

Mangala Suta

Uannana

Ven. K. Gunaratana Thera

(transcribing from the free distributed booklet printed by "The corporate body of the buddha education Foundation <http://www.budaedu.org>)

Preface

This book fulfils a much needed want, and it is being issued at a time when the present exigency in the world is filled with doubts of bliss, and forebodings of sorrow, and as such, it will serve to dispel such evil forces around us and guide us to a better understanding towards our moral and spiritual upliftment.

It is gratifying to learn that many people have realised the practical results in following the teaching of the Exalted One, The Buddha. To seek the Path of Deliverance from this world of births and rebirths, sufferings and sorrow, we have to take the initiative ourselves and follow the Path and the facilities offered through such studies and the purpose to which it served is questionably inspiring in the highest realization – Nibbana.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Yap Eng Seng, who has kindly defrayed all the costs towards the reproduction of this volume, and it is the more appreciable to note that his generosity has rightly gained for him more merits in the real practical sense of charity, for – "The Gift of Truth Excels all other Gifts."

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KALAMA SUTTA

„Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it;“

“Do not believe in traditions, because they have handed down for many generations;“

“Do not believe in anything, because it is spoken and rumored by many;“

“Do not believe in anything, simply because it is found written in your religious books;“

“Do not believe in anything, merely on the authority of your teachers and elders;”

“But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

Buddha

NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA

“Honour To The Exalted One, Free From All Bondages And Fully Enlightened”

In ancient Days in India, the people used to assemble in council and elucidate such lectures so as to impart wisdom and knowledge that would be of benefit to them. For their fees, those learned men who propounded such wisdom, were given of various kinds. Sometimes the length of their lecture took as long as four month to complete.

One day, a discussion was made on the subject of “Blessings”. What is Blessing; and what constitutes Blessing. Is Seeing a Blessing? Is Hearing a Blessing? Is Felling a Blessing?

One, Dittha- Mangalika formed the impression that as omens of significance, if one were to rise early in the morning, and see such auspicious things, such as parrots, pregnant woman, well-dressed boy, water-pot, horse, horse-cart, bull, cow, etc., - such things were indeed blessings. This led to an argument which some accepted as correct, whilst others disagree.

The Suta-Mangalika said, “O! man, as you have said seeing is blessing in this respect because it is pleasant to the sense of sight, may I ask what about those unpleasant and impure things that are also seen with the eyes. This cannot be so, for as far as seeing is concerned, one is apt to see pleasant and unpleasant objects as well. For verily, I cannot accept your views as correct.”

Some people agreed with him while others doubted. Again another one Suta-Mangalika questioned the assembly if such pleasant wishes as “Good Day,” “May you be prosperous,” be heard by a person, constitute blessing, then hearing of good and bad things are also blessings. Again such a question arose, that on getting up in the morning if they happen to smell some fragrant odour and eat tasty food, and also touch pleasant and soft things, whether these constitutes blessings.

Controversial points were raised and expounded and yet still no decision could be reached. From the neighbourhood where it was first discussed, news of this controversy spread far and wide and yet no satisfactory answer could be obtained. This debate had been carried even to the spiritual realm of Brahma.

After debating for about twelve years, the deities at the Tuvatimsa Heaven assembled one day and proposed to lay the matter before their King, Sakka Deva Raja, to get his corrected view. In order to obtain the correct answer to this controversy, they were advised by him to seek Lord Buddha. "For," as he said, "if you wish to have a light, you must approach a fire to get it, you can not get light from a firefly."

So a certain Deity was requested to proceed straightway to see the Exalted One, who was at that time at Jetavana Temple, which was built by a rich pious devotee named Anatha Pindika at Savatthi, now known as Sahet Mahet in Northern India. So far into the dead of this deva of wondrous beauty, with the glare of rays emanating from his body illuminating the whole of the temple premises, approached the Exalted One, and having paid due respects and homage stood on one side, and so standing, laid before Him the following question:—"Many gods and men pondering on the question of blessing could not come to a decision. Therefore O, Lord, may You please tell me what is the greatest Blessing."

In His reply, The Lord Buddha expounded the "Mangala Sutta," and thus explained to them that resulting in bliss is as follows:-

Not To Associate With The Unwise Is Most Blissful.

Fools or ignorant people not only injure themselves, but also those around them. If we associate with them, we are apt to follow their ways and so harm ourselves mentally as well as bodily, because all troubles or fear arise from ignorance or foolishness. Even if we do not practise their methods, the mere fact of associating with them will harm our reputation; in the same way that a banana leaf is contaminated if it is used to wrap up a piece of rotten fish or meat. The leaf is dirty and smelly even after the fish or rotten meat is thrown away.

Here is a story to illustrate this:

Once, when the Bodhisat was born as a man called Akitti Pandita, the King of Devas promised to grant him any boon he asked. Akitti Pandita begged that he might never meet, see or talk with fools. The King of Devas was surprised and asked him the reason for this strange request. Replying, he explained that fools or the unwise ones i.e. people who do not understand discipline, always lead their friends to bad ways and teach them to do wrong, because they do not know the right way themselves. If discipline or good ways are spoken in their presence, they become angry, for they cannot understand, they lose their temper and quarrels arise. If discipline or good ways are spoken in their presence, they become angry,

for they do not understand them. Therefore he prayed that he might never speak, meet or come in contact with fools.

To Associate With the Wise Is Most Blissful.

By wise men we mean men who are rich with virtuousness and all good deeds and thoughts, i.e. men who bodily abstain from killing, stealing and committing adultery; in their speech they refrain from these vices, are free from craving through ignorance. To associate with these wise ones, is one of the causes of bliss. By doing so we are elevating ourselves. For instance, if we take a piece of dry banana leaf and wrap up some sweet-scented flowers, the leaf is impregnated with the scent even after the flowers are taken away. In the same way, if we associate with the wise ones, i.e. well disciplined and meritorious people, our name will be enhanced.

To Respect The Respectables Is Most Blissful.

By respectable ones, we mean The Lord Buddha, Pacceka Buddha, Ariya Savaka, father, mother and elders. They inevitably are deserving of respect and those who honour, respect and administer to their needs will always obtain bliss as illustrated by the following story:

One morning The Lord Buddha taking his bowl, was proceeding to Rajagaha to receive any dana offered by His devotees. A garland maker of King Bimbisara, Sumana by name, saw The Lord Buddha approaching. It came to his mind, that if he brought the garlands to King Bimbisara, he would only get some monetary remuneration whereas, if he were to offer them to The Lord Buddha, who knows what great merit he might accrue.

Thereupon, he took a handful of flowers and strewed them before The Lord Buddha. The flowers at once sprang up into the air and formed a canopy over his head. He threw another handful and they formed a screen to one side of The Lord Buddha. Again and again, he threw handful after handful of flowers until the flowers became a floral screen around The Lord Buddha. Everyone was astonished at the wonderful sight and The Lord Buddha smiled. The Ven. Ananda on enquiring the reason for The Lord's smile, was informed that Sumana the garland maker, by this meritorious deed, would, after 100.000 eons, become a Pacceka Buddha called Munissaro.

Amisa means all forms of charity. Patipati Puja, is to observe the precepts, accept the Three Refugees and meditation. By this way we can respect the respectful ones. The younger should respect the elder, the son and daughter should respect and care for their parents; the housewife should respect and administer to the wants of her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law. Those who respect the

respectables, in this way, will, in the present life, obtain bliss such as “Ayu” (longevity) “Vanna” (good complexion) “Sukha” (happiness) “Bala” (good health and strength). Not only will they obtain bliss in the present life, but also in the next.

To Reside At A Favourable Place Is Bliss.

People whether they reside in a village, town or country, should always live amongst good and friendly neighbours, i.e. good and virtuous men.

If the people in a village are upright and strictly observe the precepts, then that place will be peaceful, safe and prosperous. Everybody in the village will always strive for each other’s welfare and any work will be peaceful and harmoniously conducted. Whereas, on the other hand, if the people of the village are unprincipled and corrupt, then sorrow and trouble will spring up naturally. There will always be quarrels and discontent, the strong ones will be aggressive to their weaker neighbours, and life and property will never be safe. Therefore we should always choose our surroundings before we decide to stay, because to reside among good and virtuous peoples is bliss.

Merits Gained In The Past To Be Instated In Good Pre-Requisites Is Bliss.

If you have accrued merits during your previous rebirth, this is bliss, because we are the product of our own actions in our previous births, i.e. “Karma”. For instance, some people are born ugly and some are beautiful some are clever and some are stupid. Some rich men may end up in poverty, while some unknown man may rise up and became a great millionaire. All this are due to “Karma” i.e. the merits or demerits that we had acquired during our previous rebirth.

To Be Well-Read And Instructed In Arts Is Bliss.

If we are well-read and instructed in arts, we are not liable to fall into the pitfalls of ignorance.

To Be Of Well Disciplined Behaviour Is Most Blissful.

Character is the very essence of man. He does not come by mere chance to acquire it and it does not come to him through his inheritance from birth either. It lies in his own hands and in the disciplinary measure that he zealously guards to refrain from committing evil deeds and to do good and meritorious deeds. It remains his essential duty a good habit so formed, to keep close watch over his action whether it be mentally, verbally or bodily. Through strict discipline alone can a man avoid the following ten evil deeds:-

1. Killing 6. Using indecent languages
2. Stealing 7. Gossiping
3. Adultery 8. Hankering after lust
4. Lying 9. Becoming hateful
5. Slandering 10. Becoming ignorant of the Dhamma

As for the bhikkhu his discipline is confined to all the aspect of strict observance of the precepts from time he renounces the world to the time of his realizing the Four Noble Truths.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that strict discipline so regulating one's behaviour is to be adhered to, at all time. The only cure for heedlessness is the concrete act of discipline. Happy is the man who has a well controlled mind.

Prince Rahula, after renouncing the world, exercised perfect discipline, in as much, that he took a hand full of sand and wished that from the number of sand in his hand he would gladly receive advice conducive to good disciplinary behaviour from The Lord Buddha and any other teachers. It is worthy to note that among the eighty chief Arahans, Rahula Araham was foremost in his disciplinary measure that he kept rigidly throughout, in order to attain the object of his desire i.e. a well controlled behaviour.

To Be Possessed Of Pleasant Words And Speech Is Most Blissful.

Every person likes you to speak nicely and pleasantly to him. No one likes to be addressed in a harsh manner. Even a child detests the stern remark that is passed; it hurts his feelings and immediately he gains the impression that the general outlook is not at all friendly. Animals too behave in like manner. A dog or a cat will instinctively find out from the tone of your speech, whether it is pleasing or otherwise.

It is a good policy to speak pleasantly. No amount of harsh word would win you respect and adoration; instead you meet with rebuke and scorn. Why not, therefore, let us be more watchful on the care and choice of the words we use, words, that ring sweetness to warm the hearts of those whom we daily

contact. Let us be alert to refrain from being rude and saucy in our speech; it does no one any good. On the other hand when we speak in so refined an expression of goodwill it goes straight home to the receiver like balm so soothing and peaceful and lo! what unspeakable joy and happiness it imparts to us. Let us exert in the conduct of ourselves daily, to be kind, courteous and helpful.

Illustration:

Once there was a king who was known as Gandhara by the name of the country he ruled. At that time the Bodhisatva was born as a calf. The owner gave away the calf to a brahmin. The brahmin had an intense liking for the calf and regarded it almost as a member of his family. He gave it the name of Nandivisala. When the calf grew up to be a big bull, it still cherished in its heart the love and kindness of the brahmin. Because it was grateful to the brahmin Nandivisala felt a desire to repay the brahmin for what he had done. It approached the Brahmin and said, "I want you to take wager with your rich neighbour who owns a big herd of strong bulls.

It shall be the match of my strength where I can display my strength by pulling at one time one hundred carts loaded to its fullest capacity. The brahmin, though surprised, gladly accepted what he considered a miracle for his bull to perform such an immense feat of strength. He then went to his rich neighbour and beaming with confidence and joy, offered to wager any price that his bull would pull in one strength, one hundred fully loaded carts. The neighbour thought that it was a huge joke, as he reckoned that it was beyond the strength of any single bull however strong it might be to encounter the great load. However he readily accepted the challenge.

The hundred carts loaded to the fullest extent, were secured one to another in a long line in readiness for the brahmin's bull to take up its position for the test of its phenomenal strength. The brahmin having washed and cleaned his bull and having adorned it by hanging a beautiful garland of flowers around its neck, yoked it to the foremost cart. When everything was ready for the demonstration, the brahmin said to the bull, "Now, you untrained bull of mine, put all your effort and pull." To the surprise of everyone, more so to the brahmin, the bull made no movement at all to show its willingness to pull the long line of one hundred carts. The brahmin lost his wager and quietly led his bull away.

For sometime, the bull went grazing in the field and when it returned home after its feed, found the brahmin lying quietly on the couch brooding over his loss. The bull came near to its master and said, "During all these years that I have been living with you, is there any occasion when I have been a nuisance in your house, say like breaking any article that came my way or urinating anywhere in the place? Why then call me an untrained bull? – Such unwarranted and unpleasant remark has no place in my own good behaviour right through all these years to you."

However the bull did not wish to appear so resentful as to cause unnecessary distress to its master, and in this light, he asked his master to make a second wager with an increased stake amounting to two hundred gold pieces and at the same time reminding him of the incident in case he became abusive again. The wager was keenly taken up and when the final arrangements were completed, the brahmin politely said to his bull, "Now, son, will you make a good start?" To the amazement of all the spectators, the bull made one gigantic tug and the hundred loaded carts began to move. The display of the stupendous feat of a single bull earned the admiration of the spectators who gave freely their articles of gold and other gifts to enrich the coffers of the brahmin together with the settlement of the two hundred gold pieces wager from his rich neighbour.

The Lord Buddha made it an occasion as reference to this particular incident in one of his previous rebirth, that rudeness of speech had made a disadvantage to the man concerned.

To honor, Respect, support And Attend On Parents Is Most Blissful.

Ministering to parents is one of the sterling qualities of man. The Lord laid particular stress on the practice of this virtue on many occasions. In the observance of ministering by the bhikkhus, to laymen is permitted, yet in the case of ministering to parents, the Lord Buddha not only encouraged it, but made it a necessity to attend to the needs of their parents.

From this instance, we can gather how pressing is the attention of parents, that it becomes the immediate duty of man and woman to render all the assistance to their parents. They are not to fail in the duty bound by their birth to the parents who in their love are watchful over the safety and well being of their children, and rear them through the passage of their young and carefree days; with what care, love and sacrifice they throw their all. No poverty or wealth is any deterrent to the love and sacrifice of a mother over her tender one. She is the potent guardian seeking no gain or honour but so pure and noble in her love, that she gives her life for the sole protection of her frail little child. This display of strong maternal love is also evident among the animals.

How, then, could it be justified for any one to be in absolute neglect in the discharge of their duty towards their parents at time when they are so dependent on the care and support of their children. It is the time that they seriously reflect on the foregoing obligation that as age and care have their hold on their parents, it is primarily their part to lend the helping hand that was once given them.

May all those who look well after their parents, continue their good mission, gathering strength from

day to day, and thus bring about their noblest virtue by ministering to their parents.

Illustration.

Venerable Sariputta Thera, the chief disciple of The Lord Buddha, knew his time was near; his mortal life drew close to its journey's end and the vision of the state of Pari-Nibbana become manifested to him. It was on this point of his reflection that it devolved upon him his final duty to repay the many debt of gratitude he owed to his mother.

Lady Sari was a very fortunate woman to be the mother of seven Arahats, the greatest among whom was the Ven. Sariputta. Her belief was the worship of Brahma, and to this end she spared her entire devotion to the utter neglect, to seek the real refuge in the Triple Gem. It was also Ven. Sariputta's desire to win her faith in the Triple Gem, that made him seek that very place, wherein his Pari-Nibbana may be gained. Ven. Sariputta made his last request to the Lord Buddha about his Pari-Nibbana at the house of his mother as the last homage to be accorded to her. It was a great hour, when the chief disciple in deep reverence, paid his last respects to the Lord Buddha and taking his leave, accompanied by his five hundred followers, he walked slowly away.

Jetavana Temple was alive with a large crowd of devotees and people who came to see the Ven. Sariputta Thera. It was a scene heavy with the free offering of flowers and food, they paid their last respect to him, and cried in grief that with the departure of their beloved teacher the Ven. Sariputta, all was ended for him.

Like bleating lambs after their mother sheep, this huge congregation of men followed their teacher for a long distance, until the Ven. Sariputta gave them his final blessing and advised them to be heedful and diligent in their conduct. He then turned to go on his journey homeward together with his five hundred followers.

On the way thousands of men and woman were fortunate enough to hear the deliverance of the Dhamma by the Ven. Sariputta. On the seventh day, he reached the city and rested under the cool shade of a banyan tree. Here he was met by his nephew Uparevata who paid him due respect. Ven. Sariputta requested his nephew that his mother be informed of his coming, and that arrangements be made for the accommodation of his five hundred followers.

When the news came to Lady Sari, she received it with mixed feeling of joy and surprise, and with her motherly love, she thought of her son who, perhaps with age advanced, considered it necessary to disrobe himself. So hastily she sent people to extend her welcome to his homecoming. Having set food in his mother's house, Ven. Sariputta proceeded straight to the room where he was born, and was soon laid up in bed suffering from acute diarrhea and the Ven. Cunda Thera was in attendance all the time.

The mother greatly alarmed at her son's sudden illness, came near to the room where her son was, to see what assistance she could render. A strange vision met her wondering eyes. She saw four figures with shining light radiating their whole personalities going in and out of the room. A short while after the first apparition, there appeared another figure brilliantly lit about his whole person, standing before The Ven. Sariputta and then moved away again. His place was taken by another figure of great bearing and with a greater array of light in glowing brilliance issued forth from his body. He also stood for some time and left.

Still wondering on the perplexity of the strange vision she had seen, she enquired of the Ven. Cunda about the visitors and their strange mission. Ven. Cunda went near to the great Thera and informed him about the presence of his mother. The Ven. Sariputta knew the time was opportune to have his mother realise the truth about the Lord's Dhamma and calmly the Great Thera spoke to lady Sari:-

"What has brought you here at this hour of night?" Lady Sari, her mind fixed on the wellbeing of her noble son and kindled still with that affection and love of a great mother, said softly:-

Dear son, the only joy to warm my heart is to see you well and happy. Tell me. O! son what ails you, and what is your present state of health. Tell me too O! son the mission of your four noble guest, whose glowing light lit up the room you slept."

The Ven. Sariputta replied, "It accounts for the presence of the four chief devas of the Caturmaharajika Heaven who came to pay their homage.

"O dear son great is the respect they accord thee. Art thou higher in thy virtue whereby these devas pay their humble homage?"

O Upasika, the four personalities thou glorify are the four guardians who with their drawn swords kept gracious guard over the Lord, The Buddha, from the very day of his confinement in His mother's womb."

Then, dear son, who is the one who appeared next after them?"

"O Upasika, he is Sakka, the king of devas."

“O dear son, do thou in thy loftiness stand higher than this Sakka, the king of devas?”

“O Upasika, Sakka in thy esteem is like a Samanera (precept holder of lower ordination) whose glowing tribute is his attendance on a Bhikkhu. He was in attendance to our Lord, carrying his robes when He descended from the Tavatimsa Heaven.”

“Then O son, who is the great shining personality, the brilliance of whose light radiating forth, is greater than the moonbeams that cast upon this room?”

“O! Upasika, He is your blessed teacher Maha Brahma whom in thy devotion made most sincere.”

“Oh! dear son, do thou in thy excellence outshine the grandeur of my blessed teacher Maha Brahma?”

“Oh! Upasika, Maha Brahma great in thy exaltation, is no other than the one who with outspread net received our Lord Buddha when He was born.”

There was silence. Lady Sari beamed with immense joy that she knew not how, what is her son’s supreme attainment that surpassed the greatness of her most blessed teacher, the Maha Brahma. Then Ven. Sariputta knew that her time was near to bring home the truth of the Lord’s doctrine.

“O Upasika, what is it that weighs in your mind now that this silence brings?”

“Oh dear son, I have known no greater joy than this realisation brings that, if my son strived for that great enlightenment with wondrous achievement, it places me in deep wonder, what greater exaltation could his teacher dispose to.”

“Oh! Upasika, there is no comparison to bring forth the greatness of the most Exalted One, our Lord The Buddha, for this great earth tremored and quaked with tremendous force to herald the time of His birth; His great renunciation; His supreme Enlightenment and His first deliverance of the sermon, Turning the wheel of Law.

Throughout the expanse of the whole universe, no greater one ever lived, who can be likened unto Him, that in so far they become matchless in which He excelled in virtue, compassion and wisdom; a gateway to eternal bliss free from the bondage of lust, hate and ignorance.”

Lady Sari saw the new vision of truth on the nobility of Buddha Ratna (Gem of Buddha) and she attained

the fruits of the first Path, Sotapatti. She exclaimed, "O! Dear son, Upatissa, why have I waited so long yet now only taste the bliss of truth, whereby I gain the complete freedom that is eternal."

Another dawn of day broke the eastern sky, a day so young yet pregnant and full, waiting the passing away of the Great Aharant. All the five hundred followers assembled in the early hour, many with sorrowing hearts and the time came fast to a close. The last parting words rang out once more, the humbleness of the Great Thera, Sariputta, soliciting their forgiveness, any failing of his, that occurred to them throughout their fortyfour years of loyal service to him, and lying on his right side, the Great Arahant, the chief disciple of Lord Buddha, attained Pari-Nibbana.

To Look After Feed And Take Care Of The Wife And Children Is Most Blissful

It is expected of every man who is married to remain faithful to his wife, to respect her and to be kind to her. He must not seek the affection of another woman. He must allow the wife to hold the proprietary right over the management of her household affairs and in that light, every encouragement, sympathy and assistance must be accorded her in reference to undue interference and mistrust; For what joy she holds and the freedom she breathes within the precincts of her home; even the lure of the possession of great wealth through whatever inheritance, fails to gain its hold on a righteous wife, whose outlook is the unflinching devotion on her husband alone, around whose life and interest is her immediate concern. To spare that material delight is her constant virtue, for contentment born of happiness in understanding and affection, would in its very nature drive away her thirst to crave. With her devotion pure and true, she cannot be denied of the care and wholehearted trust of her man, as to impart unto her the custody of all his wealth and possession.

What is looked forward to, in a woman towards her husband is the performance of her duty confined to the running of his home with diligence, thrift and care, and without displaying moments of displeasure, malice and neglect. She is to foster that spirit of helpfulness and sincerity in the direction towards the preservation of the atmosphere of peace and harmony in the home. Not that her toil is a daily drudgery, it becomes her daily necessity that maintains their life stream and at once to set her course even in adversity to forge ahead and to spare no pain over her allotted task. This is what we consider her dire devotion to the only man whom in bondage is her life's partner. For then to stray stray to the yonder path seeking monetary love and affection of another man, is the base act of unfaithfulness and deceit, which will cast a slur on her life forever. She must be the good and worthy custodian of her husband's possession when entrusted to her, and in any way, she must not abuse his trust as to indulge herself in wasteful pastime, especially of gambling and drinking.

The prospect of married life is a bright and happy one, only if the man and woman so married constrain to live the best life they can maintain together in constant harmony enduring all misgiving and doubt and the very nature to err. The Lord Buddha once said, that man and woman on the threshold of their married lives, are to live like devas and in similar condition congenial to home peace and happiness, setting their lives in pattern closely to the Lord Buddha's doctrine by keeping daily precepts and enjoying the sheer act of giving away liberally to help the suffering lots of the poor and needy. And blessing are evident, following the good work and no evil of whatever nature would come their way. In the days of the Lord Buddha, many families lived in this harmonious and ideal way, that they enjoyed their common lot of life on this earth.

It can be cited here, about a very happy and loving couple, Nakula Mata and Nakula Pita who, having enjoyed the bliss of their happy married lives, wished to continue living together in their next life. They sought the advice of the Lord Buddha and because of their wish and the kind of happy and ideal way they lived together, they could fulfill their mission in a happy union once more in their next rebirth.

Now when one wanders further, seeking to enliven in his search for the success towards the whole make-up of a happy and model home to a certain measure that directly she contributes her full share in the success or failure in the management of her family ties. Into this line a woman easily falls into a class wherein we name after her particular trait and habit. She can either be:

1. Troublesome
2. Thievish
3. Domineering
4. Motherly
5. Sisterly
6. Friendly
7. Servantly

Illustration:

Sujata, the sister of Visakha Maha Upasika, married the son of Anata Pindika. She was not only wealthy but was also charming. In the home of Anata Pindika she became disagreeable to almost every member of the family and to the servants as well. She was very quarrelsome and had her own say mostly because of her conceit.

One day Anata Pindika offered food to the Lord Buddha and his Bhikkhus and during the meal, she made a commotion in the household. The Lord Buddha, knowing the nature of the woman enquired about her dispute, which disrupted the peace of the home. The Lord Buddha then asked her, "There are seven classes of wives; have you any knowledge to which class you belong?" She replied that she did not know. The Lord Buddha said, "A wife not in any way agreeable but finding every chance to quarrel with her husband or members of his family, is a quarrelsome wife. A wife whose outlook in life is bent on squandering away the fortune of her husband in gambling or drinking, is a thievish wife, a wife who

takes good advantage of the kindness of her husband, adopts a superior outlook in a manner so as to gain control over him in any matter concerning his family or his outside activities, is a domineering wife; but when a wife looks after her husband's interest with tender care and devotion like a mother over her child, this kind of wife is a motherly one; again a wife who by nature is obedient and shy like a sister to a brother belongs to a sisterly type; and a wife who shares in like manner the happiness or misfortune of her husband is at once a friendly one; finally a wife who lives in tolerance of the whims and dislikes of her husband and serves him faithfully throughout, is a servantly type.

In the light of the truth Sujata gained the realization of the fruits of the First Path (Sotapatti). Continuing the sermon, the Lord Buddha remarked that among the first three classes of wives, their existence after death would be in a hellish state, suffering untold pain in the unconsuming fire or torment. The remaining four classes of wives would enjoy even in their present lives, the store of happiness and after death, their existence would be in a continued state of bliss in the realm of heaven.

Here it may be told of the most loving and happy lives that Prince Siddhartha and his wife Yasodhara led together from the time of Dipankara Buddha to his final enlightenment as a Buddha that in almost every rebirth they lived together in a very happy and peaceful state.

To give you an idea what constitutes the harmony and happiness of their living as man and wife, I quote an illustration in one of the incidents of their rebirth together:

Bodhisattva was born as a prince whose name was Udaya Bhaddha. They were deeply attached to each other and as a result they both made a solemn vow that in the event of their death, one or the other was to make known to the one living the place of his or her rebirth. They enjoyed the bliss of their marriage which was a privilege of the few; their affection was as lasting as the bond that kept them happily together. Thus it came to be, that they lived to a good old age and king Udaya Bhaddho died. He was born in the heavenly abode and became Sakkadevaraja.

It was then that as Sakkadevaraja that he recollected the secret promise he had made to Udaya Bhaddha, and he caused himself to appear one night in the queen's private chamber which was heavily guarded. He brought for the queen a big gold plate containing gold articles and entreated her to accept her company for the night. The queen, very surprised, asked for an explanation about his sudden presence, when she was fully aware of the impossibility of gaining entrance into her well guarded chamber. Sakkadevaraja announced himself as a deva and assured her to find no cause for alarm as he had so expressed his purpose only to keep her the desired and company. Udaya Bhaddha calming herself, said, "You may be a deva or a devil, but whoever you are I do not entertain your presence in my own chamber, let alone to claim your right as to be with me alone. No man has a place in my heart however loving and powerful he may prove himself to be, only that bondage in common with my own late king Udaya Bhaddha, that I pay my humble submission, the affection that was his. I request that you leave me in peace and go your way."

Sakkadevaraja again appeared on the second night this time offering a silver plate with its silver contents and still pleaded for her love. Queen Udaya Bhaddha reflected that to enter into further conversation with him would mean inviting him to her chamber night after night, therefore, she chose to remain silent. On the third night Sakkadevaraja appeared with a copper plate containing articles of copper and repeatedly asked for the queen's consent to his love. Thereupon the queen said, "You appear to have a very unusual way of wooing my love. To think that your gift its worth from gold to copper in your three attempts to win my love is indeed a very silly gesture. Why, if one is to make his offer, he would apparently start from the first of copper and then to silver and gold, as to token of his earnest desire." To this Sakkadevaraja suitably, "I am a merchant who wisely knows his trade and therefore I set a prize according to its worth. My first estimation of you was the worth of gold, my second of silver and my third falls to the grade of chopper, for your life declines with the passage of time. Your beauty fades and so your age which in its slow progress is inevitably nearer to death. I have seen wisely the worth I set my price on you which you have observed degrades in value. As day passes on to night, and night to day, the life span of a living being becomes shorter and shorter. Decay and its consequence of death is the ultimate lot of men and animal on this earth. Whereas in the heavenly plane, the life span is long; there is no sign of decay and wrinkles do not appear to mark old age. Life is one of perpetual happiness, no sorrow nor suffering to stain its path.

Queen Udaya Bhaddha wishing to enjoy the bliss of this sorrowless and painless life, asked the way how she could attain this. Sakka explained the one and only course, was to lead a clean and virtuous life, keeping precepts well and performing charitable work. He then revealed that he was King Udaya Bhaddha in his previous existence. The queen pleaded in tears that she was so lonely and wished to have his continued presence to comfort the remaining years of her earthy life till death claimed her finally. Sakkadevaraja further expounded the doctrine about the impermanent state of all mundane things and its line of sorrow. Life was one of sorrow and pain from birth to death. As a last parting word unto his former queen, Sakka reminded her to lead a wholesome life and to be heedful at all times.

On the following day Queen Udaya Bhaddha sent for all her ministers and informed them of her intention to renounce the world, and that a temple be built for her in the park. For the rest of her days she lived in peace and contentment. Death came as sure as the night that claimed the harrowing day; she found her rebirth in the Sakka world where she happily took her place with Sakkadevaraja for the reunion they so promised. It is an important feature in the narrative you have just read that eternal bliss of a happy married life follows from birth to birth and the fulfillment of the wishes that perfect unity of a man and wife has become possible in their round of rebirth.

Matali a deva, asked Sakkadevaraja a question that being a king himself of the sakka world, what kind of a virtue in a man would he respect. "I pay homage to the layman whose ordinary life is one of purity

and wholesomeness; is a strict preceptor and a lover of truth; is charitable with regard to his outlook of the suffering world and one who performs his duty well to his family," was the answer given.

Speaking of family duty especially to a man who desires to bring up his children, the perfect model of his virtue, it is of grave importance for him to bring into consideration the following hints:

1. Keep him away from the grip of vices
2. Teach him the way of virtue
3. Train or help him to become skilful in a trade or profession
4. Get for him a suitable marriage
5. Hand over to him his inheritance

A child receives training from his parents. There are stages of training and this varies on certain period of his age where a gradual changeover, due to his growing intelligence will be imparted to him. From the age of one to five where such periods demands the care and love of a parent, the child must be given every sympathy encouragement and companionship of his parent. From the age of six to fifteen is the opportune time to administer a careful and strict control over his difficulty, direct him to proper conduct in life and still into him the earnestness of his labour. Where punishment is unavoidable at the time the child shows misconduct or disobedience, he must be treated in a manner stern enough to make him see the true light of his misdeeds. But from sixteen and up the child is big enough to be spared any punishment whatsoever. He needs the respect and advice of his parent, who has also to be a guide and friend to him.

Illustration:

There was once a hermit who was on his way to the hermitage. He met a young boy who, out of sheer mischief began to tease and rebuke him. The hermit paid no attention to his rudeness, but instead went up to his mother who stood nearby, and advised her to make use of the young plant that grew nearby as a means to punish her child for his mischievousness. The mother completely ignored the injunction of the hermit who then went his way.

Twenty years later the hermit happened to pass by the same route where he saw a man hanging from a tree while nearby the mother wept bitterly over her son's mishap. The hermit drew near and said to the woman, "My good woman, you need not cry any more, for your son is dead. You have yourself to blame for his death now. On this very spot, twenty years ago and by this very tree, I advised you to train and bring up your child as he should be. Through that very mischief left uncorrected, it leads him to what he is today, a total wrack of his useful life where he should be trained and guided against the vices that always beset the path of a young man.

Anatha Pindika had a very disobedient son. He was not only disrespectful but vain and did not believe in according due veneration to the Triple Gem. His father was aware that the failure entirely rested on himself from want of necessary measure to bring about the obedience and worthiness of his son. One day he devised a plan to break the habit of his arrogance and to teach him to become humble and obedient.

He suggested and offered his son a hundred pieces of gold, if he would only keep the precepts in the temple for one day. At first the son thought his father was joking, but later was persuaded that it was his father's desire that he should keep the precepts for one day.

The son went to the temple and took a seat quietly in a corner without respecting the presence of the Lord Buddha and his bhikkhus. The day passed and the young man returned home. The father was very pleased and offered him food and various delicacies, but he refused to taste a morsel of the food, until his father had paid him the hundred pieces that he promised. On the following day, Anatha Pindika called his son and promised him a reward of thousand pieces of gold, if he could remember the discourse of the Lord Buddha. The Blessed One, knowing the purpose of his mission, delivered the Dhamma in such a way, that however earnest his attempt to discern the particular line of the Dhamma, he soon forgot directly he came to the next line. He exerted more of his attention, but stanza after stanza, even though he tried to learn, he was unable to retrain them in his memory. When the Lord Buddha ended His discourse, Anatha Pindika's son through his earnest attention, and through the wisdom of his father, won for himself the first of the Noble Path (Sotapatti). In triumph, he accompanied the Blessed One and His disciples and proceeded on their way to the house of Anatha Pindika.

Anatha Pindika, on seeing the Lord Buddha knew that his son changed and had now become a noble son. He was very pleased, but the son on seeing his father, was ashamed and wished that his father would not give in the presence of the Lord Buddha, the thousand pieces of gold as his payment for listening to the discourse of the Lord Buddha. Anatha Pindika, made offering of food to the Lord Buddha and His disciples and then to his son.

When the meal was over he made a presentation of the thousand gold pieces to his son as fulfillment of his promise as well as a mark of his esteem in the change of his son, from disobedience and vainness to great nobleness. The young man calmly asked his father to keep back the price. The Lord Buddha, having known the situation through his divine insight, asked for an explanation. Anatha Pindika said, "Two days ago, my son has undertaken to observe his precepts on payment of a hundred pieces of gold, and refused to take his food on his return from the temple, until the compensation of his prize in gold has been settled. He was sent on a second errand again on my promise to pay him a thousand pieces gold, that he has to relate to me only one stanza of the Dhamma, he has learned." The Blessed One gave his reply, "Any man having attained the true realization of the Noble Path has the better fortune than the position of a world monarch or the deities."

In Benares there was a rich family who had an only son Mahadhana Settha Putta. The child was wholly neglected concerning his education and the general bringing up, for the parents considered it an

irksome task to look after their son's own welfare and did not believe in having a necessary control over him. As a result, the son was given a free hand to do what he liked and thus his life was wasted away in amusement and idleness.

In the same city there lived another wealthy family with an only daughter. The Parents of the young girl conceived the idea and accorded the same way of treating their daughter as the parents of Mahadhana Stthi Putta for they believed their immense wealth would be more than ample to provide their daughter a life of ease and comfort.

These two wealthy families were united by the marriage of their son and daughter. After the parents of both families died, all the wealth and inheritance went to Mahadhana Setthi Putta and his wife. They lived a very care-free life and as it was all their, without any restriction, they soon fell an easy victim to vices; drank, gambled, danced and entertained lavishly until all their wealth was drained away. Then they sold their house they lived in, and even the very beddings they slept on. They slept on the wayside and begged morsels of food around the temple.

One day they came for their usual round for alms in the temple where the Lord Buddha stayed. Thereupon, a faint smile lit up the Lord Buddha's face, when the two beggars came into view, and Ananda Thera noticing it enquired the reason of the smile and the Lord answered, "If, in their young days this man and his wife were to look after their wealth properly, and perform their duties accordingly, they would have been the wealthiest family in Benares. But if both of them were to abandon their wealth for the sake of renunciation, the victory for the man would be his attainment of Arahantship and the woman her Anagami state. If then in their later age they were to take good care of their wealth, they would become the second wealthiest family in Benares and in the course of their renunciation the man would attain the state of Sakadagami and his wife Sotapatti. Now they are human wrecks and the opportunity of enjoying the fruits of labour in the bliss that is mundane and supramundane is lost to them forever.

During the time when the Lord Buddha stayed in the Velu Vana Temple in Rajagaha, there was in the family of a wealthy resident a boy. He was not given the necessary education as was expected from such a rich parentage. His parents had a different view, for the prospect of making their son acquire his education would mean added hardship and a burden to his young mind. They had a fair estimate that if their son were to spend a thousand gold pieces a day, it would have taken him one hundred years before their wealth would be all used up. When he grew up his parents arranged a marriage for him with a girl who was equally a spoiled child. After the death of their parents they joined the company of men who drank and gambled away their time. When their wealth had dwindled to the last copper, they mortgaged their home as security for a loan and when debts began piling up, they were driven to the street and had no food and shelter.

A gang of robbers plundering the surrounding district where they lived, saw their plight and since the man was strong and hefty, they enlisted his service to rob with them. One day the robbers planned to stage a holdup at the residence of a rich man and his duty was to keep guard outside the scene of the robbery and was given to stout pole to kill or maim any person who came to render help. During the

process of robbery, the inmates raised an alarm and the robbers fled in different direction. The foolish guard kept on to his post and was subsequently arrested. It was then, that robbery was considered a major crime and the punishment meted was death. The day of execution came and the unfortunate man, with a garland of red flowers round his neck and painted red all over his person, was led into the street. A company of tom-tom beaters, guards and his executioner kept him marching on to his doom.

On the way, they passed the house of a courtesan who, at one time was helped by the foolish man. She had her sympathy, and as he was beyond any means of her help, she offered him four pieces of her homemade cake and a jug of water. Just then Maha Mogallana Thera arrived on the scene and the condemned man knowing that his useless life would soon be spent, had a last desire that it would be more beneficial to him instead, to offer the food and water to Maha Mogallana, who received his offering and partook of the meal to sir the joy in his heart, the worthiness of the deed he had done.

It did not take the prisoner long on his last track and calmly he walked up to the scaffold with only the thought that even at the moment, when the executioner's sword was about to be brought down on his neck, his joy was the offering he made to Maha Mogallana, and if he were still to retain that wholesome thought, to the exclusion of other fleeting thoughts, it would bear for him the existence in the heavenly plane, but then a second thought flicked in his mind for the lingering love towards the courtesan and through this thought, with the fall of the executioner's sword, it caused him his immediate rebirth as a tree spirit inhabiting the banyan tree.

This is the case of a very unfortunate man. He was tied to the endless rounds of rebirth, not that he yielded without an attempt to break off his shackles, but the failure of his parents to lead him to the path of righteousness, for at this very birth of his as a man, and on his renunciation, would carry him on his last lap across the sea of Samsara and attain Arahantship.

If every parent can only appreciate the care and duty that they make themselves responsible for the welfare of their children, out of every case, it will be very likely that the general outlook of their children's whole future will be bright and full of promise. For the Blessed One has so said that the purity of the mind of a child at birth can be likened to the brightness of a star. It is stainless, regardless of the veils around, but as contact sets in, in its growing days, the mind has been the advent of a mixed kind, wholesome and unwholesome.

To Be Engaged In Undisputed Undertaking Is Most Blissful

Seek a wholesome trade or occupation. It may not pay what you wish, but as long as your undertaking is honest, clean and sincere with no evil purpose to deceive or to do harm so as to get the desired result, you will have all the peace and contentment rightly earned from those with whom you deal. Your course is open, therefore, it bears no ill-will or against anyone. You are friend to all, your colleague, your neighbor or your competitor and their failure shall not be the subject of your concern that they shall do so. Instead, you feel you are a part of the whole machine, that co-ordination is essential for your contribution to bring about peace and harmony among mankind.

Be diligent in your work. Fill your time with earnest occupation that inactivity and idleness shall not have their way. Time is slipping by pretty fast without your being aware of it. A store of golden opportunity may have been lost if you do not make good use of your precious moments. Happy is the man who has his dreams materialized directly from the sweat of his own labour. Does not the fruit of his own orchard taste sweeter and the feeling that it is grown by his own hands give him joy and contentment? To v'be directly independent and not proving an added burden to anyone else, should be the aim in order to derive a happy and peaceful frame of mind.

Illustration:

Once there lived in Benares a rich man by the name of Cullasetthi. He was widely known in Benares for his wisdom; he was also a renowned astrologer. One day, it happened that while he was passing along the highway, he came by chance to see a rat apparently dead, lying on the road. He began to muse on the object with interest, that from the opportune time he reckoned, it would not be strange to predict the amassing of a great wealth only if the right and fortunate man were to take immediate possession of the dead rat, and dispose of it at the first opportunity. Little was it known to the astrologer, that his fortuitous remark on the tale of the dead rat, would have caught the ears of a poor man, Cullantevasika. Pondering that he would have nothing to lose in the bargain, he quietly picked up the dead rat and went on his way.

Not long later, Cullabtevasika spied a man looking for some food to feed his hungry cat. He came in handy to be rid of his priceless possession for a few paltry copper, which for the poor Cullantevasika gave him the confidence to eke out his miserable existence. He tossed over in his mind the idea to make his little means earn what it possibly could. He spent all that had on a few pieces of candy and from the fresh water he could obtain, he offered it for sale as plain sweetened drinks to the florists. For his trouble, he was given a few handful of flowers, which he sold in the market place and with proceed, he bought more candy to turn into a bigger supply of drinks for his customer, the florists. This time they offered him the rest of the unplucked flowers. It enriched him by a few extra coppers, but that alone gave him the security to stand on his own feet, and to make him work harder for his living.

One day a heavy storm arose and in its fury, trees were uprooted and branches blown all over the park. But, to Cullantevasika, it meant for him a day in the park to clear and tidy up the place from its litter of broken branches, dead trunks and fallen leaves. They were given to him as payment for his labour and which he sold as firewood. Again, he went back to his business of candy drinks, where he made a quick sale to the weary travelers outside the city gate. A band of five hundred grass cutters were making their way to the city and at the gate they rested themselves, and Cullantevasika was able to supply them with his candy water to quench their thirst. In this way, he managed to have the friendship of the grass-cutters who responded to his cheerful disposition and the friendly manner he conducted his small and humble trade.

Nevertheless, Cullantevasika was on the move for any likely chance to change over to a new trade and it came to him one day when he received news that some merchants were sending five hundred horses to the city for sale. He at once thought of his friends the grass-cutters and proceeded immediately on his

plan that they all supply him one thousand bundles of grass to be twice their usual bulk on each bundle. On the following day the merchants and their five-hundred horses arrived in the city and they went about in search of fodder for their horses, but none could be found except in the store kept by Cullantevasika. They bought all the stock from him for one thousand coins.

Again, the water labourers brought him the news that a big merchant boat was due to arrive in the port. He bought the best cart in the city and dressed himself up as a rich merchant. Upon the boat's arrival, he approached the owner of the vessel and offered him an expensive ring in order to solicit his help to use his influence to induce all the merchants to deal with him. As a result all the other merchants who came later failed to secure any business; while he acted in the capacity as their agent and the profits he earned rose steadily to the sum of two hundred thousand coins.

Cullantevasika became a rich man and his thought roamed back to the incident on the highway when he realized the truth of Cullasetthi's prediction. He paid a courteous visit to Cullasetthi and offered him a gift of one hundred thousand coins, with an explanation that he wished to repay him (Cullasetthi) as an appreciation for his good fortune following the advice he acted on the prediction about the death rat. And here again, his good fortune served him well; Cullasetthi seeing his unselfish nature offered him the hand of his (Cullasetthi's) daughter. They lived happily and on the death of Cullasetthi he inherited all his wealth as well as the high office treasurer to the king.

So we turn our thought on the close of the story to one in his present day life, that if the work is being performed in a manner clean and free from intent to jeopardize the living of others, without inciting a loss or harm, that undertaking alone is noble and unselfish.

The Practice Of Charity Is Most Blissful

Charity is not an act of giving with a deep concern for its ultimate reward now or hereafter. If it is so then charity is very much looked forward to, as a compensating unit hanging on the balance that would tip heavier against the deposit end. The essential point to remember is that charity should be an act prompted by one desire, and that is to impart however great it may be, so as to free oneself of the strong passion to crave. It is this alone that would not burden the donor himself of an added desire to anticipate a future gain, but to be wholly in sympathy whereby his own unselfish action has served one good cause further and that is to allay the suffering of his fellowmen. It is a great cause first to purify and make his actions divine and then to bring bliss to the world.

A man may be charitable, yet he enslaves himself to his own greed. He is known as a slave to charity. This is the reason. He is motivated by a momentary desire to give and in so doing he chooses that which he does not esteem, because of its poor value, and then gives it away. Another man has a different disposition in regard to his view on charity. He does not feel the sting to be deprived of his possession whichever he chooses and give away in equal degree that which he himself closely regards. He is a friend to charity. But the man who ranks supreme in his love for charity, thinks not of himself nor of his possession, but willingly makes greater sacrifices in consideration, that the needs of others are greater than his. He is a master of charity.

Illustration

During the reign of Brahmadata, the Bodhisatta was born in a rich family. His parents called him Visayha. When he grew up it became his daily routine in the observance of the five precepts and on the week-ends the eight precepts. Apart from his virtue to live cleanly and in a wholesome way, he had one strong aspiration and that was the giving of alms which he planned to carry out extensively. He put through his noble scheme and built four alm-houses around the suburbs of the city of Benares, where he lived; one in the mid-city and one close to his home. For the maintenance of those homes for the poor, he spent one hundred thousand coins a day.

The virtue of Visayha in his unflinching strength to carry out his good work soon spread to the realm of the Brahma world, where Sakkadevaraja, who felt keenly to put to the test the virtue of Visayha by causing a wholesale destruction of all his wealth, possession and food. What was left among the ruin were two baskets, a pole and a sickle. His wife was much distressed to see him face the grimness of poverty, but he assured her that as long as he had his life spared, he would endeavour through his present plight to proceed with his good work. On this decision, he gathered the only remnant of his possession and wandered forth into the woods. As a grass-cutter, he kept on to his trade and made a provision to set aside half the proceeds of his sale for charity. But often, he deled more into his scanty reserve for his family and carried on ungrudgingly, the humanitarian work. Due to his incessant labour and the impoverished state he was in, he fainted. Sakkadevaraja appeared before him when he regained consciousness.

“You are now in a state of exhaustion. How can you carry on the task you so rigidly impose on yourself day by day, with utmost disregard to your health? Would it not be of interest to you to divert your devotion and attend to your own personal needs, instead of to nurse the sufferings of others?”

“May I be permitted to know who you are?” asked Visayha.

“I am Sakkadevaraja,” was the reply.

“As Sakkadevaraja, then it is easier for you to account the many meritorious deeds you have acquired in the past. For you to advise me not to carry on my present good work, seems a complete contradiction against your own ideal to become a Sakkadevaraja. Even if a thousand Sakkadevarajas were to join you, it would not help to relax the firm resolution that I have taken. I set a greater task and with my full compassion may it be, that through my devotion in this life and hereafter, the ignorance of many living beings be cleared and gain the wisdom of the Noble Path. I labour not for the attainment of glory and bliss of Sakkadevaraja or the deities of other happy state of existence, or the rich possession of things mundane, but I strive for the higher course to free the unhappy and sorrowful state of existence; I strive to become a Buddha.”

Sakkadevaraja was happy to learn the truth about Visayha’s great aim for Buddhahood and he restored all his possessions with increased wealth, which Visayha gave away in charity. When Visayha died, he found a happier existence in the heavenly plane.

To Behave In Accordance With The Dhamma Is Most Blissful

In life are oceans of sorrow, fierce and boundless. Men are tossed and lashed by its angry waves and founder himself more often on the rocks of disaster. Yet in this brief span of years many strive vainly in search of power, for glory and for wealth. They rage madly for a possession; they plunder, they kill almost like an infuriated bull just to satisfy their miserable want; they give no security to their comrades who live in fear and sorrow.

Countless are the evils of men, that they must destroy, else aeons upon aeons would pass before even one of his evils would fade away. It means a doom to boundless suffering in the ocean of Samsara. "Seek no refuge, but unto your own," so said the Buddha. Evil is overcome only by one who is steadfast in purpose, so the good shall prevail. Perfect happiness comes always as a result of a good action that is being kept on in heedful indulgence of the Dhamma's way and the merits so accrued, would gain for the worker of The Dhamma, unlimited wealth of wisdom until the final realization of Nibbana.

Illustration

There were once in the city of Savatthi five hundred men who were religious and devoted most of their time for the cause of their faith. Each of them had five hundred followers. From among this body of righteous men, there was one who was the most devout in his practice and was elected their headman. He had a big number of children numbering seven sons and seven daughters. He became very ill one day and was conscious of his approaching death, but before his end was over he expressed his desire to listen to the Dhamma from the lips of the Bhikkhus. His request was conveyed to the Lord Buddha and eight Bhikkhus were sent to his home to comply with his dying wish. When the headman saw the Bhikkhus his heart overflowed with joy and he exclaimed, "This is a very fortunate moment in my household. I feel my hour is drawing near and before I breathe my last, I would appreciate to hear a discourse from you." And when asked, he selected the discourse on Sati-patthana, that is, the contemplation on the four Sati-patthanas referring to the body, the sensations, the mind and the phenomena.

Just at this moment, six deva lokas, appeared with six carriages that were profusely decorated, and the dying man turned eagerly in their direction. Whence he heard a voice, sweet and clear, come floating by, "Make haste, good man, make haste; linger not in your earthy life. The hour has come that you part with your earthy possession; choose now the one that is priceless to thee; the role that is five celestial." The headman became conscious of this divine call, and remained calm. He replied, "Aware I am of thy company, but thy call has been loud to distract my attention, that I have set my heart open to The Lord Buddha's Triple Gem. Pray thee, stop for this brief moment thy welcome to the abode beyond."

The eight Bhikkhus being unaware of the presence of the Devalokas, assumed it was the request of the headman to discontinue the discourse on the Lord Buddha's doctrine and all of them remained quite. But to the children of the headman, they thought it was the fear of death which haunted the dying man, that their father who, thought a very virtuous man throughout his life, feared in like manner, the approach of death. They wailed aloud and the din of their cry lent an added confusion.

The Bhikkhus left quietly for the temple, as they believed they could not do anything further. Meantime the headman became conscious of the distress of his children and instead of peace and quietness that prevailed a short time ago, he could not understand the sudden outburst of grief and incessant crying, and turning to his children, he said, "My good children, do not grieve over what is to come. Rejoice with me that I am blessed with the presence of the Devalokas this hour who beckon me to hasten my journey to their pure abode that is pure and sorrowless. Now, my children, tell me which is the most sublime of the six heavenly planes?" "It is Tusita, the pure abode of the Bodhisattvas," came the reply from the children. "Then fetch me a garland of flowers, make your wish when you throw it high, let it hang on the carriage from Tusita where I will sojourn." The children brought a garland of flowers and threw it in the direction their father indicated. "Now, my children, can you see the flowers hanging on the carriage from Tusita?" "We can see the flowers, but not the carriage you mentioned father." "The position of the flowers is where my carriage is; my time is up; lament not my parting; be heedful in the continuance of your good work on earth and when your task is done may you all seek your birth in the Tusita heaven." With the end of his last message, he passed away and was born in Tusita's pure abode.

The eight Bhikkhus on their return to the temple narrated to the Lord Buddha the incident relating to their abrupt departure. The Lord Buddha said, "You cannot see with your eyes the divine presence of the six Devalokas and the Upasika's seemingly request to discontinue in the midst of your reciting the sutta, is in truth, a request to the Devalokas to allow him to listen to my doctrine. "Oh! Lord, then what happened to him on his next rebirth?" asked the Bhikkhus. He seeks his happiest rebirth in the pure abode of Tusita. Like this Upasika, many who are in quest of this very happy birth may seek with diligence the path by following well my Dhamma."

To Render Help To Relations Is Most Blissful

We view in the light of misfortune that any calamity befalling their suffering lot like loss of wealth or of home, or plagued by disease or persecutions and such like nature, may it once necessitate our attention and our sympathy to give whatever assistance we could hope to render. When on occasion they come to our very door, driven to, when they have no where to turn to for a likely help, to ease their suffering, let us render to their needs with care and love and spare them, be it even a temporary shelter over their worn out life, or clothing to cover their bare frame, or food to allay their gnawing hunger, or money to tide over their financial straits. As this comes from our hearts, let it blossom forth but not restrain our cherished thought of compassion to help.

Verwandten eine Hilfe zu leisten ist von größtem Glück

Wen wir im Licht von Unglück jegliches Elend welches sie als Leiden stark erfasst betrachten, wie der Verlust von Reichtum oder Heim, oder Plage durch Krankheit, Verfolgung oder durch Natur passiert, erfordert dies unsere Aufmerksamkeit und unsere Sympantie um jegliche Art Hilfe zu leisten. Wenn sie zu einem Anlass getrieben an unser Tor kommen, wenn sie niemanden haben, an den sie sich für eine ausreichende Hilfe wenden können, sollte es vorübergehende Schutz und Unterkunft für ihr verbrauchten Leben oder Gewand um ihren Körper zu bedecken oder Essen um ihren nagenden Hunger zu stillen oder Geld um ihre finanziellen Nöte zu überbrücken, lasst uns entsprechend ihrer Bedürfnisse

mit Fürsorge und Liebe helfen um ihr Leiden zu verringern. Wie dieses von Herzen kommt, lass es aufblühen und unterdrücke nicht die ehrenwerten Gedanken von hitfühlender Hilfe.

And this demands from every right thinking man to give his portion to relieve the suffering of their fellowmen, their kith and kin. For what they count not in their days of comfort, peace and plenty, that we need fulfil, bring them greater gain in health, wealth and happiness. And their kinsmen return in no small measure from the ounce of their strength to the copper in their purse, they pursue right their noble heart the desire to help, and in greater fortitude. So stands the position of suffering myriads of human beings in the world today. They cry their needs aloud, but how sore their hearts, eaten to the core by the disease of selfishness, their love to keep safe guard over their own families within the precincts of their own families within the precincts of their household but not beyond.

Und dies ist ein Erfordernis für jeden rechtschaffend denkenden Mann, seinen Teil

And what measure of relief they may yearn to expect of their kinsmen their friends and their fellowmen. None, in so far that they suffer alone for their want to help others. Charity sheds its light first in the home. The mother and father, the wife and children claim the attention of their needs, then the next of kin, then friends, then neighbours and so on, to men's beloved men so spread the might net of compassion to render help in whatever capacity whether great or small, yet all the same, the heart is in the giving, that may it be even the mere paltry sum yet so nobly given.

The greatest of all lessons we learn is the noblest deed, firm in purpose of our beloved Lord, The Buddha, who in all his countless rebirths, lent whatever help in this noble way, first to his next of kins, then to his fellowmen, for great was his compassion that any man rich or poor strong or weak and from king to beggar never was refused help. He gave with his heart, that mankind may enjoy the blessing of peace and happiness.

Illustration

Midway between the city of Kapilavatthu and the city of Koliya, the river Rohini meandered its way through fields of emerald green. The inhabitants of both cities shared the same source of water supply from the river Rohini, for the irrigation of their lands. There was a dry spell of a weather and no rain fell to fill the river and in the course of time there was not sufficient water to irrigate both lands. It was about this time when the paddies began to ripen and inhabitants of Kapilavatthu and Koliya were both anxious to receive a fair share of water for their fields. The only course left to avoid further shortage of water, and to save the crops, was, that irrigation had to be closed against one of the vast fields, either of Kapilavatthu or Koliya. But the people of both cities were equally adamant and would not sacrifice their crops. Failing this solution, they suggested that if the people of Kapilavatthu had their crops harvested, they were to be made available to the people of Koliya. No agreement was reached either; then followed the battle of words, hot and furious, each branding the other the true representations of beasts and savages. Their disputes reached to a point that they made their decision to refer the matter to their kings. It began the turning point that from the conflict of gaining possession of water for their

fields, it soon formed into a major trouble and a state of war existed. The kings of the two cities decided to take up arms in order that the issue could be settled.

The Lord Buddha on that day, had by means of his divine power cast a view of the universal and its suffering inhabitants and to extend his compassion to help anyone in distress. He observed a state of inevitable warfare between the people of the two cities and he became aware that they were mostly the kith and kins of his father and mother before he renounced the world. He knew that if a war was fought, there would be chaos, misery and countless suffering and the grim picture of horror to see the water of Rohini stained red. The Lord Buddha made his appearance over the Rohini river sitting cross-legged in mid-air. The two kings with their armies closed in on the boundary, where the Rohini river separated them. There they saw the Lord Buddha and became at once conscious of their shameful act. They disarmed themselves and threw all their weapons on the fields and paid their homage to the Lord Buddha. When asked the reason for their assembling in the fields, the kings of both cities pleaded their ignorance as to the outcome of waging war among themselves. Enquiries were made from the generals of their forces and they too turned out readily ignorant of the state of affairs. And so investigation was carried on from rank to rank of their forces until they were traced to the farmers who related the incident about diverting the passage of Rohini's water to their fields.

The Lord Buddha made a reference to Rohini's water and asked what value as a material gain could be attached when countless valuable lives had been sacrificed on it. Human lives were beyond the power of any material wealth to regain, and such invaluable lives they had thrown away on the unimportant from Rohini whose flow from course to course would be blood instead of water. It would be more beneficial for all to live peacefully among themselves, unloving among haters, and to free their lives from lust after mundane and eternal pleasures.

After the death of King Kosala, his son prince Vidudabha, ascended the throne and he planned to destroy the entire Sakya race. He harboured an intense hatred on the Sakyas and it became so much more evident on his ascending the throne, that he planned to destroy the entire Sakya race. The Lord Buddha, who had his usual survey of the universe, saw the calamity that about to happen. At the boundary separating Kapilavastu, the land of the Sakyas, and Vidudabha the kingdom of King Vidudabha, the Lord Buddha appeared and sat under a tree with few branches and thinly spaced leaves that gave scanty shade. A little distance away was the country Vidudabha with its shady banyan trees. King Vidudabha came along the way leading his big army of soldiers and when he saw the Lord Buddha sitting under the tree, he came near, paid his respects and remarked that the tree did not have full shade to keep off the burning heat of the afternoon sun. Thereupon he invited the Lord Buddha to refresh himself under the spreading shade of the banyan trees of his country nearby. The Lord Buddha said, "Taking a rest under the shadow of relations is more cool and refreshing," The king immediately became aware of the meaning of the Lord Buddha's statement and he turned back his army without making a further attempt to avenge himself on the Sakyas.

For some time king Vidudabha remained restless, the project weighed heavily on his mind and it became evident he could not wait any more. He set up a second campaign and marched off to invade again, the Sakya land. And again the Lord Buddha appeared on the very spot. Once more he turned homeward

only to renew his hatred so much more, that he made a third attempt and for the third occasion the Lord appeared to ward off his hatred. Upon the fourth attempt the Lord Buddha realized the moment was near, the impending evil karma of the Sakyas could not save them of their destruction. It began the day of the wholesale massacre of the Sakyas.

To Engage In Undertakings Of A Righteous Action Is Most Blissful

The simple code for a Buddhist in making a living for himself is to refrain from or having anything to do with:

1. Trading in weapons
2. Trading in living beings
3. Trading in meat
4. Trading in intoxicating drinks
5. Trading in poison

Be sincere, true and honest. Let deceit, falsehood and greed have no part in your schemes. It is a hard way, but the task is worth undertaking, for like a signpost, it ensures full measure of confidence, trust and esteem to others; keep constant guard against greed and selfish desire to enjoy the labour of others instead of sharing the same spirit of helpfulness and tenderness towards each other; take pride in doing service to the elders, the aged, the disabled and the like without a desire for reward which shall find no place to satisfy the wants of your own self. Whichsoever act you impart, it should be brimful with purpose, clean and wholesome and not stained with lust and hatred. Even how humble be your contribution to ease the suffering and sorrow of others, that work alone is a achievement kindled by the same glory with the one more fortunate, to dispose his wealth in building alms houses, hospitals and other charitable institutions for poor and needy.

Illustration

During the time when the Lord Buddha resided at the Bamboo Grove Temple in the city of Rajagaha, there was a man who spent his livelihood in rearing and slaughtering pigs. He would go to his neighbours and barter his padi for their piglings. He reared them until they became the right size for the market. The method he applied to slaughter the pigs, was not only dreadful, but extremely brutal to the animal. The pig was secured fast on stout poles and beaten until its body was swollen all over and until he had satisfied that the body of the poor animal had attained the size he wanted. To end the agony of the battered pig, boiling water was poured into its gaping mouth and over its body.

This man lived a short distance away from the Bamboo Grove Temple yet in all the years, astutely engaged in merciless killing, he offered not a handful of flowers or a morsel of food to the Lord Buddha. He became ill one day. He suffered the onset of pain which was in violence like a ball of fire consuming his whole frame. He crawled on his four limbs and grunted like a pig. He became a subject of contempt and all the neighbours avoided him and kept him alone in his house, with doors locked and guards kept

watching him. For seven days he remained helpless and suffered alone and when the end came, he was maddened with horror to face the destiny of his rebirth in the Avichi Hell. Some of the Bhikkhus approached the Lord Buddha and said, "Lord we have learnt today that the suffering of the pig dealer is ended. His pain is as cruel as his deed. We never know a man who can be more ruthless than him." The Lord replied, "This pig dealer has been in a painful state as a result of his present karma. For the last seven days, he suffered in fierce agony like internal fire consuming his whole body. Today, he finds his painful existence in the Avichi Hell. Heedless man who commit evil deeds suffers torment in his present life even. He suffers whenever the memory of his evil deeds comes back to him. Even in death, he does not find solace; it carries him through the woe he wrought."

The following is a story which will give an illustration on the right and blameless conduct one has to keep and the performance of meritorious work.

In the village of Macala, there lived a man Magha by name, who was native of the country of Magadha. One day there was an open air assembly of the villagers, who turned up to formulate their plan with regards to the general outlay of the village. Magha was in the crowd and as it was his habit, he prepared a clean spot where he stood and listened to the village headman who was addressing his fellowmen on matters concerning the welfare of the village. A man came and pushed Magha aside and stood on the clearance of his ground. Magha did not refute nor appeared annoyed, but moved quietly to another place and having made it clean, he stood there. Another man again took up his position and he moved ungrudgingly to the next vacant spot which he swept clean. Again and again, he was made to go from one stand to another. He was heedful of not causing annoyance to people around him, for he realised that any man wanted to choose a clean place for himself.

On the following day, Magha set out from his home and prepared and cleaned a big area of land to serve the purpose of a playing field. He raked out the weeds and whatever rubbish that was scattered on the land. When the work was completed, he kept himself busy in attending to road repairs, which was in a bad state due to heavy usage. He remetalled the damaged portion and leveled up the holes and cracks. A man who happened to pass, enquired of him about his work and he told him that he was in the course of making a safe road to lead him to heaven. The man on learning of his good work, joined him. More men appeared on the scene and they all joined in to assist Magha in the hope of sharing the same merits with him. In all his fellowworkers numbered thirty-two and they toiled diligently with him.

An overseer of the king who looked after the maintenance of the roads and highways, observed with curiosity this gang of workers happily engaged in making a road-way with their free labour. It came to his mind that it would be more practical for them to employ their time to the brewing of intoxicants, which was of course illegal and thereby he could earn a portion for himself by way of bribery once he tipped them off. But Magha could not be persuaded to fall in with his project though the overseer argued at great length, the uselessness of his work which could be more profitably employed in brewing intoxicants or wild game hunting. This infuriated the overseer and he conceived on a plan to revenge himself on Magha and his fellow workers.

The overseer was not slow in communicating to the king that a gang of robbers were operating on the highways. He named Magha and his men as the robbers and they were caught and brought before the king. The misguided king, eager to mete out punishment to the unfortunate men did not make any enquiry as to their guilt. Whereupon the prisoners were made to lie on the ground and the king's elephants were immediately released and led to trample on their prostrate bodies. Magha seeing that their death was imminent addressed all this men, "There is left only one course for us and that is to protect our purity of action. May we at this hour extend our loving kindness to the king, his officials, and to the elephants. Let no hatred spring from our hearts; instead, let them be filled with thoughts of love for our fellowmen like the same love that feel for ourselves."

Somehow the elephants when released in their direction stopped abruptly on approaching the prostrate figures. The king thought that his elephants were afraid on being confronted by so many men lying on the ground, so he instructed his men to cover the prisoners with mats, and to lead the elephants to trample on them. But again the elephants refused to do so. The king, noticing the unusual behavior of his elephants, ordered his prisoners to stand before him. The king said, "You men, being daring highway robbers, and caught in your den, what would you all expect me to do as my last resort for your punishment."

Magha stood forward and bowed in deep respect before the king. He then said, "O! King, it is interesting to know why we were branded as robbers from the highways. We are only peaceful villagers laboring for our own interest to make a road to lead us to heaven. Your overseer, though not interested in our project, is the principal witness of our activity before you arrest." The king hearing this said, "I, who am your king and a human being as well do not know your virtue, whereas my elephants although dumb animals themselves, know your true virtue. I now ask your forgiveness." The king, in order to punish the wicked overseer ordered that the overseer and his family were to work as personal attendants to Magha and have him and his men their village free from taxation and their freedom to live from the king's rule and also allowed the elephants to work for them.

To Abstain From The Indulgence In Intoxicants Is Most Blissfull

Intoxicants that is of liquor and other spirits is a deadly enemy. It has to be checked in time to lesson the strength it might gain before it becomes deadly. This enemy operates from within and lies low for the right moment to strike. Keep a careful watch and do not for a moment relax, for however trifling it may be, once the habit gets a firm hold on the man, suffering is evident.

It is best to reflect on the consequences that a man when infatuated with intoxicants would cause himself to:

1. Lose whatever wealth he possesses
2. Become quarrelsome
3. Be liable to disease
4. Lose his social status and be subject to evil reputation
5. Be prone to act in a shameful manner
6. Be weakened in intellect

There is a tendency that in the excessive indulgence of intoxicants, a man may be driven to a semi-state of insanity. He loses all sense of personal safety and well being. Like a mad bull, he looks for his kill, and not conscious of his murderous act, he paints the path red, by the blood of even his own parents or relatives, friends or strangers. By this violent act, he would cause injury to the Lord Buddha, the Pacceka Buddha or Arahants – and in his waking state he would sigh with repentance, but no retrieve could be made to set his folly right. The fires of hellish realms, burn fiercely when death sweeps him off to begin in slow degrees, the mental torment which his folly has wrought. While on his rebirth in this Samsara, his intellect worsens to a state of insanity.

Illustration

During the reign of king Brahmadata, there lived a forester in the country of Kasi. He made a trip to the Himalayan forest prospecting in order that he might find something useful as a means to eke out his living. In the rich Himalayan forest, there was a large tree with a few stalwart branches and creepers twined thickly on them and around its huge trunk, making festoons of dark green foliage. On top of this tree there was a large hole which formed a natural receptacle in which rain water had collected. Fruits of the yellow myrobalan trees and berries from the overhanging creepers, ripened and dropped into this natural receptacle on the tree-top. Birds hovered above, carrying with them grains of padi that grew wild on the wasteland, they perched at the edge of the receptacle to drink its water, and also dropped their grains of padi into it. During the dry weather, when the sun shone brilliantly, the little pool or receptacle, with its mixed deposits of ripened fruits, berries, and padi, become warm and fermentation sets in. Birds and monkeys that drank its water became intoxicated and fell limply to the ground below. For awhile they remained lifeless, then they came to their senses and hurried away confused at the effect of the stimulant.

Sura the forester, came on the scene attracted by the number of birds that chirped gaily on the tree-tops. To his surprise, the birds fell one after another to the ground and there remained inert for some time and after tottering about as if under a magical spell, they finally took their wings. On investigating the tree-top, Sura concluded that the crimson water collected in the hole could not be harmful as a drink. He collected some of the birds that remained on the ground and built a fire to roast them. He relished his simple dish of roasted birds and crimson beverage. Sura made the acquaintance of a hermit who lived in the forest. He was called Varuna. He offered him food prepared from the birds he roasted, and the crimson beverage that he had collected from the tree-top. With joy in his heart, he disclosed to Varuna, the discovery of a wondrous stimulant, which incidently was named after them.

Sura and Varuna conceived a plan to commercialise the stimulants, which received a ready demand by the people of the city. Its popularity soon gained the interest of the king himself. Sura and Varuna found that they could not cope with the demand of the king and his people, for the constant supply of the stimulant. In order to solve their difficulty they made a careful study of the process and in this crude way was the world's first stimulants introduced from the tree-top in the Himalayan region. The people in the city were jubilant since their wants were ever replenished from the big scale of brewing the stimulant in their own city. But their happiness was short-lived. They were more drunk than sober and as such, they wrecked their lives in utter ruin.

Sura and Varuna next moved on to the city of Savatthi and set up their business there. They made a roaring trade and king Sabbamitta quickly purchased five hundred jars. He set five hundred cats to keep away the rats from coming to the jars. The cats attracted by the smell of the stimulants, licked whatever remained that oozed out from the jars and as a result they were all laid to peaceful slumber. Rats came out in numbers and the five hundred cats were bitten all over their bodies. The king was informed of the situation and he exacted the instant punishment of death to both Sura and Varuna for their intimidation to endanger his life. The five hundred jars of stimulants were ordered to be destroyed. But before anything could be done, the cats were found to be fully alive which eventually gained for the condemned men their reprieve from the king. The spirit had proved its worth not as a killer, but a truly remarkable stimulant. Thereupon the king desired to celebrate the great event. It turned out to be a big day for him with all the splendor in his court, where his minister, officers and guests were all assembled and ready to give him a royal toast.

Sakkadevaraja the Buddha-elect, surveyed the universe to aid mankind in the performance of meritorious work. He saw king Sabbamitta and his men in the festive mood over the newly discovered stimulants. Sakkadevaraja, knew that if the king were to propagate the extensive indulgence of the drinking habit it would cast the whole world in profound chaos and misery. He appeared as a Brahmin sitting in mid-air facing the king and the assembly of men. He offered to sell the king the contents of the jar he had in his possession. The king thought it was strange for the Brahmin to keep his ware secret, and he demanded his right to be informed of it before he could be interested.

The Brahmin with calmness and peace in his countenance addressed the king thus: "O! King! It may tempt you to know the contents of this jar. It is neither fat, or oil or honey, but it is the stuff you can only know from the effect of its direct application. It would cause a man an unsteady step and he would stumble as if over an obstacle. Confused, he would dance anywhere he set his foot; or appearing like a runaway bull, he would pretend to attack any person at sight; It would even lull him to sleep long into the night or urge him to wander aimlessly like a lone wanderer without a home. He would dance like a puppet, shooting out his legs, swinging his limbs and rolling his head; it would send him jerking fitfully from head to foot, or he would be behavior in a mad way, not knowing the sense of justice nor of shame; his spirit would soar high in full fantasy, having come to own the whole world that would be his for ever and anon; and within the next second, he would feign a weakling and lay his full length on the ground in the public place and babble words that are slandering and abusive; he is a courageous man but he would turn into a coward; he is a modest man, but he would commit deeds that are shameful and detrimental to his good repute. There are divers ways whist under its evil influence, for a man commits wrongful deeds verbally, bodily and mentally. Can it be, that such a stimulant, having done immense harm to human life, be considered helpful and useful?"

The king seeing his own folly and realizing the truth in the wisdom of the Brahmin, replied, "You, although you are not a parent nor a teacher, yet now you bestow on me the blessing derived from the doctrine you so render. As a token of my gratitude, it is my pleasure to impart to you my possession of five villages, the revenue from each of which would amount to one hundred thousand gold pieces, also one hundred slaves, seven hundred cows, and ten horse-carts," By now Sakkadevaraja appeared as he was, in his full glory and informed the king that he was no mere human being, but the king of gods, and

the material gifts though liberal in generosity, was of no significance to him. "Keep your vigilance day and night that you do not succumb, and be conscious of all it brings," and so this ended the good mission of Sakkadevaraja. Thereafter, the king heedful of the doctrine of Sakkadevaraja, planned a saner life, taking the precepts, and giving away generously for the benefit of his people. After his death he was born in the realm of happiness.

Thought this good king had completely destroyed the five hundred jars of wine, there was yet the evil done, for the brewing of wine was sought after and began to spread to this day, causing at all times endless lives to be wrecked.

To Be Heedful In Virtuous Deeds Is Most Blissful

The last words of the Lord Buddha were, "All things are transient, work out your own deliverance with earnestness," This is a definite answer to all of us; the necessity that we work with earnestness and that we are not to relax at any time, in our encounter with the evil fetters of greed, hatred and ignorance, for these are the very fetters that keep us fast to our continued existence. It is the kind of failing that subjects everyone of us to inactivity and so we become a constant slave to our sense. We become a ready victim to lust, hatred and illusion and lulled by their intoxication, we suffer in endless birth, decay and death.

Therefore, let us ponder well the words of the Lord Buddha. Let us strive with earnest intent. Every human being has a chance to live to the realization of his one aim, the deliverance from Samsara and its following trail of endless suffering, for the Lord Buddha has said, that not only monks and nuns attained Nibbana, but every layman and woman living a chaste life, and free from the fetters of lust, hatred and ignorance, could obtain deliverance. Everyone has a ray of hope only if he wishes to accomplish it. As long as men will strive after wisdom, that highest wisdom, enlightenment and Nibbana, they can reach the goal.

The path of man is fraught with allurements of the world that enraptures him with lust and delusion. With the advent of science and the progress in material welfare of the world today, it becomes an instant delusion, that ensnares the mind of man. He is lost in his attraction like a light to the fireflies; his carving for things mundane; for wealth; for power and fame; all the nightmare and the fire of his wants increases in greater degrees. Tossed in the ocean of Samsara, with no heedful purpose to steer clear of the course, anger and delusion, he aims at his own ruin, to suffer in limitless rounds of rebirth.

This is not a picture of the gloomy aspect of life you are asked to look into. It is freshly alive with no danger of misrepresentation nor any facts misconstrued. The cause is that, men do not walk on the path towards liberation, and that he does not desire to gain control over his thoughts, words and deeds, and as a result, he founders, for his good is lost without its rudder of heedful diligence.

Life is but a brief span on this earth that will bear us off to attain the goal of Nibbana. Then why squander away our lives in search of things mundane, to gratify our sense, to lull us to false security, and to cast us into permanent struggle for existence, in a never ending battle of life. We shudder seeing

myriads and myriads of men marching towards their graves in utter wreck, under pain and torture on earth, and even carried on to hellish state in cruel torment.

Yet escape is all possible. Therefore, make haste, else the day closes without our undoing our fetters. Make every moment the moment of exertion, of earnest striving towards perfection leading to Nibbana.

Illustration

It was in the Jetevana Temple that two Bhikkhus took their leave of the Lord Buddha, after he had instructed them in the subject of meditation. They left for the forest to meditate. Of the two Bhikkhus, one was heedful; the other was heedless. The heedless Bhikkhu made a collection of twigs and built a fire to keep himself warm, for the night was dark and cold. He had a company of novices, and he engaged them in conversation far into the night.

The heedful Bhikkhu kept himself in seclusion and so sincere was his purpose, that he soon found himself deep in meditation. He took a rest as a break, to ease his peaceful mind and it was during this period, that the heedless Bhikkhu turned to him and said, "I bid thee to keep constantly in check else you may lapse into heedlessness, for the door of hell is open to receive the heedless one.

Heedfulness is our watch-word, since we received the subject of meditation from the Lord Buddha. We do not come here all the way to gladden the heart of the Blessed One; we are here on a fixed mission to put our purpose to real effort, that we may seek truth in our ultimate realization. Therefore, strive on, my comrade."

The heedful Bhikkhu remained silent.

The heedless Bhikkhu returned to warm himself by the fireside as the cold in the forest became more intense. He kept on striking on the note of heedlessness from time to time, yet forsaking himself the task he was expected to perform. The diligent Bhikkhu in deep silence, meditated till daybreak, his mind set to gain the knowledge of Truth. It was not long, that after a number of days of earnest struggle, he came to the end of his quest – he attained Arahantship.

When the rainy season observance was over, the two Bhikkhus returned to Jetevana Temple. The Lord Buddha enquired as to progress of their meditation and the achievement they had made. The heedless Bhikkhu said; "O! Lord, when we retired to the forest to keep ourselves in quiet meditation, this foolish Bhikkhu found it opportune to sleep most of the time." Then the Lord Buddha asked, "And did you in your diligence make any progress in your meditation?" The heedless Bhikkhu replied, "O! Lord, I saw to my duty to collect wood for fire to give ourselves warmth in the dark cold night; I maintained the spirit of liveliness in company where I conferred with the novices on the subject of interest that appealed to most of us." The Lord Buddha said, "You have been heedless all the time when you think you are heedful and diligent. You have acted like a lame horse in the great course of strife, you have been overtaken by a more heedful Bhikkhu, who, striving like a steady, swift horse, does indeed make strides towards achievements.

To Respect And Honour Those Who Deserve Them And Be Submissive Is Most Blissful

The ones deserving of respect are The Lord Buddha, Pacceka Buddhas, Araya Savaka, father, mother and elders. Anyone who are respectful and submissive will in this present life be blessed and will be reborn in a better sphere of life. If they are born in the human world, they are sure to become members of respectable and highborn families.

To be submissive, people must be as humble as a carpet that is always trodden upon, or like a cow with a broken horn, or like a snake without any fangs. Therefore to be humble is bliss.

To Be Contented And Grateful Is Most Blissful

To be without carving is to be content. The man who is never content with what he has, but is striving for more, will ultimately bring about his own downfall and is never happy.

People must always be grateful. The Lord Buddha is always full of praise for gratitude. Persons who are always ready to help, are rarely found in this world; but rarer still are those who remember and are grateful to those who have helped them. If we are grateful we are sure to be happy.

To Listen And Hear The Dhamma At Such Times In order To Check Our Thoughts Is Most Blissful

When one's mind become lustful and full of passion, we must always listen to the Dhamma in order to subdue our thoughts of lust and anger. Therefore in this verse there are five blessings:

1. Honouring the respectable ones
2. Humbleness
3. Contentment
4. Gratitude
5. Listening to the Dhamma at suitable times

To Observe Patience And Obedience Is Most Blissful

PATIENCE. He who practices patience, will be liked and respected by the wise; he overcomes anger and thereby he is freed from its resultant disasters. He enjoys peace of mind, peaceful sleep, peaceful death and eternal happiness thereafter. We must try to practice patience, just like the Ven. Punnatthers, who said to the Lord Buddha:

“When I go to Sunaparanta, and they abuse me, I will not heed them and even if they beat me, I will not be angry, but I will try to control my temper.”

OBEDIENCE. People should be obedient to their elders and should listen accordingly and follow their advice.

To make The Sight Of Bhikkhus Pleasant Is Most Blissful

According to some astrologers, it is unlucky to meet Bhikkhus. This is quite wrong, because if you meet Bhikkhus you will be blessed and you can get merits, so that for many thousand lives, you will be free

from eye disease. You will also enjoy blessings. If animals see the Lord Buddha and feel happy, they will get bliss and after death such animals get rebirth in the human world or became saints.

To Be Engaged In Religious Discussions When One Requires Checking On Thoughts Is Most Blissful

When we are in doubt, we should go to a Bhikkhu or a clever one and ask questions on the Dhamma. If you get knowledge in this way, then this is bliss.

To Practice “Brammacariya” Is Most Blissful

To practice “Brammacariya” is to abstain from association with the opposite sex. This is blissful.

To Realize The Four Noble Truth Is Most Blissful

When we understand and really realize the Four Noble Truths we are on the right path to Nibbana and that is surely most blissful.

To Attain Nibbana Is Most Blissful

The person who attains Nibbana is freed of the fetter that bind him to the round of rebirths. Therefore he is free from all worldly attachments such as birth, death, sorrow, decay, anger, craving and ignorance; and moreover has attained eternal bliss.

To Be Well Balanced In The Attha-Loka Dhamma Is Most Blissful

The Attha-Loka Dhamma means the law of worldly changes. He who practices “Upekkha” i.e. equanimity, remains unchanged and uninfluenced in the observances of his mental equilibrium in respect of all matters whether worldly or superworldly; and is therefore most blissful.

Not To Feel Sorrow Is Most Blissful

Ignorance is the cause of sorrow. If we understand the cause of sorrow (Tanha) i.e. desire, attachment craving, temptation or love, that accompanies passionate delight, and that gives rise to rebirth; we can realize that to completely root out the said desire or craving so that it may never rise up again, is the final removal of sorrow.

To Be Calm and Quiet In Everything Is Most Blissful

He who maintains equal balance of thought in respect of profit or loss, good or evil, respect or insult, happiness or sorrow, without being even slightly moved by the one or the other is always calm and quiet and is thus most blissful.

The one who practices the above mentioned blessings fearlessly at every stage, will never be beaten out, hence such a one will everywhere gain everything good and virtuous and thus become the gainer of Blessings of the highest esteem.

Anamodana!