



We live with Dhamma Knowledge

Words from the Heart

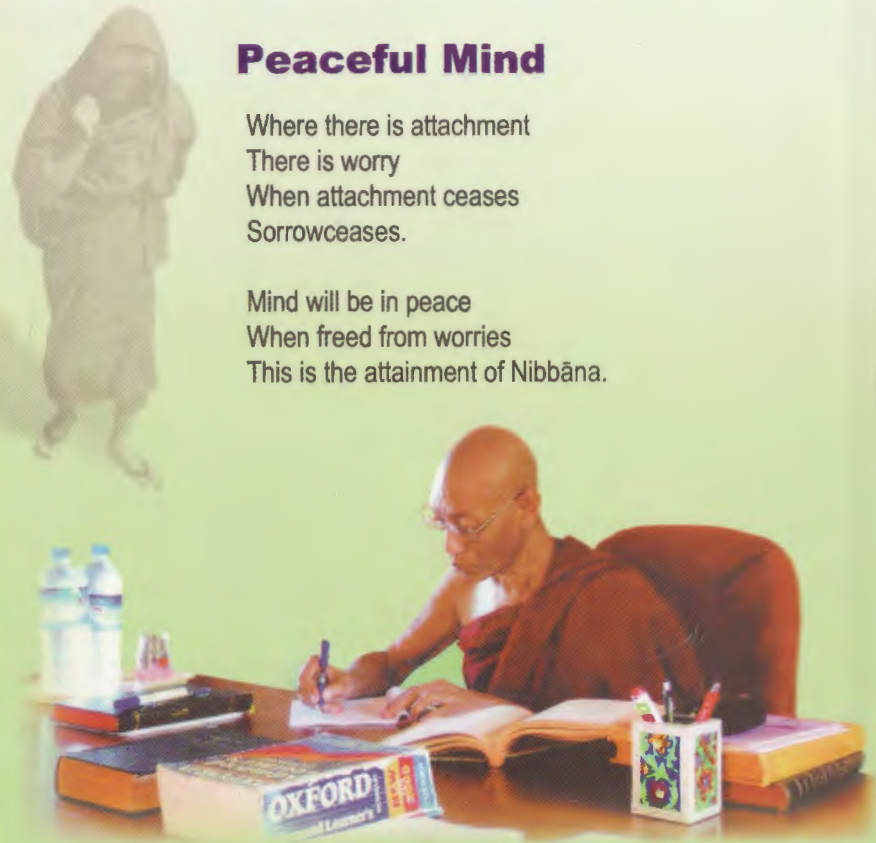
Venerable sayadaw
Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

"May you be in long life, healthy, happy and may your wishes come true"

Peaceful Mind

Where there is attachment
There is worry
When attachment ceases
Sorrow ceases.

Mind will be in peace
When freed from worries
This is the attainment of Nibbāna.



Words from the Heart is a translation from a selection of
75 summaries of Dhamma Talks compiled for the
occasion of Sayadaw's 75th Birthday, 2015.

Words from the heart

A compilation of 75 Dhamma Talks

by

Venerable Sayadaw
dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

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Acknowledgement

On the occasion of Sayadaw's 75th birthday in 2015, a compilation of 75 Dhamma Talks that Sayadaw had given over the years was made by venerable U Viriya.

With this translation into English, the important and compassionate messages from the heart of Sayadaw are made accessible for the English reading audience.

The work done for this book by sayalay Dhīrapālī, Dhammācari (Riēt Aarsse), Htet Naing San and others is gratefully acknowledged.

May you live with Dhamma knowledge!

Dhamma Sahāya Sāsana Centre
Institute for Dhamma Education (IDE)
Pyin-Oo-Lwin, Myanmar
April, 2016

Preface

On the full moon day of Tabaung, 2015, we will turn to the 75th page of the book of the life of Rector Sayadaw, as the Myanmar people titled him, or dr. Nandamālābhivamsa, the chief Sayadaw of Mahā Subodhāyon monastery.

On one of the life-pages of Sayadaw, we can read that he and five brothers, all monks, established Mahā Subodhāyon in Sagaing in 1959 with the aim of supporting the Buddha's Sāsanā that is to exist up to 5000 years. Later, they established two more branches of this pariyatti monastery, in Monywa and in Than-lyin, to spread the pariyatti Sāsanā further. The third missionary branch, the Institute for Dhamma Education, was founded in 2013 and Sayadaw teaches there people from Myanmar and abroad who wish to learn Dhamma.

Sayadaw loves literature and his hobby is to collect ancient palm leave manuscripts. He is very good in giving speeches but also in writing. Since the precious moment that he took his pen and started to write, he wrote poems, articles, biographies, verses and eulogies. To preserve and revere this heritage, his elder pupils collected and printed two books on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

While doing missionary works, in Myanmar and abroad, Sayadaw teaches pariyatti. When giving Dhamma talks with his peaceful voice, he tunes into the needs and requests of the people.

The talks of Sayadaw are clear and notable, because he teaches the Dhamma in a modern way. People often come to Sayadaw and say how grateful they are as their views become right and their way of living life has changed for the better, because of the power of Sayadaw's Dhamma Talks.

This book is a selection of 75 extracts of transcriptions of Sayadaw's Dhamma Talks.

When these words from the heart of Sayadaw sink into your heart, it will be a source of inspiration and confidence. May it be a support for us who are circling in saṃsāra.

May all the virtuous people who love Dhamma be peaceful, by reading and following these words from the heart.

May you all live with Dhamma knowledge.

Pyin Oo Lwin, April, 2015

U Viriya

Biography of Sayadaw dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa

Ashin Nandamāla was born on the 22nd of March 1940 in the village of Nyaung-bin in Sint-ku, Mandalay. His parents were U San Hla and Daw Khin, who were pious Buddhists.

He was ordained a novice when he was ten years old. His preceptor was Sayadaw U Canda, well-known as the "Sankin Sayadaw", the presiding monk of the prestigious "Vipassanā monastery".

Ashin Nandamāla started to learn the Pāli language and the basic Buddhist scriptures under the tutelage of his own elder brother, Sayadaw U Nārada. At the age of 16, he already passed the Dhammācariya (Dhamma teacher) examination and when he was 21, the Abhivaṃsa examination. He also studied in Sri Lanka and India. He wrote his PhD-thesis about Jainism in Buddhist literature.

Dr. Nandamāla is one of the founders of the renowned Buddhist Teaching Centre, Mahā Subodhayon, in Sagaing, where about 200 monks receive education in Buddhist philosophy and literature. In 1995, dr. Nandamāla was conferred the title of the Senior Lecturer, 'Aggamahā gantha vācaka paṇḍita' by the Government of Myanmar and in 2000 the title 'Aggamahā paṇḍita'.

He is Rector of the Sītagū International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) in Sagaing. After being a Visiting Professor at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon since its opening in 1998, he was appointed rector of this university too, in 2005.

In 2003, he founded "Dhammavijjālaya - Centre for Buddhist Studies (CBS)" in Sagaing. In 2013, he established the Institute for Dhamma Education, in Pyin-Oo-Lwin. These institutes serve both Myanmar people and foreigners for further studies and practice.



Ashin Nandamāla serves as a religious worker to promote and propagate the Buddha's teaching. He has travelled the world to teach Dhamma. Since 2003, he gave yearly Abhidhamma courses in Europe.

In Myanmar, dr. Nandamālābhivamsa has given many Dhamma talks to Burmese and non-Burmese audiences for many years.

Sayadaw teaches Dhamma in a very individual, lively and practical way with many examples from daily life. His talks are filled with citations from the texts and commentaries of Suttanta and Abhidhamma. Sayadaw teaches with a lot of humour and loving kindness (mettā).

Dr. Nandamāla is the author of many books written in Myanmar language, Pāli and English.

1

Although they may not know, people, companies and countries that are successful in business will have the industrious characteristics that the Buddha taught as the *Uṭṭhānasampadā*. These are:

1. They have skill
2. They have good technology
3. They try hard.

It cannot be denied that these characteristics lead to success. Another important quality they have is *ārakkhasampadā*; they have the ability to spend properly and to waste nothing to improper purposes. In addition, they have good friends (*kalyāṇamitta*). These friends are good and can advise on their business. The last quality is *samajīvitā*. They can manage income and expenditure well. Having these abilities, they are successful.

The Buddha's Teaching and Today's World

2

Consider these two options: 1) One can get rich if one venerates the Buddha. The other is 2) The Buddha is worth of veneration as he is endowed with great qualities such as *arahantship*. By venerating the Buddha, we can extinguish attachment, hatred and ignorance and we can enjoy peace of mind.

Of these two options, we should consider which one is more valuable, the first one or the second one?

Dhamma Mirror

3

If our behaviours and attitudes become virtuous by listening to Dhamma and by living with Dhamma knowledge, we can conclude that it is the Buddha's Dhamma.

If, however, *māṇa* (conceit in our mind) is increasing, or *issā* (envy i.e. feeling angry about others' possessions or knowledge about something) or *macchāriya* (stinginess, i.e. not wanting that others have or know what you have or know) are increasing in our minds, then we can conclude that it is not the Buddha's Dhamma.

Dhamma Criterion

4

Keeping Uposatha (Sabbath; one day of observance of 8 precepts, every week or 12 days a month) means keeping morality. On these days, people have a noble mind caused by restraining themselves.

Keeping Uposatha is mainly to guard one's bodily and oral behaviours with the aim of diminishing *lobha* (craving), *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion) in one and to accumulate wholesomeness. The right way among the three kinds of Uposatha is *Ariya Uposatha*, in which people observe the eight precepts in the same way as virtuous persons, such as arahants, do. Such kind of Uposatha is greatly beneficial. In contrast, if someone keeps Uposatha without the right purpose, one will not get much advantage from it.

Keeping Uposatha (Sabbath)

5

It may be considered if it is reasonable that the lifespan of people becomes short when people do evil deeds. Humans and their outside worlds are always connected. Weather becomes bad as soon as morality drops (consider climate change for example). At that time, the nutritive essence of the crop that grows dependent on the weather will diminish. This causes the shortening of the lifespan of people because they consume food with lower nutritive value.

Peoples' lifespan can become longer when they perform wholesome deeds and it can become shorter when they continue to do evil things. It is important to do wholesome deeds, and this depends on yourself. Therefore, the Buddha said: "Be yourself, your own reliance, be the Dhamma you practise, be your reliance".

The Next World for Today's People

6

People of today's world have different views and different relationships. Dependent on where we are born and among which people, we will follow the different views and live in ways according to the cultural surrounding. We will get advantages as well as disadvantages because of our actions and behaviour.

The life of someone who practises Dhamma will not become worse, because wholesomeness is encouraged. In the Maṅgala sutta, the Buddha taught the way to practice step by step in this life.

May all people be able to walk on the Maṅgala road of practising Maṅgala Dhamma.

Summary of Maṅgala Sutta

7

People's mood changes when things go well and also when things go wrong. The mind should be guarded in order to be in its original condition. The mind of people is like electricity. With low electrical power, electric bulbs and fluorescent light cannot be bright. If the electric power is too high, on the other hand, the bulbs can burst.

Likewise, if someone is depressed, the mind may not be balanced and one can burst if ones' mind is too active. We should practise to get resistance against this imbalance and to develop equanimity about the high and low states of mind.

Equanimity

8

Opportunity is a rare thing. There are many people who do not recognize that they have an opportunity; they just live their lives without making use of their opportunity to end *saṃsāra*.

They just let their lives pass reasoning that they are busy, even though they recognize they do have an opportunity. We cannot have an opportunity forever. Life is short. Many people become poor from being rich.

If we do not seize the opportunity we have now, we can miss more important opportunities and advantages later, as life is short.

Make use of your opportunity

We should contemplate of what kind our daily search is; is it the search of virtuous people or that of ordinary ones?

The search of ordinary people or non-virtuous search is search by those people that have the nature of aging, suffering and death for those of the same nature. In the same way, it is search by those with the nature of worry for those who are worried.

The six billion people in the world are searching mostly in this way.

Virtuous searching, however, is realizing these unworthy natures of aging, suffering and death and search for *Nibbāna*, which is free of these unworthy states. Furthermore, we have mental defilements and thus are worried. Therefore, we should search for *Nibbāna*, which is free of those mental defilements. Such a way of searching is virtuous search.

Search and Gain

10

Regarding employer and employee, it can be said that the employers can run their business with their employees and employees can live relying on their employer. They live in a interdependent relationship.

There will be no problem if the employer and the employee have a relationship filled with loving kindness. When they are grateful to each other and if they have kindness for each other, they can achieve success by the power of this loving kindness.

If, at a certain time, there is a decline in the business of a colleague or someone else, one may wish that the bad conditions may turn into good and wish him an escape from the trouble. This is *karuṇā* (compassion). If one feels happy if someone achieves success, it is *muditā* (sympathetic joy). *Mettā* (loving kindness) covers all. So, if there is mutual *mettā*, *karuṇā*, and *muditā* between employer and employee, they will achieve success.

Goodwill between Employer and Employee

If unwholesomeness unintentionally arises while people perform wholesome deeds, they can accumulate only little wholesomeness. Furthermore, the unwholesomeness can be so strong that it can cause them to be born in a woeful state.

We can achieve wholesomeness only if we know how to do wholesome actions, i.e. how to accumulate wholesome kamma. If we do not know, what we do might be unwholesome kamma. Therefore, we should have knowledge of what are *kusala* deeds (wholesome kamma) and what are *akusala* deeds (unwholesome kamma) before we start action.

More people ask if some action can cause them to be born in a woeful state than the number of people who ask if something they do is unwholesome kamma. They think that something is worth doing if it will not cause them to be born in a woeful state. Being born in a woeful state means that someone has accumulated a lot of seriously unwholesome kamma.

Not every *akusala* deed will cause someone to be born in a woeful state. Everything has its limits. Although the actions look similar regarding their unwholesomeness, the results will not be the same. It is the thing of the Buddha to know to what extent an unwholesome deed will have a painful result.

Little Wholesome, much Unwholesome

'*SāraṇīyaDhamma*' is the *dhamma* that benefits unity and we should keep it forever in mind and always remember it. The Buddha taught six beneficial *dhamma*'s that foster unity:

1. *Piyakaraṇa* produces loving kindness between one another
2. *Garukaraṇa* causes respect between one another
3. *Samgahāya* for unity
4. *Avivādāya* for freedom of dispute
5. *Sāmaggī* for having agreement
6. *Ekībhāvāyato* be united

People who perform wholesome deeds and establish religious organizations without following these *Sāraṇīya Dhamma* can collect unwholesomeness. This is because there can be disagreement or disputes.

Because of disagreement, unwholesomeness comes into being instead of wholesomeness. Therefore, it is important that the *SāraṇīyaDhamma* is always respectfully followed.

Sāraṇīya Dhamma

There are three ways of contemplation:

1. Contemplate yourself carefully.
2. Contemplate the surrounding world carefully.
3. Contemplate the Dhamma carefully.

How to contemplate?

1. "When I get the life of an intelligent human being, I will try my best to improve my morality and to be good. I will observe Uposatha (Sabbath) on every Uposatha day. I will try to offer *dāna* (offering)." With these contemplations, one should take care of oneself and by proper actions, one removes unwholesomeness and increases wholesomeness in oneself.

2. "I am not alone in this world. There are also powerful beings that see what I hide. If they see what I did it will be shameful." By such thought, one should consider one's surrounding, contemplate and avoid unwholesomeness and evoke wholesomeness only.

3. One should respect the Dhamma that one is practising. Any way of practising Dhamma will have a certain result. It will help to achieve your ambitions. Respecting this ability of Dhamma one should try to remove unwholesomeness and increase wholesomeness in order to improve oneself.

To contemplate carefully and improve Oneself.

It is sure that all will benefit if one does with *mettā* (loving kindness) whatever one says or thinks the whole year round.

Everyone should try to dwell with *mettā* (loving kindness) in one's mind.

The mind and heart of people have intrinsically *mettā*. However, if one does not practise to improve the power of *mettā*, the benefits will not be experienced.

Treating anyone with *mettā* can make things go well for people of any race and religion. There will be no fault in his or her mind if one does so.

Loving Kindness for Everyone

People in the world cannot stay alone. They stay with companions. Human companions however (*puggala*), cannot give much help when life ends. Enduring happiness can only be obtained by taking the Dhamma as a companion.

In taking the Dhamma as a companion, the Dhamma may not come to one if one does so only at the end of one's life, when one is about to die. Although it is true that Dhamma is useful for everyone, it does not come into one's mind easily. One should take time and practise Dhamma, otherwise one will face painful trouble.

People who do not take the Dhamma as a companion end their life with grief. Man has hopes to live long, but they may die earlier than their wish. It is never too late to try to practise Dhamma. If one tries from now on, one has a companion before one's last breathe.

Dhamma is the best Companion for enduring Happiness

16

As everybody has gotten a life, the question is whether people feel certain about their lives? What is needed for that? If people have achieved wealth in their life, they say 'Life is secure.' Is this really true? 2500 Years ago the Buddha taught how to live one's life, what to do if one gets a human life. To be certain about one's life there are four qualities that one should possess. These are:

1. to say the truth
2. to have knowledge of good and bad, of cause and effect of oneself and one's life.
3. to have effort
4. *Cāga* - sharing one's possessions with others, not keeping all for oneself.

The destination in one's next life is protected if one has lived up to these qualities.

To Secure One's Life

17

To try to persuade others about the truth of the Dhamma by showing mental powers (*iddhi*) or by predicting the future or mind reading (*ādesanā*) shall not be successful.

Only when truly giving advice and teaching true Dhamma (*anusāsanī*) there will be success because it is a genuine, truthful mission and persuasion.

Important to note here, is that although one knows the supernatural, one's mind will be filled with greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) if one cannot protect the mind properly. If one dies with these states of mind, one will be in trouble. If one does evil things by using supernatural mental powers, one will be reborn in a woeful state.

Moreover, although the arts of magical and supernormal wisdom do exist (*gandhārī vijjā*), they cannot be used and be successful in persuading people who do not believe in them because they think of them as mundane and magic arts.

Therefore, the Buddha did not allow persuading by showing power (*iddhi*) because it is not the right way for the missionary.

Powers and Religion

18

When people experience good circumstances and events, greed (*lobha*) comes into being and the mind becomes unsteady. Likewise, the mind becomes unsteady when people experience bad situations that cause hatred (*dosa*) in the mind.

The mind is no longer strong when *lobha* and *dosa* arise. Because of the vicissitudes of life, the mind of everyone becomes stained with *lobha* and *dosa* because of the craving (*lobha*) for pleasant experiences and the aversion (*dosa*) caused by unpleasant situations.

Ups and downs cannot be avoided. A person whose mind is without strength and calmness will be against the bad situations and will be satisfied with the good ones. He or she cannot escape from rebirth (*paṭisandhi*), from aging, suffering and death, and will not overcome grief (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), suffering (*dukkha*), and displeasure (*domanassa*). To say it more directly, there is no way to escape from *dukkha* when there is no strong mind.

Vicissitudes of Life and Strong Mind.

19

We came to be born as human beings at the moment when wholesomeness produced its result. Most people do not wonder why they were born as human beings. Even as they consider this, they cannot discover the true cause and give different optional causes for their birth. There are three kinds of wrong thinking:

1. *taṇhāmannanā*-wrong thinking with *taṇhā* (thirst)
2. *mānamannanā*-wrong thinking with pride at one's abilities
3. *ditthimannanā*-wrong thinking with wrong view

Those wrong thoughts are based on *sakkāya*, the five aggregates. If we cannot remove those wrong thoughts we will still get the five aggregates again and again (we will have to circle in *samsāra*), no matter how fed up we are with it. Therefore, we must follow the Noble Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha in order to eradicate these wrong thoughts and attain forever peace or *Nibbāna*.

Wrong Thinking

20

There is nothing in our body that can be called an essence and there is nothing in our mind because it arises and disappears very quickly. However, if we can manage to get the essence that appears based on mind, then we can understand the essence of body.

If we can distinguish between what is essential and what is not, we are able to choose to give much time to the essential things and not so much to the opposite, the rubbish.

The essential qualities that we should develop in this life are faith (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), suta (listening to lessons preached by the Buddha), offering (*sāga*), wisdom (*paññā*). If we do not know how to obtain these essentials of life, we will get non-essence.

Things that are not essential mainly impress people. Many people in the world are impressed by property and authority, which last only a certain length of time and is not permanent. People search for them every day and are attached to them. They do not know that it is worrisome that there is the loss of *saddhā*, morality and so on. What really should be worried about is only losing morality and wisdom.

Leave the Rubbish and Take the Essence

21

People, from the moment of their birth are moving towards aging, suffering and death. Though these words seem frightening to hear, they are not. Some think that it does not bring luck to talk about death, or that it is not auspicious or they deny any abode of death as if they will not die.

People, however, need to know not only how to live life but also how to die. So, the Buddha taught, 'A wise friend should say words of encouragement to a wise person who is suffering a disease.' Because this is beneficial to that person. People do different things when someone is sick or about to die. Some invite monks to their home and request them to recite protective texts (*paritta*).

The Buddha, however, taught to say words of encouragement. When speaking words of encouragement it is important that the one who speaks them is wise, and the one who is spoken to is also wise. One should take care to speak these words to an unwise one, because it might upset their minds.

Words of Encouragement

22

People know what is needed to live long. They know about the supporting conditions. To live long, everybody knows that good medicine, nutriment and staying at a place where the weather is good are essential.

The Buddha taught what people didn't know yet. To live long, wise men praise the non-forgetfulness of performing wholesome deeds, this is called '*appamāda*'. *Appamāda* means not forgetting, watchfulness, that is, remembering to perform wholesome deeds.

Appamāda is very important and the Buddha preached, '*Appamādena bhikkave sampādetha*' that means to fulfill wholesomeness by *appamāda*, non-forgetfulness in one. With *appamāda*, one does not forget to cultivate *silā* (morality) *samādhi* (concentration) and *pañña* (wisdom). So, perform wholesome actions and do not forget.

Appamādena Sampādetha

23

There is much wrong in one's views and the other's views. All these views may be right or wrong. Dhamma view, however, is not wrong. It is right view.

Dhamma view is: *Sabbe saṅkhāra aniccā* which means that everything appears by a cause and is impermanent, and this is *dukkha* (suffering). The dhamma of *dukkha* implies that it is not I, , mine, nor myself (*atta*). That is the right view. Moreover, where this *dukkha* ends, there is *Nibbāna*. This is the right view of a Buddhist.

One's View, the other's View and Dhamma View

24

The properties that people search for every day, the normal possessions one has, are subject to many dangers, such as water (flood), fire, bad government, theft (robbery) and bad heirs. Because of these dangers, one's property can be lost or destroyed. It must be said that the durability of normal property is short because it becomes empty, gets lost or is destroyed, no matter how much effort it took to get it. Virtuous property, however, is never wasted or destroyed. The Buddha urged to develop these virtuous possessions: *saddhā* (faith), *sīla* (morality), *suta* (listening to doctrines preached by the Buddha), *saga* (offering), *pañña* (wisdom), *hiri* (shame) and *ottappa* (moral dread) which are the qualities a human being can obtain.

The value of normal property and virtuous property differs greatly. Like the big difference between the value of five trucks filled with stones and one piece of diamond, the normal properties and the seven virtuous properties in our mind differ greatly in value. So, the Buddha encouraged us to develop these virtuous qualities in our minds.

Virtuous Things cannot be Lost

25

Mental strength can cure illness. This idea is accepted also in modern times. In the Buddha's teachings, there are records about relief of suffering by listening to Dhamma and the realization of a peaceful mind.

Concerning illnesses, there are cures not only for mental illness but also for bodily diseases by the power of the mind.

When people are ill in Buddhist countries, they invite monks to their homes and listen to the *Bojjhaṅga* sutta (teaching of the factors of enlightenment) that the monks recite. This is a kind of psychotherapy. Although it is not called by this term, people become better because of listening to the *Bojjhaṅga* sutta. It is a condition for improving one's mind and relief from illness.

Mental Strength Cures Illness

The meaning of the word '*brahmacariya*' has been changed and is nowadays used as 'following religion'. This is better comprehensible. Nowadays, people are working to change conditions to get out of trouble (the trouble of staying in *saṃsāra*). Following religion, however, is not for changing Kamma and conditions. The purpose of following a spiritual path is not to get out of trouble but it is to know, to see and to attain a condition that has never been known, seen or been in our mind before, during all the time in *saṃsāra*. This is *Nibbāna* and to follow religion means to realize what we do not know.

Well, what we have never seen or gotten is the four Noble Truths. We have been circling round in *saṃsāra* because we do not know the four Noble Truths. As soon as we realize the four Noble Truths, we can remove all the causes of circling in *saṃsāra*.

The Aim of Following Religion

27

Everyone who receives the five aggregates is likely to receive burdens.

There are many dangers when we are going through our lives such as aging and suffering and finally we will have to face death and end this life. There is nothing good. One may experience happiness before getting old, suffering or death. People think that happiness, although lasting only a short time lasts forever. They forget this. If one looks ahead, there are dangers and if one looks back, there are also dangers. Whatever the experience was, it is a danger.

If so, who brought this burden of the five aggregates? The culprit is *tanhā* (craving). *Tanhā* brought this burden. *Tanhā* attaches and that is why one receives a life, which gets one in trouble.

The Burdens of Life

When we get the life of a human being, the most important thing for the cultivation of wholesomeness is to improve one's attitude, one's mind. Wholesomeness appears only if we know how to use our mind properly. If not, it will not appear.

How do we use our mind properly to increase wholesomeness? When we see a thing (through our eyes) that can cause *lobha* (craving), we must contemplate, 'It is not good if I crave for other's things. I must not crave.' As soon as we contemplate like that, *lobha* disappears and wholesomeness arises. This is called *yonisomanasikāra*, wise consideration. For example, When you see a person you do not like, you can think 'because I hate him, it will not matter for him but my mind will be dirty or impure with hatred and I will accumulate unwholesomeness. There is no benefit to hate others.' This is a wise consideration. '

Yonisomanasikāra is thinking reasonably and leads towards the arising of wholesomeness.

Wise Consideration

'*Attāhiattanonātho*' means 'oneself is one's only reliance. People in the world do not consider themselves as their only reliance. They rely on others and not on themselves. Who do they rely on? They rely on parents, daughters and sons, relatives and friends. Other persons however, are not trustworthy sources. The Buddha emphasized in many *sutta*'s that oneself is one's only reliance.

Attadīpā means relying on oneself, not on others. When we are born as a human being, we have to deal with the burdens of life, walk on our own way and arrive at our own destination.

Attāhiattanonātho

Let only the people who wish by themselves to offer *Dhammapujā dāna* do this. Do not persuade others to offer *dāna*. There should be a place to accept *dāna* for those who would like to offer *dāna*, but there should no form of persuasion.

Giving a sermon is a deed that causes much wholesomeness, because it is creating a chance to listen to Dhamma. If such a virtuous work is carried out in a wrong way and if mistakes are made, it is not good. We should be mindful about the fact that such a work is very important and that it should be carried out in a clean and pure way.

Both the preacher and listener should be honest and virtuous. If they preach and listen virtuously, their aims of knowing Dhamma, practicing Dhamma and of finding the exit from *saṃsāra* will be achieved.

Goodwill in Preacher and Listener

31

Concerning the Dhamma, practicing the right practice in the right way is called walking on the path of certainty.

In the *AnguttaraNikāya*, the Buddha preached '*apaṇṇaka paṭipadā*. It is the secure way for those who are travelling to *nibbāna*.

For those who want to attain enlightenment and want to walk the straightway in *samsāra*, *apaṇṇakapractice* is the only way of certainty.

- *Apaṇṇakapractice* follows these guidelines:
- *Indriyaśamvara* - restraint of the senses
- *Bhojanamattaññū* - moderation in food
- *Jāgariyānuyoga* - being active in Dhamma, watchfulness

By walking on *Apaṇṇakapatipadā* one walks the path that surely leads to the goal.

Walk on the Way of Certainty

Everybody has his own life as each of us gets a life. However, the opinions on life differ among people. Some see life as enjoyable. Some see life as wretched.

What we experience is neither always good nor bad. There are pleasant and enjoyable things called *assāda* and there are awful things (with faults) called *ādīnava*. The ability to distinguish between these two experiences is said to be the Dhamma view, or realism. When life is seen in different ways, it is needed to see it from the Dhamma point of view.

Dhamma means the truth. It is the law of nature. The word Dhamma is '*attano sabāvaṃ dhāretīti dhammo*' and it means that it is being in its nature. When life is seen with the Dhamma view, we should scrutinize what this life is that each and everybody gets. There is no one who is as careless as the one who does not know about the life he gets. Therefore, one should make effort to see the truth about life by looking with the Dhamma view.

Seeing Life in Dhamma View

33

One should note impossible things as impossible and possible thing as possible and should do suitable things accordingly.

When one has the right view, there cannot be a mistake in the work that is done based on this right view. It is needed to distinguish between possibility and impossibility in worldly (*lokiya*) matters or supramundane (*lokuttarā*) matters.

If possible and impossible are not correctly distinguished, there can be many mistakes. One may think something is impossible, while it is possible, and therefore does not take action and thus keeps away the possible thing.

Possible and Impossible

34

The whole world will be peaceful and pleasant if oneself and all others in ones surrounding live with loving kindness (*mettā*).

If we look around carefully, a decrease in loving kindness can be seen in today's world. It may be possible that the world is getting warm because of the decrease in loving kindness. Commonly, however, the heating of the earth is explained by a hole in the ozone layer. Actually, when loving kindness is getting dry in the mind of beings, whatever produced from their bodies is heat. Because then there is unwholesomeness in the form of greed (*taṇhā*) and hatred (*dosa*).

Therefore, loving kindness should always be kept in people's mind to maintain peacefulness in their mind.

With Loving Kindness Forever

35

We should note how people get into trouble when they make mistakes on their way in saṃsāra and thus learn how to be careful.

Every person who is travelling through saṃsāra can make mistakes because of not knowing the truth, which is the main cause of many causes.

When people cannot distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done then they do what should not be done and they do not what should be done. And sometimes they do bad things thinking that it is good.

When one has done something wrong, the disadvantages that one will have to suffer are not easy to bear. We should be careful not to make mistakes by contemplating how people did wrong in the Buddha's lifetime. We can learn from it.

Do not make Mistakes on the Way in Saṃsāra

36

It is obvious that all people throughout the world have to struggle every day. They are struggling with business, society, education, health and policy. As they are struggling, things sometimes go well, and sometimes not. When things go wrong caused by several conditions, people suffer from depression.

If we want to live a pleasant life, we must follow the system of living with mindfulness and wisdom. Mindfulness (mentioned here) means to be mindful of our present action. Whatever we are doing in the here and now, we must be mindful of. Only mindfulness in the present moment can give peacefulness of mind.

Living with Mindfulness and Wisdom

37

Many people think 'mind' and 'thinking' are the same. However, considering Abhidhamma, mind (*citta*) is that which is aware of the object and thinking is the mental state (*cetasika*) that occurs depending on mind.

In the words 'thought of mind' it must be noted that thought is the name of the *cetasika* (*vitakka*). Two kinds of thought can be known. When one is trying to make one's mind pure, one needs to diminish bad or unwholesome thoughts and to strengthen good or wholesome thoughts. Among thoughts of mind, bad thoughts can be solved in the following ways:

1. by changing the object
2. by contemplating its fault
3. by forgetting
4. by searching the main cause
5. by suppressing mind and trying until success follows.

By trying to eliminate unwholesome thought through these five ways, one's mind will become free from bad thoughts and one will obtain the ability to control one's thoughts. By means of that ability, one can think what one wants and control what one does not want to think.

Thought of Mind

38

'*Citte saṃkiliṭṭhe duggatipaṭikaṃkhā*': if one's mind is impure, one will be born in *duggati* (a woeful state) and one will be in trouble.

'*Citte visudde sugatipātikaṃkhā*': if one's mind is pure, one will be born in *sugati* (a happy existence) and experience happiness.

Nothing can come into being just by thinking. There must be practical action following thought. It is obvious that thought without action will not succeed.

Therefore, among the mental defilements, *kāmacchanda* (attachment to sensual pleasure) which is like a debt, *byāpāda* (ill-will) which is like an illness, *thīna-middha* (sloth and torpor) which is like a prison, *uddhaccakukkucca* (restlessness and worry) which is like a slave's life, and *vicikicchā* (skeptical doubt) which is like travelling in a desert, must be eradicated. One should try to eradicate these because there is no one in the world who achieves *nibbāna* without eradicating these mental defilements.

Removing Impurities of the Mind

39

The liberated mind means the *arahatta phala* mind (the liberated mind of the highest level). We must try to achieve that highest attainment. In order to achieve a fully liberated mind:

1. one must find a noble or good friend and teacher
(*kalyāṇamitta*)
2. one must be virtuous, with restraint, according to the guidelines of a good teacher
3. one must listen to Dhamma
4. one must have energetic effort
5. one must have and develop wisdom

When we have these five good conditions, what should we do further to achieve a liberated mind?

To remove *taṇhā* (craving), practice *asuba kammaṭṭhāna* (the contemplation of loathsomeness and impurity). To overcome hatred, develop *mettā* (loving kindness). To remove evil thoughts, contemplate on and be mindful of breathing in and out. To remove conceit of 'I' or 'I am', contemplate impermanence (*aniccasaññā*); this will *cause anattasaññā*, the perception of non-self, to appear in one's mind. When *anattasaññā* comes into being, one will be freed from the conceit of 'I' or 'I am'. Then one will achieve a completely liberated mind.

The Liberated Mind

40

To be born as a human being is like a short visit to this human world. In the expression '*Pamattassa ca nāma cattāro apāyā sakageha sadisā*', it is said that *apāya* (the four woeful states) is like the home for those who live their lives carelessly and forget to perform *kusala* (wholesome deeds). In the same way that whoever goes to whatever place, at the end of the day one must go back to one's home. If one does not live one's life carelessly and realizes the nature of *rupa* (materiality) and *nāma* (mind) and achieves the ability to remove all the wrong views on attachment, one will achieve a peaceful life without worry. One is truly worth to be a human being only if one attains a peaceful life and a calm mind.

Basically, one is worth to be a human being if one practices the ten ways of wholesome actions (*kusalakammamāraḍḍā*). Then, if one continues with the next level and starts *vipassanā* practice and subsequently achieves enlightenment, then one is really worth to be a human being. Therefore, we must try hard in order to be worthy of this human birth.

Be Worth to be a Human Being

41

Gratitude means that one helps and protects someone, it benefits another person. One's appreciation for the goodness or performance of another person is gratitude. It is very important to appreciate someone's good performance.

There are many people who do not appreciate other person's good performances. Since they do not appreciate these, they show that they do not recognize beneficial performances. Since they do not recognize it, they cannot see in a positive way. Appreciation is a quality of polite people.

For the comprehension of gratitude or appreciation, one should know that appreciation of other's direct or indirect help or creating benefit for you is a quality that is in the heart of good-natured persons. Therefore, the Buddha taught that appreciation is a quality of virtuous people. On the other hand, it is true that only a gifted person can appreciate one's gratitude.

Gratitude

A person who is with *sīla* (morality) and has *pañña* (wisdom) is a virtuous person. Most virtuous, however, are the Buddha and Arahants (fully enlightened persons). *Sīla* means here the practice of the ten wholesome courses of action (*sucarita dhamma*). One who practices these dhamma's can be called a decent person.

If someone has the knowledge of '*kammasakatāsammāditthi*' (comprehension of *kamma* and the results of *kamma*) and if this is followed by the higher knowledge of *vipassanā sammāditthi* (knowledge of impermanence, suffering and non-self), one can be called a gifted person. Basically, it is defined in this way.

There is a big difference in the attitude of virtuous people and of other people. Often, people are sensitive about being offended or concerned about their properties (Commonly people protect themselves and their properties too much.) Rare are the people who protect their *sīla* (morality). People easily drop their morality. Virtuous people, however, take morality as a worthier thing than their lives and they restrain and protect their *sīla*. That is the attitude of virtuous people who can give up their life for the sake of *sīla*.

The Attitude of Virtuous Persons

43

Dhamma knowledge acquired by learning is not as strong and mature as the knowledge gained by actual practice. The practice of Dhamma, even when it is known, can be very difficult because of the influence of the *kilesā* (mental defilements) such as *lobha* (craving), *dosa* (ill will) and *moha* (ignorance). When these are very strong, the knowledge or wisdom is very weak. If the wisdom becomes stronger, *kilesā* such as *lobha* will become weak and then one can practice Dhamma.

To acquire the knowledge that one should develop wholesomeness is often realized by listening to Dhamma. One performs *dāna* (generosity, offering) *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (development) according to one's knowledge. If one can accumulate wholesomeness, then one can say that one practices Dhamma. If one does not do so or does not get started to accumulate wholesomeness, even though one has the knowledge, one is said to know dhamma with a difficulty to practice.

To practice Dhamma can be difficult

'Dhamma' means the teachings of the Buddha and it serves to distinguish between right and wrong. The comprehension of cause and effect, and of good and bad actions that can produce good and bad results is Dhamma knowledge.

To live our life usefully with Dhamma, we must be intelligent about it. When one gets life, there are several ways to live life; there are beneficial ways and also detrimental ways. Some ways are beneficial in the present life but are not in next life. The Buddha taught the way of living a life that can be beneficial for both the present life and *saṃsāra*.

In order to be able to live a life that is beneficial in both present life and future lives, one should have two kinds of knowledge like one has two eyes. In the *Andha* sutta the Buddha taught that *dvicakkhu*, meaning a person having two eyes, is the best person. Intelligence sees both sides and is not limited to one side (this life) only.

We live our life useful with Dhamma Knowledge

45

With regard to *taṇhā* (craving), it can be said that any kind of *taṇhā* is not good. This is because *taṇhā* can repeatedly cause lives. Among the six kinds of *taṇhā* such as *rūpataṇhā* (craving for visible objects) and so on, *rasataṇhā* (craving connected to the sense of taste) is worse than any other *taṇhā*. Some may not attach to things seen by the eye or heard by the ear, but there are very few people who can avoid *rasataṇhā*. Even though people can stay peacefully without seeing or hearing, they cannot help eating what they like because of *taṇhā*. So, Myanmar people bring their favorite 'Ngapikyaw' (fried shrimp paste) when they go abroad.

Without nutriment, life is not possible. One can live without seeing, hearing, or smelling. But one cannot survive without daily consumption of nutriments. Therefore, it is said: '*Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā*', meaning that all creatures live their life depending on food.

Rasa Taṇhā

46

In the Āsīvīsopama sutta, the Buddha taught a way to direct to *vipassanā* practice. One should be able to see the bad natures of the four elements that are like four snakes, or of the five aggregates that are like murderers, or of the inner enemy called *nandīraga* (lust for pleasure). The things that cause trouble are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind or the six non-essence *ajjhattikāyatana* (inner senses) called the six-houses village. The six *bāhirāyatana* (outer spheres, that destroy the houses) are called the six robbers. The Buddha taught these dhammas as objects for *vipassanā*.

The wide river consisting of the four *ogha* (floods of the four cankers - *āsava*) must be crossed with the ferry of the Noble Eightfold Path by contemplating the above objects. Like swimming energetically, one must try to cross diligently. When one arrives at the bank, one is liberated from the above dangers.

Therefore, 'the other bank is peaceful' means *nibbāna*. May you arrive at the peaceful bank by understanding the belligerent problems of this side of the river.

The Other Bank is Peaceful

47

Sometimes, *puthujjana* (common ones, non enlightened beings) unintentionally accumulate misconduct (bad kamma). This kamma will stay latently in one as energy.

In the body which is produced by *kamma* and *kilesā* (mental defilements), that bad kamma can produce results as long as the resultant body exists, this happens even when the mental defilements are eradicated.

There are reactions to actions from the past. Such kind of reactions, in the Buddha or an arahant or anyone else, will appear whenever the conditions are present. In other words: "When there is a debt, one cannot stay without paying it back. One must repay when it is time."

The Buddha suffered from bad kammic results

Dusk is the period of time when the sun goes down. All beings will meet the dusk of their lifetime or the last day of their life. Often, people feel worried during such a time, because they will have to travel an unknown journey at the time the sun is going down.

'*Karunā*' means the heart-stimulated feeling of someone who sees a *dukkhita sattavā* or one who is in trouble. The characteristic that one cannot keep oneself calm and cannot look at others in trouble without wishing to help them is called *karunā*.

Karunā is very important in the twilight zone of life. It is indeed noble work when people with a virtuous heart help and support others in trouble out of compassion.

The Twilight of Life and Karunā

49

Nowadays, there are many religions to follow. There is quite some variety in religions and the belief and teachings of each religion differs from others. The thing said to be right in one religion is wrong in another religion.

For those who have difficulties in choosing the right one among many, the Buddha taught the way to follow. In the Kālāma sutta the Buddha advised:

- Regarding 10 ways of acquiring knowledge one should not blindly believe but know for oneself what is good or bad.
- One should base one's beliefs on one's own intelligence and knowledge.
- By solving problems with one's own intelligence, one leaves wrong and accepts right.
- To live with others with a virtuous mind and attitude.
- When one cannot solve a problem, choose the way that is good for both sides. That is the right way.

May one attain *Nibbāna* by following the way taught by the Buddha.

The Way to Choose in Life

50

People in the world have different views on deciding who wins and who loses. Someone might be winning from the worldly point of view, but might be the loser from the point of Dhamma view. The Buddha taught four ways to win from others:

1. *akheodhena jine kodhaṃ*: Defeat someone who has much anger by tolerating him with mettā and a peaceful mind without strong anger.
2. *asādhuaṃ sādhuṇā jine*: Defeat someone who does evil deeds by avoiding evil deeds and by performing good deeds.
3. *jine kadariyaṃ dānena*: Defeat a stingy person by offering.
4. *saccenalikavādinā*: Defeat someone who always tells lies by telling the truth.

Therefore, in the worldly way, winner and loser can be seen in certain ways, but from the Dhamma point of view we can see who is really at loss.

Winner and Loser

51

A person who behaves badly is called an evil person. A person who lacks intelligence and good judgment is a foolish person.

Some people are bad and cannot distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done. That is when one does whatever one likes. Such a kind of person is called both an evil and foolish. These are the characteristics of a person who is both evil and foolish:

1. duccintita cintī - He always thinks in a way that troubles others, never positive or supportive of others.
2. dubbhāsita bhāsī - He does not talk nicely but has only bad speech that can upset others.
3. cakkata kamma kāri - Whatever he does, his deeds are evil.

Evil and Foolish Persons

52

When people become poor, there arise many problems and people get into trouble. In the same way, if there is poverty in the Dhamma, there will be trouble.

If one does not have the qualities of Dhamma, one is poor. Which are the qualities of the Dhamma that one should have?

1. Faith in kamma and the result of kamma. Interest in performing wholesome deeds. (*saddhā*)
2. Being ashamed of doing unwholesome actions (*hiri*)
3. Being afraid of unwholesomeness (*ottappa*)
4. Making effort to collect wholesomeness by avoiding unwholesomeness (*vīriya*)
5. Knowing what is good and bad (*pañña*).

One is said to be poor if one lacks these qualities. One should not be poor. Whereas material poverty is only for one life, the poverty of important Dhammas, that concern wholesomeness such as *saddhā*, *hiri*, *ottappa*, *vīriya* and *pañña*, can extend to many lives and effort should be made to alleviate this kind of poverty.

Poverty Alleviation

53

In Myanmar many people try to do wholesome deeds on their birthday. It is important to recognize that the wholesomeness accumulated based on one's birthday is precious. And if no wholesome deeds are done on one's birthday, it is of course less precious. Of course, in general, being born is not good from a Dhamma point of view. The good thing out of the bad thing of being born is the accumulated wholesomeness in one. It is good if one can benefit others. If people are happy because of you, it is good. By collecting many good things, we will achieve great benefit. Therefore, one can develop *pāramī* by doing *kusala* action based on one's birthday.

Therefore, by saying 'happy birthday to you', with what will one be happy? With the wholesomeness that is accumulated by performing wholesome deeds on your birthday.

Birthday Present

54

The thing that is by nature (*ussannatā*) present in one's mind or the mood that is usually present is called 'character'.

According to the literature, there are six types of characters: three good and three bad characters. For meditation, it is helpful to know these characters. The three concerning *akusala* are characters with *rāga* (lust), *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion). The three concerning with kusala are characters with *saddhā* (faith or confidence), *buddhi* (intelligence, wisdom) and *vitakka* (thought).

Vāsanā means that there is a habitual practice. Character means that a certain state or characteristic is commonly present. Based on these states, in the mind arises imprints of former actions resulting in a habitual practice.

Some said that characters belong to those habits practiced during the past life. Venerable Buddhaghosa said, "This answer is not sure; it is general. The kind of mood or attitude when a kamma was done in the past life must be seen. The kamma causing *paṭisandhi* (rebirth consciousness) is the main cause of the type of character."

Character and Habit

55

Even while sleeping in a beautiful apartment, *rāga* (lust) and *dosa* (hatred) can arise in one's mind and one will be worried. The nature of *taṇhā* and *rāga* is being discontent and it causes misery and exhaustion. With those worries, it will not be a sound sleep, although one might sleep in a luxurious bed.

Sound sleep as meant by the Buddha is the sleep of a person with a peaceful heart that is free from mental defilements (*kilesā*).

Sound Sleep

56

Performing wholesomeness is a kind of investment. The Buddha explained how to be certain about one's investment. A sure investment is when a clever person performs wholesome deeds of *dāna* (offering), *sīla* (morality) and *sa-mādhi* (concentration) based on his property and effort. He tries to realize the highest mundane (*lokīya*) and supramundane (*lokuttarā*) goals.

The instruction for business and households is to divide ones property into four portions. One portion must be saved for emergencies, one is for daily expenses, the last two are used to improve the business. This is an advice to manage the properties properly so that people will not get into trouble.

Investment

For everyone who wants to attain *nibbāna*, it is important to find a qualified *kammaṭṭhānateacher* so that one can walk on the right way when meditating. It was recorded in the canon that one can be a *kammaṭṭhānateacher* only if one is endowed with the following qualities:

1. *piyo ca hoti manapo* - One must have morality and must be respectable. One must not have fault.
2. *garu* - Not only being respectable but also one must have qualities that are worthy of reverence.
3. *bhāvanīyo* - One must have qualities that are worthy to be praised by others.
4. *vattā* - One must be dutiful in telling what ought to be said.
5. *vacanakkhamo* - One must patiently be able to tolerate and accept the things pointed out by the other.
6. *gambhīrañcā kathaṃ kattā* - One must be able to teach about the deep topics of rūpa, nāma, magga, phala and *nibbāna*.
7. *no ca atthāne* - One must not point out the wrong way to follow.

KammaṭṭhānaTeacher

Though the discourses preached by the Buddha are meant when we speak about Buddhist religion, the Noble Eightfold Path is mainly seen as the religion. The middle way or the Noble Eightfold Path (*majjhima paṭipadā*) is defined as the *Sāsanā* (the dispensation of the Buddha). In more detail: the 37 *bodhipakkhiya dhammas* (the 37 parts of enlightenment) starting with *satipaṭṭhāna* (domains of mindfulness) included in the Noble Eightfold Path must be considered as the Buddha's *Sāsanā*.

So, missionary work means to learn the lessons taught by the Buddha and to practice according to the Dhamma. The one who does so, is the real follower of the Dhamma and a missionary. The rest of the activities such as building pagoda's and buildings are important because they support the missionaries work. Without this support, a missionary cannot do his work.

Missionary Powers

Traditional Buddhists mainly imitate the behavior of others, family members or friends. They rarely revere the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha from their own heart-felt feelings and intellect. They do not really take the three Jewels seriously. They take other beings (*devatā*) in their house more seriously and sometimes revere those more than the three Jewels.

The Buddha preached, '*sukho buddhānamuppādo*', which means that the arising of the truth-knowing person called the Buddha, is for the bliss of all creatures. Does the Buddha save the creatures from getting in trouble and to get bliss by the means of supernatural powers? No. One might consider if saving creatures with supernatural powers is possible, or not.

The truth is that the wholesomeness in oneself can save oneself. By considering this, the Buddhist can consider whether his aim is right and his reverence is truly from the heart.

The Three Jewels to Revere

People, having received a human life, have to eat food every day. Because this needs to be done the whole life long it is said, 'to fill the small stomach is as hard as filling the ocean'.

If people try to fill that small stomach by earning a livelihood through bad conduct (*ducarita*), one will be filled with fault. This can produce painful results in *saṃsāra* rather than filling the stomach.

When one gets a life, the stomach will have to be filled until the end of life. In order to be able to eat, one has to buy food and has to earn a living and if one wants to accomplish this too quickly it might be that one makes dishonest deals in business. Then, one accumulates unwholesomeness and finally drowns in the ocean of *saṃsāra*.

To fill the stomach is as hard as filling the ocean

The pariyatti schools (schools for monks and nuns where Buddhist scriptures are taught) are passing down the Buddha's teaching. The teachings of the Buddha have been transferred from generation to generation in this way for the past 2600 years. When it has come to one's turn, one should not be carelessly. One should learn and study the Buddha's teachings as much as one can. Then the Buddha's teachings that are beneficial to the world (loka) and saṃsāra can be passed down.

When the Buddha was alive, he preached, 'Yo dhammaṃ passati, so maṃ passati' meaning that one who sees the dhamma, sees the Buddha. Also before his parinibbāna, the Buddha said that the dhamma that he taught shall be our teacher. Based on these speeches it is obvious that the Buddha respects the practice and the acquisition and following of the teachings. It is needed to share and pass down the Buddha's teachings that we know.

By doing so, it will get into the hearts of people and peacefulness will come in being.

Passing Down the Teachings of the Buddha

Sometimes we feel dissatisfied. If it becomes worse, it can burst and the peaceful mind is destroyed. When one gets angry, one cannot smile and ones face becomes ugly and is not as beautiful as it is when smiling.

When forms of dissatisfaction, such as *byāpāda* or hatred, come into being, one can find exits from those aversive mental states. Some substitute the dissatisfaction by thinking other thoughts or in some way oppress the feelings about the person that one does not like. Such oppression is not an exit. However, people think oppression is an exit of the mental state and they try not to think about it or the person whenever they feel dissatisfied. In doing so, undesirable problems come into being.

The Buddha taught that the real exit from dissatisfaction in the mind (*byāpāda*) is *mettā*. By developing *mettā* (loving kindness), one will have the exit for dissatisfaction. When *mettā* is developed, the heart becomes kind and forgiving. This is the right method.

The Exits of Mind

63

A yogi is someone who strives persistently (yoga). One who meditates only for fun and without striving cannot be called a yogi. In the *padhāniyaṅgasutta*, there are five qualities mentioned that a yogi should possess.

1. To have belief (faith)
2. To be healthy
3. To be honest
4. To strive
5. To have a strong basic knowledge.

If one has these qualities and one meets a good teacher, one can achieve enlightenment within a week. It is even stated in this sutta that after learning how to practice in the morning, a qualified person can achieve enlightenment in the evening.

The qualities that a yogi should have

64

It is not mentioned in the texts that one will be safe if one recites the *Mettā* sutta every day. But many people in Myanmar believe this. In the words of Mogok Sayadaw: 'our men use the pills as an ointment.' There will be little benefit if one uses pills (that should be swallowed) as an ointment. The pill that should be swallowed must be swallowed in order to be effective. Therefore, one should develop *mettā*, not by recitation, but by practice, because it is a kind of *bhāvanā*.

Mettā is not for reciting but for developing. *Mettā* is a kind of practice (*kammaṭhāna*). Mostly, people think that only *vipassanā* meditation is *kammaṭhāna*. Developing *mettā*, however, is also *kammaṭhāna*, and it is a form of concentration meditation (*samatha kammaṭhāna*). Therefore, with regard to the *Mettā* sutta we can say that it is not only for reciting and listening, but more importantly for developing *mettā*.

Summary of the Mettā Sutta

65

The Dhamma taught by the Buddha is about cause and effect (dependent origination). People in the world hope for happiness in their lives. They have hopes of getting rich, being healthy, to live long and they have the wish to be reborn in a happy state (*sugati*). These wishes can come true only if one has obtained the four causes that lead to *sugati*. These four causes (*attasammāpaṇidhi*) are *saddhā* (faith), *sīla* (morality), *cāga* (offering) and *pañña* (wisdom). Without these causes, the above wishes cannot be fulfilled.

At the time of New Year one often has the wish to become better than the last year. If so, one should strive to make the above causes stronger. Only if one can realize these causes, ones hopes for happiness and the wish of 'Happy New Year' will come true.

Dhamma Gift for the New Year

66

To attain enlightenment, it is necessary to avoid bad conditions by doing wrong actions. One must not commit, any of the five acts that have immediate retribution, i.e. matricide, patricide, murdering of a holy person, wounding a Buddha, and making a schism in the community of monks (*pañcānantariya kamma*). Also, one should not have wrong view (*niyatamicchādiṭṭhī*). When one is free from these conditions one should have the power of faith (*saddhā*), the power of a strong wish (*chanda*), the power of intelligence for knowing Dhamma based on faith and wish and finally the striving intelligence to know Dhamma.

When one has the above things, one can attain enlightenment. The Buddha taught that the one who has the state of rightness (*sammattaniyāma*) is worth attaining enlightenment. He or she becomes enriched with good conditions because of listening to and understanding the Dhamma.

Who can achieve Enlightenment?

67

People in the world compete in the wrong way about the wrong things. There appear many problems because there is competition over things that are not worth of competition, On the other hand, people do not compete over the things they should compete. They cannot solve the problems by competing and it will lead to a situation where both are the loser. The end is that the winner has resentment and the loser is sad. That is the result of competition, as taught by the Buddha.

The Buddha said, '*Tasmātiha bhikkhave evaṃsikkhitabbam*': Therefore, monks must practice in this way: '*Uttaruttari paṇīta paṇītaṃ vāyamamānā*' by striving better and better than others, '*anuttarṃ vimuttisukhaṃ*': it leads to the best happiness of liberation, '*saccikarissama*' this we should strive to achieve.

We should compete in this way. The meaning is that the end of competition is when one becomes an arahant. There is nothing more to compete about. Competition ends at *arahattaphala*, the final emancipation

The End of Competition

68

Mahā means noble or great. The noble or great *dāna* (offering) as taught by the Buddha is when we follow the five precepts. In the discourse, *sīla* (morality) is considered as *dāna* (offering). Whenever we observe the five precepts we can increase our *cetanā* (motivation) by remembering that we are giving a great offer; mahā dāna.

Pāṇātipāta veramaṇī (restraining from taking life, the first precept) is *mahā dāna* because there are many creatures in our surroundings. Although the restraint from taking others life seems a small thing normally, it is a great and wonderful thing because one gives sanctuary to all creatures, (*abhayaṃ deti*), one gives safety (*averaṃdeti*) and one gives freedom from suffering to all creatures (*abyābajjhaṃdeti*). This is wholesome indeed.

Mahā Dāna

69

If people can remember the words of the Buddha by heart then it is beneficial not even in this present life but also in next lives. An example of this, is the 'pañcagga brahmin' couple; as soon as they heard the word '*nāmarūpaṃ*' (mind and matter), they felt they had heard it before and understood the meaning immediately. Instantly they became enlightened as *anāgāmi* (non-returner). So, memorize the Buddha's words '*nandi dukkhassa mulaṃ*'. These are not very difficult pāli words and have the following meaning: desire is the cause of suffering.

Nandi Dukkassa Mūlaṃ

70

The Buddha spoke about the characteristics of a good friend. A good friend is:

1. One who gives something that is difficult to give.
2. One who performs something that is difficult to do.
3. One who tolerates something that is hard to tolerate.
4. One who does not abandon you and runs away when one is in trouble.

One who has these four characteristics is worth to be considered and be treated as a good friend.

A Good Friend

71

Wealth is not concerned with religion. It should be considered whether the people who are not wealthy follow the teachings of the Buddha or not. The Buddha taught us to try to follow his teachings in order to be wealthy in this life.

One must have persistence and knowledge of the economical system. One must be able to run ones business without spoiling anything. One must be able to manage income and expenses. And the last one is to have good friends.

One can gain happiness by fulfilling these characteristics. This is a way to live life as taught by the Buddha. Young Buddhist people should note these characteristics and try to improve themselves by following these teachings; it may bring them wealth.

Living according to the teachings of the Buddha

72

When one craves for something with attachment, it can be contemplated that one's mind is being stained. When one's mind is stained, the things that are memorized become weak and fade away. Then, one is not able to study or to memorize.

In order to improve your memory you must practice to diminish the *nīvaraṇa* (hindrances) such as *kāmacchanda* (desire for sensual-pleasure) or *thinamiddha* (sloth and torpor). *Nīvaraṇa* means a hindrance of mind that obstructs the way to a wholesome mind and wisdom. One's memory may not be improved until the *nīvaraṇais* diminished.

Practice to improve one's memory

73

Morality is something that one must follow. There are moral principles that people should follow. If people do not have moral practices or ethical modes of conduct, there will appear *dosa* (hatred) and *āghāta* (anger) in their mind instead of happiness.

If people behave in ethical ways, the country, town and family will be happy. People's societies will never be peaceful if they have no moral codes of conduct.

People with Perfect Morality

When Venerable Ānandā said to the Buddha, "O Lord, it is strange that you become a little bent and your skin gets wrinkled", the Buddha uttered, 'Ānandā, in this way, *jarā* (aging) steals youth, causes *byādhi* (suffering), steals your health and finally *maraṇa* (death) will take one's life.'

Everyone, including powerful people, people with authority or very rich people, will be destroyed by the Dhamma of *jarā*, *byādhi* and *maraṇa*. The Buddha preached these dhamma's for people to contemplate.

Dhamma Saṃvega and the Twilight of Life

75

Every kamma has energy. Even though one may be born in a woeful state because of unwholesome kamma, one's wholesome kamma can be one's safeguard for one's return to human life. The lifespan in the human world and in a woeful state is different. The lifespan in a woeful state depends on kamma. As long as there is kamma, a being in a woeful state will not die. People's lives do not depend on kamma. As it is said, 'life is guarded by wisdom'.

Seeing the beings in the hell (one of the four possible woeful states), the king of the hell (king Yama) wished them to get a human life. He felt pity for them. They can escape from the suffering only when they get a human life. He revealed his wishes: "What a good condition they will have, if they can meet the Buddha when they are born as human beings. It would be very well also, if the Buddha could teach me and if I understand the dhamma preached by the Buddha."

The Wishes of King Yama

Sabbadānaṃ dhamma dānaṃ jināti
The gift of Dhamma excels all gifts

Sādhu - Sādhu - Sādhu!