CHAPTER III

SOCIAL ETHICS IN BUDDHISM

"Akkodhena jine kodham asadhum sādhunā jine, jine kadariyam
dānena saccenalikavādinam”¹

Conquer the angry one by love; conquer the wicked by goodness;
conquer the stingy by generosity, and the liar by speaking the truth.

_Dhammapada_

Man is a social animal by nature according to Aristotle. A man who is
not social is in his view, either a beast or God. From the primitive age up to
the present time, man has always lived in some form of society. Man’s
existence apart from society is inconceivable. In fact, a man without society
carries little meaning.

That man has intrinsic need of society is an obvious fact. He is
dependent on society for nature, protection, gratification of sex desire,
enjoyment of material goods and comforts of life, physical growth and
mental development. He is dependent on society for the fulfillment of his
dreams and ambitions of life, full realization of the ends of his existence,
full exercise of his personal freedom and harmonious development of his
personality. Normal development of an individual, in isolation from society,
is unthinkable.

Buddhism believes in middle path and it has a positive attitude
towards social, economic and political problems. It believes that an active
social, economic and political life cannot be separated from true religious
life. The Buddha tried to develop individual as well as society. He taught
people to lead a proper life. Being ethical teacher, the Buddha prescribed
various duties of classes in _suttas_ that containing norms for social and
personal well beings and supply the foundation stone for the social ethics
of Buddhism which are very relevant event in present era. To understand

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¹ Dhammapada, verse, 223.
its various aspects, let us discuss it under the following heading and subheadings:

**Man and Society in Buddhist Perspective**

Buddhism upholds the view that man is the Supreme Being. He surpasses even the gods –devas in wisdom and strength. Buddhism gives pride of place to man who lives in human society. The uniqueness of man among other living beings is well recognized. No other living beings possess the quality of rational thinking. The Buddha gave due recognition to the moral and intellectual development of man and further showed the path to its fulfillment. According to Buddhism, among all the terrestrial and celestial beings, man occupies the most desirable position. Herein, by the word ‘man’ the entire humankind should be understood. Human birth is not mere chance of accident. The very existence of man is due to his own karmic results. It is stated that to be born as a human is a rare event even as the birth of a Buddha, the availability of the good *Dhamma* and one’s opportunity to listen to it. This point is illustrated in the *Bālapaṇḍita Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* with the simile of the blind turtle and the yoke. The Buddha addressing the monks says:

“Suppose a man throws into the sea a yoke with one hole in it, and the east wind carries it to the west, and the west wind carried it the east, and the north wind carries it to the south, and the south wind carried it to the north. Suppose there were a blind turtle that came up once at the end of each century. What do you think 0 monks? Would that blind turtle put its neck into that yoke with one hole in it? When the monks reply: It might sometime or other at the end of a long period.” The Buddha continues:

“O monks, the blind turtle would take less time to put its neck into that yoke with a single hole in it than a fool, once gone to perdition, would take to regain the human state, I say. Why is that? Because there is no practising of the *Dhamma* there, no practising of what is righteous, no
doing of what is wholesome, no performance of merit. There mutual devouring prevails, and the slaughter of the weak."²

The fact that to be born as a human being is a rare event is emphasized in Buddhism, seemingly for two reasons—firstly, to bring out the enormous suffering that a person has to undergo in his wandering in the cyclic existence of birth and death and secondly, in order to inculcate an awareness of urgency in the mind of the people to practise Dhamma, be righteous and to perform wholesome actions leading to realization. Simply, one should be good and do good during his lifetime making the best out of living a human life in order to get rid of suffering and realize the supreme Bliss.

Who is Man?

The Pāli words for man are ‘manussa’ ‘mana’ ‘nara’ and Sanskrit is “manusya”. It is a very meaningful word. “Incidentally, the English word “Man” is derived from Sanskrit word “manu” meaning “to think.”³ Man is the only living beings who can cultivate and develop the mind to its maximum level. Such a living being is called manussa. The word “man” is also derived from the mana meaning mind. Thus one who has a mind to think is called man. With his superior intelligence, man has only to direct and channel his desire and the can make his life to be what he chooses.

The definition, however, is found in Pāli commentaries and Pāli grammatical works. Manussa is defined in Pāli grammar like this, “manuno apaccā puttā māṇavā—man is māṇava’s son, so he is man, and kārāṇa kāraṇam manati jānāti’ti manusso—he knows what is reason and unreason. Therefore he is called man, manussa, attā nattaṁ manati jānāti’ti manusso—he knows what is welfare and un-welfare. So he is man."⁴ We can also find

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definatin of manussa in the Vîmâna Vatthu commentary as well as in the Suttanipâta commentary. The definition is that “manassa ussannatāya manussā – because of the fullness of the mind they are called men”\(^5\) and “manuno apaccā’ti manussā, porāṇā pana bhaṇanti. Te jambudipaka, aparagoyanaka, uttaraguruka, pubbavideha’ti catubbidha – according to ancient saying, we are manu’s son, therefore we are man. The people inhabit Jambudipa, Aparagoyāna, Uttarakuru and Pubbavideha.”\(^6\)

According to commentary, there are four kinds of manussa because of the behavioural pattern. They are manussa niraya, manussa peta, manussa tiracchāna and manussa paramattha. The first one is that even though he is man, he suffers a lot –mahādukkham anubhavati. This person is called manussa niraya. Secondly, he is man but he is difficult to get food and water, though he goes around for food –ghāsacchādanampi na labhati, khuppiṇāśabhiṇāto dukkhabahūlo katthaci patiṭṭham alabhāmāno viravati. He is called manussa peta. Third person is that he is man, he is burden for others, he makes inharmonic society; he does not know whether what should do or not –paresaṁ bhāraṁ vahanto, dukkhabahulo vicarati, hitāhitam ajānanto. The man is called manussa tiracchāna. Finally, he is a man. As a man, he knows what he should do for welfare of society; he is endowed with moral shame –hiri and moral fear –ottappa –hirotappa sampnño; he has compassion for all beings –dayāpanno sabbā satteso; he persuades to do good and not to do evil –akusakammapathe parivajjento, kusalakammapathe samācaranto. He is called manussa paramattha.\(^7\)

**Society**

Society may be defined as a collection of individuals held together by certain enduring relationships in the pursuance of common ends. Social relationships constitute the basis of society. But every relationship between man and man cannot be considered to be social. Man is born into society,

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\(^7\) Ibid. p. 23.
brought up in society and he continues to live in society until his death. An ascetic, too, leaves behind all his encumbrances of household life and departs to forest, carries with him the experience he acquired when he was living in society. Man being a social animal, he acquires his human nature or humane qualities from living in society and maintains relations through communication with the other members who constitute society.

No man on earth can develop his personality without the help of any kind of human society. The impact society makes on an individual is so strong that it should be considered as the most fundamental and important factor which builds the character of an individual. A child from his birth is under social influence, because he learns from others, firstly from parents and then from teachers and others. Unlike among other species, human child needs mother’s care and protection for several years. He lives with others. When he is grown up to be a man, he develops communication with others weaving a network of relationship with others. He is caught up in the web of obligations and commitments to his fellow beings called society.

There is no society without humans and no humans without society. This interdependence of society and man is persisting not only for the sake of mutual survival but also for the fulfillment of higher ideals related to both man and society. Society existed long before we are born into it and it will continue to exist even long after we are dead and gone. In the interaction between man and society, society dominates man channeling him on the proper path, instructing him on values, rights, duties, manners and behavioral patterns and many more and directs him to live a meaningful and purposeful life. On the other hand, man also contributes his share to society as an active member of it by way of continuing his social heritage or reshaping it ideologically.

The inter-relationship of man and society is accepted in Buddhism. Hence social ethics in Buddhism is for the welfare of both man and society. The Five Precepts –Pañca Sila (I have already discussed it in the chapter two.), the Four Sublime States –cattāro brahmavihāra, the Four Ways of Showing Favor –Cattāri saṅgha vatthūni and the Ten Wholesome Deeds – dasakusala often discussed in the canonical texts vindicate Buddhism’s
social concern taking the individual as an integral part of it. Therefore Buddhist ethics become meaningful only in the context of society. The Five Precepts, too, ensure one's social position as a constituent part of society. With reference to Ten Wholesome Deeds, the first four, precepts are discussed in the Sāleyyaka Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya in detail. The Ten Wholesome Deeds are discussed in relation to one's conduct of body, word and mind. Herein the Buddha says:

“How are the three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone kills living beings; he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He takes what is not given; he takes by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or forest. He misconducts himself in sensual pleasures; he has intercourse with women who are protected by their mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, and even with those who are garlanded in token of betrothal. That is how there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.”

“And how are there four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone speaks falsehood. When summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, and questioned as a witness thus: ‘So good man, tell what you know.’ Not knowing, he says, ‘I know’, or knowing, he says, ‘I do not know’, not seeing, he says ‘I see’, or seeing, he says, ‘I do not see’; in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends, or for another’s ends, or for some trifling worldly end.” In this way the discourse describes the rest of the wrongful verbal behaviour related to carrying tales, harsh speech and gossiping and then the mental attitudes of coveting, ill will and wrong view together with the positive aspects of all the ten.8

It is quite clear that these ethical standards laid down in Buddhism are expressive and relevant only in the framework of social living. The

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Buddhist conception of society is not confined to human. In a profound ethical sense it includes all living beings (sabbabhūta), animals as well as lower creatures.

**Four Sublime States**

You can remove a man from society but you cannot remove society from the man. Having considered the Buddha's views about man and society, we should now continue to investigate the Buddha's attitude on the social relations and social ethics that should be cultivated for the betterment of human society as a whole. At this point it is far more relevant and important to examine some of the fundamental principles of social ethics that are found constantly emphasized in the scriptures, than to collect all ideas scattered throughout the texts. The concept of four sublime states—Brahmavihāra and the four modes of hospitality—saṅghahavatthu would be discussed here.

What are the four sublime states? They are: loving kindness (mettā), compassion (karunā), sympathetic joy (muditā) and equanimity (upekkhā). They are called Brahminihāra. According to Buddhist cosmology, “Brahma” is the highest being in the order of beings. A result of the attainment of meditative absorptions one is reborn into the Brahma, who always practices loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Any one, in this world, who practice these meditations is said to be living as Brahma or sublime living, (Brahmavihāra). They are also called “Appamaṇṇā”—immeasurable mental states, because these four states of mind are to be extended towards all living beings immeasurably, limitlessly. An individual who cultivates these qualities is beyond all biases and prejudices and, above all, beyond all kinds of limitations such as those pertaining to race, nationality, religion, caste, class, color, clan and so on.

The Brahminihāra are extremely important for personality development. They are said to be excellent or sublime, because they are the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings. The four attitudes of mind provide in fact the answer to all situations from social contact:

They are the great removers of tension, the great peacemakers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence, leveling the social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakens of slumbering long abandoned, promotion of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.

The human mind has latent in it both virtuous and evil tendencies. Whenever one accumulates any virtuous deeds, these pure volitional forces lie latent in the mind as perfections: if one accumulates any evil actions, then impure forces lie latent in the mind as defilements. Those who wish to be great, noble and service, who wish to sublimate themselves in order to serve humanity, endeavour their best to remove the latent vices and to cultivate the perfections with persistent effort and enduring patience. The Buddha, therefore, taught these sublime meditations to get rid of the latent impurities and develop love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, so that one can live happily, peacefully with oneself and with others.

Mettā (Loving kindness)

The first of Brahmavihāra is mettā. What is mettā? It is loving-kindness, pure love, infinite love, boundless love and unconditioned love. The direct enemy of Mettā is hatred, ill-will or aversion; its indirect enemy is personal affection. If the love is based on some kinds of selfishness or attachment, that is not mettā. Mettā should be given freely, without expectation of something in return and it should not be discriminated or limited to only a few people. There are many kinds of love in human society; a husband's love for his wife, a wife's love for her husband; a parent's love for their children, children's love for their parents; brotherly love, sisterly love, love between men and women and between friends,

10 Mijjati sānīhyatī mettā. Mittesu bhavati vā mettā. (sā sattānaṁ hitasukhūpasāmaharanalakkhaṇā) Abhidhammavibhāvanītikā. Myanmar editon, p. 259. This is very famous among monks who study monastic education because we must study the book from Pathamanye —middle calsss to Pathamagyi — higher class.
none of these forms of love are *mettiā*, because all of these loves are based on attachment and selfishness. Mettiā can be developed properly if one gives it to boundless beings.

The object of mettiā meditation should be infinite beings; it also called illimitable (*apperamaññā*). Therefore mettiā should be extended towards all beings without exception. May all living beings be well and happy, it embraces all living beings. Through mettiā meditation one softens one’s heart. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception.

“Just as a mother protects her only child even at the risk of her life, even so one should cultivate boundless loving-kindness towards all living beings”\(^\text{11}\) is the advice of the Buddha. It is not the passionate love of the mother towards her child that is stressed here but her sincere wish for the genuine welfare of her child. In order to practice loving-kindness, one must first practise the noble principle of non-violence and must always be ready to overcome selfishness and to show the correct path to others. The struggle is not to be done by torturing the physical body, because wickedness is not in our body but in the mind. Non-violence is a more effective weapon to fight against evil than retaliation. The very nature of retaliation is to increase wickedness.

In order to practise loving-kindness, one must also be free from selfishness. According to the Buddha we should learn how to practise selfless love to maintain real peace while at the same time working for our own salvation. This is called altruistic love: where a self that does the loving is not identified. Just as suicide kills physically, selfishness kills spiritual progress. Loving-kindness in Buddhism is neither emotional nor selfish. It is loving-kindness that radiates through the purified mind after eradicating hatred, jealousy, cruelty, enmity and grudges. According to the Buddha,
Metta—Loving-kindness is the most effective method to maintain purity of mind and to purify the mentally polluted atmosphere.

There are at least forty kinds of meditation object described in Theravada Buddhism, according to the individual temperament and need. Some of them are suitable or beneficial for some people depending on their own temperament, but the mettā meditation is suitable for all kinds of temperament and all time.

The Metta Sutta describes how to cultivate mettā. It says that just as a mother protects her only child, one should cultivate loving-kindness towards all those who are born and even seeking to be born, towards all those who are big or small, tall or short, near or far, see or unseen and so on. The kakacūpama sutta\(^{12}\) says that the one who cultivate the ideal state of living kindness should not harbor any thought of ill-will even against a person who harms him by cutting of his limbs. The story of Puṇṇa who volunteered to go to Sunaparanta inhabited by violent people shows clearly the greatness of those who possess mind nurtured with this loving kindness.

The antithesis of mettā is anger, ill-will, hatred, or aversion. Mettā cannot co-exist with anger or vengeful conduct. The Dhammapada clearly states that hatred cannot be appeased through hatred. It is appeased only by loving-kindness.\(^{13}\) Mettā not only tends to conquer anger but also does not tolerate hateful thoughts towards others. He, who practises mettā, never thinks of harming others, nor does he disparages or condemns others. Such a person is neither afraid of others nor does he instill fear into any. It is seen that the negation of hatred is friendliness and that Metta Sutta compares this to the state of the mind of mother who protect her only child. Herein one could see both the negative and positive aspects of Buddhist social ethics. Benevolent attitude is the chief characteristic of mettā. It discards ill-will. He who practices mettā is constantly interested in

\(^{13}\) Dhammapada, verse, 5. (Na hi verena verānī, sammantidhā kudācanam averena ca sammantī esa dhammo sanantano.)
promoting the welfare of others. He seeks the good and beautiful in all but not ugliness in others. Metta becomes the most vital fundamental human force in social ethics.

One who practises loving-kindness, will be blessed in these eleven ways - one sleep happily, wake happily, had no bad dreams, is dear to humans, dear to non-humans, cherished by the gods, protected from fire, poison and weapon, easily concentrated, has a radiant complexion, pass away peacefully and after the death at the very least is reborn in heaven.\(^\text{14}\)

**Karuṇā\(^\text{15}\) (Compassion)**

What is Karuṇā? It is pure compassion, infinite compassion; it is boundless and unconditioned compassion. If compassion is based on selfishness or attachment, that is not Karuṇā. It should be developed toward all beings without exception, or limitation. Whatever compassion one develops toward certain people, such as parents, friends, family etc. is not Karuṇā, because it is discriminatory. The object of Karuṇā meditation should be boundless beings. So that Karuṇā should be extended toward all living beings. "May all living beings without exception be free from all kinds of suffering", it therefore embraces all beings. The practice of Karuṇā, makes one's good heart quiver when others are seen to be subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the woes of others and compels one to serve others with altruistic motives. The one who practises compassion lives not for himself but for others. He seeks opportunities to serve others expecting nothing in return, not even gratitude.

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Many amidst us deserve our compassion. The poor and the needy, the sick and the helpless, the lonely and the destitute, the ignorant and the vicious, the impure and the undisciplined are some that demand the compassion of kind-hearted, noble-minded men and women, to whatever religion or to whatever race they belong.

Many are physically sick, some are mentally sick. Science provides effective medicine for the former but not for the latter, who very often languish in mental hospitals. There are causes for these two kinds of diseases. Compassionate men and women must try to remove the causes if they wish to produce an effective cure. Effective measures have been employed by various nations to prevent and cure diseases not only of mankind but also of animals. The Buddha set a noble example by attending on the sick Himself and exhorting His disciples with the memorable words:

"whoever... would tend me, should tend the sick –yo bhikkhave maṁ upaṭṭhaheyya so gilānaṁ upaṭṭhaheyya."\(^{16}\)

Some selfless doctors render free services towards the alleviation of suffering. Some expend their whole time and energy in ministering to the poor patients even at the risk of their lives. The world needs today compassionate men and women to banish violence and cruelty from the face of the earth. Buddhist compassion, it should be noted, does not consist in mere shedding of tears and the like, for the indirect enemy of compassion is passionate grief (domanassa). Compassion embraces all sorrow-stricken beings, while loving-kindness embraces all living beings, happy or sorrowful.

**Muditā**\(^{17}\) (*Sympathetic Joy*)

*Muditā* is pure sympathetic joy, and boundless, infinite and unconditioned sympathetic joy. If we feel sympathetic joy or happiness,

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when our nearest and dearest are successful and happy, then that is not *muditā*, pure sympathetic joy, for it is based on selfishness and attachment and it also limited. Therefore we should practise sympathetic joy towards all living beings without exception. This is a very effective practice to destroy our jealousy. It is jealousy that endangers our whole social constitution. Very often some cannot bear to see or hear the successful achievements of others. They rejoice over their failures but cannot tolerate their successes. Instead of praising and congratulating the successful, they try to ruin, condemn and vilify them. In one way *muditā* is concerned more with oneself than with others as it tends to eradicate jealousy which ruins oneself. On the other hand it aids others as well since one who practises *muditā* will not try to hinder the progress and welfare of others.

It is quite easy to rejoice over the success of one’s near and dear ones, but rather difficult to do so over the success of one’s adversaries. Yes, the majority not only find it difficult but also do not and cannot rejoice. They seek delight in creating every possible obstacle so as to ruin their adversaries. They even go to the extent of poisoning, crucifying, and assassinating the good and the virtuous.

It is true that the practice of *mettā* and *Karunā*, is easier than the practice of *muditā* which demands great personal effort and strong will power. The chief characteristic of *muditā* is happy acquiescence in others’ prosperity and success (*anumodanā*). Laughter and the like are not the characteristics of *muditā* as exhilaration (*pahasa*) is regarded as its indirect enemy. *Muditā* embraces all prosperous beings and is the congratulatory attitude of a person. It tends to eliminate any dislike (*arati*) towards a successful person. Sympathetic joy is the direct opposite of envy and jealousy. Therefore, one should practise sympathetic joy if one wishes to uplift oneself and be internally happy.
**Upekkhā**\(^{18}\) *(Equanimity)*

This is the most difficult and the most essential sublime state. It is the highest state of the mind which one can experience after the attainment of the meditative absorptions. However, the etymological meaning of the term *Upekkhā* is 'discerning rightly,' 'viewing justly,' or 'looking impartially,' that is, without attachment or aversion. This is a very effective meditation practice for those who have to live in an unbalanced society amidst fluctuating circumstances. Society is so constituted that the good and the virtuous are often subject to unjust criticism and attack. The worldly vicissitudes of loss and gain, fame and defame, praise and blame, pain and happiness affect all humanity. Most people are perturbed when affected by such favorable or unfavorable states. One is elated when one is praised, and depressed when blamed and reviled. He is wise, says the Buddha, who, amidst such vicissitudes of life, stands unmoved like unto a firm rock, exercising perfect equanimity. The one who practises equanimity, amidst these vicissitudes of life, stands unshakeable, sorrowless, stainless and secure; this is highest blessing in life.

Thus, *Mettā* embraces all beings, *Karunā* embraces all suffering beings, *muditā* embraces the prosperous, and *upekkhā* embraces the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant. The one who wishes to be divine in this life itself must cultivate these four sublime virtues daily.

**Catusaṅgha Vatthu**

In the same way the fourfold service are to be practised for the sake of others. The fourfold service is charity or giving –*dana*, pleasant speech –*peyavajja*, altruism –*atthacariya* and equability –*Samānattatā*.\(^{19}\)


It would be relevant to mention that the Buddha did not accept the view that punishment should be inflicted to cause terror upon the wrongdoer or as a deterrent to prevent the repetition of a crime. He was of the opinion that punishment should serve the purpose of rehabilitating the wrongdoer, so that he could be a useful member of the society in which he was a member. Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Hate the sin, love sinner. Sinners are potential saints."20

The Buddha, in presenting the Fourfold Service to his disciples, spoke these memorable words: "There are, O Bhikkhus, in this world among beings, four things, namely, giving or the voluntary parting of one's wealth, the use of pleasant or agreeable words, acting with sincerity for others' welfare and conducting oneself righteously with an open mind, without bias or prejudice. These four things tend to promote among men mutual respect, co-operation, harmony and unity. Moreover, they hold together the human family, just as the explanation of a chariot in motion keeps in place its wheel and does not allow it to jump out."21

This exhortation of the Buddha had its immediate results. For, it inspired and transformed the minds of kings and princes, frequently at war with each other, to take a saner outlook on life and read just their lives to live in harmony and at peace with their neighbours. And in later times, these words of the Buddha inspired, in greater measure, the Great Asoka of India to bind together in a common bond of brotherhood the peoples of his far-flung empire.

**Charity or Giving**

It is a wholesome (*kusala*) act, where the act of giving is done with a consciousness unprompted, accompanied by pleasure and combined with knowledge. Such an act of giving is the basis for the noble root condition called non-greed (*alobha*). It is this form of giving that eventually leads to total renunciation (*nekkhamma*). All self-centred desires are illuminated in the process, and the mind is gradually directed towards *Nibbāna*. In

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support we quote Aṅguttara Nikāya which says "the self-centered desires are to be eliminated by depending on desire –*taṇhāṃ nissāya taṇhā pahātabbā*"\(^{22}\) which is the desire for Nibbāna. It is for this reasons that it stands first among the Ten Perfections (*Pārami*), which an individual aspiring for Buddhahood has to practise through many lives in *Samsāra*.

Let us come down to matters mundane. Whatever is given should be given with one’s hand. It should be parted with a willing and cheerful heart. Let go with no expectations of worldly gain, honours or fame. Do not give with the expectation of better dividends in the next birth. The volition – *cetanā* in every act of giving should be. May this act of charity be a condition to attain Nibbāna. A word of caution is necessary here. In the act of giving, the giver should reflect whether his act of giving would conduce to the wellbeing of the recipient or to his harm. There are various things such as intoxicants and the co-called sedatives that do much harm to the receiver. Let us direct our minds to charity as a form of service.

There are many ways in which one can be of service to his fellow beings. The poor and the needy can be helped by providing them with the bare necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and medicine. These things could be done either individually or by a number of persons forming themselves into an association. Social service is yet another way to help the destitute, the blind, the dumb, the deaf and the mentally retarded children. Crèches to look after the babies of working mothers are another form of service. Community service is not a new institution. In fact it was a form of social service in the past till money became the nexus of society. In like manner was the donation of blood, eyes and various organs which is considered today as the highest form of giving. On the contrary, the Bodhisatta, the Buddha-to-be, had offered his life in many ways to help the needy. He had offered his life to appease the hunger of a tigress, and in the penultimate birth in *Samsāra* he had offered his children and wife to a beggar.

Pleasant Speech

Buddha by word and example set the service of pleasant speech in motion towards all beings to win the immortal name Sugata, which means one endowed with pleasant, agreeable speech. Never did he use harsh words, nor was he guilty of prevarication. Pleasant speech is the offspring of truth. The Buddha when referring to himself used the word Tathāgata. One of the meanings of this many-meaning word is: one who always speaks the truth (tatha vaditaya Tathāgata).

In the Maṅgala Sutta, Buddha hails pleasant speech as a blessing — Subhāsitā ca yā vācā.²³ Pleasant speech makes the mediocre friendly. The friendly become more and more friendly. Pleasant speech dissipates enemies. Even non-humans and animals come under the being influence of pleasant speech. Experience teaches that pleasant speech is a more powerful antidote to bring under control the unruly, the petulant, the insubordinate than harsh words, which more often than not, defeat the object in view.

Speech becomes pleasant and agreeable when it is accompanied with a serene smile on the face; when it is free from gestures; when it is spoken with perfect composure of body and mind; when the words used are choice, mellifluous and well-articulated; when the words are free from slang and are flavoured with urbanity; when the words are a judicious blending of wit and wisdom; and when the words are able to produce a symphonic note in the vibrant chords of the human heart. In contradistinction to pleasant speech is a variety of speech introduced to our island-home about four decades ago. This speech consists of blood-curdling, rabble-rousing words spiced with fire-spitting slogans accompanied with wild gesticulations by a certain section of the educated intelligentsia. They claim that the body politic could be cured of the malady of capitalism by means of a bloody revolution resulting in a completely

equalitarian state. This method of appealing to the masses had produced results in a number of countries.

Remember the Law of Causation. None of us can escape its inexorable operation: the good will receive their due reward: and the evil doer can never escape unpunished. Nature will not tolerate, will not permit for long, pseudo realities being imposed upon human affairs.

**Altruism**

We have translated the Pāli word _atthacariya_ into English as altruism. Properly speaking _atthacariya_ is a compound. _Attha_ means welfare and _cariya_ is the means to that end. Hence, it is selfless service to promote the welfare of others. It is service born of compassion without inducement or prompting and without any expectation of reward or gain. The Buddha was the first to set in motion the noble service of _atthacariya_ when he sent forth his first sixty missionaries exhorting them with these memorable words: "Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many... _caratha bhikkhave cārikāṃ bahujanahitāyā bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya attāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ. Mā ekena dve agamittha._"²⁴

Altruism is a subject that requires training. Two types of people are mentioned for this training. There are those who go forth (pabbajja) from home to homelessness and those who remain at home to keep the home fires burning. The former go through a "gradual training, a gradual practice" in morality (_sīla_), concentration (_samādhi_) and wisdom (_paññā_). Wisdom leads to Arahantship.

You will note that the sixty missionaries the Buddha sent forth were all Arahants. The principle is: Be perfect to serve. Altruism or _atthacariya_ is classified into:

i. Possessed of mundane wisdom one steps out to the world to seek his welfare (_atattha-cariya_),

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ii. While seeking his welfare, he also works for the welfare of his relations and friends (ñātathacariya),

iii. Irrespective of relations or friends one works for the welfare of all human beings (lokattha-cariya).25

This refers to the individual who is following the path or one who has gained supra-mundane wisdom.

Equality

The Pāli word for equability is Samānattatā. Herein sama means equal and atta means oneself. Samānattatā means to consider oneself as being equal or similar to other and to act with such understanding. This enable one to do away with such considerations as the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the privileged and the underprivileged; the wise and the foolish. It is worthwhile to observe here that the Buddha admitted to the order patricians, plebeians, serfs and slaves. Once they donned the yellow robe, they mixed themselves freely and forgot their erstwhile social inequalities. The Buddha describes this homogeneity in his order by this apt simile: "Monks, just as all the great rivers, the Gangā, the yamunā, the Aciravati, the Sarabhū, the Mahī, on reaching the great ocean lose their former names and identities and are reckoned as the great ocean, similarly the Khattiya, the Brahmin, the Vassa and the Sudda, after entering the Śāsanā, lose their former identities, and become the members of one order."26

When practicing equality there would not be any dichotomy between one’s benefit, other’s benefit for, they would become meaningful as two aspects of single concept. What happens is that when one is working for the benefit of another who deserves help one would place himself in the position of the person who deserves help and then begins to work for his good.

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Social Relationship and Responsibilities within the Monastic Order

In comparison with laity the monastic society or *Saṅgha* is a very small community. It is an independent but the most respectful community of Buddhist society which leads a pious life and maintains 'Dhamma' for society. 'Saṅgha' is one of the 'Jewels' (*Triratana*) and the third refuge (*Sarana*) of Buddhism. It is the highest community of Buddhist society. The supremancy of *Saṅgha* within social order is stated even by the Buddha Himself. The life of the monk is bound to the *Saṅgha* and is also regulated by the disciplinary rules of *Saṅgha*. A Buddhist monk cannot lead an absolute solitary life. Hence, Monasteries and the Bhikkhus are required to maintain good relationship both among themselves and with lay society.

Within the monastery the monks have to maintain the rules of seniority. A monk or nun is not allowed to have or acquire personal property. All gains and acquisitions by a monk or nun are equally dividable among the members of the *Saṅgha*. The *Saṅgha* runs totally held on democratic pattern and is guided by religious laws of the Buddhism (*Dhamma* and *Vinaya*). The meetings of the *Saṅgha* are held regularly and even the most elderly monk has to attend the fortnightly meeting or any other meeting of the *Saṅgha* convened for the performance of a formal act.

The monks and the nuns are bound to maintain these six virtues of fraternal living:

i. To be amiable indeed, openly and private.
ii. To be amiable in word, openly and private.
iii. To be amiable in thought, openly and private.
iv. To share any lawful gains with virtuous fellows.
v. To keep the rules of conduct along with one’s fellows.
vi. To be endowed with right views along with one’s fellows openly and private.27

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Following are the seven programmes of welfare that must be conducted by *Saṅgha*:

1. To hold regular and frequent meeting.
2. To meet together in harmony, disperse in harmony and perform all duties and do all business in harmony.
3. To introduce no revolutionary ordinance or break up established ordinance, but train oneself in accordance with the prescribed training rules.
4. To honor and respect the elders of long experience and deem them worthy of listening to.
5. Not to fall under the influence of craving which arises?
6. To delight in forest retreat.
7. To establish oneself in mindfulness with the thought – “Let disciplined co-celibates who have not come, come here, and let those that have already come, live in comfort.”

Though these virtues were originally established for monks and nuns, these are recommended for laity also. The best account of the concept of society based on mutual human interest is found in the Discourse on the Admonition to *Sīṅgāla*. It provides the best account of the rights and responsibilities of the individuals in a society. This *sutta* describes the parents–child relationship, husband–wife relationship, friend to friend relationship and also the employee–employer relationship. The whole domestic and social duties are described here for the welfare of a person and a society as well.

**Relationship between Monks and Laity**

As state above, the total Buddhist community of comprises the two units of monk and laity; hence these two units are interrelated. Both the

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communities are bound to maintain the norms of co-existence for social harmony. According to Vinaya, a monk is dependent on the lay people for the physical needs of his daily life like food and other materials. In daily alms round a monk comes under the contact of lay people and in return he teaches them Dhamma. This reflects the reciprocal nature of the relationship between Saṅgha and laity. As Buddha himself says “My livelihood is bound up with others –paradattūpa Jivita29”, hence, monks are exhorted to contemplate this fact again and again, so that they will be earnest both in their exertion for individual perfection and in working for the well-being to laity. The Saṅgha’s this responsibility for laity is not merely an act of returning favours but out of their own virtue of compassion the Saṅgha always works in favour of laity.

Following are the six ways by which the monks express their compassion for laity—

1. To keep them away from evil.
2. To encourage them toward good.
3. To have kind thoughts for laity.
4. To teach them Dhamma.
5. To correct and clarify what they (laity) have learned.
6. To show them the path of heaven.30

Following are the five ways by which laity should serve the Saṅgha or monks:

1. By kind and respectful acts.
2. By kind and respectful word.
3. By kind and respectful thought.
4. By keeping their house open for monks and nuns.
5. By supplying them with materials they need.31

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These practical instructions for the monks and nuns are contained in a specific part of the cannon Vinaya Piṭaka.

The Layman’s Duties to His Associates

Though Vinaya Piṭaka contains the code of conduct for monks and nuns, for lay society no specific instruction is found as such. The five precepts of abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and taking intoxicants are accepted as the basic moral laws for lay man but, however, these are the only general instructions for a common man by which one may lead ethical life. It is a well established fact that man is a social animal. He cannot live without society. The human society expresses itself in the close knit relationship between human beings. Maintenance of this relationship is a man’s moral obligation. Though Buddhist canons do not state anything explicitly about these relations, some moral instructions are found scattered in Sutta Piṭaka. To search these general laws Jātakas are one of the good sources but teachings therein are too scattered and unsystematic to be formalized as ‘ethical code of social life’.

In the Mahāparinibbāna sutta, which is a discourse addressed specifically to householders, some instructions for maintaining the social and family relationship are found. In sīṅgālovāda sutta, which is a discourse to an individual, some norms of social ethics are stated. Sīṅgāla, son of householder who recently died, had previously shown no interest in religion. At his father’s death, however, he consented to observe the practice of paying devotion to the various quarters of the earth and sky, immediately after his morning bathe without knowing its significance. The Buddha found him in such state and then the Buddha explained him the real significance of these acts. The Buddha explained that the six quarters—east, south, west, north, the nadir and the zenith are representing respectively the parents, teacher, wife and children, friend and companions, servants and work—people; and religious teacher and Brahmins. The malpractices or misconducts towards these people cause
serious loss of spiritual as well as material well beings. Following are the main contents of *siṅgālovāda sutta*, which can be taken as a typical example of the Buddhist code of conduct:

1. The avoidance of the four vices of conduct (corresponding to the first four of the five precepts, i.e., abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech).
2. Doing not evil out of the four prejudices that are caused by love, hatred, delusion and fear.
3. Not following the ways of squandering wealth, viz., addiction to intoxicants, roaming the streets at unseemly hours, frequenting shows, indulgence in gambling, association with companions; and the habit of idleness.
4. Knowledge of how to distinguish among the four false friends, viz., the out and out robber of destruction; and, the four true friends, viz., the helper, the man who is the same in weal and woe, the good counselor; and, the sympathetic.
5. The amassing of wealth and the fourfold division of money into one part for living and doing duties towards others, two parts for business and one part for time of need.
6. The covering of the six quarters of human relationships and their attached mutual responsibilities, viz., child-parents, pupil-teacher, husband-wife, friend to friend, servants and workman (master or employee), monk-layman.
7. The four bases of social harmony, viz., generosity, kind words, life of service and impartial treatment.32

**Duties of Children to their Parents and vice-versa**

The basis of all human society is the intricate relationship between parent and child. A mother’s duty is to love, care and protect the child, even at extreme cost. This is the self-sacrificing love that the Buddha taught. It is practical, caring and generous and it is selfless. Buddhists are

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taught that the parents care for the child as the earth itself cares for all the plants and creatures. To be filial to the parents and to show respect and care for them, is one of the noblest spiritual obligations that a child could shower on his parents. This is a fundamental relationship that cannot be ignored.

The duties of children to their parents are stressed in Myanmar culture from the very early period. Family is a unit of society. All persons, who decide to lead a worldly life, should maintain the family relationship with honour and dignity. Aṅguttara Nikāya grants great approval to the families where the parents are held in high respect. The Buddha counts these families as to sabramakāṇi. These families are āhuneyya (worthy of offering). The Buddha pointed out that the parents do much for their children, bringing them up, taking care of them and introducing them to the world. Hence, they are the most respectable.33

In the Buddhism, the duty of supporting one’s parents is considered as great as the practice of charity. Siṅgālovāda sutta gives five ways in which a child should serve to his/her parents:

1. One should look after their parents in their old age.
2. One should do their duties.
3. One should maintain the honour of the family and continue the family tradition.
4. One should protect the wealth earned by their parents.
5. One should perform their funeral rites after their death.34

In His discourses, the Buddha has listed certain primary duties and functions as essential guide-lines for parents to observe. One of the primary guide-lines would be, by precept, practise and action, to lead the children away from things that are evil and through gentle persuasion, to guide them to do all that is good for the family, for society and for the country. In


this connection, parents would have to exercise great care in dealing with their children. It is not what the parents profess but what they really are and do, that the child absorbs unconsciously and lovingly. The child’s entry to the world is moulded by emulating parental behaviour. It follows that good begets good and evil begets evil.

A child should be taught to be unselfish and to be able to rejoice in the welfare and well-being of others. They should be guided to resist any impulse that tends to harm others by cruelty, anger or hatred. A child should learn to honour other people’s rights and to protect his own, yet be generous enough to be charitable and to give freely and wisely. A child should be shown the way to be honourable and pure in word and deed in all relationships and to uphold fidelity as a virtue to be prized. He should respect and honour the traditional values cherished by a family and should never give way to temptation or seduction that might disrupt the sanctity of a family. In speech and action, a child should be truthful, polite, kind, just and sensible. With such attributes, a child would definitely be an asset to society. A child should be guided to show respect for the aged and towards authority, not out of fear but out of sense of obligation and duty.

As the child grows up, it is the duty of the parents to provide him with a suitable education intellectually and spiritually, to enable him to cope with the challenges of the world that he would be facing as an adult. Coming to adulthood, the age-old parental duty would be to find a suitable wife for the grown up child. This was the tradition that existed long ago. One other guide-line enunciated by the Buddha is that the parents should hand over, at an appropriate time, their inheritance to their children. The love of the parents is well expressed in a saying; “the sight of their children is like a drop of cool, exhilarating water on them”. Their attachment to their offspring is particularly strong, a fact which gives birth to a proverb; “discard only bad baskets and punnets, not bad sons and daughters.

Apart from the guide-lines given in regard to children’s duties towards their parents, the Buddha has enunciated some useful injunctions or
obligations that the parents should uphold in respect of their relationships to their children. Followings are the parents’ duties:

1. They should keep their children away from evil courses.
2. They should exhort them to virtue.
3. They should give them a good education.
4. They should marry them into good families in due time.
5. They should hand over the property to them in due course.

Husband and Wife

A society grows through a network of relationships which are mutually inter-twined and inter-dependent. Every relationship is a whole-hearted commitment to support and to protect others in a group or community. Marriage plays a very important part in this strong web of relationships of giving support and protection. A good marriage should grow and develop gradually from understanding and not impulse, from true loyalty and not just sheer indulgence. The institution of marriage provides a fine basis for the development of culture, a delightful association of two individuals to be nurtured and to be free from loneliness, deprivation and fear. In marriage, each partner develops a complimentary role, giving strength and moral courage to one another, each manifesting a supportive and appreciative recognition of the other’s skills. There must be no thought of either man or woman being superior — each is complimentary to the other, a partnership of equality, exuding gentleness, generosity, calm and dedication. To make the household life a happy one both husband and wife must equally fulfil their duties to each other.

The Buddha, in reply to a householder as to how a husband should minister to his wife, declared that:

1. The husband should always honour his wife
2. He should never be wanting in respect to her.

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3. He should love her and be faithful to her.
4. He should give her the requisite authority to manage domestic affairs.
5. He should please her by presenting her with clothing and jewellery. \(^{36}\)

This advice, given over twenty five centuries ago, stands good for today. Knowing the psychology of the man who tends to consider himself superior, the Buddha made a remarkable change and uplifted the status of a woman by a simple suggestion that a husband should honour and respect the wife. The suggestion that a husband should be faithful to his wife would mean that a husband should fulfil and maintain his marital obligations to his wife, thus sustaining the confidence in the marital relationship in every sense of the word. The husband, being a bread-winner, would invariably stay away from home, hence he should entrust the domestic or household duties to the wife who should be considered as the home economic-administrator. The provision of befitting ornaments to the wife should be symbolic of the husband’s love, care and attention showered on the wife. This symbolic gesture has gone on from time immemorial.

With regard to the manner as to how a wife should minister to the needs of a husband, the Buddha advised that:

1. The wife should be proficient in her household duties;
2. She should accord cordial hospitality to her husband’s relatives and friends;
3. She should love and be faithful to her husband;
4. She should protect and conserve what her husband earns and
5. She should be claver and diligence in all activities. \(^{37}\)

It will be observed that in accordance with the list of duties a wife is expected to perform to meet the needs of a husband, a wife should not be

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treated as merely a natural or feminine gift to her husband, but should be
treated as a partner of equal standing in a delightful relationship that
should be nurtured reciprocally by both parties in a spirit of sincere loyalty,
gentleness and devoted dedication to one another.

_Aṅguttara Nikāya_ records some instructions given by the Buddha to the
girls about to marry. These are as follows:

i. To rise early
ii. To honour and respect all persons honoured and respectful to
her husband and to offer a seat and water on their arrival.
iii. To be skillful in the various handicrafts.
iv. To be careful for servants and sick people.
v. To be careful for the wealth brought home by her husband.
vi. To cultivate gentle voice
vii. Work willingly
viii. Order their affairs smoothly.\(^{38}\)

Now I deal with one aspect of Buddha’s teachings that concern the
household life or the married life.

One day the Buddha visited a house in the city _Sāketa_. The head of the
house was known as _Nakula pitā_ and his wife was called _Nakula Mātā_
because they had a well known son _Nakula_. Both of them were very much
familiar with the Buddha and they regarded the Buddha as their own son.
That day they welcome the Buddha as usual and treated him with food and
after the meal was over; they sat on one side and began to tell him the
intimate details of their life. The householder said; “ever since this _Nakula-
Mātā_, my wife was brought home to me when she was a mere girl, I have
been not conscious of having transgressed against her even in thought,
much less in person. We do desire to see each other not only in this very
life but also in the life to come. Then his wife said to the Buddha, “ever
since I, a mere girl came over here when this householder was a mere lad, I

have never transgressed against him even in thought, let alone in person, we want to see each other not only in this life but also in the life to come.”

The Buddha said: If both wife and husband desire to see each other both in this life and in the life to come, both should be matched in four qualities: in faith, in good conduct, in generosity and in the knowledge of Dhamma.39

If the wife and husband are not virtuous and not tender-hearted, marriage would be an unfortunate and miserable one. With regard to this matter there is a description of the wives as the Buddha expounded.

Anāthapindita was the most devoted and most generous lay follower of the Buddha and his disciples were often invited to his house and entertained with meal and other requisites. One day, at his request, the Buddha paid a visit to his house.

While the Buddha was sitting there he heard a noise of shouting and scolding on the backyard of the house. The Buddha asked the householder what was that shouting. Then he went on saying: “Buddha recently a girl of a rich family was married to my son. She is very proud and hot-tempered. She doesn’t obey her husband, and doesn’t listen to our advice. She is almost always shouting and quarrelling with the servants. Since she came here the peace in our house has been disturbed.” Then the Buddha asked him to take her over there. He went there and told her that and she came over there, bowed down and sat on one side. Then the Buddha asked her: Is it you that have shouted over there now? “Yes” said she. “Do you know that there are seven kinds of wives?” asked the Buddha. She said did not know. “Then listen to me” said the Buddha and went on expounding the seven kinds of wives.

“There is a certain wife who is hard-hearted and hating her husband. She loves other men and wastes what her husband earns. She is called the wife the destroyer.

There is another kind of wife who tries to filch a little out what the husband earns. She is called thievish wife.

There is another kind of wife who is greedy, passionate lazy, careless of her duties, foul -mouthed, full of wrath and hate, tyrannical to the members of the family, she is tyrannical wife.

There is still another kind of wife who is compassionate, care for the husband as a mother to her child. She takes care of the husband’s property unwasted. She is called motherly wife.

There is a fifth kind of wife. She is modest, obedient to her husband. As a younger sister reverences her elder brother, she pays respect to her husband. Such one is called sisterly wife.

There is a sixth kind of wife. She is very pleased at the sight of her husband, as a friend is happy at the sight of his friend after long absence. She is high–bred, virtuous, and is always ready to sacrifice her life to save her husband, just as a dear and loving friend. Such is called the friendly wife.

There is still another kind of wife. She is clam. Even when abused by the husband she keeps silent. She is full of dogged patience, true–hearted, bending to husband’s will. She never shows rough face. She loves her husband as an obedient servant loves his master. Such is called the servant–like wife.

These are the seven kinds of wives. Out of these seven, the first three: the wife the destroyer, the thievish wife and the tyrannical wife – these three make the family unhappy and become miserable here and hereafter.

The other four kinds: motherly wife, sisterly wife, friendly wife and servant–like wife –these four wives make their families happy and fortunate. Here and hereafter they will be happy and become successful in every aspect.
After explaining these seven kinds of wives the Buddha questioned her, to what kind out of these seven, do you belong? She was convinced. She said “Buddha, after this, I will behave to my husband and this family as a motherly wife, as a sisterly wife as a friendly wife and also as a servant-like wife.”

This instruction of the Buddha brought blessings peace and fortune to the families of his real followers. With regard the ways of living a peaceful and successful family life, the Buddha gave instructions on many occasions. Now I would like to tell how the Buddha categorized married couples into four classes. One day he said:

“There are four kinds of couples living as husband and wife. What four? A female hobgoblin lives together with a male hobgoblin, a female hobgoblin lives together with a male angel, a female angel lives together with a male hobgoblin; and a female angel lives together with a male angel.

In what way does a male hobgoblin live together a female hobgoblin? In this case a husband is a slayer of life, steals, commits adultery, a liar or given to the use of liquor. Such a wicked man lives together with a wife of the same type. This kind of life is called the life lived together by goblin.

How does a male goblin live together with a female angel? If the husband lives an immoral life together with a kind and good-natured wife, it is called being lived together by a male hobgoblin with a female angel.

In what way does a male angel live together with a female hobgoblin? The husband is good-natured and virtuous while the wife is wicked and immoral. This is called the life lived by a male angel along with a female hobgoblin. These three kinds of couples live unhappy and unsuccessful life.

If both the husband and the wife are good-nature, kind and virtuous and live their life loving each other, it is called the life of an angelic couple. The

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Buddha advised every husband and wife to live as an angelic couple.\(^{41}\) That is the life to be lived by a real Buddhist couple. Their family life is an ideal one which invites peace and success here and hereafter.

**Duties of Friends to One Another**

We cannot choose our family but can choose our friends and further that one must always be careful in choosing them. On the subject of friends and associates, the Buddha has also advised His followers to be selective and discriminating in that one should not be found to be associating with undesirable elements that might lead a person to deviate from the proper path taught by the Buddha. Knowing the frailties and weaknesses of human nature, the Buddha realised that there are good and bad elements in a human society and that if we are to remain good Buddhists we should avoid bad company. By being in bad company would mean associating with habitual drunkards and drug addicts, adulterers, gamblers, cheats, people of ill-repute and people who resort to violence on the slightest pretext. Just like rotten an apple that would contaminate the good ones, the rotten apple should be isolated before it begins to do any damage.

While advising His followers to shun evil company, the Buddha also indicated the type of people whom we should cultivate as friends. The classic saying "A friend in need is a friend indeed" describes aptly the qualification of a good friend. A good friend is one who maintains the same respect and cordiality either in success or in failure. A good friend is also one who rejoices at the success of his companion whilst offering sympathy in times of adversity. A good friend is a social asset who should be nurtured and cultivated for mutual well-being and benefit of both parties.

In the choice of our friends, we are asked to exercise care against flatterers, those who try to embellish one's ego in order to gain some benefit. We should also keep a distance from those so-called friends whose words are different from their deeds and those who follow only a "one way traffic" system, that is to receive only, but not to give.

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According to Buddhism the matter of selection of the family into which one is born is closely connected with the karmic effects of previous lives, but the selection of one’s friend clearly depends on circumstances and acts of the present life. A man, who wants to select a friend, must make following observations:

1. A person who gives what is hard to give is a person who has the quality of a good friend. (*duddam̄ ṭadāti*)
2. A person who does what is hard to do is a person who has the quality of a good friend. (*dukkaraṃ karoti*)
3. A person who is forbearing when it is hard to do so is a person who has the quality of a good friend. (*dukkham̄ khamati*)

Furthermore:

1. A person, who is inferior to oneself in morality, concentration and one pointedness of mind and wisdom, should not be followed, served or honoured except for the reason of compassion.
2. A person who is one’s equal in them should be followed since one’s conversation with him would be on these subjects and so conducive to mutual profit and comfort.
3. A person who is superior in them should be follow, served and honoured with reverence since one would increase one’s own virtue and understanding hereby.

In the case when mutual friendship has been established following facts must be maintained:

i. By gift,
ii. by kindly words,
iii. by looking after their welfare,
iv. by treating them like himself, and
v. by keeping his word.

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And there are five ways in which friends and companions will reciprocate:

1. By looking after him when he is inattentive,
2. by looking after his property when he is inattentive,
3. by being a refuge when he is afraid,
4. by not deserting him when he is in trouble, and
5. by showing concern for his children.45

A wise person should recognize such type of friend and be thoroughly devoted to him. He should protect his friend from negligence, must act in friend’s interest, and must be protective to his belongings as well as to his family.

Furthermore, I would like to continue characteristic of a bad friend and a good friend according to pāli text.

**Characteristic of a Bad Friend**

These four should be understood as foes in the guise of friends: first, he who appropriates a friend’s possessions, secondly he who renders lip-service, thirdly he who flatters, fourthly he who brings ruin. Here I will explain respectively.

(1). *Aññadatthuhara* – rapacious person. In four ways, one who appropriates a friend’s possession should be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

i. He appropriates his friend’s wealth,
ii. He gives little and asks much,
iii. He does his duty out of fear,
iv. He associates for his own advantage.46


(2). *Vaciparama* – a man who pays lip-service. In four ways, one who renders lip-service should be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

i. He makes friendly profession as regards the past,

ii. He makes friendly profession as regards the future,

iii. He tries to gain one's favour by empty words,

iv. When opportunity for service has arisen, he expresses his inability.\(^{47}\)

(3). *Anupiya* – flatterer. In four ways, young householder, one who flatters should be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

1. he approves of his friend's evil deeds,

2. he disapproves his friend's good deeds,

3. he praises him in his presence,

4. He speaks ill of him in his absence.\(^{48}\)

(4). *Apayasahāya* – the follow-waster. In four ways, one who brings ruin should be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:

1. he is a companion in indulging in intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness,

2. he is a companion in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours,

3. he is a companion in frequenting theatrical shows,

4. He is a companion in indulging in gambling which causes heedlessness.\(^{49}\)

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Buddhism prescribes that such friends should be avoided as one avoids a dangerous road.

**Characteristic of a Good Friend**

These four should be understood as warm-hearted friends: he who is the same in happiness and sorrow, he who gives good counsel, he who sympathizes, and he who is a helpmate.

(1) *Upapakarāka* – the helper. In four ways a helpmate should be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

i. he guards the heedless,
ii. he protects the wealth of the heedless,
iii. he becomes a refuge when you are in danger,
iv. When there are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.50

(2) *Samāna sukadukkha* – the man who is the same in weal and woe. In four ways, one who is the same in happiness and sorrow should be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

1. he reveals his secrets,
2. he conceals one's own secrets,
3. in misfortune he does not forsake one,
4. His life even he sacrifices for one's sake.51

(3) *Attakkhayi* – the man who gives good counsel. In four ways, one who gives good counsel should be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

i. he restrains one from doing evil,

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ii. he encourages one to do good,
iii. he informs one of what is unknown to oneself,
iv. He points out the path to heaven.  

(4). Anukampaka – the man who sympathizes. In four ways, one who sympathises should be understood as a warm-hearted friend:

1. he does not rejoice in one's misfortune,
2. he rejoices in one's prosperity,
3. he restrains others speaking ill of oneself,
4. He praises those who speak well of oneself."  

The selection of friend may not be a matter of free choice in all times. In this peculiar situation one must make a true friend by his own efforts. But, however, if one fails to get a good companion one should continue to walk solitary 'like an elephant in the forest' as a solitary walk is more worthwhile than walking in the company of a fool or wicked companion.

Teacher and Pupil Relationship:

The tie between parents and children is paralleled by that between teachers and pupils. The teacher is second parent to his pupils. He has at his heart the physical, intellectual and spiritual well being of those in his charge. Teacher and pupil relationship is highly valued in Buddhism as the ignorance is counted there as the root cause of human suffering. A teacher is a person who makes free a person from ignorance and also from every type of evil. The prime duty of pupil is to honour and respect his teacher who is always to be held in high esteem. A pupil must be diligent and attentive in absorbing the teaching imparted to him by the teacher.


Without diligence and attentiveness, the pupil would not be able to progress in his studies.

It is also duty of a pupil to render whatever little service he can perform in the class, to be of assistance to the teacher, and to put into actual practice whatever ethical lessons he has learnt from the teacher. A pupil is expected to show at all times politeness in his dealing with his teacher. A teacher is expected to do his utmost in imparting his knowledge to his pupil, as the pupil depends solely on the capability of a teacher. The teacher is expected to be clear and lucid in his explanation so that he can be easily understood by the pupil. Apart from imparting knowledge, the teacher is also expected to guide the pupil in his behavior morally and ethically. Myanmar proverb says, “A bad pupil, blame the teacher. His duty, he is aware, is to mould any pupil into a full man.”

The development of a happy and successful relationship between a pupil and a teacher can be achieved by a kind and gentle approach on the part of the teacher exercising patience, tolerance and understanding. Considering the teacher in southerly direction, the Sinhālovāda Sutta gives five ways in which a pupil should conduct himself towards a teacher and another five in which the teacher should conduct a pupil.

The five duties of pupil towards his teacher are:

i. The people should rise from his seat in salutation to his teacher. He must be always respectful to the teacher.

ii. He should wait for his teacher and try to understand his lessons.

iii. He must have desire to hear his teacher and must be attentive.

iv. He must render his personal services to his teacher and should not miss any occasion to show his obedience.

v. He must be prepared for his lessons thoroughly.54

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The teacher should show his compassion or love to his pupil by following manner:

i. He must teach train him.
ii. He must see that his student grasps all arts and crafts equally and thoroughly.
iii. He must teach his students in a respectful manner.
iv. He must make his students secure in every way including the knowledge of his duties to others of the society and his family.
v. He must provide for their safety in every quarter.55

Aṅguttara Nikāya recognizes five ways of growth, which are the responsibilities of a teacher towards his students:

1. Growth of confidence based on knowledge and personal experience (Saddhā).
2. Growth of morality (Śīla).
3. Growth of learning (Sutta).
4. Growth in practices of giving-up things or generosity (Cāga).
5. Growth in wisdom (Paññā).56

In Myanmar tradition the teaching by father or mother is more superior to that of professional teacher. A father or mother, therefore, may tell the doctrine of Dhamma and stories to his son or to daughter. That's why we say “the first teachers of children are their parents.”

In Buddhism, a teacher, who is kalyānamitta, teaches Dhamma to his pupil and shows that path of perfection. The Buddha himself gave “pavajja” to his son Rāhulā.


Relation with Employer and Employee:

The employer in his relationship with his servant should be generous and not stingy. The employer should treat his servant as a human being needing sympathy and understanding. He should not be cruel and domineering in dealing with his servant. By being kind and gentle to the servant, the employer would evoke better and happier responses than by being harsh and demanding.

The employer, being a person of superior standing and intelligence, should indicate by word and action that he is a gentleman in every sense of the word and should not ill-treat his servant in any way. The servant, in his relationship with the employer should always be humble, respectful and polite. He should carry out his duties diligently, irrespective of whether the employer is present or otherwise. He should take good care of the employer’s property in a small manner as guarding his own. A servant should not speak ill of his employer but should hold the employer in high regard. Mutual respect between an employer and employee should promote a peaceful and harmonious working atmosphere for the benefit of all concerned.

According to *Sīṅgālovāda Sutta* an employer should conduct himself towards his servants or employees in the following manner:

1. Master should arrange the work of an employee according to his strength and capability.
2. He must provide his servant/employee with food and salary.
3. He must look after his employee/servants when they are sick.
4. He must share occasional food and other things with them.
5. He must give them leave at times.⁵⁷

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In return a servant/ employee must:

1. Rise before the masters rises.
2. Go to rest after his master rest.
3. Take what is given to him.
4. Work well and honestly.
5. Establish a good reputation for his master.\(^58\)

Several important feature stand out in the detailed description of mutual relation set out in the above passage. It begins with the micro-unit of the society, namely, the family. Without harmonious and healthy families there cannot be a healthy society. The mutual responsibilities of the parents and children include not only looking after and nurturing one another, but also taking care of their moral and religious welfare. The pursuit of the happiness and welfare of oneself and others, the foundation of the Buddha’s moral philosophy, is inculcated in every form of relationship, whether it be between parents and children, husband and wife, teacher and pupil, religious and laypersons, master and servant, or among friends. Benevolence and compassion are the most important sentiments inspiring each person’s behavior.

**Advice to Lay People**

Immoral action absolutely leads to inner tension, anxiety and worry. The following principles will really bring many advantages to all lay people in the present life as well as hereafter. Therefore the Buddha advises to his lay people as follows:

What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue?

i. indulgence in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness;

ii. sauntering in streets at unseemly hours;

iii. frequenting theatrical shows;
iv. indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness;
v. association with evil companions;
vi. The habit of idleness.59

There are six evil consequences in indulging in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness:

1. loss of wealth,
2. Increase of quarrels,
3. Susceptibility to disease,
4. Earning an evil reputation,
5. Shameless exposure of body,
6. Weakening of intellect.60

There are six evil consequences in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours:

i. He himself is unprotected and unguarded,
ii. His wife and children are unprotected and unguarded,
iii. His property is unprotected and unguarded,
iv. He is suspected of evil deeds,
v. He is subject to false rumours,
vi. He meets with many troubles.61


There are six evil consequences in frequenting theatrical shows: "He is ever thinking:

1. Where is there dancing?
2. Where is there singing?
3. Where is there music?
4. Where is there recitation?
5. Where is there playing with cymbals?
6. Where is there pot-blowing?\(^{62}\)

There are six evil consequences in indulging in gambling:

i. The winner begets hate,
ii. The loser grieves for lost wealth,
iii. Loss of wealth,
iv. His word is not relied upon in a court of law,
v. He is despised by his friends and associates,
vi. He is not sought after for matrimony; for people would say he is a gambler and is not fit to look after a wife.\(^{63}\)

There are six evil consequences in associating with evil companions, namely: any gambler, any libertine, any drunkard, any swindler, any cheat, and any rowdy is his friend and companion.

There are six evil consequences in being addicted to idleness: "He does not work, saying:

1. that it is extremely cold,
2. that it is extremely hot,


3. that it is too late in the evening,
4. that it is too early in the morning,
5. that he is extremely hungry,
6. That he is too full.⁶⁴

**Lokapāla Dhamma**

The Buddha considered moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*) as the guardians of the world. To feel ashamed to do evil is *hiri*; dread or fear to do evil is *ottappa*. *Hiri* is evident in those who value their honour and dignity. *Ottappa* is evident in those who respect their parents, teachers, friend and relatives. *Hiri* and *ottappa* are supposed to be two great wealth one could possess. Theses protect you from immorality putting restraints on sons from misconduct with mothers as well as on brothers from committing sin with sisters. They are regarded, therefore, as two great guardians of the world —*Lokapāla Dhamma*, protecting you from immorality. So they are pure and wholesome ideals, known also as "*Sukkha Dhamma*." These two *Dhammas* keep human beings in moral discipline and moral restraint that distinguish them from animals.

Without *hiri* and *ottappa*, mankind will sink into evil depths and be reduced to the state of animals. Today many people are void of moral shame and moral dread so that they dress, eat and behave indecently. If this moral decay continues to proliferate, the world will soon end in complete ruin. For mankind will then turn into animals. That is why the Buddha said in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* as follow:

*Bhikkhus*, these two morally good things protect the world. What two? Shame and regret. *Bhikkhus*, if these two morally good things did not protect the world, people would not know the mother or the stepmother

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⁶⁴ Ibid. Siṅgālovāda Sutta. P.T.S, vol.-II, p. 149. (atisānti kammaṁ na karoti, atiūhantī kammaṁ na karoti, atisāyantī kammaṁ na karoti, atipātō'ṭi kammaṁ na karoti, atichāto'smiṁī kammaṁ na karoti, atidhāto'smiṁī kammaṁ na karoti. Tassa evam kiccapadesahulassa viharato anuppanna ceva bhogā nūppajjanti, uppannā ca bhogā parikkhayaṁ gacchanti.)
or the aunt, or the teacher's wife, as the teacher's wife. There is a difference in the world unlike among goats, fowl, pigs, dogs, and foxes. Since these two morally good things protect the world, people know the mother, the stepmother, the aunt, or the teacher's wife as the teacher's wife.65

Others instances of *hiri* and *ottappa* are fear of court and judges, reluctance to visit the lavatory while travelling, fear of dogs, fear of ghosts, fear of unknown place, fear of opposite sex, fear of elders and parents, fear of speaking in the presence of elders, etc. These are not genuine fear or shame. Indeed they are mere lack of nerve or confidence, a collection of unwholesome states propelled by *domanassa*.

Fruitless boldness, disrespect and vain courage are undesirable; one should be bold and fearless only in doing good deeds. Excess of shame and fear are equally undesirable. There is a middle path for all to follow. One is not to be fearless in circumstance that one should have fear; and one should fear evil deeds. The Buddha said, "Most people fear what should not be feared and become fearless of what should be feared—abhaye bhayanti, bhayadassino, bhaye ca bhayadassino.66 and those beings who are ashamed of what should not be ashamed of, who are not ashamed of what should be ashamed of—Alajjitaye lajjanti, lajjitaye na lajjare."67

**The Thirty Eight Blessings—Blessing to the World**

In the earth, there are treasures such as silver, gold, precious stones, etc., but only those with knowledge of mining are successful in digging them. Just like these treasures in the earth, there are treasures, spiritual treasures which may be enjoyed by all people in all places; unlike the earthly treasures, these treasures are inexhaustible. They can be used in many ways. Those, who practise these blessing will never be defeated by enemies, by practising them they can reach the state of happiness and

66 Dhammapada, verse, 317.
67 Ibid, verse, 316.
peace. The *sutta* brings about grace and blessing to those who practise them and to the world. The thirty eight blessings are the basic social virtues and these need for the ideal functioning of a social order.

The **Maṅgala**⁶⁸ sutta—blessings were preached in ten stanzas in *Khuddaka Nikāya*. The *sutta* is very influence on Myanmar people. In Myanmar tradition, therefore, when we meet each other, we usually greet “*Mangalābā*” like Bangali people greet each other “*Namashaka*”.

The first blessing is “*Aṣevanā ca Bālānaṃ*—Not to associate with fools.”⁶⁹ Fools does not understand discipline and always leads hi friends to evil ways and teaches them to do wrong because he himself does not know the right way. Fools cause themselves calamites; and endanger not only themselves but also the good people around them and are like fire which cause ruin, misery and distress. If anybody associates with fools, he is apt to follow their ways and thus endangers himself mentally, morally and physically because all troubles or fear arise from foolishness. Even if he does not follow their ways, the mere fact that he associates with them spoils his reputation. That is why the Buddha exhorted this first blessing “Not to associate at all with fools.”

The second blessing is “*Paṇḍitānañca Sevanā*—To associate with the wise.”⁷⁰ The wise know what is moral and immoral and he know truth and untruth, that which is acceptable and unacceptable. He realises that is the cause of this result; this fruit comes out from this cause. The reality of the fact and the consequence is distinctly comprehensible only by the wise. Those who associate with the wise, gained worldly and spiritual treasures. As the leaves of perfume-less trees, when placed with jasmine, emit the jasmine fragrance, those who associate with the wise duly become wise.

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⁶⁸ Maṅgala means whatever removes evil, or whatever is beneficial or whatever is auspicious or whatever gives happiness. In other word all meritorious deeds that lead to the mundane and supermundane happiness are called Maṅgala.


The third blessing is “Puja Ca Pujaneyam —To honour those who are worthy of honour.” There are certain worthy ones who deserve honour, such as Buddha, Dhamma, saṅgha, parents, teachers, elders relatives, aged person, superior, etc. Those who respect the ones worthy of honour in this way will obtain five rewards such as long life, beauty, happiness, good strength and intelligence at the present as well as hereafter.

The fourth blessing is “Paṭirūpadesavāsō ca —To reside in a suitable locality.” People should live in suitable localities either in villages or town; they seek their fortunes, profits and advantages by earning a respectable livelihood in such places. There they will gain good friends and well-wishers, good education good health, merit and good characters, good doctor and good national physician, and they are under charge of a good ruler or good leader. There is a Myanmar saying that where the neighbourhood is good, even a corpse gets a decent burial. So, one should always choose one’s permanent residence very carefully.

The fifth blessing is “Pubbe ca Katapuṇṇatā —To have done meritorious actions in the past.” Those people who have done meritorious actions in the past, gain prosperity and happiness in the present. They are born into noble families. They are brave and fearless in doing right; they act, speak and think rightly. Other people regard them as their leaders.

The sixth blessing is “Attasammāpaṇidhi ca —To set oneself in the right course.” Nature provides a man with physical and mental power. One should use this power in the right direction for the benefit of oneself and others. It enables human beings to develop natural power to the highest states. Iron rusts and destroys itself; in the same way a man is often his own worst enemy.

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The seventh blessing is "Bāhusaccanā -To have vast learning.\textsuperscript{75}"

The primary training of children depends largely on wise parents and guardians. At this stage wise parents and guardians should take every possible care to give suitable moral lessons and general knowledge to their children. These good lessons are essential for their moral and mental uplift. Their progresses are affected by their environments. The secondary stage of training is their school life. Parents or guardians should select good educational institutions where their children may get good education, moral teaching, good discipline and good manners. Further study in a university or college is also of great importance to them, to enable them to undertake greater responsibilities in life. One who has a wise knowledge and good character cannot be misled by wicked people and can gain great fortune and wealth, respect and fame.

The eighth blessing is "Sippanca -Skill in handicrafts."\textsuperscript{76} Art, science and handicrafts are of importance to a man wishing to make himself successful in the worldly life. People should learn important arts, sciences and handicrafts such as agriculture, engineering, commerce, trade, medical and political science, etc., which are congenial to them and which should however be blameless. Those who acquire knowledge of such blameless arts, sciences and handicrafts, can easily find ways and means to earn good livelihood, and thus they enjoy prosperity, happiness and peace of life. The skill acquired in these cannot be stolen. It is a real friend in this life and it gives happiness in next life.

The ninth blessing is "Vinayo ca Susikkhito -A well trained discipline."\textsuperscript{77} Discipline means strict compliance with order and rules laid down for the performance of one’s duties towards one’s nation, family, employers, organization or one’s neighbours, etc. The very essence of good people is good character. To have good habits or a good character means not only refraining mentally, verbally and bodily from committing evil deeds but also doing good and meritorious deeds and it is thus the

essential duty of all good people. So everyone should always observe discipline strictly, performing perfectly all duties required of human beings. Discipline is of great importance in the homes, monasteries, school, and organization and in every society that works for the common good and welfare of the people as a whole or a particular organization.

The tenth blessing is "Subhāsitā ca yā vācā—Pleasant speech." Every pleasant word has its value and power. A pleasant word has influence over other people. It therefore behaves us to choose the right, fruitful, fine, sincere, polite, clear and sweet words in the right places. One, who does this, is love, respected and admire by all wherever one goes. Speak pleasant words and be kind to all beings. Show respect and address politely all people in consonance with their dignity. Do not speak more than is necessary.

The eleventh blessing is "Matāpitu Upatṭhānam—Supporting one's father and mother." In their youth, children should help their parents in house work, including the care of the shrine room and look after them in illness. Girls must help their mothers in the kitchen; wash clothes; clean the furniture and rooms; clean, med, iron and fold parents' clothes and so on. The parents will take pride in their good acts. That home will be blessed with prosperity and happiness, peace and harmony. These are the blessing that will result from serving parents. Dhammapada said "In this world it is good to be dutiful to one's mother; also it is good to be dutiful to one's father."

The twelfth blessing is "Puttadārassa Saṅghaho—Cherishing wife and children." It is natural for a man to have a wife and a lady to have a husband and for them to live together as husband and wife. A good husband must work hard to provide adequately for his family. He must be determined to accumulate saving to provide a house, ornaments and

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80 Dhammapada, verse, 332.
jewelleries for his wife and children but he is morally bound to maintain his family adequately at least with the necessities of life.

The thirteenth blessing is "Anākulā ca Kammantā –Unconfused occupations." Work is of great importance to people. Every person must work to earn his own living. A man who has work will have happiness, health and success in life, as his mind will not turn towards bad thought; and because he will be interested in his work and be fully occupied with it. Every person must be kept busy with some kind of suitable work in any sphere of life. There is a well-known Myanmar saying that labour and effort conquers everything. The occupation which bring one into conflict with others, which involve one in quarrels, disputes, the taking of life, trickery, and subterfuge, are bad. Work should not be disturbing but should be full of tranquilities that the wise would approve and should also be for the general benefit of all living beings.

The fourteenth blessing is "Dānaṅca –Liberality." The basis of charity is goodwill to the need. There are four kinds of charity: Offering of food, of cloths, of shelter and of medicine. Charity given in fear or for fame and flattery, promotion, vanity etc, is not charity in the true sense of the term. True charity knows no distinction of class or creed, but is to all. In other words, it is true charity that offers in the spirit of pure love, compassion and service of the need and of humanity. Charity should be given also to society whose activities are for the common good of the people, e.g. dispensaries, hospitals, free schools and free libraries and beneficial to the general public. So those who intend to offer charity, either in the form of money or in kind, should do so wisely. Otherwise, the charity will not bring them as much happiness as they would desire but will instead be a mere waste of money and effort.

The fifteenth blessing is "Dhammacariyā ca –Righteous conduct." Anyone may practise any part of the Dhamma, such as concentration of mind, meditating on the nature of calmness and insight, precepts etc.

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Practising of the *Dhamma* is called *Dhammacariya* blessing. To live in righteousness is practising the *Dhamma*. Lay people should live under the moral teachings which concern them, such as observing the five, eight or ten noble precepts, the duties of lay people, the universal logic, philosophy of righteousness and the sense of the universal taught by the Buddha in Discourse and *Abhidhamma*.

The sixteenth blessing is “*Ṇātakānañca Saṅgho* —The helping of relatives.”85 All people are morally obliged to love and care for their relatives, providing the needy with necessities, such as clothes, food or monetary help. No doubt charity begins at home but some rich people show their poor relatives ill-feeling and avoid them. They have no desire to support these relatives in their needs. As such, ill-feeling may arise between these relatives and them and eventually the relationship between them ceases. This is the reality in this wicked world. It is duty of all help their poor relatives in four ways:

1. To give them some help in the form of food, clothes, money, etc.
2. To talk to them in a gentle manner.
3. To render them every possible service.
4. To treat them as equals.

The seventeenth blessing is *Anavajjāni Kammāni* —Blameless actions.86 Any kind of work or profession, however humble in its nature, which is neither criminally nor morally offensive is called blameless work. Even in such works as commercial trading, cultivating farms, rendering service in the various civil departments of a country, working in business firms and factories and one’s own profession, one should be sincere, true and honest and do blameless actions. In this world there are many kinds of blameful actions or transactions, which are criminally or morally offensive, such as trafficking in arms, in living beings in flesh, in intoxicants, in poison and trading dishonestly. Those who carry on blameless actions are loved and respected by all and at the same time, they enjoy a great deal of the advantages and happiness in this world.

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The eighteenth and nineteenth blessing is “Aratī Viratī Pāpā – To cease and abstain from evil.” There are certain evil actions which people must refrain in thought, in speech and action. They are the ten evil deeds: three of mind, four of speech and three of the body. The evils of body are: killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The four evils speeches are: lying, slandering, harsh speech and frivolous talk. The three evils of mind are: covetousness, ill-will and false view. Many people are very weak and are unable to resist temptations, for the power of evils is so great that they find themselves unable to refrain from doing evil. It is easy to do evil and for the greater part of the mind to indulge in evil. There is Myanmar saying that “To refrain from committing an evil action is easy until temptation is faced.”

The twentieth blessing is “Majjapānā ca Saṁyamo – Abstention from intoxicating drinks.” All kinds of intoxicating liquor or opium, hemp, ganja and other such drug which stupefy and render one insensible are included. The habit of taking intoxicants is the most dangerous and the most ruinous in the world. One may spoil and impair one’s health. Quarrelling, fighting and disputing may result. The body of a drug taker is full of diseases and he disfigures himself and makes himself repulsive. He commits that which he should not commit. He does not escape from the result of his misdeed. He suffers physical damage; he is lost spiritually and he is open to reproach, dishonour and to the due processes of law.

The twenty first blessing is “Appamādo Ca Dhammesu – Diligence in virtue.” Ignorance is the cause of our journey in saṁsāra. Human beings born under this cloud are naturally ignorant and can distinguish good from evil. Thus they should try to cultivate steadfastness so that they may not lead themselves into errors and delusion by being forgetful of the Dhamma. In worldly affairs, they should be steadfast in their professions; otherwise their work may be accomplished but imperfectly. That they may avoid disappointment and misfortune in their life, they should train themselves to

keep their mind concentration, they must carry out their task with interest and attention.

The twenty second blessing is “Gāravo ca –Reverence.” There are many forms of reverence that should be shown to a person who is worthy of it. Reverence is another name of culture. It is of great value to a man in his social life. It is included in courtesy or good manners. It is a way to success for a man in the world. It wins the love, favour and goodwill of others. So everyone should show respect and veneration to those deserving of reverence because of age, character, wisdom, virtue, etc., or associations, either by words or bodily sings. In other words, everyone should show reverence by words or gesture to those who are more deserving than themselves in age or position etc., at all times. That’s why Dhammapada said like this “For one who habitually honour and respects elders, four things increases, viz., age, beauty, bliss and power.”

The twenty third blessing is “Nivātho ca–Humility.” Men are generally creatures of pride, which is the opposite of humility. It seems natural for men not to want to be of humble position. Envy and jealousy being part of human nature, a rich man of high birth and good education may be disliked and slandered. One must realise one’s worth and not be flattered by another’s praise or made abject by another’s belittling of one’s self. There is a saying in Myanmar that a dragon must show its crest so as to make others know that he is a dragon only when there is need. One should be humble but not abject. One should not take pride in one’s accomplishments and one should not be open to flattery.

The twenty fourth blessing is “Santuṭṭhi ca –Contentment.” Contentment means satisfaction with what one has, or to be without craving. A man of contentment can live on simple food and wear simple clothes without longing for expensive food, fine clothes and gold and jewels, which are beyond his reach. He does not grieve for that which

91 Dhammapada, verse, 109.
cannot be obtained with ease. He can face hardship and misfortune in a spirit of calm resignation. There is little difference between riches and poverty to a man contented with life. He is not trouble or anxious or worried about his past, his present or his future. Contented with his lot, he passes his day in peace and happiness. But one should try to understand the difference between content and apathy.

The twenty fifth blessing is “Kataññutā –Gratitude.” Gratitude means the awareness of one’s obligation to another person who has previously done some act of kindness towards one. Even as a debtor may free himself from his creditor by repaying the debt owed, so in the same way a man may free himself from the obligations of gratitude to another by some such similar act of kindness. Even then, he should always be aware of the kindness shown to him. We are always indebted to someone, and we should always be ready to repay our debts if not in material things but at least in loving thought. We should be aware of our debts of gratitude and repay them to be assured of a happy life in this existence and the next. Awareness of the obligations of gratitude gives a sense of pleasure both to the debtor and creditor, and is the basic foundation for mutual goodwill and friendship between men. The Buddha once said that “it is very rare to find people who possess the feeling of gratitude”. In Āṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha said,

“Dveme bhikkhave puggalā dullabhā lokasmiṃ. Katame dve: yo ca pubbakārī, yo ca kataññuta katavedi. Ime kho bhikkhave dve puggalā dullabhā lokasaminī” (Bhikkhus, these two persons are rare in the world. Which two? The one who acts thoughtfully and the one who has gratitude and returns the gratitude.) A person, who has gratitude and returns it, is rare in the world.

The twenty sixth blessing is “Kālena Dhammasavanaṃ –The opportune hearing of the Dhamma.” All human beings are worldly and in

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the pursuit of material wealth, they forget or overlook the need to listen and practise the law of Dhamma. Even during the lifetime of the Buddha, the people were so occupied in worldly matters and interest that they had little or no time to listen to the Dhamma. To be born over again as human beings in the world is difficult and more difficult is the opportunity to hear the fundamental Truth (Dhamma). And it is still more difficult to practise it. Therefore everyone should hear Dhamma at all opportune times and as frequently as possible.

The twenty seventh blessing is "Khanti ca - Patience." Patience is another virtue taught by the Buddha. Patience is one virtue which everyone should practise as much as he can. It is first step to success in life. Patience is a great asset in daily human relations. To lose patience is to lose sound commonsense and judgement. And so one loses all while other profit. Patience is in everyone's hearts. For those who practise patience will be loved and respected by all persons; they overcome anger and thereby they are free from its resultant disasters. They enjoy peace of mind, peaceful sleep, peaceful death and eternal happiness thereafter. It may be mentioned here that Buddhism lays a special stress on the necessity of practising this noble virtue.

The twenty eighth blessing is "Sovacassata - Obedience." Obedience here means to be amenable to the good advice and wise counsels given by others to one in the spirit of love and goodwill. It is natural that some men are born with a stubborn heart. Naturally their heart is hard and obstinate; however difficult may be their problems, they do not easily accept or welcome the good advice that is given by their parents, teachers, elderly people and good friends. Their heart is not soft and mild even when good advice is given for their own good and welfare.

The twenty ninth blessing is "Samana ca Dassanam - Seeing the Samanas (holy men)." Some samanas or holy persons live in village and towns; they learn the holy doctrine and study the profound nature of truth.

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in them. They become spiritually rich, eventually. They are happy in the destruction of passion; their mind is calm and pure. They lead the life of simplicity, purity and holiness. In this world, the affairs of men are many and so their requirements are also many. Hence their thought is mostly occupied with secular things. In due time, their mind is full of care and anxiety. At that time they would like to visit their spiritual guides. When they are fortunate to see these holy ones, they feel a profound calmness, peace and solace that radiate from the holy ones. And they feel refreshed and renewed, for the mysterious nature of the holy ones touches the deepest seat of their heart. So lay-people should go to see those holy saints and sages living in seclusion in the hilly regions or in deep forests so as to make themselves happy and peaceful. And thus, their visit to the holy ones brings about the change of a new life and they happily live in a new world.

The thirtieth blessing is "Kālena Dhammasākacca (taking part in) Religious discussions at proper times." Discussion profitable matters are one of the highest blessings. People sometimes place certain problems affecting the common interest before learned and able members of societies or organizations. Thus they find ways and means of solution to the problem and overcome difficulties in complicated matters. Some questions, which seem impossible to settle, may be finally settled through discussion by a group of persons. Problems affecting the interest of the whole world may be satisfactorily settled through discussion.

By discussing freely, difficulties, misunderstandings and doubts that may arise in social, political, religious and other problems may be removed. Discussion must be based on facts, honestly and sincerity; care should be taken not to discuss subjects with self-interest in view. Harsh and abusive language, anger and pride must be avoided. Everybody present may state their personal views briefly and without conceit. Thus they may arrive at a right solution to the problem.

The thirty-first blessing is “Tapo ca – Self-control.” Self-control means the strict observance of moral precepts and the seeking of truth leading to the cessation of pain and sorrow, birth and death in the wheel of saṁsāra. The power of self-control is of paramount importance, and may be observed while fulfilling domestic duties. People can lead a simple and contented life, their minds always watchful over sensual objects. As lovers of justice and fair play, always on the side of truth and always faithful to themselves as well as others, they should deal with others honestly and fairly in their social life. And consequently they led a life of purity in this world.

The thirty-second blessing is “Brahmacariyañca – Holy life” Holy life means to abstain from all sensual pleasures. The greatest sin is to enjoy oneself with other person’s spouse. The advantages of abstaining from sensual pleasures are numerous. In life, these people have sound health and they do not look as old as they are. They are free from worries and cares of families and they have many other pleasant things. There are many people in life who are unable to abstain from sensual pleasures. They face with quarrels, rape cases and sometimes they even commit suicide. So after death, these people have to go to hell only.

The thirty-third blessing is “Ariyasaccanadassanañ ap – Perception of the Noble Truths.” The four noble truths are called Ariya sacca as they are the attributes of holy ones who are able to walk in the path that leads to highest peace. The whole teaching of the Buddha is based on the foundation of Truth. Dhamma is truth. I have already discussed about these in chapter two.

The thirty-four blessing is “Nibbānasacchikiriya ca – The realisation of Nibbāna.” The doctrine of Nibbāna is very difficult to realize. It is very difficult for a person to explain the real nature of Nibbāna. So far as our little knowledge goes, it is the profound element of great peace beyond this condition.
earthly pleasure; it is the highest state of purity of the mind. One who attains this state can feel the Nibbānic bliss. It cannot be expressed in worlds, thought or in any form of similes. Nibbāna also was talked about in the chapter two.

The thirty-fifth is blessing “Phutthassa Lokadhammehi Cittam Yassa Na Kampati –He whose mind is unshaken by contact with worldly conditions.”\textsuperscript{106} The four pairs of worldly conditions –gain and loss, success and defeat, praise and blame, pleasure and pain, exist in this world. Four of them are good for mankind and the rest are bad. All the people in this world will have to experience these eight worldly conditions.

\textbf{The Eight Worldly Conditions}

This ill-balanced world is not absolutely rosy. Nor is it totally thorny. The rose is soft, beautiful and fragrant. But the stem on which it grows is full of thorns. What is rosy is rosy; what is thorny is thorny. Because of the rose one will not meddle with the thorns nor will one disparage the rose on account of the thorns. To an optimist this world is absolutely rosy; to a pessimist this world is absolutely thorny. But to a realist this world is neither absolutely rosy nor absolutely thorny. It abounds with beautiful roses and prickly thorns as well, from a realistic standpoint.

An understanding person will not be infatuated by the beauty of the rose but will view it as it is. Knowing well the nature of the thorns, he will view them as they are and will take the precaution not to be wounded. Like the pendulum that perpetually turns to the right and left, four desirable and undesirable conditions prevail in this world which everyone, without exception, must perforce face in the course of one’s lifetime. They are gain (lābha) and loss (alābha), fame (yasa) and defame (ayasa), praise (pasarpsa) and blame (nindā), happiness (sukha) and pain (dukkha).\textsuperscript{107}

Gain and Loss

Business men, as a rule, are subject to both gain (*lābha*) and loss (*alābha*). It is quite natural to be complacent in obtaining a gain or a profit. In itself there is nothing wrong. Such righteous or unrighteous profits produce some pleasure which average men seek. Without pleasurable moments, though temporary, life would not be worth living. In this competitive and chaotic world rarely do people enjoy some kind of happiness which gladdens their hearts. Such happiness, though material, does conduce to health and longevity.

The problem arises in case of loss. Profits one can bear smilingly but not so the losses. More often than not they lead to mental derangement and sometimes to suicide when the losses are unbearable. It is under such adverse circumstances that one should exhibit moral courage and maintain a balanced mind. All have ups and downs while battling with life. One should always be prepared for the losses in particular. Then there will be less disappointment.

When something is stolen naturally one feels sad. But by becoming sad one would not be able to retrieve the loss. One should think that someone had benefited thereby though unrighteously. May he be well and happy! Or one can console oneself thinking—“it’s only a minor loss.” One may even adopt a highly philosophical attitude “there is nothing to be called Me or Mine.”

Fame and Defame

Fame (*yasa*) and defame (*ayasa*) are another pair of inevitable worldly conditions that confront us in the course of our daily lives.

Fame we welcome, defame we dislike. Fame gladdens our mind, defame disheartens us. We desire to become famous. We long to see our names and pictures appear in the papers. We are greatly pleased when our activities, however insignificant, are given publicity. Sometimes we seek undue publicity too.

To see their picture in a magazine some are ready to pay any amount. To obtain an honour some are prepared to offer any bribe or give
a fat donation to the party in power. For the sake of publicity some exhibit their generosity by giving alms to one hundred monks and even more, but they may be totally indifferent to the sufferings of the poor and the needy in the neighbourhood. One may charge and punish a starving person who, to appease his hunger, were to steal a coconut in his garden, but would not hesitate to present thousand coconuts to get a good name.

These are human frailties. Most people do even a good action with an ulterior motive. Selfless persons who act disinterestedly are rare in this world. Even if the motive is not very praiseworthy, those who do any good are to be congratulated on having done a beneficial act. Most worldlings have something up their sleeves. Well, who is hundred percent good? How many are perfectly pure in their motives? How many are absolutely altruistic?

We need not hunt after fame. If we are worthy of fame, it will come to us unsought. The bee will be attracted to the flower, laden with honey. The flower however, does not invite the bee. True indeed, we feel naturally happy, nay extremely happy, when our fame is spread far and wide. But we must realize that fame, honour and glory only lead to the grave. They vanish in thin air. Empty words are they, though pleasing to the ear.

What about defame? It is not palatable either to the ear or mind. We are undoubtedly perturbed when unkind defamatory words pierce our ears. The pain of mind is still greater when the so-called report is unjust and absolutely false.

Normally it takes years to erect a magnificent building. In a minute or two, with modern devastating weapons, it could easily be demolished. Sometimes it takes years or a lifetime to build up a good reputation. In no long time the hard-earned good name can be ruined. Nobody is exempt from the devasting remark beginning with the infamous “but”. Yes, he is very good, he does this and that, but... His whole good record is blackened by the so-called “but”. You may live the life of a Buddha, but you will not be exempt from criticism, attacks and insults.
Praise and Blame

Praise (pasamsā) and blame (ninda) are two more worldly conditions that affect mankind. It is natural to be elated when praised and to be depressed when blamed.

Amidst praise and blame, the Buddha says, the wise do not exhibit either elation or depression. Like a solid rock that is not shaken by the wind they remain unmoved. Praise, if worthy, is pleasing to the ears; if unworthy, as in the case of flattery, though pleasing, it is deceptive. But they are all sounds which have no effect if they do not reach our ears. From a worldly standpoint a word of praise goes a long way. By praising a little a favour can easily be obtained. One word of merited praise is sufficient to attract an audience before one speaks. If, at the outset, a speaker praises the audience, he will have attentive ears. If he criticizes the audience at the outset, the response will not be satisfactory. The cultured do not resort to flattery nor do they wish to be flattered by others. The praiseworthy they praise without any jealousy. The blame worthy they blame not contemptuously but out of compassion with the object of reforming them. Great men are highly praised by the great and small who know them well though they are utterly indifferent to such praise.

What about blame? The Buddha says:—“They who speak much are blamed. They who speak a little are blamed. They who are silent are also blamed. In this world there is none who is not blamed.” Blame seems to be a universal legacy to mankind —porāṇametaṁ Atula, netam ajjatanāmiva, nindanti tuññhimāsinaṁ, nindanti bahubhāninaṁ, mitabhānimpi nindanti, natthi loke anindito.108 There never has been, there never will be, nor is there now, anyone who is always blamed or always praised — Na cāhu na ca bhavissati, na cetarahi vijjati ekantaṁ nindito poso ekantaṁ vā pasamsito.109

The deluded and the wicked are prone to seek only the ugliness in others but not the good and beautiful. None, except the Buddha, is

108 Dhammapada, verse, 227
109 Ibid, verse, 228.
hundred percent good. Nobody is hundred percent bad either. There is evil in the best of us. There is good in the worst of us. He who silences himself like a cracked gong when attacked, insulted and abused, he, I say, the Buddha exhorts, is in the presence of Nibbāna although he has not yet attained Nibbāna. One may work with the best of motives. But the outside world very often misconstrues him and will impute motives never even dreamt of. One may serve and help others to the best of one’s ability sometimes by incurring debt or selling one’s articles or property to save a friend in trouble. But later, the deluded world is so constituted that those very persons whom one has helped will find fault with him, blackmail him, blemish his good character and will rejoice in his downfall.

**Happiness and Pain**

Happiness (sukha) and pain (dukkha) are the last pair of opposites. They are the most powerful factors that affect mankind.

What can be endured with ease is sukha (happiness), what is difficult to bear is dukkha (pain). Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. No sooner is the desired thing gained than we desire some other kind of happiness. So insatiable are our selfish desires. The enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness to an average person. There is no doubt a momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification and recollection of such material pleasures highly priced by the sensualist, but they are illusory and temporary.

Real happiness is found within, and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours or conquests. If such worldly possessions are forcibly or unjustly obtained, or are misdirected, or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow for the possessors. What is happiness to one may not be happiness to another.

Ordinary happiness we welcome, but not its opposite – pain, which is rather difficult to endure. Pain or suffering comes in different guises. We suffer when we are subject to old age which is natural. With equanimity we have to bear the sufferings of old age. More painful than sufferings due to old age are sufferings caused by disease, which, if chronic, we feel that
death is preferable. Even the slightest toothache or headache is sometimes unbearable. When we are subject to disease, without being worried, we should be able to bear it at any cost. Well, we must console ourselves thinking that we have escaped from a still more serious disease.

Very often we are separated from our near and dear ones. Such separation causes great pain of mind. We should understand that all association must end with separation. Here is a good opportunity to practise equanimity. More often than not we are compelled to be united with the unpleasant which we detest. We should be able to bear them. Perhaps we are reaping the effects of our own Kamma, past or present. We should try to accommodate ourselves to the new situation or try to overcome the obstacle by some means or other. Even the Buddha, a perfect being, who has destroyed all defilements, had to endure physical suffering caused by disease and accidents. Amidst gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and blame, happiness and pain, let us try to maintain a balanced mind.

The thirty-sixth blessing is “Asokāṃ – Sorrowless.” Sorrow means pain and grief, lamentation and distress. The real inside cause of sorrow is ignorance and tanhā. Sorrow occurs in many forms and diverse ways; its external causes also are many; it exists everywhere in world; but it may sometimes be unseen. It may affect a person at times on the death of parents and relatives, etc., and loss of property. At such times, no one can escape from the cruel sting of sorrow. When a person meets with such sorrow, he must show calmness, standing up against its painful blow. He should try to remove it somehow by looking into the nature of its cause; life is of sorrow or gladness. But it depends on your effort. To uproot desire or craving completely, so that it may never rise again, is the necessary effort for the final removal of sorrow.

The thirty-seventh blessing is “Virajāṃ – Stainless” To be stainless means to be absolutely pure in mind and body. Take for instance dirt and

dust. All food is spoiled when dust falls on it. Dust and dirt cause ill-health and mar the natural beauty of things. Even as rust spoils a sword, so does dirt and dust spoil most things. A man with an impure mind spoils himself; it darkens him; it stains his morality. Impurity arises from passion, love, lust and defilement. So long as these invisible causes of spiritual impurity are not removed totally from man's mind, then man will not attain knowledge and enlightenment.

The thirty-eighth blessing is “Khemam – Secure”112 The world is full of dangers. They exist in every place. Dangers exist on land, in the air and water; there is no escape from dangers even in the sky. Life itself is a source of danger. Sores, diseases and ailments are inherent in life itself. So, this life is like a den where wild beasts hunt for their prey. And, hence, life is always insecure and unsafe. All living beings are afraid of dangers; they try to get free from them; they seek ceaselessly ways and means of escaping them. They may find the way, which leads to security and safety from dangers, which come to them from the outside of their body and mind.

Those who thus acting are everywhere unconquered, attain happiness everywhere—to them these are the Highest Blessings. (Etāsisāni Katvāna Sabbathamaparājītā Sabbaththa Sothīṃ Gacchanti - Taṃ Tesaṃ Maṅgalamuttamanti)113 The main purpose of above mentioned Mingala sutta is to teach gods and men to follow certain of conduct for their benefit in the present and hereafter till they attain Nibbhāna. Both men and gods should observe in daily life to the best of their ability.

The Cause of Downfall

All householders furthermore should know the cause of downfall, which was preached by the Buddha, in the Parābhava Sutta (the Causes of Loss). It explains that immorality (adhamma) leads one to loss while morality leads to winning or success. The sutta is as follows:

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I. Easily known is the progressive one, easily known is the declining one. A lover of the Dhamma is the progressive one, the hater of Dhamma is the declining one. (suvijāno bhavaṃ hoti. Suvijāno parābhavo. Dhammakamo bhavaṃ hoti. Dhammdessī parābhavo)

II. The vicious are dear to him, with the virtuous he seeks no delight, he approves of the doctrine of the vicious — this is a cause of one's downfall. (asantassa piyā honti, sante na kurute piyam, asatam dhammaṃ rocei, tam parābhavoto mukham.)

III. The man who is sleeping, fond of society and without energy, lazy, given to anger, — that is a cause of loss. (niddāsīli sabhāsīti, anṭṭhātā ca yo naro, alaso kodhapīñano, tam parābhavoto mukham.)

IV. Being rich, he does not support mother or father who are old or past their youth — that is a cause of loss. (yo mātarm pitarm vā, Jinnakam gatayobbanam, pahu santo na bhariti, tam parābhavoto mukham.)

V. He who by falsehood deceive a monk and Brahman or ascetic or any other mendicant — that is a cause of loss. (yo brāhmaṇam samanam vā, aññam vāpi vanībakaṃ, musāvādena vañceti tam parābhavoto mukham.)

VI. The man who is possessed of much property, who has gold and food, (and still) enjoys alone his delicacies — that is a cause of loss. (Pahūtavitto puriso, sahiraṇo sabhojano, iko bhūjatī sāduni, tam parābhavoto mukham.)

VII. The man who is proud of his birth, of his wealth, and of his family, despises his relatives — that is a cause of loss. (Jātittadhdo dhanaṭṭhaddho, gottatthaddho ca yo naro, saññātiṃ atimaññeti, tam parābhavoto mukham.)

VIII. The man who is addicted to women, to intorxicants, to dice and squanders whatever he possesses — that is a cause of loss. (itthidhutto surādhutto, akkhadhutto ca naro, laddham laddham vināseti tam parābhavoto mukham.)

IX. He is not satisfied with his own wife, is seen with courtesans and the wives of others — that is a cause of loss. (sehi dārehi asantuṭṭho
vesiyāsu padussati, dussati paradāresu, tāṃ parābhavoto mukham.)

IV. The man who, past his youth, brings home a woman with breasts like persimmon fruit, and for jealousy of her cannot sleep that is a cause of loss. (Atītayobbano poso, ānehi timbarutthanim, tassā issā na supati, tāṃ parābhavoto mukham.)

V. Who, so born in a warrior family with little wealth but full of carving, desires a kingdom — that is a cause of loss. (Itthim sonḍhim vikiranim, purisam vāpi tādisam, issariyasmim thapeti, tāṃ parābhavoto mukham.)\(^{114}\)

**Suggestion for Healthy Life**

Health is the level of functional or metabolic efficiency of a living organism. Better health is central to human life. It also makes an important contribution to longer life. When we are talking of health, it is not just about healthy body but about sound mental health. Good health can be described the condition where both our body as well as our mind are functioning properly. The main cause behind poor health conditions are diseases, improper diet, injury, mental stress, lack of hygiene, unhealthy lifestyle, etc. Our lifestyle has changed and we often tend to ignore the importance of healthy living in one way or the other.

The Buddha said, "ārogyā paramā labhā= health is the greatest gift\(^{115}\) and health, beauty, happiness, status and heaven are rare in the world. You cannot get these things through prayer as well as wish."\(^{116}\) It is not right for the good person who desires health to pray for it. Instead, the good person who desires health should walk the path of practice leading to healthy life. Here are some of the Buddha’s suggestions for the healthy life. The Buddha


\(^{115}\) Dhammapada, verse, 204.

taught the cause of long life and short life in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* in as follows:

These five things are for short life. What five?

i. Doing the unsuitable, *(asappāya kārī hoti)*

ii. Not knowing the measure for the suitable, *(sappāye mattaṁ na jānāti)*

iii. Partaking unsuitable food, *(apariṇātabhojī ca hoti)*

iv. Going out at untimely hours *(akālacāri ca hoti)* (or becoming unvirtuous),

v. Leading an unchaste life. *(abrahmacāri)* (Associating with evil friends.)

These five things are for long life. What five?

1) Doing the suitable, *(sappāya kārī hoti)*

2) knowing the measure for the suitable. *(sappāye mattaṁ jānāti)*

3) Partaking suitable food, *(pariṇātabhojī ca hoti)*

4) not going out at timely hours *(kālacāri ca hoti)* (or becoming virtuous)

5) leading a chaste life *(brahmacāri hoti)* (associating with good friends.)

When we are in old age, our body is weak to digest food. We have to choose food according to our age. Porridge is digestible for old age. In Myanmar, rice porridge is called "San Byok", literally "boiled rice". It is very thing and plain, often made with just rice and water, but sometimes with chicken or pork stock and served with a simple garnish of chopped spring onions and crispy fried onions. As in other Asian countries, rice porridge is considered food for the unwell. Porridge improves digestion, reduces high blood cholesterol and helps prevent heart disease. It is also relief from constipation. If we have porridge, our life is so comfortable with nature. Here is the Buddha’s suggestion for the benefit of having porridge.

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These five are the benefits of drinking porridge.

a) Hunger is appeased, (*khuddaṁ paṭihanati*)
b) thirst is appeased, (*pipāsaṁ paṭivineti*)
c) the winds behave accordingly, (*vātaṁ anulometi*)
d) the bladder gets washed out, (*vatthiṁ sodheti*)
e) the digested gets pushed out. (*āmāvasesaṁ pāceti*)

Another is ‘the awareness of proportion or limit’ (*bhojane mattaṅṅūtā*). One should have a sense of proportion or balance. With regard to food, the Buddha degrades gluttony in enjoyments. King *Kosala* is glutton and once the king approached the Buddha. At that time, the king was full, huffing and puffing. Having understood that situation, the Buddha said like that “when a man is always mindful, knowing moderation in the food he eats, his ailments then diminish; he ages slowly, guarding his life.”

In our body, the mouth is also important part to subsist life. If we don’t clean properly our mouth, our teeth will damage. To be subsistence, we must protect our teeth from damage. Tooth brushing is a form of hygiene. Modern medical research has shown that brushing teeth properly can prevent cavities and periodontal or gum disease which causes at least one-third of adult tooth loss. If teeth are not brushed correctly and frequently, it could lead to the calcification of saliva minerals, forming tartar, poor dental health has been associated with heart disease and shortened life expectancy. The Buddha preached the benefit of taking the toothpick. These five are the advantages for brushing the toothpick.

i. It becomes pleasant to the sight, (*cakkhusaṁ*)
ii. the mouth smells, (*mukhaṁ duggandhaṁ na hoti*)

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iii. the taste conductors do not get a cleansing, (*rasaharanīyo
visujjhanti*)

iv. bile and phlegm does not cover up the food, (*pittarīṃ sehmāṃ
bhattam na pariyonandhati*)

v. Food becomes disagreeable to him. (*bhatamassa chādeti*)

Without regular exercise, muscles become smaller and weaker. Exercise is importance for our healthy life. If you want to get longer life, you must be exercise. Walking is the best exercise for the health. Walkers have less incidence of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and other killer diseases. They live longer and get mental health and spiritual benefits. There are benefits for walking. What are they?

1. It hardens one for travelling. (*addhānakkhamo hotī*)
2. It is good for striving. (*padhānakkhamo hoti*)
3. It is healthy. Has few ailments (*appābdho hoti*)
4. Tends to good digestion after one has eaten and drunk, munched and crunched. (*asitam pītaṃ khāyitaṃ sāyitaṃ samma pariṇāmaṃ gacchati*)
5. The concentration won from an alley-walking lasts long. (*caṅkamādhigato Samādhi ciraṭṭhitiko hoti*)

Walking is a key to a long healthy and happy life. These are top ten benefits according to scientists. They are: (1) walker live longer. (2) Walking helps prevent weigh gain. (3) You can walk off weigh. (4) Walking reduces risk of cancer. (5) Walking reduces risk of heart disease and stroke. (6) Walking reduces diabetes risk. (7) Walking boots your brain power. (8) Walking improves mood relieves stress. (9) Walking can prevent erectile. (10) It is easy to get start walking.

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