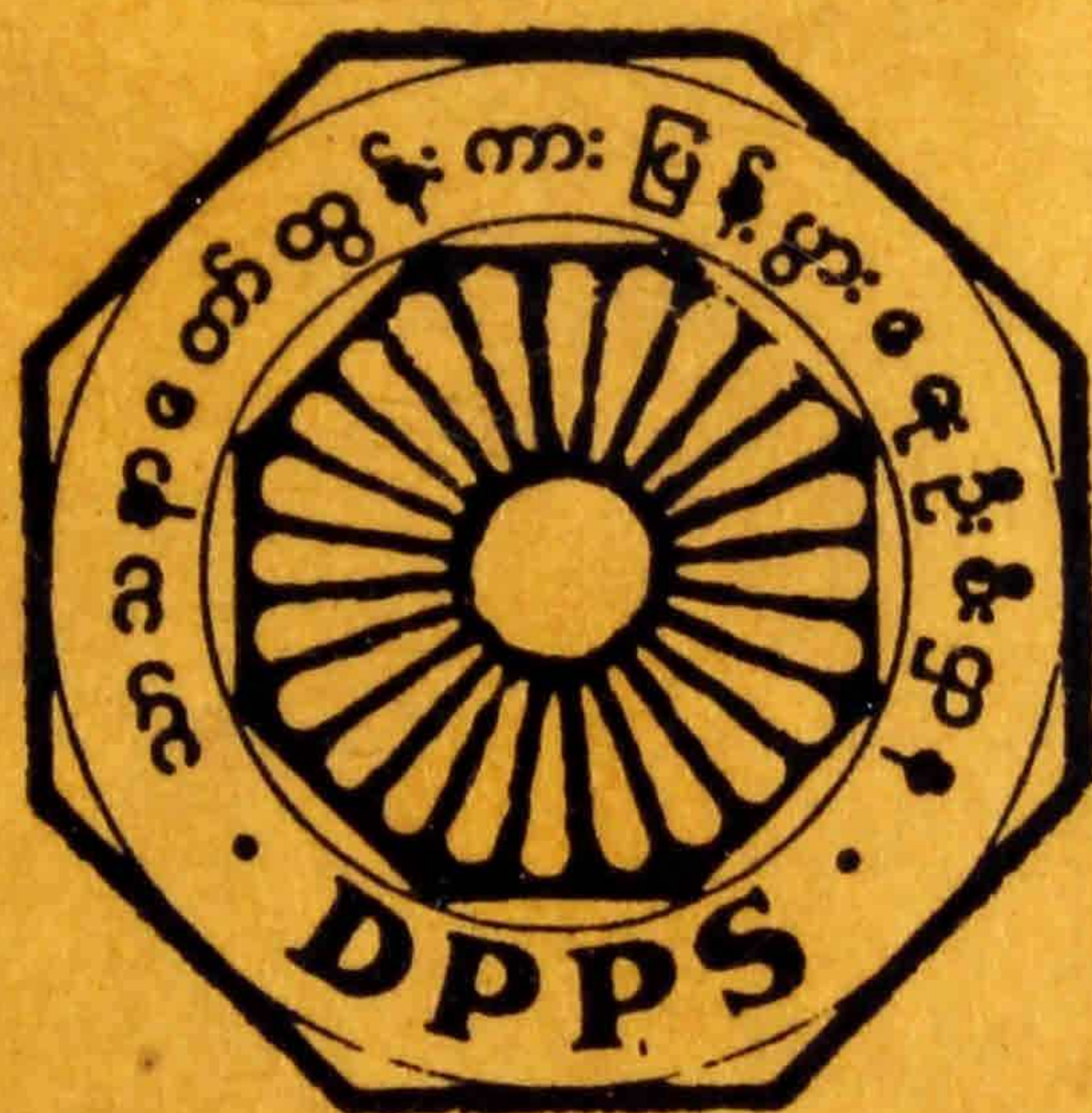


A GUIDE TO THE MAṄGALA SUTTA

by
U KYAW HTUT
Translated
by
DAW MYA TIN



Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sasana

Sasana: 2537

1994

Myanmar Era: 1355

A GUIDE TO THE MAṄGALA SUTTA

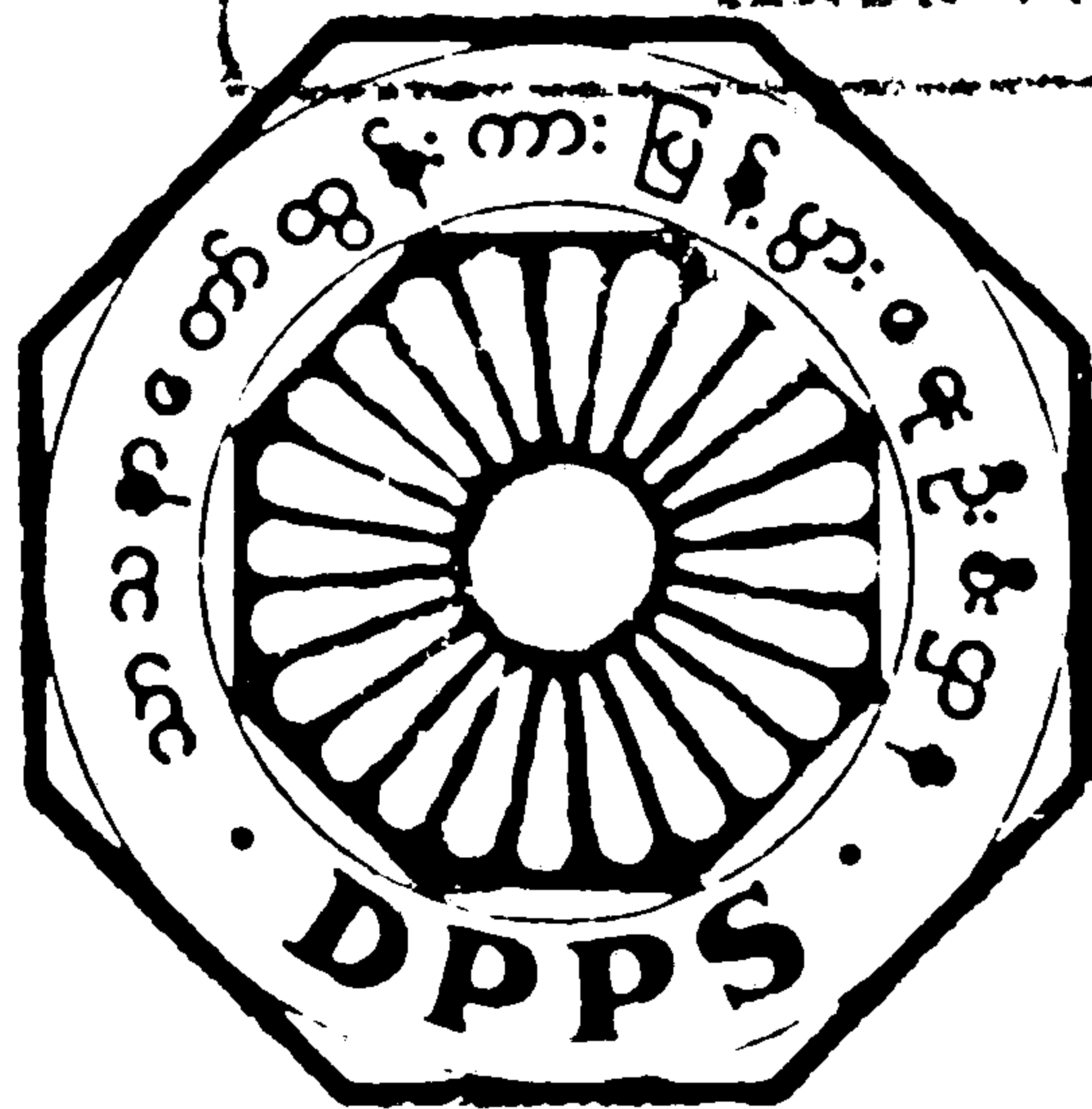
by
U KYAW HTUT

Translated
by

~~DAW MYA TIN~~

Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsana

LIBRARY
Kaba-Aye, Yangon.



Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsana

Sāsana: 2537

1994

Myanmar Era: 1355

Published by
Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsana
January 1994 3000 Copies

The contents of this work may be reproduced or
translated with the prior permission of the
Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsana.

Printed in the Union of Myanmar
at the Pyi Thu Meik Swe Offset by U Kyaw Win
(04900)
186, 39 th St., Kyauktada Township and
published by U Saw Hlyan Htoo
Exemption No. 11/94 (1)

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato
sammāsambuddhassa**

Veneration to the Exalted One,
the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened

The Buddha is an Arahāt and he is worthy of the highest veneration. All beings including devas and brahmās venerate the Buddha because the Buddha is the Supreme One, who has extinguished all defilements, who has become perfectly self enlightened through realization of the Four Ariya Truths, and who is endowed with the six great qualities of glory, namely, *Issariya* (supremacy), *Dhamma* (Knowledge of the Path to Nibbāna), *Yasa* (Fame and following), *Siri* (noble splendour of appearance), *Kama* (power of accomplishment) and *Payatta* (diligent mindfulness).

FOREWORD

Maṅgala

In the days of the Buddha, learned lectures and discussions were held in towns and villages where the lecturers were paid in gold and silver. On one such occasion the topic chosen was, “What is Maṅgala?”

What is Maṅgala?

Is something seen Maṅgala?

Is something heard Maṅgala?

Is something received through the senses Maṅgala?

At that discussion circle a certain person, who considered that Maṅgala means something seen, said:

“I know what Maṅgala is. In this world, maṅgala is seeing something pleasant. When one sees something which is agreeable, that is Maṅgala in what is seen.”

Another person, who took Maṅgala to mean something heard, said:

“I know what Maṅgala is. In the world, maṅgala is hearing something pleasant. When one hears some agreeable sound, that is Maṅgala in what is heard.”

Then another person, who believed Maṅgala to be something tangible, said:

“I know what Maṅgala is. In this world, maṅgala is some pleasant physical sensation. When one experiences some agreeable smell or taste or touch, that is Maṅgala in palpable sensation.”

Those views met the approval of some section of the audience while they were disapproved by others.

No proponent was able to prove that his view was correct. The subject of Maṅgala thus became an unresolved riddle among holders of diverse views.

When the people of the whole of the Southern Island (Jambudīpa) were astir with the discussions on the subject of Maṅgala, the guardian spirits of the various contenders were drawn into the debate. And from them the controversy spread to the upper

celestial realms of devas and brahmās. The matter was even discussed at the assemblies of devas. The question which first arose in this world system came to be taken by denizens of the ten thousand world systems. Twelve years went by and no solution was at hand. Maṅgala remained a reverberating topic, a sensation for those twelve years.

At long last the problem was presented to Sakka, King of the devas. Sakka said, “ You are like someone who ignores a live coal and tries to make fire from out of a glow-worm. Don ’t you know that there is the All-knowing Buddha in the world now?” Having said so, he sent a deva to the Buddha to seek the answer.

The Buddha was at that time staying in Sāvātthī at the Jetavana Monastery donated by Anathapiṇḍika. It was there that at the request of the deva the Buddha expounded the Maṅgala sutta containing thirty-eight principles that can ensure one every success and all kinds of prosperity. The audience at that time was a great congregation of devas and brahmās coming from the ten thousand world systems.

The Propagation of Maṅgala

From the time of the First Great Synod up to the Sixth Great (International) Synod, successive generations of custodians of the Sāsana, who cherish the Sāsana and who are prepared to sacrifice for the Sāsana, have preserved the Maṅgala sutta which is a priceless boon to the world. And among those noble personages that belong to the line of preservers of the Maṅgala sutta Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut is one. Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut is a scholar of recognized standing in the Pitaka, the traditional learning of the Theravāda School, and has been earlier awarded the titles of Sāsanadhaja siripavara dhammācariya and Sakyasīha dhammācariya. He has been actively engaged in the service of the Sāsana, with the sole aim of prolonging and spread of the Teaching, by translating the Buddha's words into the vernacular, and by teaching various classes organized for spreading the Maṅgala message throughout the world. It was in recognition of his dedicated service, lasting over forty years, to the cause of the national heritage and the Sāsana that the State Law and Order Restoration Council conferred on him the distinguished title of Mahā saddhammajotikadhaja

on Thursday, the 21st November, 1991 (the full moon day of Tazaungmon, 1353 Myanmar Era).

This book entitled “ A Guide to The Maṅgala Sutta” which was originally a series of lectures in Myanmar language by Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut has been translated into English by Daw Mya Tin and is published by the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana in the sincere hope that the reading public of the world will be greatly benefited by it both here and in the hereafter.

Sann Lwin

Director-General

The Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsana,
Yangon, MYANMAR.

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato
sammāsambuddhassa**

**Veneration to the Exalted One, the
Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly
Self-Enlightened**

P R E F A C E

I. The Maṅgala Sutta

The Maṅgala Sutta is one of the most widely known of the Buddha's discourses. The Maṅgala Sutta is included in the Khuddakapāṭha, the first book of the Khuddaka Nikāya . How this sutta came to be delivered by the Buddha is mentioned in the sutta itself. For twelve years, devas and men, wishing to have happiness and well-being, pondered over the question of what constituted a 'Maṅgala' or auspiciousness. In those days, people were steeped in superstition and their actions were mostly guided by certain signs and omens which they considered to be auspicious. There were differences of opinion and they could not get a consensus among themselves in deciding what exactly was a Maṅgala. The devas went to Sakka, King of the devas, with the problem of 'Maṅgala'. Sakka knew that the

Preface

x

Buddha was the only person who could give them the right answer; so he did not give them an answer. He chided them for coming to him instead of going to the Buddha. “Why did you not go to the flame instead of coming to a firefly to make a fire?”, he asked the devas. Subsequently the Buddha was approached and requested to resolve the problem. Sakka sent a deva, on his behalf, to the Buddha at the Jetavana monastery. It was there that the Buddha delivered the Maṅgala Sutta to the deva during the night. It was repeated to the Venerable Ānanda the next morning. This Sutta was recited by five hundred arahat bhikkhus headed by the Venerable Ananda at the First Buddhist Council, three months after the passing away (Parinibbāna) of the Buddha.

The deva requested the Buddha, in one stanza of verse, to expound to him what constituted the Maṅgalas and the Buddha gave his reply in eleven stanzas. These twelve stanzas form the body of the sutta. In delivering the Maṅgala Sutta, the Buddha ignored the superstitions and various conflicting interpretations of ‘Maṅgala’; he showed them the Maṅgalas from a practical and more useful angle.

Signs and omens gave way to modes of conduct, family responsibilities, social obligations and training of self. This was followed by Austerity Practices, and finally, by the Practice of Purity, culminating in the realization of Nibbāna. Thus, within this narrow compass of eleven short stanzas, the Buddha had condensed all moral virtues into thirty-eight rules or modes of conduct. If these Maṅgala rules are obeyed or adhered to, one can become a good son, a good parent, a good citizen, a good administrator or even an ideal head of state. These Maṅgala rules are therefore very important in the making of a nation of good citizens, and in the building of an Ideal State, or a Maṅgala Country.

The word ‘Maṅgala’ is the most frequently used word among Myanmars. “Mangalabar” has become a form of greeting among the people of Myanmar. Indeed, it is now the established form of greeting between a teacher and his or her pupils. The message of the greeting is quite clear. As the term ‘Maṅgala’ means something good or auspicious, or lucky, or a good sign or omen, the message means “May your day be good” or “May you have

good luck” or something to that effect. It is, indeed, a message of goodwill. The Maṅgala Sutta is always one among other Suttas recited by bhikkhus at anumodanā ceremonies, and other religious functions. ‘Anumodanā’ is a form of expression of appreciation of meritorious deeds done, like donations of the four requisites (food, medicine, robes and shelter) to bhikkhus and all other acts of charity. The Maṅgala Sutta is also one of the first lessons every Buddhist child has to learn either at home or at the monastic school. At first, he is taught to repeat the text after the teacher. This he has to learn by heart, stanza by stanza. As a child, he would not be able to understand the meaning of all the thirty-eight rules of conduct; but there may be some simple rules which he can understand. Whatever he learns will be of benefit to him. Later, as he grows up, he would be able to grasp the meaning of the whole sutta more fully. At present, Maṅgala classes are being conducted all over the country and we find that school children and other young ones are quite keen on attending these classes. These classes would teach them to be polite, disciplined and cultured in due course. This augurs well for the future of our country.

II. A Guide to the Maṅgala Sutta

This book is a rough translation of the book on Maṅgala Sutta based on lectures given by Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut at the Young Men's Buddhist Association (Y.M.B.A), Yangon, Myanmar Naing-Ngan. The YMBA has, since the Independence of Myanmar in 1948, been at the forefront of the propagation of the Maṅgala Sutta. Thanks to the zeal of the organization, there have appeared a number of important books on the subject of which the present booklet is one. We are indeed indebted to the YMBA for this very auspicious opportunity of presenting the Maṅgala Sutta in English.

First of all, we should like to introduce the author, although he needs no introduction as he is a well-known figure among all Myanmar Buddhists as a scholar of Buddhist studies. Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut earned the title of Dhammācariya (Teacher of the Dhamma) early in his life and was Editor-in-chief of the Board for Myanmar Translation of the Sixth International Buddhist Synod Pāli Texts. He also served as Doctrinal consultant to the Myanmar Piṭaka Association, now incorporated into the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of

the Sāsana, Myanmar Naing-Ngan. He is now the Doctrinal consultant to the Honorary Translation Committee of the D.P.P.S., and an Associate Professor in the State Pariyatti Sāsana University, Yangon. Sayagyi has long been associated with the YMBA and has played an active role in giving lectures and conducting classes on Maṅgala Sutta, holding Maṅgala examinations and producing textbooks on Maṅgala Sutta, etc. Sayagyi also gave lectures on the Abhidhamma at the YMBA and at the Mañjūsaka Abhidhamma Classes. As a result of these lectures two important and very popular books, viz., “The YMBA Abhidhamma” and “The Mañjūsaka Paṭṭhāna” have been published. In November 1991, Sayagyi was awarded the title of “Mahā Saddammajotikadhaja” by the Government (State Law and Order Restoration Council) for illustrious missionary work done by him.

At the time of the publication of the present lectures Sayagyi U Kyat Htut had been giving lectures on Maṅgala Sutta for more than twenty-seven years at the YMBA to Maṅgala teachers and students from Yangon. As teachers from the districts

did not have the opportunity to attend these classes, the then **President** of the YMBA made arrangements for a special course for instructors of Maṅgala Sutta from the districts, at the YMBA, Yangon, in 1976. It was a crash course. Sayagyi had only about four hours to cover the whole course. These lectures were taperecorded and edited and finally appeared in the form of this booklet. The book was first published in 1976; this was followed by a second edition in 1983, and a third in 1985.

Despite the short time available to him, Sayagyi has managed to bring out all the important aspects of the Maṅgala Sutta. Maṅgala Sutta is not just confined to religion. It has an immense scope and also covers the social, economic and political aspects of life . The thirty-eight Maṅgalas are applicable to the young and the old, to parents and children, to teachers and pupils, etc. Proper discharge of these Maṅgala duties will surely bring much benefit to everyone.

In his explanation of individual Maṅgalas, Sayagyi stressed the importance of practical application of the Maṅgalas; e.g., to do one's duty

Preface

xvi

to one's parents, to one's own family and relatives, to the community, and to one's own country. After reading Sayagyi's explanation of the Maṅgalas, we realize how wrong it is to have a foolish person as a leader and how important it is to have a leader who is wise. The terms 'bāla' and 'paṇḍita' are made clear to us. We are also urged to be diligent in doing good deeds; to repay our debts of gratitude which we owe to our benefactors even if they are young or poor or lowly; and to tolerate young children, students and subordinate staff. It is particularly important to be patient and tolerant in handling students and subordinates.

It is usual for Maṅgala teachers to arrange the Maṅgalas into groups or categories. The Maṅgalas follow one another in proper order and the groups also are in progressive order. By thus grouping the Maṅgalas they are more easily understood. Incidentally, as one goes through these Maṅgalas, step by step, one completes the building of the Maṅgala Country, when we have completed the Kālena dhammasākacchā Maṅgala (the thirtieth Maṅgala). Beyond that are Renunciation, Practice of Purity, Perception of the Ariya Truths and finally, the Realization of Nibbāna through arahattaphala.

The groups as shown in this book are as follows:-

- A. Four Foundations of Human Society
(Maṅgalas 1 to 6)
- B. Four Aspects of Education (7 to 10)
- C. Fundamental Principles of the Maṅgala
Country (11 to 17)
- D. Three Defences (18, 19, 20, 21)
- E. Preservation of the Maṅgala Country- the
Nine Obligations) (22-30)
- F. Renunciation of Worldly life (31-34)
(The Dhamma Practice)
- G. Attributes of an Arahāt (35-38)

People all over Myanmar Naing-Ngan are taking great interest in the Maṅgala Sutta at the present time and have come to accept the important role of the Maṅgala Sutta in their daily life. Extracts from the Sutta are being prominently displayed both in the “New Light of Myanmar” and the “Myanma Alin” newspapers. As belonging to the translation section of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana, we feel that to bring out a translation of the Maṅgala Sutta will be most appropriate. There are many books on the Maṅgala

Sutta in the Myanmar language. On one hand, some books are too brief in their renderings for the people to have a proper understanding of the Maṅgalas. On the other hand, most of the books on Maṅgala Sutta are too lengthy and are therefore not suitable for our purpose. So this small book, "A Guide to the Maṅgala Sutta", proves to be ideal for our purpose. It is a book based on Sayagyi's lectures to Maṅgala teachers at the YMBA; it has also been prescribed for the mangala examinations. Besides, it is a book which has not yet been translated into English. Fortunately, Sayagyi is still with us as the Doctrinal consultant at the D.P.P.S. and has given us permission and also encouragement to translate his book. We have tried to keep the translation as close as possible to the original text and have consulted the Sayagyi, whenever there is any doubt. The translation was done by Daw Mya Tin, member of the Honorary Translation Committee of the D.P.P.S. Editing of this book was done by members of the committee, the most prominent of whom is Saya U Myo Min, former professor of English, Yangon University.

In translating this book we have consulted a number of books on the Maṅgala Sutta. Of these, “The Maṅgala Sutta Manual” by Ashin Paṇḍita (Shwehinhtha Sayadaw of Sagaing) and Dr. R.L.Soni’s “Life’s Highest Blessings” prove to be invaluable, and we are very grateful to the authors. We also wish to express our thanks to U Sann Lwin, **Director-General** of the D.P.P.S., for undertaking to **publish the book** and for writing the Foreword, and to **Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut** for giving permission to **translate his book**, for the encouragement and for going through **the manuscript**.

May the Buddha’s Teaching

Shine forth like the radiant sun.

The Honorary Translation Committee,
Department for Promotion and
Propagation of the Sāsanā.

Dated: 28th May, 1992.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Translation Section,
Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Sasana.

Chairman

U Shwe Mra, B.A., I.C.S. Retd.,
Former Special Adviser,
Public Administration Division, E.S.A.,
United Nations Secretariat.

Members

U Myint Too, B.Sc., B.L.,
Barrister-at-law,
President, All Myanmar Buddhist
Association.

U Nyun, B.A., I.C.S. Retd.,
Former Executive Secretary,
United Nations Economic Commission
for Asia and The Far East;
Vice-President,
World Fellowship of Buddhists.

Daw Mya Tin, M.A.,
Former Head of Geography
Department,
Institute of Education, Yangon.

Doctrinal Consultant

U Kyaw Htut,
Dhammacariya; Maha Saddhamma-
jotikadhaja; Former Editor-in-Chief of
the Sixth Synod Pali Texts.

Editors

U Myo Min, M.A., B.L.,
Former Professor of English,
Yangon University.

U Tin U, B.A., B.L.
U Tin Nwe, B.Sc.

CONTENTS

Foreword

iii

Preface

ix

How To Teach the Various Grades

1

I. How To Teach the First Grade

1

II. How To Teach the Second Grade

4

III. How To Teach the Third Grade.

5

IV. The Substance of the Maṅgala Sutta

8

**A. The Four Foundations
of Human Society**

8

B. The Four Aspects of Education

20

**C. The Seven Fundamental
Principles of the
Maṅgala Country**

30

**D. The Three Defences of the
Maṅgala Country: Rules
Concerning Restraint
and Abstinence**

39

**A Brief Resume of the
First Twenty Maṅgalas**

47

Preface

xx iv

E. The Preservation of the Maṅgala Country: the Nine Obligations	49
F. Renunciation of Worldly Life	85
G. The Attributes of an Arahāt	99
The Maṅgala Sutta (The Pāḷi Text)	102
The Maṅgala Sutta (English rendering)	105
The Thirty-eight Modes of Auspicious Conduct (A Translation of the Mangala Rhymes)	109
The Eight Great Auspiciousness (Maha Maṅgala)	115
A Message of Goodwill	116

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā
sambuddhassa**

A GUIDE TO THE MAṄGALA SUTTA*

Kindly allow me to speak from this podium.

HOW TO TEACH THE VARIOUS GRADES

I. How to Teach The First Grade.

This class is something like a tutorial class for instructors who are teaching the Maṅgala Sutta. As such, I should like to mention here that in the Maṅgala examinations, the YMBA has three divisions or grades-- the first, the second and the third grades. In Yangon centres students generally appear only for the first and second grade examinations. There is not much to say about teaching the first grade. The children will be taught the thirty-eight maṅgalas, in both Pāḷi and Myanmar languages. These maṅgalas should be taught one by

* Lectures given by Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut, Dhammācariya, Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja, at the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), Yangon, in 1338 Myanmar Era (1976).

one. If the children know these thirty-eight maṅgalas thoroughly in both Pāḷi and Myanmar, that will be sufficient for them. Then, there is another thing; the YMBA has distributed the Maṅgala Poem, a Myanmar rendering of the maṅgalas in verse. The children must know by heart the whole poem comprising the thirty-eight maṅgalas. They must also be taught to correlate each of the Pāḷi gāthās to the corresponding stanza in the Myanmar poem. If the children know the thirty-eight maṅgalas in Pāḷi and also in Myanmar and the Maṅgala Poem, they can pass the First Grade examination.

There is another point regarding the First Grade children, i.e. to teach them how to write these maṅgalas in both Pāḷi and Myanmar. It is important that the children should be able to write them. The reason? This is because most of the teachers teach the children to learn the verses (gāthās) by heart and the children know all the thirty-eight maṅgalas and can enumerate them orally. But this is not sufficient; it is also necessary for them to be able to write them down. These children also know the thirty-eight maṅgalas in Myanmar. It is quite easy to teach the children to learn by heart but at the

examination they are unable to answer in writing. They should also be made to practise writing the thirty-eight maṅgalas in Myanmar. The same is true for the poem. Though the children can easily recite the poem, they cannot write it down. So let them also practise writing down the poem. As regards intelligence and better understanding, if the children are taught to study the maṅgalas one by one and given exercise on them they will come to understand and grasp the subject matter more intelligently. If you teach them this much, depending on their ability and standard of their written answers, the children can come out first or second in the First Grade examination. This is about all for the First Grade especially as this class has only four hours of teaching. Even so, some have come here from quite a distance and they may think that after coming all this distance, the YMBA classes are not of much use to them, that they have learnt here nothing more than what they have learnt before. We do not want them to think like that, so we shall be teaching them as much as possible within the period of four hours available to us. This is all for the First Grade.

II. How To Teach The Second Grade

In the second grade also, the same things are taught. The students are required to learn thoroughly the thirty-eight maṅgalas in both Pāḷi and Myanmar and also the Maṅgala Poem. But they must be taught the Maṅgala Poem more fully. For example, if the teacher says, “Shun the unwise; consort not with him” quoting a line from the Maṅgala Poem in Myanmar the pupils must be able to point out the relevant part of the Pāḷi text. They must be taught to be able to give their answers in Pāḷi for each and every stanza of the Myanmar poem. Some children know the poem by heart but they do not know the corresponding Pāḷi gāthā. For the first graders, if they know that this stanza in the poem corresponds to that Pāḷi gāthā, that is sufficient. As for the second graders, the examiner may pick up any stanza in the poem at random and ask questions. So they must be taught to be able to answer questions on any stanza of the poem in Pāḷi. Then, as practical exercise, teach them to answer such questions: “What maṅgala is this?”

e.g., “Studying lessons regularly”.

“Working hard”

“Being respectful to one’s parents”, etc.

Such unseen questions that make the children think for themselves are also essential. Another important point is this. The stories contained in the “Maṅgala Sutta Manual” distributed by the YMBA should also be taught to the second graders. In that “Maṅgala Sutta Manual” there are stories about how one gets into trouble for having a foolish one as one’s leader; how one gets into trouble in this very life for being ungrateful to one’s benefactor, etc. The teachers should thus teach the second grade with the help of these stories.

I will stop here for the Second Grade.

III. How to Teach The Third Grade

I shall now deal with the teaching of the Maṅgala Sutta to the third grade. We are teaching the Maṅgala Sutta to the children not just for the sake of religion. If you come to think about it seriously, you will realize that the Maṅgala Sutta is not confined to religion only. In social affairs and matters concerning the making of a nation also, the

Maṅgala Sutta is the dhamma that gives the right guidance. That is the reason why, from ancient times, out of a collection of thousands of discourses by the Buddha, the Maṅgala Sutta has been chosen to be first taught to the people. The Maṅgala Sutta is chosen because it contains a great deal of social matters and a great deal of other matters concerning the development of a country. In fact, the scope of the Maṅgala Sutta is so vast that with these thirty-eight rules of auspiciousness (maṅgalas) kings and ministers can govern a country. In the world today, there are many political systems and doctrines but none of these are outside the scope of the Maṅgala Sutta. That is why long before the Discourse on Auspiciousness, Maṅgala Sutta, was actually delivered it was heralded by the tidings of its coming; and the discourse was delivered only long after the tidings of the forthcoming event .

In the Pāli texts (Piṭaka) there are five kinds of news proclaiming the forthcoming events (kolāhala) long before their actual occurrence. For instance, take the news or warning about the dissolution of the world, which only occurs 100,000 years after the spreading of the kolāhala news. The

dissolution of the world never takes place immediately; it has to be always preceded by kolāhala news 100,000 years ahead of the actual event. In the same way, the event of the coming of a Buddha never happens instantly. A Buddha appears in this world only one thousand years after the kolāhala news. A Cakkavatti King, or Universal Monarch, also does not appear in this world soon after the spreading of the news of his coming. He appears only a hundred years after the spreading of the kolāhala news. So also, if the Discourse on Auspiciousness, the Maṅgala Sutta, is to be delivered it cannot be delivered immediately. It also has to be preceded by kolāhala news twelve years in advance. The kolāhala news proclaiming the forthcoming appearance of one who strictly adheres to the moneyya paṭipatti, rules of austerity practice and self-restraint prescribed by the Buddha, comes seven years previous to the actual event. In the Tipiṭaka the Maṅgala Sutta is the only discourse which was delivered after the spreading of the tidings of its coming. Out of all the Pāli texts, it is mostly in the Maṅgala Sutta that one finds matters concerning the state and social affairs and also worldly advice which

is of great benefit to all mankind. The Maṅgala Sutta gives answers to such problems as: “What system should one use to gain peace and prosperity for the world?”, “Under what system should one draw up plans to gain peace and prosperity for the world?” The answers, somehow, form a sort of planning programme for the development of a country or nation, or indeed, for the development and well-being of the whole world.

IV. The Substance of the Maṅgala Sutta

A. The Four Foundations of Human Society

1 (a) “Asevanā ca bālānam” is the first maṅgala. This maṅgala is generally translated as “Do not associate with the foolish”, which does not convey the full meaning of the Buddha’s exhortation. To be exact, “Asevanā ca bālānam” means “Do not take a foolish one as your leader”. Now, I should explain what is meant by ‘a foolish one’. What sort of person is he? Some people cannot differentiate the ignorant, the foolish, the bad and the wicked from one another. In the Myanmar language, ignorance and darkness have the same meaning; to be ignorant

is to be in darkness. When one becomes suddenly dizzy, one is not aware of anything. When it is dark also one does not see anything. Thus, an ignoramus or a foolish person is one who does not know that any action of his is for the benefit and prosperity of others or that it would cause much suffering to them. One may have post-graduate degrees or one may even have learnt the Pitaka. If, in spite of his learning, he fails to discriminate: what is beneficial from what is harmful, he is just an ignoramus or a foolish one.

Everyone has heard about Ajātassattu and Devadatta. According to “Asevanā ca bālānam”, Devadatta is classified as a foolish one. Ajātassattu is now still suffering in Niraya because he had Devadatta as his leader. Devadatta was one who could even compete with the powerful Buddha. But he did nothing for the good of the people; instead, he had done much harm to them. For this reason, he was classified as a fool. As for Ajātassattu, he was, in fact, a prince, an offspring of a king. He had also learnt much conventional knowledge. With regard to time also, it was then a propitious time because it was the time of the Buddha’s appearance, his very life-time. Ajātassattu himself was an educated prince,

but because he had Devadatta as his teacher he is suffering in Niraya up to this day. In illustrating how disastrous it is for anyone to have a fool as one's leader, the religious books always quoted the examples of Devadatta and Ajātassattu, the murderer of his own father. Out of the thirty-eight maṅgalas the Buddha has put the "Asevanā ca bālānam" maṅgala at the very beginning. This is because, as already explained, the fool being incapable of differentiating what is beneficial from what is harmful, if one were to have the fool as one's leader one would not be able to carry out any other maṅgala, whether concerning religion, or education, or politics or economics.

1(b) "Paṇḍitānañca sevana" maṅgala: "Asevanā ca bālānam" exhorts one not to have a foolish person as a leader. The reverse is "Paṇḍitānañ ca sevana", i.e., to have a wise person as one's leader. The wise person is the opposite of the fool described earlier in this text. People think the educated are the wise ones. As a matter of fact, to have a formal education and to be wise are quite different. Simply defined, a wise man is one who can discriminate what is true from what is false, and do things which are for the good of the people. If we look into the birth stories

of the Buddha (Jātakas), we will find that there were only a few who were renowned as paṇḍitas during their life-time as bodhisattas. Indeed, there were only Mahosadhā and Vidhūra. Looking at Mahosadhā's actions one finds that he did nothing for his own benefit; whatever he did was only for the benefit of the king and his countrymen. Mahosadhā was, in fact, one who could even become a king. But, instead of being interested in his becoming a king, etc., he only did things which were of much benefit to the whole world. Such a man as Mahosadhā is called a wise man. Mahosadhā protected the interests even of his enemies, Sena, Devinda, Kaminda, Pakutha, who were always making trouble for him. In short, those leaders, who can discriminate between truth and untruth, and do things for the good of the people and for the good of the country are paṇḍitas. To be educated and to be a paṇḍita are quite different. Therefore, in the "Paṇḍitānañca sevana" maṅgala, the paṇḍita is one who can discriminate the truth from untruth, who is not self-seeking, and is willing to risk even his own life for the good of his countrymen and for the good of the whole world.

1(c) “Pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” is generally translated as “To honour those who are worthy of honour”. From a religious point of view, those who are worthy of honour are the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, one’s parents, teachers and one’s elder brothers and sisters, etc. In truth, “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” carries a much wider meaning. It is used here not only in the sense of paying homage and respect to those who are worthy of honour and respect, but also giving due recognition to those worthy ones by conferring honours commensurate with their ability and service. It also means, to give a person a position he deserves, and to make a leader of one who has the right qualifications. In modern usage, this is to have the right man in the right place. Thus keeping the right man in the right place is, in fact, honouring those who are worthy of honour, i.e., “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam”. Instead of making a wise one our leader, if we were to choose a foolish one, we would be going against “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” maṅgala. Therefore, making a leader of one who is not self-seeking, who is ready to do anything for the good of others, is “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam”. This, in fact, is honouring those who are worthy of honour. In

any society, there are different types of people: the foolish and the wise, people who are self-sacrificing and who are self-seeking, and also people of character and people without character. As these people are not alike, if we do not discriminate them with this “pūjā ca pūjaneyyanam” maṅgala and treat them equally as in the saying, “five kyats for the bull, and five kyats for the cow”, there will be no incentive at all. Then, who would try to be a wise man, as defined earlier in this text, or try to be of good moral character? Therefore, awarding honours for services rendered to those who deserve to be awarded is “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” maṅgala. In any country, if this rule, “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” is broken there is nothing else to be done in that country. Awarding and honouring those who are worthy of award and honour and punishing those who deserve to be punished is “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” maṅgala. There are many jātaka stories which may be used to illustrate this.

In practice, whatever we do, whether it concerns religion or economics, or politics, when we find someone who is self-sacrificing and knows what is true and what is false, we will make him our leader, and thereby would have fulfilled “pūjā ca

pūjaneyyānam” maṅgala. At the same time, “asevanā ca bālānam” maṅgala is also accomplished. Thus, in practice, when “paṇḍitānañca sevana” maṅgala is carried out, all the three maṅgalas, viz., “asevanā ca bālānam”, “paṇḍitanañca sevana” and “pūjā ca pūjaneyyānam” are fulfilled. These three maṅgalas constitute the first foundation of human society.

2. “Patirūpadesavaso ca” is the next maṅgala. When we get a leader who is ready to risk even his own life for the good of his countrymen, one who is a true paṇḍita, we shall then have to look for “patirūpadesavāsa”, residence in a suitable locality. To set up our maṅgala country we must have a suitable locality, a congenial environment. Take the example of an association. There is the association, there is also the president of the association. Then we shall have to look for suitable premises. This is the second foundation of human society.

3. “Attasammāpaṇidhi” is the next maṅgala. Having found “patirūpadesavāsa” the suitable premises and a leader who is a true paṇḍita, we come to the third foundation “attasammāpaṇidhi” maṅgala, i.e., to set oneself in the right course and to try hard. This

means one must make a strenuous effort to achieve one's goal. Now, we have a paṇḍita as a leader, we have a suitable place, and working plans have also been drawn up, but without making any effort nothing can be achieved. Therefore, the third foundation is “attasammāpaṇidhi” i.e., to set oneself in the right course, and to make an effort. For with only the leader and the country but no effort, that country cannot achieve anything. Whatever one does, whether it concerns religion or economics or politics one must strive hard to achieve one's goal.

4. “Pubbe ca katapuññatā” is the next maṅgala. When the above three foundations of human society, viz., (i) getting a paṇḍita as one's leader, (ii) finding a suitable locality, and (iii) making the right effort are fulfilled, would the Maṅgala Country which we are building become rich instantly, like the abode of the devas? Would it become fully developed immediately? For us, as Buddhists, we have in our religion, “pubbe ca katapuññatā” maṅgala, the fourth foundation of human society. Traditionally, “pubbe ca katapuññata” is translated as “to have done meritorious deeds in the past.” This is interpreted by many as applying only to past kamma, actions

done in previous existences; but it also includes present kamma, actions one performs throughout one's life. As it covers both past and present kamma, "pubbe ca katapuññatā " may be explained thus: one would gain benefit in proportion to the amount of time and energy put into one's work. If one works hard for five years, one will have benefits (i.e., health, wealth and happiness) commensurate with five years' hard work. If one puts in twenty years of hard work, the benefits will also be commensurate with the work done for twenty years. Thus, "pubbe ca katapuññatā" means, "whatever work one does will accordingly bear consequences sooner or later; but first, one must work hard. There is another thing about kamma. All kamma (actions) do not bring about immediate results; some are delayed in results. Of the thirty-eight maṅgalas, these six maṅgalas form the four foundations of human society and have to be carried out by people all over the world, irrespective of religion, doctrine or profession.

Could there be any progress without these four maṅgalas as bases? Let us now go over these maṅgalas again briefly.

(i) “Paṇḍitānañ ca sevanā” -- In countries all over the world people are searching for a good and wise leader (a paṇḍita) who would lead in working for the welfare of the people. (ii) “Patirūpadesavasa” -- People are also working to make their own country a pleasant and flourishing place. (iii) “Attasammāpaṇidhi” -- All the countries are doing their best for the good of their own countries. Everyone is saying: “All of us must work hard; by just lazing away one cannot expect to gain anything.” (iv) “Pubbe ca katapuññatā” -- Here, it should be noted that if one works hard one will get results, but not immediately. It takes time. If one works hard for five years, then one will gain five years’ worth of benefits, in terms of health, wealth and happiness. The benefits will be in proportion to the work done. Thus, people all over the world, irrespective of race, doctrine or religion, are doing things in accordance with the above four maṅgalas. It would be quite wrong for anyone to think there can be progress and development without the above four maṅgalas as bases. Some people think of these maṅgalas as purely religious matter, and even ask, “Can they do anything for the welfare of the state?” Our answer is this, “Whatever one does, whether it concerns

religion, or economics or politics, one must have these four maṅgalas as bases.

Here is a concrete example. Let us take education:

(i) Suppose we wish to send a child to school. What is the first thing we look for? We look for a good teacher. When we find the most learned sayadaw or the best school teacher we send the child to him. This is “paṇḍitānañca sevanā” maṅgala, which means having a wise one (paṇḍita) as one’s leader or teacher. (ii) Now that we have found a good teacher, we still need a suitable place. So we look for a good school, i.e. a “patirūpa desavāsa,” a suitable place. (iii) Having found a good teacher and a good school, will the child get education automatically? According to the “attasammā paṇidhi” maṅgala the child will get as much as he tries to learn. However good the school may be, and even though the teacher may be top grade, the child will not get anything if he makes no effort. So the child himself must study hard; that is “attasammā paṇidhi” maṅgala. (iv) The child will not become learned the day he is registered as a schoolboy. If he studies for ten years he will get ten years’ worth

of school education. If he studies for twenty years he will gain knowledge equivalent to twenty years of his studies. That is “pubbe ca katapuññatā” maṅgala.

Are the teachings of the Buddha no longer up to date?

There is, in fact, no subject, whether it is education or politics or anything else, that can do without the above four bases. They may be written in English, they may be written in Hindi, they may be written in Chinese, or they may be written in various other languages; but these four bases have to be carried out. That is why the president of our association said that the Buddha’s doctrine is always in keeping with the times. Nowadays, most of the people no longer study and learn the Piṭaka (the Buddhist texts). They read English books and other foreign books, and think highly of them. Consequently there are now people who dare say that the Piṭaka are out of date, that the Buddha’s teachings are of the ancient times and therefore old-fashioned and no longer in keeping with the times. Therefore, if there is anyone who would like

to say that the Buddha's teachings are outmoded, that there is nothing new in them and that they are of no use any longer, please come out. If anyone says that the Buddha's teachings relating to mundane affairs are of no use at the present time, we are willing to explain and prove his statement to be wrong. In supramundane affairs also, the Buddha's teachings are always abreast of the times.

If I were asked from where one should start when we are building our country in accordance with the maṅgala principles or rules, I should say that we will have to start from the education system.

B. The Four Aspects of Education

The four aspects are: (1) Bāhusacca paññā (2) Sippam paññā (3) Susekkhita vinaya paññā (4) Subhāsita vācā paññā

1. "Bāhusacca paññā" means much or great learning. It is the kind of education that would give wide general knowledge to the children. Teaching the children to have a wide general knowledge (much hearing and seeing) is "bāhusacca paññā". Looking

at the letters, the children can make out nothing at first. Teaching those ignorant ones to read is to make them learn by seeing. The teachers telling stories to the class is making them learn by hearing. In fact, teaching means, first training the eye and the ear, which in the beginning just see and hear, but do not comprehend much. That is why there can be problems in prescribing the text books. Now, what kind of knowledge is “bāhusacca paññā?” It means giving a wide general knowledge which would enable one to discriminate the foolish from the wise. •

Some people in the olden days, by simply looking at a person, knew whether that person was a good man or not. A knowledgeable person, by just having a glance at someone, could tell whether that man was good or bad, wise or ignorant. Nowadays, many graduates with B.A. or M.A. degrees are being cheated; learned Buddhist bhikkhus who have passed the Dhammācariya examinations are also being cheated. Why? These people are cheated because when they see someone they do not know whether that person is good or bad. Now, here is a person holding a high official position. He believes too readily and is unable to make proper assessment of

people. What would happen to the country if he were to go on appointing people to various offices without knowing whether these people are capable of serving the country well or not? Only if he knows that here is a person who is willing to risk even his own life in the service of the country and the people, then and then only would he be able to put the right man in the right place. Without this general knowledge or wide knowledge of men one is liable to be cheated and that would be disastrous.

In the olden days, some sayadaws, when they heard a person speaking could instantly make out that this was a person who would become a sayadaw; that this kind of voice was that of a rich man's or the voice of one who would become a king, or the voice of a general, or the voice of a coward, etc. Briefly speaking, "bāhusacca paññā" is knowledge gained through much seeing and much hearing. For this kind of education to be effective, the syllabus needs careful consideration, e.g. the Jātakas should be taught. The Jātakas contain many stories. These stories teach us how to distinguish the different kinds of voices and appearances of people and to identify the good and the bad people. If our education fails

to give us this all-round knowledge, we are likely to encounter cheats. There are pseudo-monks cheating, unscrupulous astrologers, businessmen and politicians cheating; each cheating in his own way and all of us are likely to suffer miserably in their hands.

Sayadaws and teachers, when you teach this “bāhusacca maṅgala” in more detail there is a large collection of stories in the Jatakas, which you can make use of. Briefly speaking, “bāhusacca” is a good all-round education or general knowledge of many subjects or of many aspects of life. It is knowledge which enables one to discriminate the good from the bad. To be able to successfully initiate such a system of education, an appropriate syllabus must be prescribed. The Buddha’s “bāhusacca” education system is really in the forefront of the times; it is never behind the times.

2. “Sippam paññā” is knowledge of the sciences and also of handicrafts and industries. In modern times science has made great progress and expanded immensely. For instance, there are various manufacturing industries, mining and engineering industries, medical sciences, etc. In studying any of

those subjects one must learn to gain proficiency. Once one has acquired some skill in any of these sciences, that could be utilized as one's livelihood or as a hobby. In choosing a profession first make sure that it would be for the good of the people and it is not demeritorious.

3. "Susikkhita Vinaya paññā" is knowledge relating to culture and discipline. Now, the children have already acquired some knowledge of arts and literature, some knowledge of science and industries and also some handicrafts; but it still remains for them to be taught "Susikkhita Vinaya paññā" to make them well-bred and disciplined. In any country or in any school there are some rules and conventions relating to tradition and culture, which must be adhered to, e.g., things like what sort of hair-style to adopt, how to dress, how to walk, how to eat, etc. If the children are not taught to abide by these rules and conventions, the general knowledge, the sciences and the handicrafts they have learnt will be quite useless. For example, for the bhikkhus, the Buddha has prescribed certain rules of conduct, "Susikkhita Vinaya". Thus, all those who are initiated into the

Buddhist Order have to shave the hair off their heads, and wear the yellow robes. There are also rules relating to eating, walking and wearing robes. Wearing clothes as one likes and living as one likes without conforming to the conventions of society is due to lack of this “Susikkhita Vinaya paññā”.

In the case of the army and the Defence academies, the soldiers and cadets are not allowed to stay in any way they like or to adopt any hair-style they like. There they have “Susikkhita Vinaya paññā”. So, starting with Middle Schools and High Schools, we must teach the children to appreciate Myanmar culture and Myanmar dress and manners. Without this “Susikkhita Vinaya paññā”, bāhusacca paññā, and sippaṃ paññā, which they have learnt will be quite worthless. Summing up, “Susikkhita Vinaya paññā” teaches a person to be gentle and polite in dress and behaviour and also to have his mind cultivated.

4. “Subhāsita vācā paññā”: After teaching the children bāhusacca paññā, sippaṃ paññā, and susikkhita vinaya paññā, it still remains for us to teach them subhāsita vācā paññā, the art of speaking what is good, pleasant and true. This is teaching

them to master the art of speaking, which is the most difficult thing to do. As a matter of fact, all human beings have been learning to speak ever since they were born. The teachers know more than us just how important it is. The art of speaking is the most important art. With this knowledge of the art of speaking one can even win over all the people in the whole country.

The Buddha himself was able to promote and propagate his teachings to the whole world on account of this sunbhāsītā vācā paññā, the art of speaking. Sunbhāsītā vācā paññā enables one to make an ignorant or foolish person to be intelligent or wise, by proper admonition. One may admonish someone, but if that admonition is ignored, it must be because one does not know how to admonish or how to advise. It is on account of such disobedience that there are now so many children straying in the streets. We must search for teachers who can teach and train the children to be gentle and polite. This sunbhāsītā vācā paññā is, indeed, very difficult, so much so that it becomes perfect only with the attainment of Enlightenment or Buddhahood. In fact, one of the nine attributes of the Buddha, viz., the

“anuttaro purisa dhammasārathi” which means that the Buddha is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed is this very “subhāsītā vācā paññā”.

Among the Buddhist clergy there are certain disciplinary rules. For example, in accordance with tradition, junior bhikkhus are required to give an address on a religious topic on sabbath days. To acquire the “subhāsītā vācā paññā” one must have an innate ability and one must also practise a great deal. However subhāsītā vācā paññā is not just the ability to speak well; the main thing is to speak what is true. To speak the truth (sacca) is a very important national characteristic. If we cannot speak the truth, that will be a calamity for our country. In olden days, in our country, there were all the four aspects of education, viz., bāhusacca paññā, sippam paññā, susikkhita vinaya paññā, and subhāsītā vācā paññā, and on account of this, the people had this Myanmar patriotism and Myanmar national pride. Myanmar patriotism or national pride is the courage to speak out the truth, the courage and daring to speak out even if one were to be killed for saying

so. For this reason, a Myanmar is noted as a most likeable person. In those days, a Myanmar, whether male or female, would never tell lies but would only speak the truth. This is the basis of subhāsitā vācā paññā.

Since his childhood, a Myanmar with a sense of national pride would never tell lies; not even to gain an official position nor would he do so to get possession of some property. He only speaks the truth. This habit of always speaking the truth is very important in the making of a nation. In olden days, for a Myanmar to tell lies to his superior was quite unthinkable. Even if he had inadvertently killed someone in a fit of rage and was sent to court, on being questioned about the murder, a Myanmar would say that he had killed that person and that he would go to the gallows. This is the proud reply of a Myanmar. A Myanmar would not make a false statement for fear of being put to death. This is so because he was taught the “subhāsitā vācā paññā” since his childhood.

Look at our nationalist phongyis (Buddhist monks). They spoke out boldly facing the possibility

of being imprisoned; they spoke out even daring the risk of being sentenced to death by the authorities. Nowadays, the spirit of “subhāsitā vācā paññā” has vaporized and the number of people who dare to tell lies has increased. A husband tells lies to his wife, a father tells lies to his children, an officer tells lies to his subordinates. With such cheating going on all around, administration will break down. “Subhāsitā vācā paññā” will be “subhāsitā vācā paññā” only if the children are taught to always abstain from telling lies. You may leave alone the fluency in speaking. In building our maṅgala country what more is there to be taught as far as education is concerned? In our system of teaching the maṅgalas there are just these four aspects. You may also study all the other systems of education in the whole world. As a matter of fact, the Buddha has said that in a person, only the eye, the ear, the mouth, hands and legs and the mind are to be cultivated or taught. If you expand these four aspects of education you will find that any system which may appear from time to time will still be within the scope of these four aspects. With this we come to the end of the subject of education.

C. The Seven Fundamental Principles of the Maṅgala Country.

1. “Mātāpitu upatthāna” maṅgalaḥ According to the Maṅgala Sutta, the children after finishing their studies at school should, first of all, support their parents. This is “mātāpitu upatthānam” maṅgala. In our Maṅgala country, this duty of supporting one’s parents is of primary importance. Supporting one’s parents means ministering to all their needs, and also obeying them and respecting them. These duties will have to be performed conscientiously and systematically, according to plan. After all, who are the people responsible for setting up this education system? Who have given this education to the children? The parents, of course. Once educated, it is for the children to support the parents in gratitude. If they do not support the parents but neglect them, such sons and daughters will be of no use at all to the parents. Finding their own offspring to be of no help to them and thus feeling neglected, the parents might get disheartened. If the children have a firm resolve to respectfully attend to the needs of the parents, then the parents will then be heartened to bring them up to be good children.

That is why “mātāpitu upatthāna” maṅgala is most important.

2. “Puttadārassa saṅgaha” maṅgala: The next maṅgala is “puttadārassa saṅgaho” which is generally translated as cherishing or tenderly caring for one’s wife and children. This means one should not neglect one’s family, especially one’s own children. One should give proper education to one’s children. If the parents fail to give proper education and training to their children, it will be impossible to set up a Maṅgala country. At the present time, many children grow up to be waifs and strays, homeless and straying in the streets. This is because parents have neglected their own children. It is not so much the duty of the government to solve this problem. In any country, if 75% of the parents take care of their children and keep proper watch over them, that country will have no wicked people or evil-doers. Thus, according to this maṅgala, it is the responsibility of all parents to protect and care for their own children. Looking casually at these two maṅgalas, it may be said that there is nothing new in them and that everybody is doing just that. But

actually, it is not everybody who is adhering to these two maṅgalas, and that is the trouble.

There are only two categories of people in this world, viz., the parents and the children. There is no other category besides these two. So the parents must take care of their children and bring them up to be good citizens; the children must support their parents and minister to their needs with proper attention and willingness. If both parents and children do their respective duties for the good of one another, then the fulfillment of these two duties alone is quite sufficient for the building of a nation. In our maṅgala country, each and every one of the parents must train their own children to be properly educated, to be wise and to be good, and help them to be comfortably off. The children on their part must, to the best of their ability, support their parents and keep them comfortable, free from worry or from care. If this is done, we can say that the building of the Maṅgala country is as good as complete.

3. “Anākulā kammantā” maṅgala:: At this point it may be asked: “Since a person is required to support his parents and also take care of his children and

wife, how would he find the money to discharge his duties towards them? What would he do under the economic system of the Maṅgala country. The answer is anākulā kammantā maṅgala. Anākula kammantā means to work or to engage oneself in some business, occupation or any other means of livelihood. What sort of occupation should one look for? The usual translation of “anākulā” is being free from complications. This, in fact, is the business or occupation which is without fault, which does not involve any wrong-doing or demerit. The Maṅgala country does not tolerate any business or occupation which does harm or bring tears to someone, nor does it accept any property or riches gained through such occupations. The business or occupation which does no harm to anyone is “anākulā kammantā” maṅgala. To be able to support one’s parents and to care for and cherish one’s children and wife, one must have some work or some business. As long as the kind of business or occupation is in accordance with the anākulā kammantā maṅgala it is perfectly all right. The kind of work itself does not matter. Nowadays many people are eager to work only in the government service, or in other jobs which might be offered by

other people. This sort of man is not a man of wisdom. Any person having been trained in the four aspects of education would have the initiative to set himself up in some kind of business, or take up an occupation under any circumstances. Provided that his business harms no one or brings tears to no one, that will be anākulā kammantā Maṅgala.

4. “Dāna” maṅgala: All the three maṅgalas mentioned above are essential in the building of a country. To go over them briefly, they are:- “mātāpitu upaṭṭhānam”, to support one’s parents; “puttadhārassa saṅgaho”, to take good care of one’s wife and one’s own children and cherish them; and “anākulā kammantā”, to earn one’s livelihood or do business which is free from complications and does no wrong to anyone. In the ancient days people were not very greedy as they only needed enough to support their parents and to feed their own families. But in this world, there are people who cannot earn enough for their needs. They are the poor people and there are also some bhikkhu Saṅgha, who live purely on donations. That being so, should we think only of the family? No, we must share with others. This is dāna maṅgala or act of charity. After seeing to the needs of your parents and your own family,

if there is still some surplus of what you have earned, do not consume or use up all by yourself. Give away some in the form of donations or gifts to the poor and the needy. Some people think that only offerings of requisites such as food to the saṃgha, or donations towards building of monasteries or such things are dāna. But dāna is much more. The Buddha, in his exhortations has expressed strongly that there should be no one who is so poor that he has nothing to eat; for this reason the rich must give something to the poor. In any country there can be peace only if there are no poor people. Dāna is, indeed, very important in the building of a country. Nowadays, help given to the poor and the needy is getting less; and as their number is increasing, the problem of help has become more difficult. In the Piṭaka, about the time of King Cakkavati there were no poor people in the country. If someone were poor he would be given the necessary help out of the treasury of the king. In the olden days Myanmar was a Maṅgala country. The people built monasteries, dug wells and tanks, built roads and bridges on their own initiative and at their own expense. As the people in the Maṅgala country adhered to the

maṅgala rules and principles, and built the necessary works for public welfare, government had to spend very little on such works. Out of their own free will and generosity the people subscribed liberally to all works or projects concerning education, economy and social welfare. This shows just how important is dāna maṅgala to the people of those days. Indeed, any gift or donation given for the welfare of the country is dāna maṅgala, an act of charity.

5. “Dhammacariya” maṅgala: Dhammacariya maṅgala is translated by some as practice of the dhamma; this will overlap with Brāhmacariya Maṅgala. As a matter of fact, there is no overlapping in the thirty-eight Maṅgalas. Dhammacariya here refers to lawful conduct. In the building of a Maṅgala country, everyone just helping the poor is not enough. It is necessary for everyone to conduct himself properly, i.e., to abide by the prevailing rules of conduct. Even a ruler or a king has to adhere to the laws of his country. The rich and the poor, the clergy and laymen alike, must all abide by the laws of the country and also their respective rules of conduct.

6. “Ñātakasaṅgaha” maṅgala: Nātakasaṅgaha maṅgala means helping one’s own relatives. All human beings have parents, wife and children, relatives, and also people who are not related to them. Towards our parents, our duty is mātapitu-upaṭṭhanam maṅgala; towards our children, puttadarassa saṅgaha maṅgala; towards others who are not related to us, dāna maṅgala. In the case of our relatives, dāna is not enough. There are four kinds of saṅgaha; one of them is to treat your relatives as your equal, i.e., to treat with them as rich people if you are rich, not to treat them as poor relatives if they are poor, and to make your relationship with your relatives pleasing and satisfactory to them. That is why, ñātaka saṅgaha, to help one’s relatives, is included in the building of a country.

7. “Anavajja kamma” maṅgala: Anavajja kamma maṅgala is the next essential factor in the building of a country. Now that we have done our duty towards parents, towards wife and children, earned our own livelihood, have subscribed to charities for the poor, have obeyed the laws of the country and adhered to traditional customs and practices, have

also helped our relatives, what else is there to be done? There is anavajja kamma maṅgala, often translated as blameless pursuits. Anavajja kamma is liable to be mixed up with Anavajja kammanta and some people think they are synonymous. “Anavajja Kamma” is blameless action mainly associated with welfare and social activities, like building roads and bridges, giving free tuition to the poor and other social work during one’s spare time. Anākula kammanta also is blameless action, which is uncomplicated with any wrong-doing or demerit; but it has nothing to do with welfare work or social service, it is simply a proper means of livelihood.

The Seven Fundamental Principles of the Maṅgala Country, in brief, are as follows:-

- (1) To support one’s parents;
- (2) To take care of one’s wife and children;
- (3) To have a decent or proper means of livelihood;
- (4) To perform acts of charity;
- (5) To be law-abiding;
- (6) To help one’s relatives; and
- (7) To engage oneself in welfare and social activities.

All the above rules must be strictly obeyed or else action would be taken against anyone who fails to do so. If all the above rules are complied with, let us consider whether our country will become a peaceful and prosperous country or not . Are these seven rules all that is required of human beings in this world? What else is there besides these seven Maṅgalas? These seven are all as far as performance is concerned, but there are other Maṅgalas concerning restraint and abstinence.

D. The Three Defences of the Maṅgala Country: Rules Concerning Restraint and Abstinence.

There are three Maṅgalas concerning restraint and abstinence. They are: (1) *Ārati viratī pāpā*, (2) *Majjapānā ca saṁyamo* and (3) *Apamādo ca dhammesu*.

In this world, one cannot do everything just as one pleases. There are things which cannot be done because it is not proper to do so.

(1) “*Ārati viratī pāpā*” Maṅgala requires one to keep away and abstain from evil. The four things which one must keep away from are : killing someone, stealing, sexual misconduct, and telling

lies. Some people may think that these four rules of restraint and abstinence are instructions related only to religion. Indeed, in this world of human beings no one should have the idea that it is not wrong to kill someone. If this idea should prevail, there would be murders all around, one person killing another person, relatives of one side killing the relatives of the other side, people of one country killing people of another country, etc. With such killings going on amongst the people the building of a country is quite impossible. Therefore, in this world, killing another person or persons is an act which cannot be permitted or tolerated under any circumstances.

The same is true of stealing or thievery. Let alone the prospect of those culprits having to suffer miserably in the realms of continuous suffering (niraya), should people are to think that it is not wrong to steal, that one could take the property of others if no one is around, that there will be no punishment if the theft is undetected, then everything done for the good of the country and the people would come to nothing. Those misguided people would steal things from factories, warehouses, ships

and trains, etc. At the slightest opportunity, they would snatch things and run away. In such a sorry state of things no business can be established, no plans or projects can be implemented. Hence, thievery also has no place in this world.

Sexual misconduct also must be strictly avoided. If people were to take the view that it is not wrong to misbehave with other people's wives or that one's wife could be molested with impunity by another person, that would be the end of human society. Our world would then be just like the world of the animals.

The fourth thing from which one should refrain, according to “*āraṭi viratā pāpā*” Maṅgala is telling lies. Nowadays, in this post-World War II period, the number of people who dare to tell lies has increased. A Myanmar, by nature, dares speak out the truth. For example, even when he is faced with the death penalty for having killed someone, by accident or out of rage, he would not tell lies. Such is Myanmar national pride! For a Myanmar to be guilty of falsehood is a serious crime. If there is a liar somewhere, this habit of telling lies is likely to spread. If a husband lies to his wife, a wife lies

to her husband, the children to their parents, the parents to their children, an official to his staff, then, no work could be done, no administration could function. Seriously pondering over this, it becomes quite clear that under these circumstances no decent human society could be established. Therefore, these evil actions, viz., murder, theft, sexual misconduct and falsehood must be strictly avoided. It may be pointed out here that these evil actions are forbidden not on grounds of religion but because they cannot be committed in any decent human society, under any circumstances.

(2) “Majjapānā ca saṃyamo” Maṅgala: Abstaining from the above mentioned four evil actions: viz., killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and falsehood, is not enough. The next rule is abstinence from all intoxicating drinks and drugs; that is “majjapānā ca saṃyamo” Maṅgala. With regard to this rule, there can be much argument if we look at it from a global viewpoint. Some may argue, “People in many countries are taking alcoholic liquors and yet, their countries are now quite well-developed, is it not so?” This is true; but maybe they have developed only to this extent on account of their fondness for

drink; if they had been teetotallers, their development might have been many times more than this. Excessive drinking has a befuddling effect on the mind and due to this lack of clear thinking, many wrong decisions and mistakes have been made by rulers and heads of states. There are also instances of unnecessary wars having been fought with tremendous loss of lives and property. At the present time, scientists and educationists, after much research work on drugs and drinks, have also come to support the view that alcoholic liquors and drugs not only destroy individuals but may even become a curse to whole nations. There is now a general outcry all over the world against the use of drugs like heroin, marijuana, cocaine, etc., and to some extent, also against excessive drinking of alcohol. Myanmar scholars have long ago accepted alcoholic drink and opium as being lethal; they destroy nations and people have been warned not to get too fond of these drugs and drinks, or else they might become drug offenders and alcoholics. Here is a piece of advice from those old scholars to young children.

Indulgence in liquor and drugs

Leads to national decay

Abstain from them, my children!

In any case, people have now generally accepted the evils of excessive drinking and drug abuse.

(3) “Appamādo ca dhammesu” Maṅgala: For one to become a competent or an efficient person, abstinence from the above-mentioned five evil actions is not enough. The next rule or maṅgala is “Appamādo ca dhammesu”, i.e., not to be negligent in doing good deeds. There are some people who abstain from drinks and drugs but these people are very often negligent and complacent and like to lead an easy life. In this world, there are many evil things, tempting good and clever people to their destruction. If one is not mindful, there is the danger of falling into these traps, even though one may not be a drunkard. Therefore, it is very important for a person to be mindful and diligent. Now, we have these three rules, viz., abstinence from evil-doing, abstinence from intoxicating drugs and drinks, and

not being negligent. These three together with the seven fundamental principles make ten. If a person fulfils these ten rules of conduct (Maṅgalas), he would certainly become a competent or efficient person. But it is not enough for a person to be competent only; it is also necessary for him to be good as well. So, all individuals must perform these ten Maṅgalas, together with the first ten. If all the twenty Maṅgalas are fulfilled, then that person would truly be a good and competent person. In other words, this programme of performance leading to the fulfilment of all the twenty Maṅgalas may be called a “Programme of Training for good and competent individuals”. When a person is thus endowed with all these twenty Maṅgalas, parents, relatives, and local inhabitants would all come to look up to him and depend on him. If one were to ask the local people who they like best, all of them would mention him. Actually, in the olden days, in choosing a leader, for example, there was no need for an election in Myanmar Naing-Ngan. People know, for a fact, that here was the man who had fulfilled all the twenty Maṅgalas. Campaigning does not succeed by word of mouth alone or by giving bribes. But once a person is endowed with these

Maṅgalas people would spontaneously come to respect him as a leader.

With the fulfilment of the twenty Maṅgalas we find the Maṅgala country being surrounded and made secure by three defences. Of these, Ārati viratiī pāpā Maṅgala forms the third defence, majjapāna Maṅgala forms the second, and appamāda Maṅgala the first. In building the Maṅgala country, first, there are the four foundations. (i.e., Maṅgala Nos. 1 to 6). Taking No. 1, 2 and 3 as one, these six become the four foundations. Next, we have the four aspects of education (Nos. 7,8, 9 and 10); the seven fundamental principles of the Maṅgala Country (No.11 to 17); and the three defences to defend the country (No.18,19, 20). This completes the list of Rules of the Maṅgala country. This proves that one can build a country or nation with these Maṅgala rules. Some people may think that the Maṅgalas only concern the children, that they are to be taught only to the children. Not grasping the full meaning and significance of the Maṅgalas, they think the Maṅgalas serve no purpose to them. People who are sceptical about the possibility of building a country with the thirty-eight Maṅgalas may come and discuss with me if they wish.

A brief resume of the first twenty Maṅgalas is as follows:

(a) The first ten Maṅgalas:

- (i) Asevanā ca bālānaṃ - not to associate with the foolish.
- (ii) Paṇḍitānaṃ ca sevanā - to associate with the wise.
- (iii) Pūjā ca pūjaneyyānaṃ- to honour those who are worthy of honour.
- (iv) Patirūpadesavāso ca - to dwell in a suitable locality.
- (v) Pubbe ca katapuññatā - to have done good deeds in the past.
- (vi) Attasammāpaṇidhi ca - to set oneself on the right course i.e. to make serious effort.
- (vii) Bāhusaccaṃ ca - to have wide general knowledge.
- (viii) Sippañ ca - to have proficiency in technology and crafts.
- (ix) Vinayo ca susikkhito- to be well- trained in discipline, i.e., to be well- bred and cultured.

(x) subhāsitā ca yā vācā - to speak what is good, pleasant and true.

(b) The second ten Maṅgalas:

(xi) Mātāpitu upaṭṭhānam - to support one's parents.

(xii) Puttadārassa saṅgaho- to take care of one's wife and children.

(xiii) Anākulā ca kammantā - to have a means of livelihood, which is not complicated with demerit.

(xiv) Dānañ ca - to perform acts of charity.

(xv) Dhammacariyā ca- to be law-abiding.

(xvi) Nātakānañ ca saṅgaho- to help one's relatives.

(xvii) Anavajjāni kammāni - to perform blameless actions associated mainly with social and welfare works.

(xviii) Ārati pāpā, viratiī pāpā - to keep away and to abstain from evil, (i.e., killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and falsehood).

(xix) Majjapānā ca saṁyamo- to abstain from intoxicants.

(xx) Appamādo ca dhammesu- not to be negligent in doing good deeds.

E. The Preservation of the Maṅgala Country: the Nine Obligations

1. Gārava Maṅgala

The next rule is ‘Gārava Maṅgala’, i.e., paying respect to those who are worthy of respect. With peace and prosperity prevailing in the country, people tend to forget their duties and obligations towards others. They become self-satisfied and proud and forget to respect one another. In such a case, the Maṅgala country can be ruined. That is why, after setting up our country, we have this gārava Maṅgala to safeguard our country. This gārava Maṅgala is particularly important for leaders of a country or of a community, for the rich, and for people in responsible positions. It is the respect of such people that is of great importance and is highly valued. On the other hand, the respect given by a beggar is not considered to be of much value; no one is too anxious to be respected by baggars, When a person is made

a leader he is inclined to get conceited, and lose balance. He does not want to treat elderly people as elderly people, i.e., he fails to be respectful to those who are worthy of respect. Here, to be respectful means to be respectful not only to one's elders and superiors but also to respect those who are younger and those who are one's subordinates. Older people also must respect the younger ones. The young crowd would often say among themselves that it is not necessary for them to heed the older people. This is, in fact, rejecting gāraṇa Maṅgala. If they do not respect the older people, other people also would not respect them, and then a clash would arise between age groups or even among themselves.

The peaceful, pleasant country that has been set up can be ruined if there is no sense of respect among both the old and the young. As Buddhists, we all understand that we will have to pay homage to the bhikkhus (the Buddhist clergy), and to pay respect to our elders. To preserve and keep our country secure, it is important that the people should have respect for one another. Respect is due to one another both among acquaintances and among strangers. Here is the case of one who having risen

to a position of power does not care about relatives, or schoolmates or friends. Who would like to have such a one like him as their leader? Surely, he would not last long in that position. That is why any leader who has no sense of respect or *gārava* Maṅgala is likely to fall within a short time. So also in the case of a man, who may be very rich; if he has no sense of respect and regard for others, his riches are also likely to dwindle away in no time. A rich man has an obligation to help the poor and the needy. If he neglects the poor, his property is likely to be destroyed, somehow by some means. That is why it is so important for people of means and those in power to observe *gārava* Maṅgala.

2. Nivāta Maṅgala

Nivāta maṅgala is generally translated as being humble or modest. Some young people say that by keeping oneself humble one would go down further. ‘Nivāta’ literally means ‘without air’, i.e., a place which is calm. In modern parlance it means to keep still, not to get puffed up or be presumptuous. If you are rich or if you are a leader, keep still, do not get conceited. If one does not adhere to nivāta

Maṅgala, which requires one to be humble and unassuming, but keeps moving about pompously, one will soon topple. Actually, nivāta Maṅgala increases one's good reputation; it is a credit to one and raises one up. If a head or a leader does not keep still, he is liable to fall abruptly; a leader can drop off from his position. Nivāta maṅgala teaches one to be humble and to be modest however high one's position may be. To be humble is the advice of the olden days. Those people who have climbed up to a high position, by not keeping still and not adhering to this Maṅgala, may fall back. Even though one may not be able to do away with pride entirely, garāva Maṅgala and nivāta Maṅgala can help destroy pride. This nivāta Maṅgala teaches those people who have become rich and those who have become leaders not to get conceited or presumptuous but to be humble and to be modest.

3. Santuṭṭhī Maṅgala

The next rule is the santuṭṭhi Maṅgala , which is generally translated as contentment. Young people think that to be contented means to be satisfied with whatever one has. So they argue that if one were to

remain contented with whatever one gets like our Buddhist monks, our country would soon get into trouble; that it would be stagnant and would be left behind others. Santuṭṭhī Maṅgala is, in fact, the Maṅgala that improves one's condition or status. A person who is endowed with a sense of respect for others and is modest and unassuming is very much respected by people ; they would come to him and entrust him with higher duties and responsibilities. Discharging those duties and responsibilities ungrudgingly with calmness is santuṭṭhī Maṅgala. If a man who is earning Ks. 100 per day wants to get Ks 10,000 per day by unfair means, that businessman will surely flounder. An official who wants to rise by leaps and bounds, a politician wanting to become a minister all at once, will also get into trouble. They are being too greedy; and because of this, the businessman , the official, and the politician can all be ruined. Santuṭṭhī Maṅgala means working honestly and steadily for one's progress step by step. Gārava Maṅgala and nivāta Maṅgala also help us to climb socially and financially; but, if one is too greedy, one is sure to be ruined. Do not be too impatient and greedy; just work honestly and steadily, with calmness. This is

a practical advice. Look at those officials who were dismissed from their jobs for being too greedy! Look at those who were arrested, for being too greedy! Now, if you look at some businessmen you find that they are just spending money on themselves, on dress, jewellery and other luxuries without a thought for others. These people had to face nationalization in our country at one time. The rich people have a duty to share with the poor and also to give donations to religious and social institutions. If the rich do not share with the poor, there could be a revolt of the poor against the rich. None of the Maṅgala rules can be ignored. Let us ignore one of the Maṅgalas; take for example, the “mātāpitu upaṭṭhāna” Maṅgala. If this rule should be ignored, people would be reluctant to raise a family, and there could be a general decline in population. Also take the case of “puttadārassa” Maṅgala. If parents do not take care of their own children but leave them like dogs and pigs without proper care or protection, the children would take to the streets and become road devils. Within a short time the children would be quite uncontrollable. Thus, if puttadārassa Maṅgala is rejected also, there would be disaster.

Some people think lightly of being honest in doing business. If you are not honest in business dealings, the other party would also do the same to you. Rejection of *santutṭhī Maṅgala* can bring about the ruin of a country. Whatever one does, whether it is politics or business or anything else, according to *santutṭhī Maṅgala* one must work honestly and proceed steadily, step by step. If a politician is too greedy, he will soon be dropped out. School teachers and politicians must not be greedy. In teaching the school children and helping them to become good children and later on to become good citizens, the teachers are doing their duty towards the country at a sacrifice. For, it is a fact that one cannot become rich by being a teacher. So also is the case of members of the Buddhist Order. If a member of the Buddhist Order wishes to become rich, that would be breaking the rule of *santutṭhī Maṅgala*. In the case of politicians, their duty is to make the country rich; if instead, they are self-seeking and try to make themselves rich, then also the *santutṭhī Maṅgala* would be broken. As regards the rich it is inevitable that they would try to make themselves richer, but

if they make use of dishonest or unlawful means, that would also be breaking the rule of santuṭṭhī Maṅgala.

At this stage, a distinction should be made between different professions. Anyone who wants to become rich should not take up any intellectual profession like teaching or become a bhikkhu (a Buddhist monk), or a politician. School teachers are those dedicated people who, in teaching the children to become good children and good citizens, are serving the country at a sacrifice. If these same teachers wish to get rich, they would no longer be adhering to santuṭṭhī Maṅgala. There may be some bhikkhus who wish to become rich, in spite of the fact that they are members of the Buddhist Order. A bhikkhu is one who, on entering the Buddhist Order, has abandoned all his belongings and has dedicated himself to work only for the well-being of his countrymen and of all others. If a bhikkhu wishes to become rich, there can be no santuṭṭhī Maṅgala in him. A politician is one who has resolved to work to the best of his ability and knowledge and who is ready to sacrifice his own life and property

for the good and prosperity of his own countrymen. He is not one who cares only for himself. So, if a politician wants to get rich, the rule of *santutṭhī Maṅgala* is broken. Politicians should not think of getting rich.

Rich people are those who do business; their work is to make themselves richer and richer. But, if they carry out their business by some dishonest or unlawful means, that would also be breaking the rule of *santutṭhī Maṅgala*. So it is best to make a distinction from the very beginning. If one wishes to become rich one should do the work of a rich man and do business. Do not become a *bhikkhu* or an intellectual worker like a school teacher. An intellectual worker is not one who works to gain riches. Let us now consider an example of the breach of the rule of *santutṭhī Maṅgala*. Here is the case of a politician who has no means. Once he entered politics, he soon came to have a grand house and a luxurious car of his own. How would the public look at him? People would begin to talk, “This man had nothing before, but now he has a grand house and a luxurious car; from where did he get the money?”, and so on and so forth. So, a politician

should not try to make himself rich. However, if he proves himself to be a good leader, he can become a distinguished figure in the world. If intellectual workers like politicians and bhikkhus have a strong desire to become rich, then the rule of santuṭṭhī Maṅgala would be broken. I am stressing this point to make it clear how important it is not to break the rule of santuṭṭhī Maṅgala.

As a matter of fact, in this country of ours it is very important that we should strictly adhere to the rules of the above three Maṅgalas, viz., gārava Maṅgala, nivāta Maṅgala and santuṭṭhī Maṅgala. We cannot afford to treat them lightly, or think lightly of them. We must always take care and make it a point to abide by the principles of the above three Maṅgalas. Very often, people who have climbed up the social ladder forget to live up to those principles. They are quite unaware of whether they have any respect for others or not, or whether they have any sense of modesty in them or not or whether they are being contented with their legitimate income or whether they are being over-greedy. This is not unnatural, for in their success, they are being surrounded by sycophants. It is important to cultivate

the sense of respect and contentment carefully and steadily. This practice is also difficult, like the vipassanā meditation practice. One may think one has respect for others, but once one becomes a leader, one may act differently. The same is true regarding our sense of modesty and sense of contentment; it is not easy to uphold these principles in practice.

4. Kataññuta Maṅgala. The next rule is kataññuta Maṅgala. This can be briefly translated as ‘gratitude’. To be grateful means to reciprocate by some means or the other to show one’s gratitude. There may be a man who has become a leader, or a man who has become a rich man, or a man who has climbed the social ladder; each of them is under obligation to such benefactors like parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, friends, etc., to whom they owe a debt of gratitude which must be paid for. But most of the people who have managed to get into higher levels of society or have become rich usually forget to show their gratitude to their benefactors. Kataññuta Maṅgala reminds people not to forget to pay for their debts of gratitude; this is very important. There are some people who have

reached the higher society, who do not want even to wish to say a few words of greeting to old schoolmates, whom they happen to meet in the street. They have been flattered too much. They have also forgotten to be grateful. Here is the case of a politician. He has promised to do his best, even at the risk of his own life, for the welfare of the people, and the poor people supported him. Once he gets to higher levels of office or society with their support he forgets all about his promises and he falls quite abruptly. That is for breaking the rule of *kataññuta Maṅgala*.

All those who aspire to be Buddhas are very careful about adherence to this Maṅgala. The Jātaka stories mention about kings sharing even half of their kingdom with their benefactors. For example: Once there was a king who had to go into hiding in the forest due to unsettled conditions in his own country. There, a couple from a village looked after the King although they did not know his identity. When things returned to normal the King went back to his capital and again became the ruler of his country. The King then sent for the couple who

looked after him when he was in adversity and gave away half his kingdom to his benefactors. In those days kings had a strong sense of gratitude and showed this by their actions. People of the Maṅgala country also must have the same feelings of gratitude towards one another and reciprocate accordingly. By paying one's debt of gratitude to parents, brothers and sisters, and friends, they would come to recognize him as a man with a strong sense of gratitude and would look up to him as a truly worthy man. A person with a strong sense of gratitude is bound to succeed in life and get into the upper strata of society. And that is in accordance with Kataññuta Maṅgala . Therefore, this Kataññuta Maṅgala is important especially for those who are in higher society.

All the races living in Myanmar are people with a strong sense of gratitude, which is in their very flesh and blood. People, living together in the same country, inevitably owe debts of gratitude to one another. If everyone realizes that it is necessary to reciprocate benefits received, there will be no shortage of food, or dress or shelter or anything else. With help and gifts going all around, that country will truly become a Maṅgala country.

Sayadaws and teachers, when you are teaching kataññuta Maṅgala this is not enough. There are many stories which you can use; stories which tell us that if one were to do a wrong to one's real benefactor, one will fail to make a living, etc. In fact, we have this firm belief with us that those who look after their parents live long and that they are respected by everyone. On the other hand, pupils who do wrong to their teachers, even if unintentionally, will never prosper in this life, nor will they become distinguished or be respected by others although they may live long; if they do prosper, they will not live long. This belief is firmly rooted (lit., runs in their blood) in all Myanmars. Nowadays, when the teacher comes into the class and says something, the mischief-makers would not listen to him. In the olden days, as soon as the teacher came into the room, the whole class including those mischief-makers would become quiet. At the present time, the idea that one would get into immediate trouble if one were disrespectful to one's teachers never occurs to the pupils. Consequently the teachers are unable to control their pupils and the pupils are no longer amenable to instruction and guidance of their teachers.

For the time being, we will leave alone the High School students and consider the case of the students from universities and colleges, who are grown-up enough to think for themselves. If they were administered by a principal or rector, who is a true paṇḍita, the riotous students most probably will calm down. After all, university students are not of the age when they should be handled roughly. If the teachers can coax and tactfully teach their students to feel grateful to their teachers, they will become quiet when the teacher comes in.

In the early days, in Mandalay and some other towns, there were some monastic teaching complexes with a large number of student-monks, where the head sayadaw, the presiding monk had complete control over the whole complex without having to resort to any threat of force. Young monks in their twenties, however mischievous they might be, would become quiet the moment they saw the sayadaw coming. So, if the children, when still young, are taught this kataññuta Maṅgala, which teaches them how wrong it is to talk back to one's benefactors (i.e, parents and teachers) so that they fully

understand the meaning of kataññatu Maṅgala and have this sense of gratitude firmly fixed in them, then they would certainly obey their teachers.

If a teacher tells his pupils not to keep their hair long they would not dare disobey him. A school syllabus should invariably include lessons on gratitude. Once they have learnt to be grateful they will appreciate how much the government has done for them and the country. Only when people respond with a sense of appreciation and gratitude would the world be peaceful and prosperous. If the people lack a sense of gratitude, whatever plans and programmes are set up for the country and whatever is done will come to nothing. That is why kataññuta Maṅgala is so important in the Maṅgala country. The idea that one must be grateful for even a morsel of food is firmly rooted in the Myanmars. There is a Myanmar saying which means that once we have taken shelter under a tree we must feel grateful to it and so we must not break any of its branches, or even twigs. This is how the parents teach kataññuta Maṅgala to their children.

In the olden days, not to say of ordinary decent people, even bandits and robbers adhered to the rules of kataññuta Maṅgala. In those days when we were young, robberies were committed in certain parts of the countryside where there were no proper government administration or police stations. Bandits and robbers from Bago would go up-country to commit robbery; they had their own rules of kataññuta Maṅgala. If they operated in their own locality, there might be one or two among them who had been fed by the house-owners, in which case, they might be caught and get killed. So, robbers, fearing that they might be robbing some houses where they might have eaten some food, went somewhere else. Robbers from up-country came down south. This was their way of showing gratitude. In those days, even bandits and robbers had an innate sense of gratitude in them.

There never was a revolt of the poor against the rich in our country in ancient times. How could there be one? Rich people shared their food with the poor, helped them in building their houses, provided them with capital, admonished and advised them and sent their children to school. As the rich

people were doing so much for the poor and the needy, the poor could not possibly turn against the rich. Even though some people might incite them to rise against the rich they would not do so. They have learnt that it would be only to their disadvantage or even ruin if they were to go against the rule of kataññuta Maṅgala and be ungrateful. So they never rose against the rich. As time went on, the rich failed to abide by the Maṅgala rules; some people also began to stir up the poor at the other end and so the poor turned against the rich. If such a situation were to continue for a long time, there would be a breakdown of all activities, and all development plans and programmes will have to be cancelled.

Thus, in a way, kataññuta Maṅgala is political; it is also organizational. The Buddha had himself in his discourses related many stories concerning gratitude. In those stories the Buddha pointed out that a country could not be governed without this Maṅgala. If the people are ungrateful, the country will be ruined, irrespective of time or era. If people lack a mutual sense of gratitude towards one another, there would be disaster. It may be noted that this

sense of gratitude is slowly disappearing nowadays. However, we still have the Teaching of the Buddha with us, and there are also some people who still have this sense of gratitude. So it is our bounden duty to teach the children to mend their ways and to revive this sense of gratitude in them.

5. Kālena dhammasavana Maṅgala

The next Maṅgala is “kālena dhammasavanam” which is usually translated as “listening to the dhamma at the proper time. Gārava Maṅgala, nivāta Maṅgala, santuṭṭhī Maṅgala and kataññuta Maṅgala are all important Maṅgalas. But as one gets on in life, one is apt to forget to adhere to the principles of those Maṅgalas. For instance, as one rises to a responsible position, one tends to forget one’s benefactors, probably due to pressure of work. It is the same with the rich people who are busy as they become richer; they too are liable to forget their benefactors. As soon as one forgets one’s benefactors one would get into trouble. Those in positions of power will also get into trouble if they are not grateful. That is why we have this

kālena dhammasavanamṃ Maṅgala to remind people not to forget their debt of gratitude they owe to their benefactors.

This Maṅgala requires people to listen to the dhamma from time to time, whenever opportune. Some people think the term 'dhamma' applies only to religious matters, like religious discourses by bhikkhus and lessons on vipassanā practice (practice on mindfulness) and such things. Kālena dhammasavanamṃ also means occasionally listening to discourses dealing with mundane matters, such as the development of the country and the progress and welfare of the community, and also discussions to find ways and means which would best serve the community. These discussion groups need not be large; they can be just small groups comprising four or five persons. Such group discussions on the principles of Maṅgala must be held quite often. This is because by holding these discussions constantly people will be reminded of the evils of greed and ingratitude; they would also remember that greed and ingratitude could get a country into trouble, that these could even bring about the destruction of a

country. That is why occasional Maṅgala discussions are necessary. These Mangala discussions will also remind people to be respectful and to be modest.

6. Khantī Maṅgala

The next Mangala is “Khantī”, which is often translated as “patience” or “forbearance”. Some think that to be patient is to endure suffering or inconvenience without complaining. In prewar days, as the time of Independence drew near, young students being full of enthusiasm and national pride were very impatient. “Why should we patiently bear up when one country attacks and overpowers another country? Why should we be patient and enduring when one nation rules over another, without any justification? If we were to be patient and enduring, our country would never gain independence; we will always be under bondage, always be subjects of another nation”, said the young people because they thought to be patient means submissively putting up with such undesirable situations. This, in fact, is not so.

Sayadaws, please consider this. Here is a person who would be a leader. He has the

qualifications of the five Maṅgalas, viz., gāraṇa, nivāta, santuṭṭhi, katañña, and dhammasavāna. He comes here, and respectfully listens to the lectures. He is not one who thinks little of these classes and who stays away from them. Such a leader who is endowed with the above five Maṅgalas is fairly high in standing, and everyone, on seeing him, would respect him.

If such leaders lose their temper the consequences will be much more serious than in the case of others. Since he is one who has practised the Maṅgalas up to dhammasavāna Maṅgala he is quite high in status morally. That being so, it is important that he should not lose his temper. If such a person were to lose his temper, there will be very serious consequences. People in general are liable to go wrong at one time or the other, for it is only human to err. If a leader or a ruler were to lose his temper, on account of minor faults, the whole country can get into trouble. This is because he is so powerful. Therefore, when one becomes powerful, khantī Maṅgala is very important. To be patient and enduring when one is at the lower level is easy; but for people at the higher level, because

they are so high up, it is difficult to be patient and be tolerant.

Let us suppose there is a teacher who has a hundred to a hundred and fifty pupils to manage. He is above his pupils, he is their leader. If the teacher gets angry, all the children get frightened. Being young, sometimes the children are mischievous, or they may even quarrel among themselves. If the teacher admonishes them against such behaviour, with goodwill and patience, and does not lose his temper, it will do them much good. On the other hand, if the teacher gets into fits of rage and scolds them and beats them when they are still young, the children will most certainly turn to evil ways, such as stealing and robbing, later on. They would not take up other decent jobs. This is because they have been so harshly treated in their school days that they have become much too hardened to take up any decent job.

Those leaders like sayadaws, teachers, heads or presidents of institutions and associations should not lose their temper; and yet must be able to exercise their authority. If the students are unruly

and up to mischief, they must be admonished; if the people get out of hand, they too must be admonished so that they may become good citizens. But when admonishing, one should take care not to lose one's temper, for by losing one's temper one may make mistakes. That is why, it is said that Khantī is the most important among the ten rules of conduct for kings. Khantī is also one of the six qualities of a chief or a leader. Sayadaws, before the Buddha prescribed the long list of disciplinary rules of precepts for the religious Order, there were already certain precepts which you all now observe, and khantī is one of them. There is a saying that goes as follows: "Khantī paramam tapo", which roughly means "patience is the best austerity practice". Sayadaws, teach the foolish ones to be wise and sensible and the rascals to be decent and respectable. That is being patient with your disciples. If one's country is under the yoke of another, not doing anything about it is not khantī. One must surely work for the independence of one's own country; but it cannot be worked out with anger and impatience. For work of such a nature one needs to

have patience, and also diplomacy, tact and skill. Then also, if our country is poor, we must try to make it rich, not with anger and rashness but with goodwill and patience.

Khantī or patience, in fact, means loving-kindness and goodwill. Perfection in the exercise of patience (Khantī pāramī) is one of the conditions required to be fulfilled by those who aspire to be a Buddha. That one can achieve everything by being patient is not understood by each and everyone of those who have become leaders. Organizers in various institutions must make use of this khantī Maṅgala in their work. Khantī Maṅgala means working and getting things done with goodwill and patience; but patiently bearing up without doing anything is not khantī. Sayadaws, please make this point clear to your pupils.

Those leaders who can exercise patience have accomplished a great deal. Under a king or a leader who has this genuine feeling of patience (and goodwill) there is nothing to fear; for under their benevolent leadership, the people live in peace and prosperity. The practice of khantī was taught very often by the Bodhisattas (aspirers to Buddhahood).

This khantī Maṅgala is very important for the preservation and stability of the world. Loss of patience and uncontrolled anger on the part of two or three world leaders could lead to a catastrophe on a global scale. This is because they have, in their power, an atom bomb that could be dropped. Thus, the anger of a powerful world leader can make the whole world suffer. In our world today, powerful nations have nuclear arsenals of their own; so, if a head of such a nation, refusing to exercise patience and caution, were to use those powerful bombs and other weapons indiscriminately, then the whole world will be brought to ruin.

Thus, as one becomes more powerful the khantī Maṅgala becomes more important. But to do something with one's temper under control, or with patience and goodwill is not easy; it can be quite difficult. The world will have stability only if people observe all the Maṅgalas mentioned earlier, up to the khantī maṅgala. In fact, it is for us to eradicate māna (pride) with gārava Maṅgala and nivāta Maṅgala; and lobha (greed) with santuṭṭhī Maṅgala. Kataññuta Maṅgala is for us to have a sense of gratitude. With these Maṅgalas we are to do away

with the everpresent moha (bewilderment). The khantī Maṅgala cannot eradicate all dosa (hatred), but a reasonable portion of it could be got rid of with khantī. Looking from the Abbidhamma viewpoint, one finds that greed, hatred, pride and bewilderment are to be eradicated step by step.

7. Sovacassatā Maṅgala

The next Maṅgala after khantī is Sovacassatā Maṅgala. It is generally translated as obedience; it means being amenable to advice given by one's elders. In the case of parents and children, the children will have to obey their parents; in the case of teachers and pupils, the pupils will have to obey the teachers, and in the case of sayadaws and their disciples, their disciples will have to obey their sayadaws. Not taking the advice of one's parents, teachers and sayadaws is non-fulfilment of Sovacassatā Maṅgala. Some may think that it is all there is about this Maṅgala. In truth, it comes after santuṭṭhī and khantī and is higher than those Maṅgalas. Now, who are the people amenable, and who are those not amenable to advice and

admonition? Looking at them we find that sovacassatā Maṅgala, being higher than santuṭṭhī and khantī Maṅgalas, is much more important for the leaders, even more so for those at the top.

Let us take the case of the Abhidhammā teacher and the Maṅgala teacher; some of them do not like to listen to others. They think they know everything and hence there is no need for them to listen to others. They have education, they are teachers of certain doctrines and initiators of certain creeds. People of such status will not comply with what others say. They will not accept what the sayadaws say, or what the teachers say. They are the people who are difficult to advise or admonish. As a matter of fact, this sovacassatā Maṅgala is more important for such self important persons. If they are not amenable to advice and admonition but are being difficult, if they lack sovacassatā Maṅgala in them, it will be most unfortunate for the country.

Those people with suitable qualifications may have to be drawing up plans and projects for the country, but their plans are bound to fail or would be detrimental to the country if they rely on book-

learning only. The farmer knows more about farming and the fisherman knows more about fishing as they have much more experience and practical knowledge than the man with book-learning. So, people in responsible positions have to adhere to sovacassatā Maṅgala. Although one may have education, one must still listen to what others are saying, weigh their criticisms and seek solution; this will be to one's own benefit and betterment. Otherwise, one will remain stagnant. The educated people who ignore what other people say and reject sovacassatā Maṅgala will make no further progress in their education. For example, if out of conceit, we think that we know the Abhidhammā very well and do not listen to others we will not make any more progress in that subject. If we think that we have mastered the subjects of politics and business and get conceited, there will also be no further progress in our knowledge of those subjects.

So, sovacassatā Maṅgala is important to politicians and businessmen, who wish to make progress. In fact, sovacassatā Maṅgala is important not only to politicians and businessmen, it is equally important to all classes of people: students, teachers, bhikkhus, etc. Students, teachers and bhikkhus must

all adhere to sovacassatā Maṅgala. People with this Maṅgala are usually the ones who get to the top in various organizations. Those who think that they know everything and are conceited do not stay long at the top. Those who take good advice and work smoothly with others are the wise; they finally get to the top, well above those conceited ones. The reason for their success is adherence to sovacassatā Maṅgala. I am talking about these Maṅgalas with examples to show how to proceed and get along step by step. People who want to get to the top must not be conceited or ignore others, whatever they do, whether it is business or anything else. Otherwise, they are doomed to failure. These seven Maṅgalas and the next two, totalling nine, are very important for those people who want to become leaders.

8. Samaṇānañca dassana Maṅgala

The next Maṅgala is “Samaṇānañca dassanam” which may be translated as, to see or seek the company of the members of the religious Order. Some may question how it could be to our benefit or betterment by just seeking the company of monks. “You may be given some bananas by the monk is that what you call a Maṅgala?”, they might ask.

When I was young, once as I was travelling in a steamer, I met a man who had returned from the West. Those were the days when everybody thought very highly of “Bilat-pyans”, returners from Bilat.* His parents, who possessed a strong sense of religious fervour and firmly believed that it was truly auspicious and beneficial for people to see the monks often, advised their son, on his return home, to join the Education Department and get the post of Inspector of Schools rather than taking up other administrative jobs. For then, their son would be inspecting schools, including schools in monasteries and thereby, he would be fulfilling Samaṇanañca dassana Maṅgala. Obeying his parents, the son joined the Education Department, but on his inspection rounds to the monasteries he never got on well with the monks. Then he told his parents about this: “Father, you told me that it is a Maṅgala to see the monks, but I never got on well with them. There were always arguments and I always lost my temper. It would be good for me to leave this service. His father’s reply was this : I do not know

* “Bilat” is a general term used for countries of Western Europe, especially the United Kingdom.

about monks of your generation. In our time, it was always a Maṅgala to go to the monastery". This is how a public servant argued about this Maṅgala with respect to monks.

School children and young people of today do not understand the true meaning of this "samaṇanañca dassana" Maṅgala. At the time when the Maṅgala dhamma was delivered by the Buddha, there were people, who by having eradicated defilements (kilesās) had become arahats. People who have thus eradicated defilements (greed, hatred, etc.) are also called 'samaṇas'. The 'Samaṇa' mentioned in this Maṅgala refers to such arahats and samaṇas. Bhikkhus or monks training themselves in the practice of the dhamma, who are trying to rid themselves of defilements are also generally counted as 'Samaṇas'. In this world, there are many problems which cannot be solved by scholars and kings. If such complicated problems should arise, and if they were to consult someone not rid of defilements whether it would be advisable to do such and such a thing, sensing their desire he would answer in accordance with their wish. This is because he is not without defilements and is thus naturally

biased. Suppose, a well renowned person comes to see the sayadaw (senior monk) who is still not rid of defilements and asks his opinion about some matter; knowing his visitor to be a famous leader, he would not contradict the man but would give the man an answer that would please his visitor. This is because he still has defilements in him. The samaṇa who has eradicated defilements knows the truth for the truth and would always say only what is true. Even if King Cakkavatti, the Universal Monarch himself, or a powerful army officer or a person who could kill him outright were to ask him, he would only give the true answer, without any bias. If a thing should not be done as it would endanger the country he would say so; he would not say that it is advisable. Such samaṇas are the important, the worthy ones.

During the time of the Buddha, there lived the Brahmin Vassakāra, who was the chief minister of King Ajātasattu of Magadha. King Ajātasattu wanted to attack the Vajjī princes and was very anxious to know who would win in the event of war. So he sent his chief minister, Vassakāra to pay homage to the Buddha and to make tactful enquiries. But the Buddhas never gave direct answers to such questions. Instead, the Buddha explained to the Ven. Ānanda the seven

factors of non-decline (aparihāniya dhamma) for Kings and princes. If Kings and rulers adhere to these aparihāniya factors, that country will never decline or be destroyed. One should find out whether the princes and relatives of Kings adhere to these rules or not. When the princes are in harmony and unity it would be impossible to attack them. The Brāhmin Vassakāra understood the full significance of these seven aparihāniya factors and realized that there was no possibility of King Ajātasattu of Magadha overcoming the Vajjī princes in battle, unless means of cunning persuasion, causing discord by breaking up their unity, are employed. So, the Brāhmin Vassakāra got himself expelled from his country and went to the country of the Vajjī princes and became their teacher. Incidentally, it shows that teachers could play a very significant role in the affairs of a country. Teachers can help build up a country or break it up, for they have, in their hands, the students who would one day be the administrators of the country.

The Brahmin Vassakāra was fully aware that the Vajjī country could not be attacked if its people were united. So he taught different doctrines to different princes; thus, socialism was taught to one, capitalism to another, etc., so that they would come to hold

different views and embrace different ideologies. This is the best strategy to sow seeds of discord and break up unity among the people. And so it was no longer easy for the princes to differentiate the truth from untruth. If we can find a samāṇa who can differentiate truth from untruth, he would obviously be a great asset (a Maṅgala) to the country. In fact he could help develop the country and make it rich and prosperous. Therefore, in modern times, one may say that a samāṇa is one who is most intelligent, well balanced and wise; and if we were to consult him it will be a Maṅgala to us, i.e., it will be to our advantage. And now, we do have such personages in our very midst.

9. Kālena dhammasākacchā Maṅgala

The next Maṅgala is “Kālena dhammasākacchā,” which may be interpreted as study and frequent discussions of the dhamma at the proper time. To have found one who is free of all defilements, who is well-balanced and unbiased is a Maṅgala; to meet and pay homage to such persons and have discussions of the dhamma is also a Maṅgala. If one were to discuss and exchange views on any subject, whether politics

or religion or doctrine or anything else, with one who **is** free of all defilements, he will only give a well-balanced, unbiased answer. If one were to ask or **discuss** with a fortune-teller or clairvoyant, or someone **else**, the answer one gets may be either true or false. **But**, by discussing with one who is free of defilements, one will know definitely whether something is true or false. Therefore, *kālena dhammasākacchā* Maṅgala is truly important.

The above nine Maṅgalas may be applied to all subjects, including organization and administration, politics and social welfare. When applied to political parties and other associations these Maṅgalas serve as guidelines for organizational work. They also form the rules of conduct and duties for military and service personnel and for students. For teachers these form the Maṅgala factors (dhamma) which must be strictly observed. We now have dealt with thirty* Maṅgala rules, which cover the whole scope of worldly life.

* *Āratī pāpā* and *viratī pāpā* are usually counted as two Maṅgalas although they are mentioned together in our discussion above. Hence in the brief resume of twenty Maṅgalas there are actually twenty-one.

Famous writers might have written comprehensively on doctrines, rules for making of nations, political science, etc., but we are sure that they are not better than these thirty Maṅgalas or rules for good and auspicious conduct, the observance of which would bring peace, prosperity and well-being to all mankind. These rules must be strictly observed by all national leaders as well as the people. Anyone who should think that these Maṅgalas could be improved upon may come and discuss it with us. Just as the president of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) has said, the Buddha's Teaching cannot be improved upon and is always far ahead of the times. Now that we have built a Maṅgala country with these thirty Maṅgalas there will be peace and prosperity and one may take pleasure in worldly ease and comfort.

F. Renunciation of Worldly Life

1. Tapa Maṅgala

The remaining eight Maṅgala rules pertain to practice of the dhamma and benefits accrued from that practice. The first of these is 'tapa' Maṅgala, which may be translated as ascetic practice. Human beings are, in a way, quite peculiar. Before they get something they have a great desire for it; but once they have it they

no longer think much of it. For instance, there are people who want to get rich, but when they have grown rich, they get weary of these riches after some time. They have come to realize that these riches, in the end, mean nothing to them and that however rich or however powerful they may be, they will have to die one day, leaving all these riches behind them. So they thought that they should not continue being foolish till they die, that it would be better to give up the world and lead a homeless life. Thus, there arose this tradition of renunciation among the rich and among powerful Kings. Outside the time of the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsanā) those ascetics who gave up the worldly life, went to the forests and lived on fruits and roots. Those ascetics who lived a life of austerity and self-control are known as 'tapasa' in Pāli. Thus, austerity or ascetic practices also existed outside the time of the Buddha's Teaching.

Nowadays, some people do not understand the meaning of 'tapa' and think that it means thriftiness, but thriftiness and austerity are quite different. To practise asceticism is to renounce worldly riches and worldly pleasures and to ardently practise the dhamma. Strictly observing the fundamental rules of the bhikkhu is being ascetic. 'Tapa' is a term that was in existence

long ago and was applied to the practice of people who renounced the worldly life. It is applicable to all actions which had to be performed with much difficulty.

First, there are the various austerity practices of the ascetics, outside the time of the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsanā). Most of them are connected with bathing, warming up by the fireside, eating only fruits and roots, etc., besides innumerable other forms, which would not be possible for us to enumerate here. Their goal is to do away with defilements by means of drastic control of the senses, which, in fact, amounts to tormenting one's body, or self-mortification. In spite of such strenuous and painful practice those ascetics fail to eradicate defilements and they continue to wander in the round of existence (Saṃsāra). This is because their practice is not the right practice. When the Buddha appeared in this world he pointed out that such practice could not lead one to the realization of Nibbāna. However, outside the time of the Buddha's Teaching, these ascetic or austerity practices could be counted as Maṅgala and they also have their own benefits and merits.

Let us take this example. Here is a rich man, whose riches are far more than he could spend. This man has to look after his riches to make sure that they do not get lost; he is also kept in anxiety, for fear of the five enemies, viz., the King, fire, water, thieves, and un-loved ones. Next, he has to think of ways and means to make his riches grow. He also has trouble connected with his wife, his children, his relatives and friends, and also trouble connected with social obligations. Thus, he is surrounded by all sorts of troubles. The troubles will be in proportion to one's riches. To calculate the amount of misery brought about by such great wealth with misery is most difficult; even for an expert mathematician it would not be easy. One may be able to realize that these riches are nothing but a source of suffering and pain, even then, it would still be difficult to give up one's riches. That is why, renouncing the worldly life and taking up the homeless life in the forest is a Maṅgala.

Some people have a different view. To them, all ascetic practices outside the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsanā) are directed towards tormenting of one's body (attakilamatha) and as such are the practice of the

micchādiṭṭhi, or people with wrong view. They assert that these are practices which should not be carried out and talk ill of them. Actually, there are two categories of tapa practices, those carried out by ascetics outside the Buddha's Teaching and those taught by the Buddha. Both categories of tapa practices are Maṅgalas which are not against anyone at anytime, anywhere.

Let us now study the tapa practice as laid down by the Buddha. Briefly speaking, tapa practice under the Buddha's Teaching means entering the Buddhist Order and practising the dhamma of the bhikkhus. The acts of entering the Order and taking to the forests are, in a way, similar to the practice of the ascetics outside the Buddha's Teaching. The difference is in the precepts and mode of practice. The practices of the ascetics outside the Buddha's Sāsanā are either one of the two extremes, viz., the indulgence in sense pleasures (kāmasukhallikā) and self-mortification (attakilamathā). The tapa practice as prescribed by the Buddha avoids both these two extremes and embraces the Middle Way (Majjhimapaṭipadā) which leads to the realization of Nibbāna. In conclusion, I would like to make it clear; the tapa Maṅgala outside the Buddha's Teaching means leading the homeless life in the forest and practising the precepts of hermits and

ascetics; the tapa practice under the Buddha's Teaching means entering the Order of the bhikkhus and practising the precepts of the bhikkhus.

2. Brahmacariya Maṅgala

The next Maṅgala, after tapa Maṅgala, is Brahmacariya Maṅgala, which may be translated as the Noble Practice of the Life of Purity. Here also, we find two categories; the Brahmacariya Maṅgala as practised by the ascetics outside the Buddha's Teaching and the brahmacariya Maṅgala as taught by the Buddha. The practice of the ascetics is the tranquillity practice (samatha), and it is by means of this practice that many ascetics attained jhānas (mental absorption) and abhiññās or supernormal powers. As a matter of fact, outside the Buddha's Teaching, any form of practice that strives for the development of supernormal powers is Brahmacariya Maṅgala.

Here is a problem. Many people think that brahmacariya practice only means abstinence from sex and this Maṅgala is generally translated as celibacy. As you have learned earlier, there is no duplication of the Maṅgalas in the Maṅgala Sutta. If you now recollect you will find that tapa Maṅgala is the practice which renounces the worldly life and takes up the life of a bhikkhu or an ascetic or a hermit, and thus,

abstinence from sex is already included in the *tapa Maṅgala*. So *Brahmacariya Maṅgala* or the Practice of the Life of Purity here should be taken to mean such practices which are based on tranquillity practice.

In the Buddha's Teaching also the *Brahmacariya* practice is the practice which strives for the attainment of supernormal powers and the development of concentration (*samādhi*). But the practice within the *Sāsanā* and outside the *Sāsanā* are quite different. The *Brahmacariya* practice under the Buddha's Teaching avoids the two extremes of self-mortification and indulgence in sense pleasures, and is carried out steadily and steadfastly. Besides, the goal here is not tranquillity but the attainment of insight-knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*). Actually, it is not easy to explain the *Brahmacariya* practice as it can be interpreted according to context.

At this stage it would be better to re-examine the *Maṅgalas*. *Tapa Maṅgala*, as practised both outside and under the Buddha's Teaching, makes for moral purity (*sīla visuddhi*) and *Brahmacariya Maṅgala* makes for purity of mind (*citta visuddhi*). Both of these levels of practice are still in the mundane sphere;

but both are practices which lead to liberation from the bonds of sense pleasures. Only people who understand the dhamma up to this level would vaguely comprehended the Four Ariya Truths and have some idea of Magga and Phala (the supramundane Path and Fruition) when they hear the dhamma.

Therefore, as one reflects, one cannot help being amazed at the wonderful arrangement of the Maṅgalas in the Maṅgala Sutta. Thus, with dāna Maṅgala, etc., the section on charity is fulfilled. Āratī and viratī pāpa Maṅgalas, etc., cover the section on morality (sīla); the tapa Maṅgala, etc., cover the section on dangers of sensual pleasures. It is only to those who have come to this stage being disgusted with sense pleasures, who are weary of worldly life, who are searching for the dhamma which would lead to liberation from the round of existences (saṃsāra), that the dhamma of the Four Ariya Truths is to be preached. The scheme of arrangement of Maṅgalas as laid down in the Maṅgala Sutta is, indeed, wonderful. The first thirty-two Maṅgalas, (up to Brahmacariya Maṅgalā) pertain to mundane (lokiya) matters. The next two pertain to the supramundane (lokuttara) dhamma practice, and the

remaining four are lokuttara results.

3. Ariyasaccāna dassana maṅgala

The next Maṅgala is “ariyasaccānadassana” which means perceiving the Ariya Truth. Having attained moral purity with tapa Maṅgala, and purity of mind with brāhmacariya Maṅgala, this is the time to preach the dhamma of the Ariya Truths. The scope of the dhamma of the Ariya Truths is immense; it is also very profound . So in teaching this dhamma, it is impossible to cover the whole range of the dhamma. But this is the stage when the Ariya Truths must be explained and we cannot leave them out. So, one needs to be very attentive and also to deeply ponder over the dhamma of the Ariya Truths.

Outside the Buddha’s Teaching, there are some people who renounce all their wealth and property and leave for the forest to lead the homeless life of an ascetic. They try very hard to gain moral purity by controlling the senses; they would even go to the extent of tormenting themselves. They also take up tranquillity practice, and carry it out very strenuously. In spite of all their efforts they fail to have an understanding of the Ariya Truths. Why is it so? This needs to be thought out seriously. When one thinks seriously about it, one finds that these ascetics have

lost their way somewhere and have lost sight of their goal. These people perceive their wealth and riches as pain and suffering, and leaving all their property behind them they went to get to a place, which is free from misery. They are seeing the world and themselves as separate entities, two different things. In short, they fail to find the true dukkha and because they fail to find the true dukkha they also fail to find the cause of dukkha. Besides losing their way, some of them even come to hold wrong views regarding their mind and body, i.e., their mental and physical aggregates or khandhas. For example, there are some who hold the view that there is dukkha because there is the body; and that it is because there is the body there is ageing, decay and death, and also the trouble of feeding and looking after it, etc., and also that if there is no body, there will be no cause for any trouble (dukkha). Others hold the view that if there is no mind, i.e., no mental aggregates of sensation, perception, volition and consciousness but only the body, there will be no dukkha.

Why do these ascetics hold such extreme views regarding their body? It is because of their concept of “I” or “Self”. They are bent on working for “my well-being”, “my liberation from dukkha”, etc. If

they go on searching for dukkha with this “mine and I and my Self” concept, they will never find it. “Then, how should it be done?”, it might be asked. The concept of “I” and the khandhas must be differentiated. The term “I” is only conventional usage; in reality, there is no “I”. The concept “I” is simply due to attachment to the khandhas. Since there is no “I” there is no reason for “I” to grow old; only the khandhas grow old. There is also no reason for “I” to get sick or to die; only the khandhas get sick and die. When one sees the khandhas in this light, one perceives that it is only the khandhas that are subject to birth; it is only the khandhas that are subject to death; and also that it is due to the concept of “I” and to one’s attachment to the khandhas, that the khandhas are subject to repeated rebirths and deaths; and also that if there is no attachment to the khandhas, the sequence of rebirths and deaths will cease by itself. Thus, there arises the light, and the one who has lost the way will have found the path. Such perception is known as “Sacca Ñāṇa”.

With this Sacca Ñāṇa one perceives the Four Ariya Truths. The Truths are :

- (1) That the khandhas are Dukkha. (This is the Truth of Dukkha, Dukkha Ariya Sacca).
- (2) That craving for or attachment to the khandhas as “I” is the cause of Dukkha. (This is Truth of the Cause of Dukkha, Dukkha Samudaya Ariya Sacca).
- (3) That if there is no craving for or attachment to the khandhas, the khandhas will not be subject to dukkha. (This is the Knowledge of the Truth of the Path, Magga Ariya Sacca).
- (4) That if there is no craving or attachment, the khandhas will no longer be subject to rebirths and that this is the Cessation of Dukkha. (This is the Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha, Nirodha Ariya Sacca).

The Four Ariya Truths: The Truths of Dukkha, of the Cause of Dukkha, of the Cessation of Dukkha and of the Practice leading to the Cessation of Dukkha are explained in the Dhammasakkappavattana Sutta, Samādiṭṭhi Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa), and other discourses as follows:

(1) What is dukkha? ... Birth (i.e. repeated rebirth) is dukkha. Ageing also is dukkha. Death also is dukkha. Grief, lamentation, bodily pain, mental pain and despair are also dukkha. To have to associate with those (persons or things) one dislikes is also

The knowledge of these Four Ariya Truths arise simultaneously.

Now, what has happened to this person who has gained such insight? It is like having a new life; for example, like a lunatic being cured of lunacy. Scholars would say that from being an ordinary worldling

dukkha. To be separated from those one loves or likes is also dukkha. The craving for what one cannot get is also dukkha. In short, the five Aggregates, khandhas, which are the objects of clinging, upādāna, are dukkha.

(2) What is the cause of dukkha? It is craving and attachment taṇhā, which gives rise to fresh rebirth, and accompanied by pleasure and attachment, finds great delight in this or that sense-object or existence, namely, Craving for and attachment to sensual pleasure (kāma-taṇhā). Craving for and attachment to existence (bhavataṇhā) and Craving for and attachment to non-existence (vibhavataṇhā).

(3) What is the Cessation of dukkha? It is the complete extinction and cessation of this very craving and attachment; its abandoning and discarding, the liberation and detachment from it.

(4) What is the practice leading to the cessation of dukkha? It is this Ariya Path of Eight Constituents. And what is the Path? It is the Right View (Sammāditthi), Right Thinking (Sammāsankappa), Right Speech (Sammāvācā), Right Action (Sammākammantā), Right Livelihood (Sammājīva), Right Effort (Sammāvāyāma), Right Mindfulness (Sammā sati), and Right Concentration (Sammā samādhi).

(puthujjana) he has changed into one who has attained maggas, i.e., an ariya. This sort of change is, indeed, wonderful and there is nothing to compare with it. It cannot be compared with the change of sex, from male to female, or from female to male, for such change makes no fundamental difference to them as they would still continue to wander in the round of existences, saṃsāra. As a matter of fact, this “Ariya saccāna dassanam” is one of the most wonderful of the third-eight Maṅgalas of the Maṅgala Sutta. Even within the Buddha’s Sāsana it is very difficult to achieve this Maṅgala. You can only imagine the glory and the well-being of those who attain this Maṅgala.

4. Nibbāna sacchikiriya maṅgala

The next Maṅgala is “Nibbāna sacchikiriya”, which means the realization of Nibbāna. We can say that this is the last Maṅgala as it is the last as far as observance or performance is concerned. This Maṅgala being the last is also the most difficult to explain. This is because the term ‘Nibbāna’ is the highest word used in religion. It has been explained by the Buddha himself in the Piṭaka texts but, as a matter of fact, the word is not fully understood by anyone. The perception of Nibbāna in nibbāna sacchikiriya Maṅgala is far

more complete and higher than that perceived in ariyasaccāna dassana Maṅgala. To put it simply, the full Realization of Nibbāna takes place only with the attainment of Arahattaphala (i.e., Arahatta Fruition), and therefore, to be an arahat is the highest achievement, the highest maṅgala.

Those who perceive the Truths and attain the lower Maggas and Phalas with ariyasaccana dassana Maṅgala will finally attain arahattaphala and realize Nibbāna after a period of seven existences at the most. In the meantime, they will still have to continue in the round of existences, saṁsāra. For an arahat, this is the last existence; there will be no more rebirths and no more wandering about in the saṁsāra. He is liberated, he is free and there is nothing more to be done. Thus, in truth, nibbbāna sacchikiriya Maṅgala is the last Maṅgala to be performed in this existence.

G. The Attributes of an Arahāt

The remaining four Maṅgalas which are the results of the realization of Nibbāna are the attributes of an arahat. The four are “na kampati, asokaṃ, virajaṃ and khemaṃ (Maṅgala numbers 35, 36, 37,

38).

(i) Na kampati. “Phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi cittam̐ yassa na kampati” means, the arahat, when faced with the ups and downs or vicissitudes of life, is unperturbed. He is not overjoyed or get conceited when things are going smoothly; he is not saddened or depressed when things go wrong. An arahat is unshaken by the lokadhammā¹, which are eight in number.

(ii) Asokam̐. This is the next attribute of the arahat; it means to be without sorrow. The term ‘Soka’ applies to all aspects of sorrow, viz., grief, lamentation, pain, distress and despair. Attachment is the cause of sorrow. Sorrow arises as a result of loss of relatives, loss of wealth, sickness, loss of character and loss of faith, and it arises only in the worldlings (puthujjanas), and in the ariyas who have not yet gained arahattaphala (Sekhas). An arahat, i.e., an asekhā does not have any sorrow in him because he is not attached to anything.

1. loka-dhamma: The loka-dhamma are; lābha (gain) and alābha (loss); yassa (fame or following) and ayassa (disgrace or lack of following); pasanna (praise) and ninda (blame); sukha (well-being) and dukkha (suffering).

(iii) Virajam. It means being free from the dust of defilements (kilesas). An arahat, having rid of greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and bewilderment (moha) and all other kilesas, is free from any trace of the dust of defilements. An arahat has no craving or attachment.

(iv) Khemam. It means perfect safety or security. The arahat who is unshaken by lokadhammā, who is no longer subject to sorrow, who is free from the dust of defilements is also free from the bonds or yokes (yogas) of attachment to sense pleasures, to existence, and to wrong views, and to ignorance. An arahat is perfectly safe, he is free from all dangers; he has attained the perfect peace and Bliss of Nibbāna.²

They who have fulfilled these (thirty-eight Maṅgalas) are invincible everywhere; they dwell in happiness and safety anywhere. Theirs is the highest auspiciousness (Maṅgala).

2. Nibbāna: There are two aspects of Nibbāna. Sa-upādisesa or kilesā Nibbāna is Nibbāna with groups of existence or Khandhas remaining; it is realized by an arahat on the attainment of arahatship; Anupādisesa or khandha Nibbāna is Nibbāna without groups of existence or khandhas remaining. It takes place on the death of an arahat. Here it refers to Sa-upādisesa Nibbāna.

This brings us to the end of the lecture and the completion of the course on the Maṅgala Sutta.

The Maṅgala Sutta The Pāli Text

1. Yam maṅgalam dvādasahi
cintayimṃsu sadevakā
sothānam nādhigacchanti
aṭṭhattimṃsañca maṅgalam.

2. Desitam devadevena
sabbapāpavinasanam
sabbalokahitatthāya
maṅgalam tam bhanāma he.

3. Evam me sutam:

Ekam samayam Bhagavā Sāvattṭhiyam viharati
Jetavane

Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārame. Atha kho aññatarā devatā
abhikkantāya rattiya abhikkantavaṇṇā kevalakappam
Jetavanam obhāsetvā yena Bhagavā tenupasamkami,
upasamkamitvā Bhagavantam abhivādetvā ekamantam
aṭṭhāsi. Ekamantam tṭhitākho sā devatā Bhagavantam
gāthāya ajjhabhāsi:

4. “Bahū devā manussā ca
maṅgalāni acintayum
ākaṅkhamānā sotthānam-
brūhi maṅgalamuttamam.”
5. “Asevanā ca bālānam
paṇḍitānañca sevanā
pūja ca pūjaneyyānam-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam. (3)
6. “ Patirūpadesavāso ca
pubbe ca katapuññatā
attasammāpaṇidhi ca-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam. (3)
7. “Bāhusaccañca sippañca
vinayo ca susikkhito
subhāsītā ca yā vācā-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam. (4)
8. “Mātāpitu upaṭṭhānam,
puttadārassa saṅgaho,
anākulā ca kammantā-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam. (3)

9. “Dānañca dhammacariyā ca,
ñātakānañca saṅgaho,
anavajjāni kammāni-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ. (4)
10. “Aratī viratī pāpā
majjapānā ca saṃyamo,
appamādo ca dhammesu-
etaṃmaṅgalamuttamaṃ. (4)
11. “Gāravo ca nivāto ca
santutṭhī ca kataññutā
kālena dhammassavanam-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ. (5)
12. “Khantī ca sovacassatā
samaṇānañca dassanam
kālena dhammasākacchā-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ. (4)
13. “Tapo ca brahmacariyañca,
ariyasaccāna dassanam,
nibbānasacchikiriya ca-
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ. (4)

14. “Phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi
cittam̐ yassa na kampati
asokam̐ virajam̐ khemam̐
etam̐ maṅgalamuttamam̐. (4)
15. “Etādisāni katvāna
sabbattha maparājītā
sabbattha sotthim̐ gacchanti;-
tam̐ tesam̐ maṅgalamuttamam̐.”
Maṅgala suttam̐ niṭṭhitam̐.

**The Mangala Sutta
(English rendering)**

1. Devas and men for full twelve years,
Pondered over things auspicious,
But failed to discover
The thirty-eight factors of Auspiciousness.
2. The Buddha, greater than all devas, has taught
Things auspicious which destroy all evil,
Which are for the good of the whole world,
Let us now recite those factors of Auspiciousness.

3. Thus have I heard:

At one time, the Bhagavā was residing at the Jetavana monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika in Sāvattī. Then, soon after the middle watch of the night, a certain deva of extremely attractive appearance approached the Bhagavā, illuminating the entire Jetavana monastery. Having approached the Bhagavā and having made obeisance to the Bhagavā, he stood in a suitable place. Thus standing, the deva addressed the Bhagavā in verse:

4. Many devas and human beings,
Longing for their well-being,
Pondered what constitutes Auspiciousness;
O, tell us
What is the Highest Auspiciousness.
5. Not to associate with the foolish,
To associate only with the wise,
To honour those worthy of honour;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.
6. To dwell in a suitable locality,
To have done good deeds previously,
To set oneself on the right course;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

7. To have wide knowledge and skill in technology,
To have discipline and good training,
To speak what is true and pleasing;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.
8. To support one's mother and father,
To care for one's wife and children,
To have a blameless occupation;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.
9. To perform acts of charity,
To abide by customary laws,
To help relatives and the community;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.
10. To refrain from evil
(In thought, word and deed),
To abstain from intoxicants,
To be diligent in doing good deeds;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.
11. To be respectful, to be modest,
To be contented, to be grateful,

To frequently listen to the dhamma;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

12. To be patient, to be amenable to advice,
To see often the samaṇas,
To frequently discuss the dhamma;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

13. To practise Austerity,
And the Practice of Purity,
To have Perception of the Ariya Truths,
To Realize Nibbāna (through Arahatta-phala);-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

14. When touched by pain and pleasure,
An arahat's mind is unshaken,
'Tis free from sorrow, pure and secure;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

15. Those who have fulfilled these things
Are invincible everywhere,
Are safe and happy anywhere;-
This is the Highest Auspiciousness.

The Thirty-eight Modes of Auspicious Conduct.
(A Translation of the Maṅgala Rhymes)

“Asevanā ca....”

1. Shun the unwise; consort not with him;
Give him a wide berth.
Associate consistently with the wise;
Consort with him; emulate him.
Pay obeisance to the three Jewels,
Parents and Teachers.
These three modes of relations
Lead to Happiness:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Patirūpa....”

2. Reside where appropriate
To gain merit, wisdom, wealth.
Let there be good deeds
Sowed in the past.
Exert self-control
And stray not from the way.
These three modes of behaviour
Will bring you wealth:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Bāhusaccaṇca”

3. Look, listen and acquire
 All knowledge worth gaining.
 Learn a trade for livelihood.
 Study and understand
 The rules and conduct of laity.
 Speak correctly, civilly, cordially:-
 This is the Way of the Buddha
 This is the Conduct for the World.

“Mātā- Pitu.....”

4. Repay in full the debt owed to parents
 That is as great as the golden Mount Myinmo,
 Sow the seeds for new debts;
 Cherish and be dutiful to wife and offspring.
 Do not be deficient in your duties;
 Live a blameless life;
 These three modes of conduct bring wealth:-
 This is the Way of the Buddha;
 This is the Conduct for the World.

“Dānaṇca”

5. Give out alms and donations;
 Be happy before, during and after.

Be pure in thought, word and deed;
Forget not your duties;
Take care of your relations.
Carry out blameless deeds
To benefit mankind:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Aratī Viratī...”

6. Anticipate and avoid
All that is evil,
Control and do not commit them
If you are so tempted.
Abstain from alcoholic drink
For it will lead to wrong-doing.
Do not speak or do things unthinkingly,
But carry them out mindfully:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Garavo ca....”

7. Pay respect and learn
From those older and wiser,

Be humble; let not pride
Rear its ugly head.
Be content with what you deserve.
Do not satisfy greed.
Forget not a good turn,
Cultivate a sense of gratitude.
Constantly listen to the Dhamma.
They multiply merit.
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Khantī ca....”

8. Bear with patience and control your mind,
Towards threats to life and property.
Do not be reluctant to accept
Advice born of reasoning.
Meet frequently
With those leading a holy life.
Constantly discuss with them
To have correct view of the dhamma.
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Tapo ca.....”

9. Restrict worldly pleasures,
Do not be heady with them.
Practise compassion and loving-kindness,
Abide by the rules of the Noble Ones;
Endeavour to understand correctly
The Four Ariya Truths,
These will illuminate the Path to Nibbāna
That which expels dukkha:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“Phuṭṭhassa.....”

10. Everyone faces ups and downs;
Good and bad are inseparable,
And occur in turns.
Tremble not; be strong of mind
To meet these ups and downs
Control anxiety;
Abolish craving,
Live in peace and tranquillity:-
This is the Way of the Buddha;
This is the Conduct for the World.

“The Benefits”

11. All who wear this garland
Of the thirty-eight modes
To Auspiciousness
Shall attain Wealth, Happiness, Grace,
And flowers of benefit shall bloom.
Free from danger, loved by many,
Content in mind and body they be.
That their words will be accepted, their plans
successful
Is an absolute certainty.
Thus, wear it! Adorn it!
This garland of Auspiciousness.

Myanmar poem by

Maṅgala U Ba Than &
Dagon U Htun Myint.

Translation by Hla Yee Yee.

**The Eight Great Auspiciousness
(Mahā Maṅgala)**

1. To cultivate loving - kindness
And goodwill towards all beings. (Metta)
2. To be patient and forbearing
With both the high and the low alike. (Khantī)
3. To show respect to everyone. (Gārava)
4. To have true friends. (Mitta)
5. To have a loving and loyal wife. (Bhariya)
6. To have one's qualities recognized by the ruler.
(Paññā)
7. To be generous in giving alms and donations.
(Dāna)
8. To realize Nibbāna
Through Arahatta Magga and Phala. (Nibbāna)

Extract from Jātaka, Dasa Nipāti.
(The Five Hundred and
Fifty Birth Stories, the Tenth Book).
Myanmar Translation By U Kyaw Htut
English Translation by Daw Mya Tin.

A Message of Goodwill

1. May all beings be able:
Not to associate with the foolish;
To associate only with the wise;
To honour those worthy of honour.
2. May all beings be able:
To dwell in a suitable place;
To have done good deeds previously;
To set oneself on the right course.
3. May all beings be able:
To gain much knowledge;
To be skilful in technology;
To be polite, to be well disciplined;
To speak what is true, good and pleasing.
4. May all beings be able:
To look after the parents;
To take care of their wives and children;
To have a decent means of living.

5. May all beings be able:
To donate generously;
To be law-abiding;
To help relatives;
To do social and welfare work.
6. May all beings be able:
To refrain from evil, in thought, word and deed;
To abstain from drugs and drinks;
To be diligent in doing good deeds.
7. May all beings be able:
To be respectful, to be modest;
To be contented, to be grateful;
To frequently listen to the dhamma.
8. May all beings be able:
To be patient, to be amenable to advice;
To see often the samaṇas;
To frequently discuss the dhamma.
9. May all beings be able:
To practise Austerity,
And the Practice of Purity.
To have Perception of the Ariya Truths,
To realize Nibbāna (through Arahatta Phala).

10. May all beings be able:
To be unshaken and imperturbed
By ups and downs of life,
To be without sorrow, without impurities and be
secure.

11. May all beings be able:
To attain supremacy over enemies,
To attain the Perfect Safety,
The Perfect Bliss and Well-being of Nibbāna.

