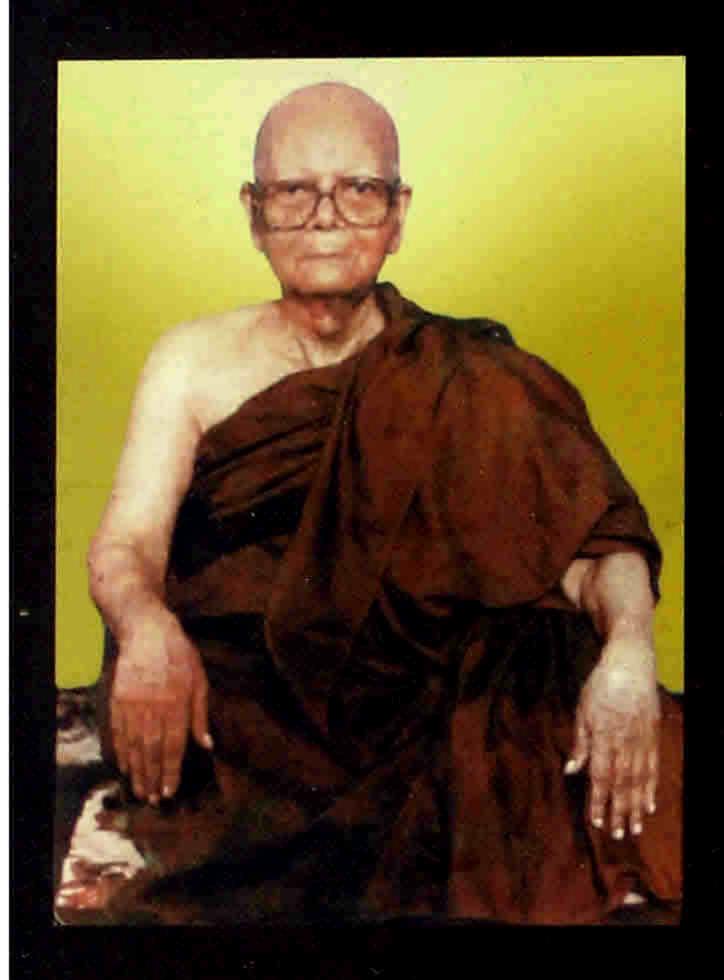
Timeless & Priceless Treasures of Thabyekan Sayadaw

THARMANAY KYAW



Thabyekan Sayadaw Joint Chief of Shwegyin Tradition

THABYEKAN SAYADAW was born on Wednesday, 14th December 1910 at Chaung Wa Village in Thanlyin Township, Yangon Division. His parents were U Pho Sein and Daw Ain.

He became a Sāmaṇera (novice) at the age of nine. His name as a novice was Ashin Vimala. Later, his name was changed to Ashin Vasettha when he entered Thabyekan Mahā Dhammikarama Monastery.

At the age of 15, he was awarded the title of "Ubhato Vibhangadhara" for his ability to memorise and recite the first two volumes of the Vinaya (Monastic Disciplinary Rules).

Three years later, he was awarded the title of "Vinayadhara" for being able to memorise the whole five volumes of Vinaya.

He was fully ordained as a Bhikkhu (monk) on 10th July 1930 with the Most Venerable Mahā Dhammikarama Thabyekan Sayadaw as his preceptor.

One year after his ordination, he was awarded the title of "Vasettha Siripavara

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Compiled by Tharmanay Kyaw

Translated by U Hla Maung

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MYANMAR IS A HAVEN OF TRANQUILITY, and its people are at peace with themselves and with their neighbours. Goodwill, loving-kindness and compassion characterise the country and the people. This has been brought about by the pervasive influence of Buddhism throughout the country since times long gone by, and the people owe the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dhamma (or the Buddha's Teaching), and the Sangha (or the Buddha's Order of Monks), immeasurable debts of gratitude that words cannot express. We rest assured that in times to come, the cleansing and beneficial influence of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha will continue to safeguard Myanmar and its people from the evils, deprivations and destruction caused by unwonted desires, greed, anger, hatred and conflict.

Constant remembrance of the Buddha and the Buddha's Teachings, and the putting into practice of as much of this teaching as our individual gifts or aptitudes allow, is another characteristic of the Myanmar people, who regard clarity of mind, contentment, goodwill and loving kindness as cardinal virtues which must be nourished and developed. Interest in the Buddha's Teachings is widespread among people of all ages. Books, pamphlets and magazines relating are always well attended. Individuals who write or give Dhamma talks on the Buddha's Teachings are respected and honoured throughout the country.

One who put into practice, to the utmost of his immense capabilities, the Buddha's Teachings, and who preached and

wrote extensively on the subject, was the late Thabyekan Sayadaw, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Ashin Warthita Bhivamsa a Presiding Sayadaw of the Shwegyin Sect, and Presiding Sayadaw of the Pazundaung Shwekyin Monastery, Yangon. The Sayadaw was born on December 14, 1910 and passed away on February 6, 1995, after 65 years in the Buddha's ministry. The Sayadaw had a huge following of devoted disciples, and his sermons were always attended by hushed and respectful crowds, and books by the Sayadaw were much sought after, by both the Sangha and laymen. Although the venerated Sayadaw is no longer with us, it is heartening to observe the still growing respect for the Sayadaw's teachings.

Over many decades, the Sayadaw wrote and preached extensively and tirelessly, as witnessed by the numerous volumes of his writings. Extracts from these many volumes, principally from the Sayadaw's Discourses on the Buddha's Teachings and the Collected Sermons, were compiled in a book by Tharmanay Kyaw (U Dhammika Bhivamsa) to enable the public to more easily read and treasure the timeless and priceless sayings and admonishments of the Sayadaw, and have been here translated by U Hla Maung (Ayar-Chindwin). U Vivekananda, German monk resident at Panditarama Monastery and Meditation Centre, Yangon, graciously reviewed the translations and made numerous suggestions to improve their accuracy and clarity.

Translator's note: It is sometimes difficult to translate from

Myanmar into English word for word, or even phrase for phrase, and still retain the meaning or flavour and spirit of the original. It has been necessary to paraphrase the Myanmar so that the meaning intended is conveyed, and the English rendering remains clear and concise.



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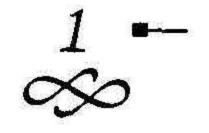


FRUITS FROM the same tree are similar, for example, in taste and smell. This is not so for living creatures. Although born of the same mother, sons and daughters differ greatly as individuals, being kind or mean of spirit, bright or dull of mind, handsome or ugly, weak or vigorous of body. Observing these differences, how satisfying and explanatory the doctrine: "One's condition in this present life is conditioned by one's actions in past lives."



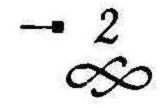
FOR ONE WHO BELIEVES: "There is nothing after death," there is neither need nor incentive to do good, nor to fear the consequences of one's unwholesome actions. It therefore becomes difficult to become a good person in this present life. In the event that after death there are other lives and other states of being in the round of <code>Samsāra</code>, one's unwholesome actions in this present life will lead to rebirth in unwholesome and unhappy states of existence. Therefore, such a one loses both in this present life and in lives to come.

For one who believes: "There are other lives and other states of being after death," even assuming that there is in fact nothing after death, one is encouraged to do good in this present life and to become a good and respected person. This is in itself of great advantage. In the event that there are indeed other lives and other states of being after death, one is assuredly reborn in wholesome and happy states of existence. Therefore, one enjoys advantage both in this present life and in lives to come.





IT IS SAID that even the higher celestial beings having supernatural powers cannot see the Great *Brahmā gods*, unless they choose to manifest themselves in one form or another. How then can mere unenlightened mortals see such highly exalted beings? Even the lower celestial and spiritual beings can only be seen when the mind has been wholly purified of defilements and psychic powers are developed. To deny the existence of other worlds because they cannot be seen by human eyes is to deny the existence of microbes because one does not have a microscope, or to deny the existence of sound waves because they cannot be grasped.





SUCH GREAT ADVANCES have been made in science that some people begin to believe all phenomena can be measured and investigated by science, and that there is no basis for phenomena which cannot be so investigated. In the mystical and spiritual worlds however, there are strange, subtle and wondrous phenomena that are beyond the purely physical world of science.

The worlds of celestial beings and the *Brahmā gods* cannot be known through science, but only through supernatural or psychic powers developed by meditation, and by minds purified of defilements. For one without such purity of mind, mental control and supernatural powers to deny the existence of the higher worlds is to be gravely mistaken.



IF KINGS GOVERN poorly and unjustly, progress and prosperity are hampered and the people suffer hardships. The people will prosper only with the justice and good governance of kings. Just so, as kings justly and appropriately support the religion of the people, the religion will progress and prosper.

Contagious Influences

IT IS NATURAL and all too easy to be influenced by people we meet. For our children and our disciples to become good, decent, righteous citizens, it is important that parents, teachers, friends and acquaintances too are good, decent, righteous people.

3 **-**-

If, through unavoidable circumstances, we are burdened by bad parents, bad teachers, or undesirable friends and acquaintances, take special care that we are not influenced for the worse. Bad habits and bad attitudes are easily and quickly contagious. Good habits and good attitudes are slow to take root.

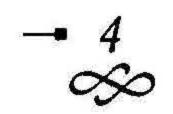
Paying Due Honour and Respect

TO HONOUR AND RESPECT those worthy of honour and respect is to increase within our hearts the love and goodwill we feel for all beings, and to increase within the hearts of those thus honoured, the love and compassion they feel towards us. When

people live just so, with love, goodwill and compassion in their hearts, fair weather prevails, harvests are bountiful, food and nourishment are available for all. During such times, people are healthy, vigorous and long-lived, wholesome of appearance, happy and contented. Healthy in both mind and body, the people increase in learning and wisdom also.



It is said that the kind and gentle raising of animals as pets bring luck and success. Similarly, certain minerals if worn are also said to bring luck and success.



For Man to Differ from Animals

WHEN MOVED by extremes of envy, greed, meanness or anger, animals differ from Man in that animals make no conscious effort to curb or decrease such feelings. Man, to differentiate himself from animals and to be worthy of his higher evolution, must strive to curb such unwholesome feelings.



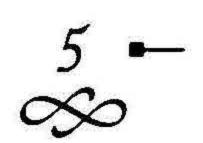
LOOK OFTEN in the mirror of wisdom and judge honestly whether the reflections of your actions, words and thoughts are good or bad. Mend your manners if you find yourself wanting in goodness.



READING THE *Dhamma* or scriptural writings can bring a multitude of benefits. One who reads thus learns correct beliefs, correct attitudes, and correct means of living, which, put into practice, keeps one free from the dangers and pitfalls of life, and also brings benefits both in the present and in the future, both in the material world and in the spiritual world.



EVEN MEDICINE which is correctly prescribed must be taken if a sick person is to be cured. It is not enough to merely recite the name of the medicine. In like manner, one learned in the Dhamma can still be lacking in goodness, for merely reciting the Dhamma is also in itself not enough. The Dhamma must be put into practice for a person to become wise and righteous.





It is rightly said that "Wisdom is found in books," but rare is that person who makes such wisdom a part of his being. Wisdom is a virtue to be greatly desired and cherished, and a person endowed with wisdom is one nobly distinguished from others.



HOWEVER LEARNED a person may be, it remains essential that his learning be tempered by goodwill. Learning combined with goodwill leads to benefits to oneself and to others. Learning, unaccompanied by goodwill, can lead to harm and suffering to oneself and to others.

For example, a doctor's wide learning is much to be respected and valued, but if a doctor is lacking in goodwill, both his patients and his reputation suffer.

To Profit from Learning

LEARNING PROFITS a person only if one knows how to apply it to one's advantage. Otherwise, time and effort spent learning remain time and effort lost.

Two Kinds of Demerit

JUST AS it is an offence to do what should not be done, it is equally an offence not to do what should be done.

Don't Take Offence and Fail to Profit

When given advice to correct our failings and shortcomings, we should respond with courtesy and gratitude, but too often our nature is such that our pride tends to take offence, and we

respond in an ill-mannered and counterproductive way. By acting thus, we abuse good advice and lose a little of our grace.



IN AN AGE obsessed with material wealth, the power of the mind to bring about good is often forgotten, even to the extent of feeling that heartfelt love and goodwill towards parents, teachers, and the Triple Gem—of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha—can bring no tangible benefit. This is natural of people fallen into ungracious and ungrateful ways.



IT IS ALWAYS essential to keep a proper balance, and not to swing to one extreme or another. Faith for example must be balanced by learning. Blind faith without learning is as much an error as great learning without faith and humility.



HONOUR BEFITS a person who deserves honour, but honour a person who neither understands nor deserves honour, and his honour becomes a sin, even as freshwater in streams become undrinkable on reaching the ocean.



Wise parents teach their children good manners and learning, which bring lifelong benefits, rather than give them material riches, which decay with age and diminish with use. Such parents are true friends to their children.

Therefore, take care not to drown our children with excessive indulgence, which leave our children spoiled and ill-disciplined.

Parental Responsibility

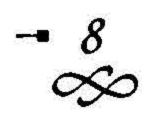
IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY of parents to teach, guide and discipline their children, using all their art and experience, so that their children become good, useful members of the community.

Parents as Role Models

Parents are the earliest and nearest role models for their children, and realising this, should strive to be model examples, so that their children learn to be good by association and imitation.

Moulding Good Minds

Parents should teach their children not only to strive for material success, but also to cherish and value the teachings of the Triple Gem—the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha—as did always the rich merchant Anāthapindika, who



donated much of his great wealth for the benefit of the Triple Gem during the time of the Buddha.

In line with the Myanmar saying, "An old earthenware pot cannot be reshaped" (or the English saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks"), children need to be nurtured at an early age when their minds are still receptive and their opinions and attitudes can still be moulded.

No Better Gift Than This

ANY PERSON who truly cherishes and follows the Buddha's teaching becomes good and righteous, and enjoys peace of mind and contentment throughout life. During times of worldly stress and tribulation, the Buddha's teaching becomes a haven of rest and tranquillity. This being so, what better gift to give our children than the gift of the Buddha's teaching.

~ ~ ~

Work Well Done

WORK, TO be done well, must be work done in a timely manner. If one delays and starts too late, work done hastily becomes work done badly, and may have to be abandoned poorly finished.

A Time and Place for All Work

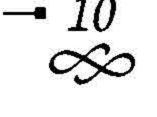
"To Plough the earth when the Monsoon has gone" is to work at the wrong time, while to plant crops in the desert is to work in the wrong place. In either case, we fail to achieve success.



IT IS NATURAL for a person to be attached to his possessions, but either out of respect, or because of love or compassion, a generous person is able to give unselfishly and easily to help another.



SOME PEOPLE say that even *Dāna*, the giving of alms and donations, can prolong the cycle of *Saṃsāra*—of lives, deaths, rebirths and attendant suffering, but it is craving (for the benefits of our giving, for example) that prolongs *Saṃsāra*. To give alms and donations in a correct manner, with noble intention and volition, is to diminish such craving.





IF OUR Dāna is not free of craving, it keeps us chained to Samsāra. If our Dāna is free of craving, it brings us nearer our liberation from Samsāra.



A PERSON who works for the good of others earns their love, gratitude and respect. Assuredly, such a person lives happy and content, free from enmity and danger, and reflecting on the good deeds done, is filled with gladness.



SOME PEOPLE excuse a little drink (of alcohol) as being good for one's health, but rare is that person who rests content with just a little. Once hooked, a person no longer sees the dangers but drinks to excess.

When alcohol has caused disease and debilitation, and brought one near death, such a person cannot stop his craving, and heedless of the doctor's warnings, will give his life for "just another drink".



A PERSON who is drunk has neither fear nor inhibitions, and there is no limit to the evils that he dare commit. Alcohol is thus the root of many evils. A person who is drunk is ever capable of terrible deeds.

11 -



DILIGENCE (OR APPAMĀDA*) is the cause of success in all things, whether in business, or education, or in just maintaining our good health. People who are successful are also mindful of their needs and aspirations. Unsuccessful and degenerate people are negligent and lax.

^{*} The Pāli appamāda, sometimes translated as "zeal", is a quality compounded of motivation, enthusiasm and diligence.

The Benefits of Dhamma are Not Postponed

FOR YOGIS who live according to the Dhamma, the benefits are not postponed until their next existences. In this very life, they attain bliss, contentment and equanimity even in the face of life's hardships. If yogis strive especially ardently, they can achieve Nibbāna, or the release from the sufferings of Samsāra.



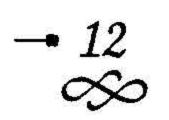
BHĀVANĀ, whether Samatha-bhāvanā, the development of one-pointed concentration, or Vipassanā-bhāvanā, the development of Insight, develops one's memory, ennobles one's thoughts and intentions, and enriches and deepens one's wisdom.

Misplaced Shame

SOME PEOPLE are ashamed to show respect, thus being ashamed of what is in truth commendable. Rather, such people should be ashamed of censure from the wise for their unworthy behaviour.

Respect Another and Ennoble Yourself

To pay respect to another is felt by those without right understanding to be servile and belittling. In fact, to pay due respect to another is to ennoble oneself and to increase one's



right understanding. The more right understanding one develops, the more sincerely respectful one becomes.



PEOPLE WHO do not respect the Dhamma take pride to be a virtue and not a vice, and err towards arrogance. People who respect the Dhamma know pride to be a sin, and strive to weaken pride in themselves.



A CONTENTED PERSON lives happily with what he has. He is as a person with well-made sandals who cares not whether he walks on dust or sand or sharp stones. For such a person, the surface of the earth is as if carpeted with leather.

13 **-**-

Unreined Wants to Unwonted Ruins

IF YOUR WANTS are uncontrolled, contentment goes, and ruin comes to take its place.

Achieve Your Potential

IN WORLDLY matters such as education and business, to say "Just this is sufficient" is not contentment. It is being lax. It is stopping short of your full potential. Lay people have

responsibilities to their families, their community and their country, and should strive to increase the prosperity of all concerned.

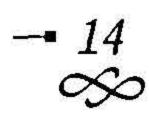
It is a grave error to make direct comparisons between the worldly and the spiritual. Monks must strive to diminish their wants and the burden of unnecessary possessions. At the same time, for monks practising meditation to say. "Just this is sufficient" is also to stop short of their potential. Practising monks must strive ardently and indomitably to achieve *Maggaphala*, or path-fruition, the attainment of *Nibbāna*, the liberation from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

Two major areas of responsibility are recognized for Buddhist monks, Pariyatti—the learning and teaching of Buddhist scriptures, and Patipatti—the practice and the teaching of practical aspects of mental development—bhāvanā or meditation. Monks in Myanmar customarily spend their initial years in Pariyatti monasteries learning the scriptures. Most continue to reside in such monasteries, continuing to learn or to teach the younger monks, but many also devote periods for intense meditation in Patipatti monasteries.



When help is required by a benefactor, some people, even when able to help, do not repay their debt of gratitude in deed or kind, but offer instead abundance of sweet and empty words. Such people are ingrates who do not know the meaning of gratitude.





GOOD AND VIRTUOUS people understand the Dhamma and, appreciating the help of others, are sincere in their gratitude. People without virtue or grace do not understand the Dhamma and know not gratitude.

Be Ever Mindful of Our Debts

ALL OF US owe immeasurable debts of gratitude to our parents, our teachers and to others who have helped us in the past. The good and virtuous, whenever possible, repay their debts in deed and kind. When this is not possible, then at the very least, they are ever mindful of their benefactors. Thus, good people honour and repay their debts.

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Tolerance and the Well-being of Societies

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, tolerance has been the hallmark of times of well-being, peace, prosperity, and progress. When people are tolerant of the failures, short-comings and differing views of others, societies remain united and prosper. During such times, there can be no conflicts or disruptions of societies.

A Battle Hard to Win

IF YOU ALLOW another person to stir your anger, you merely debase yourself to a level beneath the other person. If you conquer your rising anger, you have won a battle that is truly hard to win.

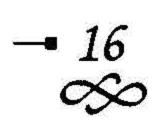
To Desire Amity is Not to be Weak

IF, KNOWING another to be angry, one strives with patience and forbearance to restore peace and amity, then one strives for the benefit of both. People without understanding and wisdom think such a person a fool who is weak and spiritless.

True Test of Forbearance

IN THE ABSENCE of angry words and criticism, a person may believe himself forbearing, but only a person who remains calm and unangered when affronted with angry words and criticism can rightly claim to be so.

When a person realises the benefits of forbearance, then it becomes a part of his being. Stronger still is the forbearance developed by the power of *Bhāvanā* or meditation. Otherwise, a person gives the appearance of having forbearance only when circumstances are pleasant, but when circumstances become unpleasant or adverse, then his cloak of forbearance slips away.





GIVE MILK to a snake and you increase its venom. Give advice and instruction to a fool, and you increase his anger.



IF CIRCUMSTANCES do not permit one to give alms or pay worship to the Buddha and the Sangha, then even to look upon the Buddha and the Sangha with love and devotion will bring benefits. It is said in the scriptures that in existences to follow, one will be born with eyes lovely to behold, flawless, perfect of form and clear of vision.



ONE WHO has achieved *Magga-phala*, or path-fruition, and perceived the bliss of *Nibbāna*, truly sees the Buddha and the Sangha as incomparable. Such a person is ever a disciple of the Buddha and the Sangha.

Strive therefore to become such a disciple.

Great are the Benefits of Dhamma Talks

GREAT ARE the benefits to be won from Dhamma talks and seminars, wherein there are those who preach and instruct, and those who listen and learn. Such Dhamma talks and

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seminars are auspicious occasions where blessings are shared by all.



Worldlings (Puthusiana), though ever at the mercy of impermanence, suffering, decay and old age, remain unmindful and unrestrained, and therefore remain oppressed and wounded by the pain and misery of worldly living.



→ 18 SSO TRUE BUDDHISTS accept with composure the woes and difficulties of life, realising "Such is one's *Kamma*, for who is there who can escape the repercussions of his past actions". With time, such calm acceptance of life's hardships strengthens one's mental fortitude.

One remains composed in the face of life's hardships, and equally so, when blessed with good fortune, realises "Only while good fortune (*Kamma*) lasts. When good *Kamma* is exhausted, hardships will follow". One is not given to unrestrained elation and empty hopes.



How undignified to sing and dance with unrestrained merrymaking when good times come; how equally useless to wail and weep when beset by problems. How inauspicious (Amangala) and unworthy such behaviour.



AT ONE TIME, the Lord Buddha said, "Atula, kings are criticised, kings are praised. The sun, the moon, the earth are criticised by some, and praised by others. I too, the Lord Buddha, am criticised; I too am praised. There is no need to heed the criticism of fools, but of the wise, take heed to win their praise and to escape their censure.

Criticising others is not something new. This has been so from ancient times. Those who are silent are criticised, those who talk much are criticised, those who talk in moderation are criticised. No one is free from criticism.

There never has been, there never will be, nor is there now, anyone who is always praised, nor anyone who is always blamed."

Let this discourse be as a shield against criticism.

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To WIN the blessing (Mangala) of bliss, be resolute, set aside a regular time and strive for progress in meditation (Bhāvanā).



MERITORIOUS ACTS of virtue, such as acts of *Dāna*, that lead one towards release from *Saṃsāra*, or acts that benefit others, are acts that deepen one's *Pāramī*, but must be done without ignoble thoughts of personal gain or ease.



THE FOOLISH MAN works only for personal gain. He thinks always of his fame and fortune, and only of this present life. He does not concern himself with meritorious deeds that deepen one's *Pāramīs*, or that lead one nearer release from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*.

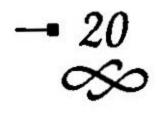
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

Pāramī is almost always translated as "perfection", and ten perfections are recognized as being required for Buddhahood, namely, the perfections of almsgiving or Dāna, morality or Sīla, renunciation or Nekkhamma, wisdom or Paññā, energy or Viriya, forbearance or Khanti, truthfulness or Sacca, resolution or Adhitthāna, all-embracing love or Mettā and equanimity or Upekkhā.

However, as commonly used, it is taken to mean "working towards perfection" or "deepening one's aptitudes for virtuous and heroic deeds of Dāna, Sīla, Viriya, etc". A person is commonly said to have "Pāramī" if he or she has special gifts or aptitudes, since it is understood he or she has acted in previous lives for these aptitudes to develop.



ORDINARY PEOPLE see old age, sickness and death time after time, but fail to see the truths of existence. The Future Buddha encountered old age, sickness and death but once, and saw the fleeting pleasures of the senses kept one bound to impermanence, suffering and misery. Seeing "the world as if ablaze with an all-consuming fire", the Future Buddha vowed to make the Great Renunciation.





Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana Kaba-Aya, Yangon.

THE VENERABLE ĀNANDA, before reciting *Parittas* (protective verses), paid reverence to the Incomparable Powers and Virtues of the Lord Buddha. Today's disciples should note this noble example and likewise pay reverence to the Lord Buddha's Incomparable Powers and Virtues before undertaking the recital of *Parittas* or other meritorious deeds.



As WITH HUMANS, where some are worthy of reverence and others not, so too with *nats* (spirits, celestial beings and deities). Be mindful of *nats* worthy of reverence, make due offerings and share the merit of our good deeds.

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Just as among humans, those we help and support cannot in turn help us in all things, but only when circumstances allow, so too with the guardian *nats*. They too can help us only when circumstances allow.

Extreme Devotion to Nats Undesirable

Do NOT PLACE excessive reliance on the guardian spirits, as some would place excessive reliance on *Kamma* (and thereby give up personal striving for one's welfare). Only upon the Triple Gem can there never be excessive devotion, but undesirable is the excessive devotion placed upon guardian spirits, such that one becomes known as "mad on *nats*".

Some people would place offerings to the *nats* with great care and reverence, and leave untended the shrine for the Buddha. By such actions one becomes an unskilled Buddhist. Therefore, be ever mindful to reserve your greatest devotion for the Buddha.

The Incomparable Lord Buddha

THE LORD BUDDHA, noble and magnificent, a marvel to behold, worthiest of worship, pleasant of speech, whose discourses so profound, perfect. How incomparably delightful then to behold the Buddha or to hear the Buddha's discourses.

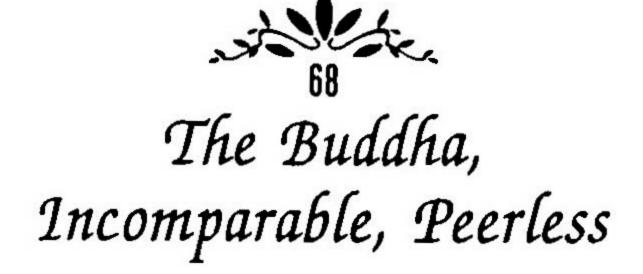
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Jewel Among Men

SUCH IS the Lord Buddha, worthiest of worship, omniscient, incomparable in virtues, rare indeed to encounter the Buddha or the Buddha's *Sāsana*, for only the deserving to behold and revere, unparalleled Jewel among men.

Discover the Triple Gem

WORSHIPPERS of spirits and deities, on hearing the Dhamma of the Buddha, are as if born anew, and become the disciples of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.



BEYOND COMPARISON are the virtues, powers and wisdom of the Buddha, the Supreme without peer. Impossible even to find one who fully comprehends the Buddha.

Priceless Beyond Measure

MEN OF LIMITLESS wealth, like Jotika and Jatila, turned their backs on their possessions to become disciples of the Buddha. Thus can one gauge how immeasurable and beyond comprehension the value of the Buddha's Dhamma.

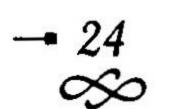
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None More Wondrous than the Buddha

BEFORE THE ADVENT of the Buddha, the Magic Flying Chariot of the God of the Four Worlds was the most wondrous of miracles in the Universe. But far more to be valued, far more to be treasured, far more wondrous is the Buddha, the Fully Enlightened, the Incomparable, the Peerless.



INNUMERABLE BEINGS strive to become the Buddha, the Enlightened, the Omniscient, but to become such a Buddha, the Ten Perfections—Almsgiving and Liberality, Morality, Renunciation, Wisdom, Energy, Forbearance, Truthfulness, Resolution, Loving Kindness, Equanimity—must be nurtured, developed, and perfected through countless world cycles. Many are the world cycles in which a Buddha does not appear. Exceedingly rare is it for a Buddha, the Perfect One, to appear in the world.



Outside the Dhamma

THE BUDDHA'S DHAMMA is not for those misled by wrong views, lacking faith, nor for the irreligious and unrestrained, nor for evildoers who know not right from wrong, nor for men of little understanding who know not the value of the Dhamma.



DO NOT BE a Buddhist in name only, but strive to realise the truth of the Dhamma by diligent practice of the Buddha's Eightfold Path—Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.



Do You Treasure the Dhamma?

PEOPLE TREASURE their gold and their diamonds, and are ever mindful of them, ever fearful of their loss. They guard and protect them assiduously. But how do they treasure the infinitely more valuable jewels of the Buddha's Dhamma? Are they ever mindful of the Dhamma, ever fearful of minor transgressions? Do they guard and protect the Buddha's Dhamma as they protect their worldly jewels?

The Safety of the Buddha's Perfections

REMEMBRANCE AND WORSHIP of the truth of the Buddha's incomparable virtues and powers will safeguard you from dangers, and bring to fulfilment your rightful aspirations.

The Bliss of Freedom from Defilements

WHEN A DISEASED PERSON is finally cured of some terrible disease, he experiences both the intense agony and helpless debilitation of the disease, and great satisfaction, ease and comfort when fully cured, and he realises clearly the undesirability of the disease and the desirability of good health.

Defilements (Kilesas), like the terrible disease, bring suffering, anguish, debasement, and shame. When one realises the evils of defilements, how clearly to be yearned for is freedom from defilements. Purified of defilements, one wins the bliss of Nibbāna as the diseased man wins ease and comfort when cured.

Levels of Happiness

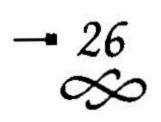
ONE ATTAINS higher and higher levels of well-being and happiness the more one is able to give up longings and attachments.

Uprooting sensual desires, one attains the greater rapture (Pīti) and well-being or happiness (Sukha) of the first Jhāna (often translated as "Absorption"). Abandoning thought-conceptions (Vitakka) and discursive thinking (Vicāra), one attains the second Jhāna, or rapture and well-being undiminished by discursive thinking. By developing indifference even for joy, one attains the equanimity and well-being (Upekkhā-sukha) of the third Jhāna. By giving up Sukha, one attains the perfect equanimity (Upekkhā) of the fourth Jhāna. By giving up all perceptions of form, one attains the formless (Arūpa) Jhānas, beyond which lies the "extinction of feeling and perception, the suspension of all consciousness and mental activity" * (Nirodha-samapatti). Beyond lies the highest and ultimate goal of all Buddhist aspirations, Nibbāna, the release from the sufferings of Samsāra.

* quoted from BUDDHIST DICTIONARY — Manual of Buddhist terms and doctrines by Thera Nyanatiloka

It Takes One to Know Another

A PERSON must himself have honour to better appreciate the honour of another.



Love and Reverence of Men and Devas

JUST AS PEOPLE love and value the rose and the jasmine for their scent and beauty, so do men and *Devas* love and revere the *Ariya*, or Noble Ones (accomplished monks) for their morality, concentration and wisdom.

Alms-Giving to the Sangha

ONE WINS GREATER MERIT by alms-giving to the Sangha (Order of monks) than to an individual Ariya (unless the alms-giving is to the Buddha himself). In giving alms where there may be only unaccomplished Sangha (Sammuti Sangha), one should also be mindful of the wish or volition to donate to the Noble Sangha of olden days.

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Daily Raise Your Worth

THE SLOTHFUL MAN who neither works nor takes interest and care in his work has no worth or honour, but the man who shows diligence in his work daily raises his worth and his honour.

Within the Sangha too, the slothful monk, negligent and unmindful of his duties, has no worth or honour, while the monk who is ever mindful and ever diligent daily raises his worth and his honour.

Don't Let Slip this Opportunity

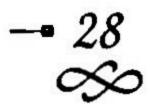
How exceedingly difficult it is for sentient beings to win birth as humans, and then to hear the Buddha's Dhamma! Much more to be cherished than all the treasure in the world is this opportunity to follow the Buddha's teaching and to strive towards one's release from Samsāra. If one lets slip this opportunity, think of the suffering and misery one must endure through countless cycles of rebirth and painful death before one encounters the next Buddha Sāsana (period when the Buddha's teaching is available).

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

How terrifying to think that of the 5000 million-plus humans now living, millions upon millions live lives tortured by famine, disease, genocidal slaughter and mutilation; or lives misled and blinded by superstition and ignorance, tyrannised by voodoo and black magic, far removed from the saving grace of religious teachings. Therefore, heed the Buddha's teaching "To abstain from evil, to do good, to purify the mind" to ensure rebirth in a good existence.



SMALL-MINDED PEOPLE who become leaders are unable to acknowledge that others may be better, or if they are followers, they follow blindly and cannot see the merits of other masters. They hold dear their personal opinions, theories and prejudices. Noble-minded people have no such prejudices and their minds are ever open to whatever and whoever is right and just.





IT IS ONE'S conduct which determines whether one is good and worthy. One may have wealth and education, but if one's conduct remains base and evil, one also remains base and evil.

The Arahant's Freedom from Desires

THE ARAHANT (or saint) continues to pay homage to the Buddha and to perform other meritorious deeds, such as acts of Dāna, but the Arahant, with mind freed from defilements (Kiriyacitta), acts without craving and covetousness. Having won release from Samsāra, his acts no longer bring about rebirth.

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86 Craving for Samsāra

All beings cherish their lives, and even when Death, the Inescapable, approaches, all long for another existence. More than this, and not only for just the next existence, but for succeeding existences too, unbounded and untamed still are their desires. It is just such cravings that keep beings chained to the sufferings of *Sarisāra*.

Never Harm Another

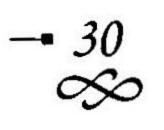
Whether your work is well-done or poorly done is not of paramount importance. What is really of paramount importance is that whatever you do must not harm another being and thereby add to your store of bad *Kamma* (Akusala Kamma).



THE 'SOTAPAN', or 'Stream-winner', having cut off the three fetters of wrong beliefs, doubts, and attachment to wrong practices, is no longer subject to rebirth in the lower worlds (of animals, ghosts, and purgatory) but, destined to full enlightenment within seven rebirths at most, his existences will be among good and noble families.



SOME CHILDREN instinctively shun the taking of other's possessions, and full of compassion, are exceedingly reluctant to harm, or see harmed, all living creatures. On seeing fish at the market, some dead and some still alive, they are greatly saddened and wish ardently for the release of the fish still alive. Surely such children are true disciples of the Noble Ones.





PEOPLE WITH little love, compassion and goodwill for others are exceedingly desirous of personal gain. Such people, when writing commentaries or preparing sermons, are unduly and unbecomingly desirous of personal fame and possessions.

Most Profound Respects

WHEN PEOPLE come across commentaries which are well-written and instructive, they become full of respect for the writer. In like fashion, when one encounters a discourse of the Buddha which is replete with wisdom, understanding and compassion, one becomes filled with the most profound respects for the Buddha.

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The Blessings of Love and Goodwill

ENTERTAIN NO DOUBTS but truly believe that one who mindfully develops love and goodwill for all becomes doubly blessed, for it shall really be that such a one not only enjoys good health, success and contentment, but is protected from evils and dangers as well.

The Prayer of Love and Goodwill

Countless numbers have been protected from harm by the recitation of the *Mettā Sutta*, or Prayer of Love and Goodwill, even where the recitation (in Pāli) has been without full understanding. When recited with full understanding, or when one develops concentration (*Bhāvanā*) on the *Mettā Sutta*, how much more powerful it becomes!

By the recitation of the *Mettā Sutta*, with true faith and unwavering devotion, may all beings come to realise its power for the benefit of all.



In Worldly Matters, success will not come to one without faith in one's abilities, without health, without vigour, without learning. Only those with faith in one's abilities, with good health, vigour and understanding, will strive and succeed to their full potential.

In spiritual matters too, faith, good health, vigour, effort, understanding and wisdom are essential for full success.

Good Teachings Take Root in Pure Minds

ONLY ON A CLEAN unsoiled canvas can one paint bright, distinctive, unpolluted colours. Just so, only when mind is clean and unsoiled by defilements, can noble teachings take firm root and develop. In minds defiled by impure thoughts, good teachings cannot take root.



GENTLE OF ACTION and gentle of voice, such a person is well-loved and easy to approach for guidance and advice, just as a protective harbour is well-remembered and easy to approach for shelter.

Bhāvanā and Dignity

TRUE DIGNITY of deportment cannot be achieved unless one undertakes meditation practices (Bhāvanā).

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Mark of Learning
and Wisdom

33 **-**-

TRULY LEARNED and wise people, being judicious and restrained in both their praise and their censure, praise only those really worthy of praise, and censure only those justly deserving of censure.

Meditation on Loving-kindness

IN THE MEDITATION on loving-kindness (Mettā-bhāvanā), one radiates loving-kindness to all quarters, taking care not only to pray that all beings live, enjoying well-being and happiness, but also that all live free from dangers, free from harm, free from sufferings.



TOWARDS SOMEONE ONE loves and respects, there can only be tenderness. Thus, pride ($M\bar{a}na$) rears its ugly head only in the absence of love ($Mett\bar{a}$).



A MOTHER BEARS her baby within herself for nine or ten months. Then, after birth, she nurses the baby with milk from her breast, and watches over the baby always with the greatest of love and tenderness. Thus, a mother's love is greater than a father's.



WHEN A PERSON'S mind has not been developed, it is not easy to radiate loving-kindness towards all the beings in their various abodes, but when one's mind is fully developed, there is no quarter of the universe that cannot be reached by the power of *Mettā-bhāvanā*.



Алтноисн Udaung Min made offerings and supplications to the sun and other deities for his worldly well-being, he nevertheless took refuge in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Therefore, it cannot be said that he was misled by wrong beliefs.

The Bodhisatta's Recollection of the Dhamma

THE *Bodhisattas*, or Future Buddhas, have accumulated immeasurable merit, and done countless good deeds through *Samsāra*, and are thus able to recollect the Buddha and the Buddha's Dhamma. It should not be said that for such *Bodhisattas*, instruction from a teacher is required.

105 Loved and Respected

A FLOWER without scent or beauty is not valued, but if well-scented and beautiful of form, it is loved by all. In like manner, people with honour and dignity are loved and respected by all.

106 Virtues to Praise

IN FOOLS, evildoers, and men of little understanding, it is hard to find virtues to praise, but how easy it is to sing the praises of the wise, the good and the honourable.

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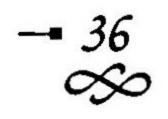
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to appreciate the vastness of a great forest, and the incredible variety of its beauty, its geography, and its plant and animal life unless one has well-explored its depths. In like manner, only a person well-learned in the vastness, profundity and subtleties of the *Tipiṭaka* (or threefold division of the Buddhist scriptures) can begin to truly appreciate the omniscience and compassion of the Buddha.

The Buddha's Perfect Response

Whenever Questioned or requested to instruct by the *Brahmā* gods, *Devas*, ascetics, leaders of other sects and learned men, the Buddha, being endowed with all-knowing, all-seeing omniscience, was always able to respond in a manner most appropriate to the occasion, without hesitation, without doubt, without fear, without having to ponder.

109 Learning and Good Conduct

A PERSON with learning but without goodness of conduct will not have the compassion to help others by giving wise counsel and instruction to those who, being unwise, uneducated, uninstructed, are engaged in unwholesome and harmful activities. It would seem as if such a person were also without learning.



A person who has both learning and goodness of conduct has the compassion to guide, counsel, instruct and help others to follow the path of wholesome, virtuous behaviour. Thus, leaders with both learning and goodness of conduct (*Vijjācarana*) are known by the good conduct of their followers.

The Buddha's Abodes

THE LORD BUDDHA could at all times have resided in the finest of monasteries built by wealthy disciples, but out of compassion for beings, the Buddha strove tirelessly to teach his Dhamma, travelling across the country, on foot, through forest paths, over hills and rough ground, and in all kinds of inclement weather, staying in forest camps or even just under the shelter of trees.

Whatever the weather, whatever the surrounding, after the six years of extreme austerities following the Great Renunciation, the Buddha was in no way troubled. Quite apart from this, ever ardent, ever mindful, purified, concentrated, the Buddha could at will abide in the four *Jhānas* and higher stages (*Samāpatti*), the Four Divine Abodes (*Brahma-vihāra*), the Heavenly Abode (*Dibba-vihāra*), and the Noble Abode (*Ariya-vihāra*). Abiding thus in these abodes, the Buddha was ever protected from the environments and ever in absolute bliss.

37 **-**− 050

The Buddha's Speech

IN HIS DEALINGS with his disciple monks, the lay-people of the towns and villages, and adherents of rival sects, the Buddha was always perfect in his choice of word and argument and

parable, suiting the time and place and disposition of their minds, and was ever instructive and persuasive, such that all who heard delighted in and cherished the Buddha's words, and even leaders of other sects were won over and marvelled at the Buddha's skill and omniscience.

The Buddha's Powers
Beyond Science

SOME SEEDLINGS will bear fruit while others will not. Difficult as it is to predict which seedlings will and which will not bear fruit, it is still possible through science to analyse and distinguish the two types. But it is only the Buddha, with his omniscience and absolute spiritual powers (Abhiñña) who can penetrate and know the nature and minds of beings.

8

The Malady and the Cure

IF A PERSON'S condition and illness are not diagnosed correctly, that person will be given medicine not appropriate to the illness. Instead of curing the patient, the illness gets worse and may kill the patient. In like manner, only when a person's physical and mental attributes and character are correctly assessed, can that person be given the most suitable and efficacious instructions for his well-being.



IT IS SAID that "worldlings (*Puthujjana*) are as madmen", for they become as madmen when the diseases of the impurities strike (and overwhelm their good senses).

The Agitated and the Ever Calm

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD are restless and agitated. The Noble Ones (*Ariya-puggala*), freed from the passions, fears and agitations of worldlings, dwell ever calm and tranquil, mindful and pure.

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Joyfully Hailed, the Incomparable Teacher

IF ONE'S TEACHER is of doubtful abilities, one hesitates to acknowledge him as such, but if he has great ability, learning and wisdom, and is of good conduct, one takes just pride and joy in proclaiming him as one's teacher. The Buddha was blessed, omniscient, perfect of conduct, knower of worlds and endowed with absolute spiritual powers, compassionate and incomparable teacher of beings. How proudly and joyfully then did his disciples hail him as their Teacher, unparalleled among all beings!



NORMALLY, teachers instruct only those who come to them. The Buddha however, gave his teaching not only to layfolk and devas who came to him, but daily would survey the world with his divine vision, and with the greatest of compassion, travelled far and wide to admonish and instruct the needy and the deserving (of his teaching). Seeing beings of little impurity ready for release from *Samsāra*, the Buddha even went to grounds strewn with refuse and corpses where others had not dared to venture.

The Buddha's Fame and Prestige

As LONG As the Buddha's teachings (*Pitaka-dhamma*) are respected and worshipped by the wise, the fame and prestige of the Buddha will resound throughout all the quarters of the world.

The Buddha's Unrelenting Efforts for All Beings

THROUGHOUT the history of mankind, never has there been anyone to compare even remotely with the Buddha in his efforts to teach the Dhamma for the good and well-being of monks, layfolk and *Deva*. The Buddha strove without rest, tireless and unrelenting, for the purification of all, and for the release of all from the suffering of *Samsāra*.



RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS outside the Buddha's Dhamma are as infertile soil. Their teachings are as impure seeds. Impossible then for beings to achieve complete well-being, purification and release from suffering, for poor soil and poor seeds can only bring about stunted plants and stunted fruits.

Meditation, Morality, and Society

By THE ARDENT practice of *Vipassanā* (Insight) and *Samatha* (Concentration) meditation, one not only removes impurities and raises one's worth and honour, but one also works towards the peace and well-being of society. Without mental development (*Bhāvanā*), morality (*Sīla*) by itself does not give such powerful and wide-ranging benefits, but nevertheless morality also remains absolutely essential, because a person without morality is as one who is working for the ruin of society.

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122 Disease and Morality

THE WISE maintain that it is the widespread loss of morality among men and women today that has caused so many strange, new dreadful diseases to appear.



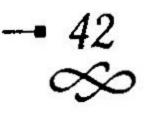
FOR PEOPLE who are ever diligent to maintain goodness of bodily and verbal conduct, and heartfelt goodwill towards all beings, every day is an auspicious and blessed day. There is no need of special rituals to ward off ills and evils and to bring forth blessings and good fortune.

Goodwill and Anger

It is always pleasant and calming to meet someone who feels love and goodwill towards all beings, and how unpleasant or distasteful to meet someone whose mind is agitated or distorted with anger. Thus can a person's state of mind affect others.

Habitual (Ācinnaka) Kamma

IT IS IMPORTANT to frequently recall to mind one's deeds of pious charity (and other meritorious deeds) and to rejoice in thus bringing about the well-being of beings. Every time one rejoices thus, one not only raises the worth of one's wholesome volitions (Kusala Cetana), but by such frequent recalling and rejoicing, one's Kamma becomes Habitual Kamma (Ācinnaka-kamma) and one reaps its fullest possible benefits, not in later existences, but in this very life.



Strive Earnestly and Profit from this Life

IT IS EXCEEDINGLY difficult to win birth as a human, and especially so where the Buddha's teachings are available. Therefore, put into practice earnestly the Buddha's teachings. If one cannot profit from thus having won rebirth within a Buddha's Sāsana, one's loss will be incalculable if one becomes fettered to the cycle of painful, unprofitable existences. How difficult, how long then, before one wins rebirth again in a wholesome existence!

Value and Potential of Human Life

THE LORD BUDDHA and celestial beings speak of the great value and potential of human life. How important to realise that, having won this wonderful opportunity, one should not fritter it away in frivolous, meaningless or unwholesome activities. One should strive and profit from this human life, for, by purity of conduct, by mindfulness and development of concentration and wisdom, one can attain *Nibbāna*, the release from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*.

128 Look, See, Understand and Profit

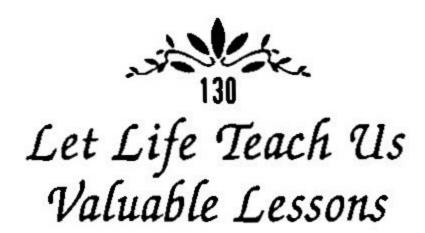
Know how to look correctly, and one sees things as they really are, thus gaining more and more understanding. Put this understanding into practice and one will make progress towards one's goals.

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A LITTLE MONEY saved daily becomes a large sum in a few years. Drops of water, in themselves insignificant, will accumulate to fill a barrel. A little learning noted daily and remembered will in time make you as learned as an acclaimed professor.

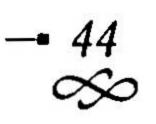
In the sphere of spiritual enlightenment too, do not think it is of no consequence if, day by day, you can devote only a little time and effort to meditation practices. One's purity and understanding develops, grows and deepens little by little, even though one may not realise it. One progresses towards *Sotapattimagga*, becoming a "Stream-enterer" destined for *Nibbāna*.



LIFE can teach us valuable lessons if we know how to see the truth beneath external appearances. For example, seeing a corpse, mindlessly, we can let ourselves become agitated, repulsed, perhaps even more attached to our own bodies. Or mindfully, we can meditate on the loathsomeness of the body (Asubha-bhāvanā) and on death (Maraṇānussati), and thereby make progress on the path to liberation.



WITHIN THE DEPTHS of a huge forest, one can live away from the temptations and distractions of sensual delights, tranquil, mindful, free of mental impurities (*Kilesas*). In like fashion,



monasteries and meditation retreats too can be havens that protect one from the distractions and temptations of sensual delights, and keep one's mind free of impurities.



SOME PEOPLE mistakenly understand sensual desire to refer only to pleasures associated with touch cognisable by body. In fact, sensual desire, for pleasures of the senses, also include desires for shapes and colours cognisable by eye, desires for sounds cognisable by ear, desires for smells cognisable by nose, and desires for tastes cognisable by tongue.



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TO DEFEND YOURSELF from the dangers of lust (Kāma-rāga), the Dhamma teaches moral discipline, restraint, mindfulness.



ONLY WHEN ONE realises the error of clinging to sensual pleasures, does one renounce the world, does one become a monk, does one come to monasteries and meditation retreats. Otherwise, one continues to delight in the ephemeral pleasures of the senses (without realising the dangers).

Faith and Reverence

ONE SHOULD LOOK upon the Buddha's scriptures with the deepest reverence. One should not be lazy to recite them, nor to learn them. Instead, one should learn and recite them with reverence and with joy, and the power of the scriptures will protect us from harm and bring due success and well-being (in accord with our *Kamma*).

This being said, one should not recite the scriptures merely with selfish desires for protection from harm, success, riches and fame, but with a heart filled with faith, reverence and worship of the Buddha.



Look Upon Our Good Deeds as Precious Jewels

When we have a particularly lovely jewel, be it a ring or brooch, bracelet or necklace, how proud and joyful we are every opportunity we get to wear and display it. We feel joy thinking of it. We feel joy gazing at it. We feel joy wearing and displaying it. We feel joy thinking, "What a lovely piece of jewel I have!"

In like fashion, we should recollect again and again, and with joy, the acts of charity that we have done.

Benefits of Good Deeds

SOME PEOPLE SAY, "The benefits of good deeds come but in the next existence. There is nothing to show for this present life." Such people think only of their efforts and expenses and do not realise the benefits of good deeds.

Whether one realises it or not, the fruits of meritorious deeds will ever follow one, and bring great benefit not only in following existences, but even here and now.



THERE IS A SAYING: "Without wealth, one cannot donate liberally, not donating, one gains not wealth. Having wealth, one donates liberally, and thus donating liberally, one gains wealth." One can see here the effects of *Kamma*.

Purity of Conduct the Most Precious of Possessions

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Our Venerated Preceptor, the (late) Presiding Sayadaw of the Shwegyin Sect, the Vissudharyon Sayadaw, always admonished his disciples, "Do not fear the decay and dissolution of the body. Do not fear the loss of possessions. As long as your purity of conduct is not compromised or weakened, you are as a person who can never be destroyed."

140
As in Dreams
Long Forgotten

FOR COUNTLESS LIVES throughout Samsāra we have wandered, perhaps as Brahmā gods, sometimes as celestial beings, or as kings and queens, and rich and powerful beings, enjoying lives of luxury and pleasure now long forgotten as dreams of

yesteryears. Our bodies, as are all component things, are subject to decay and dissolution. It is only the good *Kamma* of meritorious deeds and the wholesome aptitudes (*Pāramī*) developed through our efforts on the path of spiritual progress which follow us from life to life and help us throughout *Saṃsāra*.



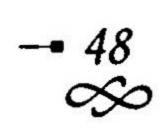
THE LEVEL OF a person's maturity, mental resilience, purity and sincerity accord with the time and effort exerted in meditation practices.



A PERSON WHO has never been tested by adverse and unpleasant situations may have the reputation of being a good and well-controlled person. If a person always responds in a calm, restrained and rational manner when confronted with adverse and unpleasant situations, only then can one conclude that person is truly good and well-controlled.



THE OCEAN cannot be heated by a small grass-fire, just as a mighty mountain range cannot be split by a small hand-knife. Quite clearly, the immensity of the ocean and the mountain range cannot be affected by small fires and small knives.



In like manner, the Noble Ones (*Ariya-puggala*) and wise men whose minds are strengthened and purified by meditation; restrained, controlled, calm; such persons, protected by the strength of Dhamma, are not affected by the trials and tribulations of life.



A HOUSEHOLD which believes deeply and sincerely in the power of loving-kindness ($Mett\bar{a}$), and whose members act accordingly with love and goodwill towards all, will surely be a household blessed with love, harmony and happiness, free of petty quarrels and problems.

For the Well-Being of both Laymen and Monks

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FOR FAMILIES, communities, towns and villages to live in peace and prosperity, it is important that all its members live in accordance with sacred religious teachings. For monasteries to progress and prosper, it is important that monks and novices live strictly in accordance with the Buddha's Dhamma. Living thus, the well-being and happiness of both lay-communities and monasteries are well-assured.

146 For Future Generations

It is absolutely essential for the Buddha's *Sāsana* (or teachings) to maintain its purity and to spread and become strong. Only then will future generations, knowing how to worship, revere

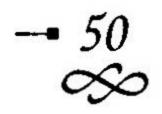
and cherish, protect and defend the Buddha's teachings, and having the opportunities to put them into practice, enjoy the benefits and blessings of the Buddha's teachings as we ourselves have benefited; and these future generations must in turn further propagate the teachings for posterity.

The Democracy of the Sangha

THE SANGHA, the Buddha's Holy Order of Monks, is governed by rigorously applied precepts and rules of conduct. In many meetings, whether of minor or major import, all the monks present are consulted, and approval by the majority, or even complete consensus may be required. To use a popular term, "democracy", the rule of the majority, is often applied.

148 Worship of the Sangha

THE SANGHA are clothed in robes made sacred by the initiation and ordination ceremonies, and follow rules of conduct (Patimokkha-samvara-sīla) far more rigorous and numerous than those followed by laymen. Thus, a layman, through ardent effort, may become an Ariya (Noble One), but whether he be a Stream-enterer (Sotāpanna), Once-returner (Sakadāgāmi) or a Never-returner (Anāgāmi), such a layman must still, with humility, pay homage to Puthujjana monks and novices (Sāmanera) who have not reached the higher stages of holiness.





A PERSON of little faith, not believing sincerely in the benefits to be won from acts of charity, will remain reluctant to donate even small sums of money, while a person of deep faith will have no reluctance to donate very large sums. Therefore, to win great merit from the performing of good deeds, it is truly essential for a person to have faith. Since blind faith in itself is not sufficient, learning and wisdom are also important.



ROLE MODELS are very important in shaping young people's characters. Children look up to and try to emulate their parents, just as disciples look up to and try to emulate honoured and learned Sayadaws. If you realise and appreciate, and show the very great gratitude you feel towards your parents, then your children in turn will likewise rightly feel deep respect and gratitude towards you.

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Worldly Thoughts and Spiritual Thoughts

IN PERFORMING ACTS of charity (Dāna), one should not think selfishly on rewards of worldly riches, but cultivate thoughts of goodwill and compassion in the giving. Thinking overmuch of selfish benefits will subtract from spiritual gains, while cultivating thoughts of goodwill and compassion will add to one's advantages and benefits.

152 Importance of Learning

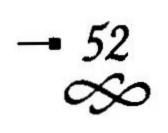
In religion, as in other matters, understanding is of great importance. With understanding, worship becomes deeper and more meaningful, and the benefits and advantages become greater. Therefore, it is important that all Buddhists strive to increase their understanding.



IN WORSHIPPING the Buddha, our state of mind is of the greatest importance. The deeper our heartfelt humility and sincerity, the greater the benefits to be won. Worship without sincerity will bring poor benefits. We must learn and recite, as many as we can, the psalms (*Gathas*) extolling the virtues and powers of the Buddha, and thereby strengthen the power of the *Gathas* to protect and benefit us.

Daily Learn a Little More

LEARN AS MANY and as much of the Buddha's virtues and powers, and your worship becomes deeper and much more satisfying. If you recite merely the opening salutation and prayers, your worship will remain superficial. Spend time and effort therefore to read and learn as much about the Buddha's virtues and powers as you can. Our work and other worldly affairs should not be used as an excuse, for we can all find the time to daily learn a little more, and with time our learning will grow.



For the Buddha's Teachings to Succeed Fully

ONE CAN WORSHIP the Buddha and the Sangha by alms-giving and thereby gain merit. But for the Buddha's *Sāsana* to succeed fully, it is important to put the Buddha's teachings into practice and strengthen one's morality, concentration and wisdom, and thus establish oneself firmly on the path of the eight stages of holiness (*Magga-phala*) and *Nibbāna*.



IF, THROUGH FEAR of not having enough to eat or fear of losing one's wealth, a person has not performed due acts of charity, then that person will suffer such hardships as lack of food and loss of wealth.

Perform acts of charity without hesitation and without anxiety for oneself, and one will never suffer to one's disadvantage, but will always achieve success and prosperity. Therefore, never fear to donate or give alms generously.

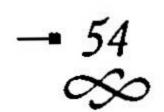


THE MYANMAR PEOPLE today can take great pride in the purity and achievements of the Buddha's Sāsana in Myanmar, and in the success of the Myanmar Sangha in propagating the teachings abroad. We must teach and culture our children so that future generations too can take pride in the Buddha's Sāsana, realise its value, and know how to worship and revere

the Triple Gem. This is the greatest inheritance we can leave future generations. This is the way to ensure the propagation, purity and success of the Buddha's *Sāsana* for posterity.

158 Grace and Honour

A PERSON who performs good deeds has grace and honour. Such grace and honour are not internal qualities realised only by the person concerned. In performing good deeds, in speaking of good deeds, in recalling to mind good deeds, the joy and contentment that one feels, the grace and honour that one has, are apparent for all to appreciate too.



The Silent Buddhas

THE "PACCEKA BUDDHAS", or Individual or Silent Buddhas, are fully accomplished and enlightened Arahants (saints), who have by themselves, without the aid of a teacher, realised the Four Truths and attained Nibbāna as a result of Pāramī (perfections) and merit developed and accumulated through countless lives. The Silent Buddhas do not possess the faculties to proclaim the doctrine to the world. It is only the Buddha who has both realised the Four Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, and attained to Nibbāna without the aid of a teacher, and also has all the requisite qualities to proclaim the doctrine to the world and become a world leader.



TODAY, THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS have become a guiding light for the whole of mankind. Through the efforts of scholars and researchers, the doctrine has spread to countries far and wide, and where previously it was not known. Advances in travel and communication have also made this easier.

In the worlds of *Brahmā gods* and celestial beings, the Buddha's teachings have been known from its earliest propagation, and gods and devas remain disciples of the Buddha.

Sadly however, in the very land where the Buddha won enlightenment and preached the first sermon, the *Dhammacakka Pavattana* (or the Turning of the Wheel), worship and reverence of the Buddha has all but disappeared.

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Organizing Religious Celebrations

When Organizing Ceremonies and celebrations to honour deeds of charity or alms-giving, emphasis must always be on the religious aspects of the occasion, and never on the worldly aspects, such as winning prestige or entertaining guests. Emphasising the worldly aspects will lower the dignity and value of the occasion, and the merits will likewise be less. Emphasise the religious aspects, such as sermons and the sharing of merit and goodwill, and the dignity and value of the occasion will rise, as will the merit to be shared by all.



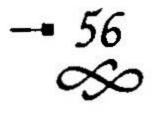
ALL DEEDS OF CHARITY and alms-giving should take us nearer to realisation of *Nibbāna*. We should therefore perform such acts with reverence, dignity and decorum. We should cut down as much as possible on anything which detracts from the religious aspects of the occasion, and which are often wasteful and inessential. What is really essential and of paramount importance are the good and meritorious deeds in themselves.



KNOW AND UNDERSTAND one's life. Know what needs to be done. If one is negligent, and if one does not realise the path and fruition of Stream-winning (Sotapatti Magga and Phala), one is not assured of release from the sufferings of Samsāra. If, in ensuing cycles of death and rebirth, one were to become enmeshed in sin and evil, how incalculable is one's loss, and how difficult to regain one's present position.

Novices Must be Old Enough to Understand

IT IS THE FERVENT WISH of parents to celebrate the novitiation ceremonies of their sons, and see their sons become novices (Sāmaṇera) for a certain period, but the sons should be of an age to understand, and they will then be happy and appreciate and learn much from being novices, and everyone will receive the fullest merits. If the novices are too young, they will lack



understanding and be unable to follow properly the required monastic rules. Therefore parents can be faulted if they rush their sons into becoming novices.



THE NOVICE OR SĀMAŅERA is one to be much honoured. It is difficult to say exactly why or how, but as soon as the novice's robes are put on, the demeanour and bearing of the novice becomes full of grace and nobility. Although the Buddha ordered heads to be shaven to remove vain preoccupations with one's appearance, in reality, the shaven head adds to the beauty, nobility and dignity of the novice.



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NO MATTER HOW often or long a lay-person recites the formula for taking refuge in the Triple Gem, without the robes and the shaven head, he does not become a novice, or one equal in status to a novice. The novitiation ceremony follows rigorous procedures, including the correct pronunciation and intonation of the sacred texts, which were laid down by the Lord Buddha himself 2500 years ago.

The Four Unknowables

AT WHAT AGE, of what cause or disease, at what time of season and day, and in what locality will we meet our death? These are four things which we cannot know.



THE SUM OF A PERSON'S character, his very nature, his aptitudes, his likes and dislikes, his prejudices, his disposition, his temperament, is of extreme importance. Such personal characteristics or qualities, although unseen, follow a person from life to life. If a person has habitually performed good deeds in past lives, he will have good qualities in this life. Conversely, if a person has habitually performed bad deeds in past lives, he will tend to have bad qualities.



JUST AS A SEED develops into a plant when the required conditions of soil, moisture, soil nutrients and temperature are present, one's *Kamma*, unseen but nevertheless latent, will also suddenly develop when the required conditions are present, and take effect to one's advantage or disadvantage in accord with one's past deeds.

The Potential for Impurities to Flare Up

THE POTENTIAL for fire lies unseen within a matchstick. Only when struck against the igniting strip does the fire suddenly flare up. Within each of us also lies, unseen but latent, the potential for impurities. Given cause, such impurities too can suddenly flare up and make us commit unwholesome and demeritorious deeds.



IF ONE WERE to ask, "What, in life, is of the greatest importance?", the answer is to strive to improve one's good qualities or characteristics. As one improves such characteristics, the potential for benefits and advantages increases within oneself, and when time and other conditions are right, one enjoys due happiness and success. Within the spiritual realm, development of good characteristics will bring about more quickly the realisation of that highest of goals, that eternal bliss, that deathless state, that release from the sufferings of Samsāra, in other words, the attainment of Nibbāna.



GOOD BUDDHISTS perform and recall to mind their good deeds of charity or alms-giving with enjoyment. The Buddha himself commented the taking of deserved enjoyment from doing good deeds. Such good deeds and such enjoyment bring about advantages and benefits to oneself. The other kind of enjoyment, namely, the enjoyment of worldly pleasures of the senses, increases one's cravings and covetousness, and ultimately prolongs one's sufferings through *Saṃsāra*.

How Parental Aspirations have Changed

DURING THE TIME of the Buddha, mothers admonished their sons thus: "My son, if you wish to remain as householders,

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strive to become as renowned as Citta and Arlarvaka." (Citta and Arlarvaka were two householders praised by the Lord Buddha himself for their knowledge and practice of the Dhamma.) During these present times however, mothers are admonishing their sons: "My son, study hard and get a B.A., or an M.A. If you can, get a Ph.D."

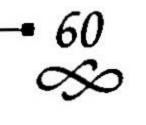
Let alone the ancient times of the Buddha, even just several generations ago, parental aspirations were different from now. Parents were delighted when their sons became *Sāmaṇera*. They were even more delighted when their sons, happy as *Sāmaṇera*, elected to remain in the Sangha. Parents then gave much greater importance to spiritual than to worldly matters.



IF THE BUDDHA'S *Sāsana* (teachings) spreads and influences for the better the minds and actions of mankind, then the world will surely enjoy greater peace, prosperity and happiness. Pray thus: "May the Buddha's *Sāsana* spread, influence and protect mankind. May there be peace and prosperity for all."

New Beginnings Every Instant of Time

FOR LAY-PEOPLE, the new year comes only once a year. Within our bodies however, every moment is as a new year, for our so-called individual existences are in reality nothing but the ceaseless arising and passing away of both matter ($R\bar{u}pa-khandha$) and mind ($N\bar{a}ma$) or states of consciousness. Within each inconceivably short instant of time (or Khana), there is the threefold arising or coming into being (Uppada), existing (Thiti), and passing away (Bhanga).





WHEN ONE ENCOUNTERS an enemy, thief or robber intent on doing us harm and one is unarmed, there is cause for fear. If one is armed with something one can rely on, one can defend oneself boldly.

In like manner, if one has striven to lead a good life, rarely performing unwholesome and demeritorious deeds and habitually performing good, meritorious deeds, then one can rely on one's store of merit (*Kusala Kamma*) to come to our aid and defence through life. There will be little to fear and one faces adversity boldly. One meets old age gracefully and without disease, one meets death painlessly and without fear, and if there is rebirth, one will be born into a good existence.

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EVERY CITIZEN of Myanmar has the duty to work not only for the progress, peace and well-being of the country, but also for the progress, prosperity and well-being of the country's *Buddha Sāsana*, which has justly become renowned throughout the world for the purity of its teaching and practice. One observes however, that in this country, there is no need for the Sangha to continually exhort the lay-people to donate and give alms, for the supporters of the Sangha in Myanmar are generous beyond expectation.



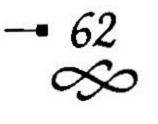
IT IS ESSENTIAL for all of us to be ever mindful to radiate love and goodwill for all beings on earth, so that our country and all the countries of the world, enjoy peace and prosperity, and the earth becomes a pleasant and happy place for all.

Love and Goodwill Returned

THE MONKS of olden days were forest dwellers, but came to no harm from the tigers, elephants and other wild animals that shared the forest. Why was this so? This was because of the power of love and goodwill which the noble monks ever radiated to all beings. Through the power of love and goodwill, the wild animals of the forest became mild and pacified, and regarded the monks with benevolence.

The Power of Love and Goodwill Increased

When Buddhists come together to radiate love and goodwill as a group, the power of love and goodwill are much intensified, and very much greater than that which is created by just one person.





RADIATE LOVING-KINDNESS towards one who hates us, or harbours a grudge, wishing sincerely and ardently for that person's happiness and well-being. Before long, that person will greet you with humility, and cleansed of enmity. This has been the experience of many who have practised *Mettā-bhāvanā* in this manner.

The Protective Power of Love and Goodwill

THE PROTECTION afforded those who faithfully and ardently practise *Mettā-bhāvanā* is truly miraculous. For such people, an ocean of troubles becomes a small pool, and a mountain a small hill. Fire and earthquakes do not harm such people. Even poison inadvertently taken loses its efficacy. Venomous snakes of wild and dangerous intent become tamed before such people.

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A Mansion of Love

As parents deeply love their children, and their children return this deep love, a household becomes divine with love, even if *Mettā-bhāvanā* is not especially practised.



PEOPLE ARE NORMALLY forgetful and negligent of the Buddha's Dhamma of Truth. Only when faced with suffering, illness and danger do they remember the saving grace of religion. Such is the nature of ordinary people.



Wise and learned Sayadaws often admonish their lay disciples: "Be prepared for death." So that one can meet death bravely and gracefully, live according to this admonishment and be ever prepared for death.

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ONE MUST LEARN to rejoice and share in the meritorious deeds of others. On encountering deeds of merit, it takes no effort to call with enthusiasm: "Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!" (Well done! Well done! Well done!), and one shares in the many benefits of the deed.



On REFLECTION, one realises how deep our parent's love is for us. When we become parents ourselves, we realise this even more, as King Ajata Sattu discovered when he became father of a son.

Many people tend to take their parent's love for granted, and become unmindful and inconsiderate. When their parents have passed away, only then, too late, do they lament how little they honoured, cherished and cared for their parents when their parents were alive.



No MATTER HOW pained or diseased the body, keep the mind calm and mindful. Let not the mind too, become diseased. Let the shortcomings of the body be as they are, but cure the mind of the disease of impurities. A person with mind cleansed of all impurities is worthy of honour and worship even if his body be diseased.



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ACTS OF CHARITY are as the magic Tree of Plenty. As one plucks off a fruit, another takes its place. As one gives in charity, one will receive greater rewards in return.



IT IS SAID of the Ledi Sayadaw—a scholar-monk of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century renowned for his vast learning and for his practice and teaching of *Vipassanā*—that monks who had not received ordination at his monastery were re-ordained when opportunity arose. Monks having received initial ordination at his monastery were also re-ordained at

least twice. One might ask if such re-ordination is necessary. The answer is that if the initial ceremony was faulted in any way, one truly becomes a monk only on re-ordination. If the first ordination was already successful, then the second and third ceremonies strengthen one's contentment with the monastic life.

Learned authorities in the *Vinaya* have also ruled that if one has performed deeds which are unwholesome or infringed upon monastic rules, re-ordination serves to remove, or at least reduce, the harmful effects of such deeds.

In like manner, kings of olden days performed their coronation ceremony two or three times. By such means, the honour and authority of the king were heightened.



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IN ALL MATTERS, members of the Sangha have to answer the questions: "Is this wholesome or unwholesome? Can this be faulted? If it cannot be faulted, it must be deemed good." Surely a ceremony in which a monk reaffirms his determination to be a member of the Holy Sangha, and lay-disciples pay their homage, cannot be faulted on any grounds. It can only be judged good and meritorious.



ONE'S BODY and one's honour differ in this very important aspect. One's body is subject to decay, and lasts but for this life. In line with the saying, "The world may crumble but my vow stands forever!", the body perishes but one's honour lives on even after death.



HARD TO WIN indeed is existence as human beings, but are we all therefore worthy and commendable? This is not so! We must always uphold our morality, integrity and honour to be worthy and commendable. Otherwise, our lives remain empty of value, and we do not profit from having won human existence.

194 Commendable Living

WE PROFIT from having won this hard-to-win birth as humans only if we strive to cleanse ourselves of defilements, and strive always to be pure in thought, word and deed.

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195
The Right Way to
Maintain One's Wealth

JUST AS, in the depths of a great forest, a vast lake remains of no use to anyone, but fills with sand and silt and disappears, the foolish man may have great wealth, but he knows not how to use it to benefit himself, nor to benefit others. But the wise man uses his wealth well, both for himself and for his community. He helps his relatives and his friends when necessary. He lives thus free from blame, and is praised and respected by all. Such a person is assured of a good birth among the happy celestial beings.

It is by giving generously that one maintains one's well-being and happiness in lives to come.

196 Arrogance and Conceit

An ARROGANT, easily angered person is sometimes compared to an air-filled leather ball. When not inflated, the ball is soft and pliable, but when inflated, it becomes hard and rigid. Just so, a person puffed up with pride and conceit becomes intolerant and impatient, intractable and opinionated, and closed to the views of others.

191
True Friends and
False Friends

IT IS EASY to find friends who are always sweet with their words, but they are "friends" in name only. Difficult to find are friends who speak plainly and point out faults and shortcomings, or otherwise give advice, if to do so is to our advantage. Such friends are true friends who have our interests at heart and sincerely desire our well-being. True friends not only speak plainly and honestly, but in turn, also know how to accept sincere advice in good spirit.

198
True Disciples

MERELY LISTENING to sermons on the Dhamma, one becomes a "disciple" in name only. True disciples are those who put the Buddha's teachings into practice, and becoming ever mindful of the Eightfold Path, strive ardently to purify their minds of all impurities, and thereby achieve *Nibbāna*, the release from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*.

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A MOTHER COW is ever mindful of her newborn calf, nursing it with love and tenderness, watchful of its needs, and taking time to feed herself only out of necessity. Just so, a Noble One is ever mindful of the Eightfold Path, and strives ardently to control and purify his mind, although out of necessity, he must also shoulder the responsibilities and duties of monastic life, administering to the needs of his fellow-monks.



A PERSON who is content and satisfied with what he gets and can accept with equanimity whatever happens, does not easily become unhappy or angered over events or people. Such a person finds it easy to develop and harbour love and goodwill towards all.

69 **-**-

201 Love and Courtesy

LOVE AND GOODWILL are gentle, subtle states of mind and, as a result, are not found in rough and ill-mannered persons.

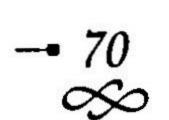
Praise and Encouragement

WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL for the praise and encouragement we receive from people we respect and honour deeply, for

this can raise our interest and enthusiasm, and lead us on to success and achievement.



EVEN AS A GOLDEN PEACOCK in a previous existence, the Future Buddha had developed wisdom and integrity, forbearance, patience and equanimity to very high standards, maintaining always loving goodness towards all creatures, and desiring only their well-being. Even as a peacock, the Future Buddha was an extraordinary individual. Let alone the creatures of the forest, even ordinary humans could not be considered as his equal.



The Buddha's Omniscience

By STUDYING THE *PITAKA* (Buddhist scriptures), one learns of the Buddha's all-seeing, all-knowing omniscience. So much in the *Pitaka* that seems incredible and extraordinary can be proved by practical experience as being correct. If we accept then, the truth and wisdom of the *Pitaka*, we can accept too, the truth of the Buddha's omniscience.

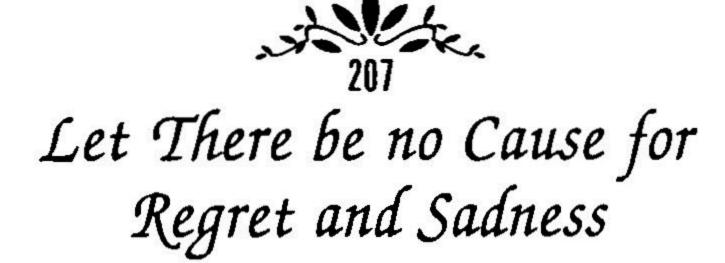


GOOD PEOPLE who discipline themselves and strive after worthwhile goals will give only good advice and instruction to others. Bad people, undisciplined and inclined to unwholesome and unmeritorious activities, will give bad advice and instruction.



A PERSON who appreciates good literature can find endless delight in a beautiful poem, marvelling at the choice and placement of words and at the sense and emotions evoked. But such a poem is without value or delight to one who cannot appreciate good literature.

In like manner, one can find endless delight in the Buddha's teachings, marvelling at the depth, range and subtleties of content, and in the choice of words and parables.



050

SOME PEOPLE NEGLECT their aged parents, failing to care for them in their years of need. This can give cause for regret later when their parents have passed away, and with this regret, there will rest always a heavy sadness in their hearts.



A PERSON who speaks well easily becomes successful, can persuade, advise and instruct people to their advantage, and more easily wins the respect and love of his community. Thus, the ability to speak well brings benefits to oneself and to one's community.



SOME ARE BORN with the ability to speak well. They interest and delight others with their speech. They can cajole, persuade, advise and instruct well without making special efforts.

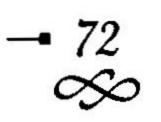
However, with diligent effort, it is also possible for those not so naturally gifted to become good speakers. They can conscientiously broaden their general knowledge and study ways of effective speaking and presentation. By becoming good speakers, they make an important big step on the road to success and achievement.

The Speech of Fools and Good Men

LISTENING TO THE SPEECH of fools is like playing with knives, for it can bring us harm. But the speech of good men, guided by love and compassion, attracts discerning listeners just as the magnet attracts iron, and brings advantages to all.

Other People are Like Us too

WE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE to speak pleasantly to us. Rude or ill-mannered speech upsets and angers us. Liking pleasant speech ourselves, why then do we not speak to others always with courtesy and respect? Disliking harsh speech ourselves, why then do we sometimes speak harshly to others?





A SNAKE may be adorned with rubies but nevertheless remains dangerous. Thus, a wicked person is to be avoided, even if that person is endowed with great learning.

A Good Place to Live

IT IS A BLESSING to be able to live where religious teachings and instruction are available, and where also one's education, prosperity and good health are not hampered in any way but can be further developed.

As a Person Blind

THE SCRIPTURES containing the Buddha's teachings are as the eyes of mankind, for through the scriptures, one's doubts are removed and one sees the sure road to personal well-being in this life and in lives to come. One who does not go to the scriptures for guidance and refuge is like a blind person.

215
Like People
who Cannot Read

Some PEOPLE do not write down and learn the Buddha's teachings, saying: "It is all there in the books." Such people are not much different from people who cannot read!

73 **-**− ∞∞



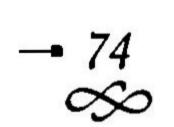
ONE MUST ALWAYS have good objectives in learning and studying. One should not learn and study to defeat, slander and belittle others, or merely to show off one's learning. Such learning is no longer a blessing.

All Learning has Value

EVEN A LITTLE learning may one day prove its worth and bring benefits. Therefore, one must never think of learning as: "This is too little, this is not important, this is not relevant." All learning has value.

The Immediate Benefits of Charity and Alms-giving

A PERSON WHO has given with loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*Karunā*) and sympathetic joy (*Muditā*) is always filled with joy to see his gifts benefiting others. In future, the remembrance of his good gifts and the benefits they have given others continues to fill him with joy. The advantages to the donor are therefore, enjoyed both here and now, and in the future. One need not wait for future existences.



219 Lifeless, like a Blacksmith's Bellows

SOME PEOPLE, having no faith (in the benefits to be derived from acts of charity and alms-giving), do not give to others, but spend their wealth selfishly on themselves. Although they do not enjoy the benefits (of $D\bar{a}na$) in future existences, they at least have enjoyed advantages in this present life. Some people fail to give to others, and fear also to spend their wealth on themselves. Wise men say that such latter people are like the blacksmith's bellows; they may be breathing but they are not living.

To Hunger for Criticism and Instruction

ON ONE OCCASION, Shin Rahula picked up a handful of sand and remarked: "How good it would be to have wise men, as many as the sand grains in my hand, criticise and instruct me!" All who understand the value of wise criticism and instruction hunger thus, for wise criticism and instruction to guide us swiftly and surely on the road to success and achievement.

Wealth, to Squander or to Use Well

When showered with great wealth, unrestrained and undisciplined people squander their wealth recklessly. The restrained and disciplined know how to use their wealth well for the benefit of community and relatives, and thereby also win great merit.

75 **-**-

However Ill-mannered a Rogue

THE LORD BUDDHA, seeing fully the dispositions of people, their shortcomings and mental defilements, whether great or small, apparent or hidden, was always able to give the most appropriate advice and instruction. Thus, however agitated, angered or ill-mannered a person, all became calmed and well-disposed on hearing the words of the Buddha.

Two Kinds of Learning

from the s there is no Buddha's

WORLDLY LEARNING IS for this lifetime and will not deliver you from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*. Concerning only the mundane, there is nothing really extraordinary about such learning. The Buddha's teachings however, will release you from the sufferings of *Saṃsāra*, and give you the eternal bliss of *Nibbāna*. How grateful one feels then, to experience even fleetingly this bliss of *Nibbāna*. One comes, as never before, to love and worship the Lord Buddha as the Greatest of Teachers, Peerless and Omniscient.

Imagine someone searching for some understanding, some answer to the confusion of life. This person knows that things aren't quite right. There must be better ways to live one's life than this. She or he searches and picks up yet another book and finds the answer to his or her quest. ~THAT'S IT! ~ and life changes forever.

~ Venerable Ñānadassi ~

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May they be relieved from all sufferings.

May they take existence in a happier and more blissful state in their next birth.

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Sasanadhaja Samyuttabhanaka" for his ability to recite the whole five volumes of Samyutta Nikāya (the Kindred Sayings), the prescribed text of Jetiyangana Organization.

While he was studying Pāli and Sanskrit under the Most Venerable Abhayaram Sayadaw, he was awarded the title of "Pariyatti Sasanahita Dhammacariya".

After the demise of Mahā Dhammikarama Sayadaw of Thabyekan, he returned to Mahā Dhammikarama Thabyekan Monastery and took up the duties as Joint Lecturer at the monastery. Then he took the Government Monastic Examination and passed all nine prescribed texts with distinctions and became the first ever recipient of the title "Sasanadhaja Siripavara Dhammacariya Siromani".

He translated the Paritta Pāli (Protective Verses) Texts into Myanmar language with complete commentary and verses, which are much commended and respected by all the learned scholars of Myanmar.

On 18th February 1984, he was elected Chief of Yangon Division Shwegyin Nikaya Organization. He then served as the Most Learned Adviser (Ovadacariya) and Patron of Shwedagon Pagoda Trust, Tipitakadhara Examination, Pitaka Translation Society, Mangala Byuha and Pitakabyuha Societies and Shwegyin Nikaya Central Sangha Affairs. In the same year, Sayadaw was awarded the "Agga Maha Pandita" title.

In the year 1992, Sayadaw was elected as Joint Chief Executive of Shwegyin Tradition and he was presented "Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru" title by the government.

While carrying out the Sāsana duties devotedly, at the age of 85, Sayadaw passed away peacefully on 6th February 1995.

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"People treasure their gold and their diamonds, and are ever mindful of them, ever fearful of their loss. They guard and protect them assiduously. But how do they treasure the infinitely more valuable jewels of the Buddha's Dhamma? Are they ever mindful of the Dhamma, ever fearful of minor transgressions? Do they guard and protect the Buddha's Dhamma as they protect their worldly jewels?"

~ THABYEKAN SAYADAW

Over Many Decades, Thabyekan Sayadaw wrote and preached extensively and tirelessly, as witnessed by the numerous volumes of his writings. Extracts from these many volumes, principally from the Sayadaw's Discourses on the Buddha's Teachings and the Collected Sermons, were compiled into this book to enable the public to read and treasure the timeless and priceless sayings and admonishments of the Sayadaw.



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