

Series on the

# DHAMMAPADA

yuttadhammo

bhikkhu



SIRIMANGALO.ORG

Verses 1-20

# Foreword

In 2011, the Venerable Yuttadhammo Bhikku began releasing a series of videos on YouTube in which he shares the verses of the Dhammapada with related stories, and he also provides his commentary and perspective on each lesson. The intent of this book is to provide a condensed version of the YouTube videos in a written form. A group of volunteers from Sirimangalo International Buddhist Meditation Society has aided in the editing of the episodes. The videos offer a valuable combination of original Dhammapada verses, rich and compelling stories, and unique commentary from Ven. Yuttadhammo Bhikku.

Each chapter contains original Dhammapada verses in Pāli, using both the original video and the Digital Pāli Reader as sources ([Digital Pali Reader online](#)). English translations are a combination of the translation provided by Ven. Yuttadhammo Bhikku in each video with additional translation from the Buddharakkhita translation where necessary. The Sirimangalo International Buddhist Meditation Society Book Editing Staff set goals to condense stories where possible, but to retain the essence of the story and ensure readability in prose form. Similarly, the goal for commentaries is to use the same approach as in the Ask a Monk series: to ensure readability in prose form and to condense and retain essential points and interpretation of the story. Each chapter will be published after completion of the chapter on an ongoing basis, as the video Dhammapada series is also still ongoing.

We hope that all students of the Dhamma will benefit from this publication.

Sirimangalo International Buddhist Meditation Society Book Editing Staff

# Prologue

The following is a transcription of an excerpt from the second video of the YouTube Dhammapada series as told by Ven. Yuttadhammo Bhikkhu concerning the stories that correspond to Dhammapada verses.

There was some skepticism from viewers of the first video in the Dhammapada series, which is about the first verse– which is actually quite tame relative to much of the Dhammapada. While that reaction was what prompted this response, this is meant to address skepticism to the whole of the Dhammapada, and may be even more pertinent with regards to other more seemingly outrageous stories included therein.

In the story corresponding with the first verse, a monk becomes enlightened at the same moment that his eyes go blind. At the outset, this is a great example for us, that we might exert ourselves to similar extents, and when we have physical ailments, we shouldn't let them get in the way of our practice, so regardless of whether it really happened, it is a wonderful example for us to keep. The likelihood of such an occurrence aside (this particular example not being all that unlikely; these are actually the exact moments when a person is likely to let go), that part of the story is not the core principle that the verse the Buddha gave with regards to the story is based upon. The core principle that the Buddha described was in regards to a part in the story where this now blind monk unknowingly steps on insects, and the Buddha says that he wasn't guilty of anything because the mind is chief and suffering only comes from the mind.

I think that many people go quite a bit too far in their unwillingness to have an open mind with regards to the seemingly impossible details in many of the stories of the Dhammapada. One doesn't risk anything by believing these stories that may seem outlandish to them. It's not like one bases their practice on these stories, and if they were to find out later that they are false, they would suddenly be ruined. It doesn't really matter whether such things actually occurred, as they have no bearing on our practice. It's not a fundamental doctrinal principle that the seemingly absurd details in the stories truly happened. If I said that there was a man who prayed to a God and as a result he became enlightened, or if there was someone who wished for something and it came true, and that's the sort of practice that we should take– if our practice rested on the truth of such a story, then that would be a problem. But it doesn't– our practice rests on the core principles that are presented in the stories.

Another thing is our inability to accept things which defy the laws of physics. The idea of believing in an existence which is outside of the laws of physics and our conventional reality as we know them; for example, existence of angels, or of a hell, ghosts, magic, the concept of making wishes and having them come true, and so on. All these things on the surface would appear to be going against the laws of reality and everything we believe. Some people might not be able to swallow some of these stories, and are going to be turned off by them, which is

unfortunate, but our inability to be open to these possibilities is what is really problematic, not the stories themselves. Again, if it turns out that there is no such thing as angels or whatever seeming impossibility is in a given story, it's really not going to make a difference, as the core principle is still intact. Our inability to take anything useful from these stories never has anything to do with our belief or lack thereof in whether such details actually happened, or whether such things could actually occur. Some stories do seem to potentially have been embellished, and maybe some of them have been created and some details have been added, all of which shouldn't really make a difference. The focus, again, should be on understanding the core principle.

Moreover, with regards to meditation practice, we really should throw the laws of physics out the window. They have no bearing on our practice, and no bearing on ultimate reality. The laws of physics are a set of theories that are well grounded in a certain set of experiences and repeated experiences, but those experiences are totally subjective— they are based on our mode of contrived existence as human beings. It could be that the only reality possible is the one that we live in, but physicists don't believe this anyway— they don't know. Some of them speculate that the only way this reality in this universe could exist is if every reality, every type of universe, every type of existence imaginable, and maybe even unimaginable also exists, that otherwise it makes no sense that this universe could exist. I like this, because I think it mirrors some of my own beliefs and some of my own understandings— maybe not that everything exists, but at least that everything *could* exist, and the logical argument is that given that we as people exist in a conventional sense, and this conventional reality exists, I see no reason to doubt that angels or ghosts or any kind of existence imaginable could exist, and when I hear these stories, no matter how outrageous they are, I think they are certainly possible. We get caught up in this conventional and contrived set of laws and principles which, as far as is observable, are only applicable to our own conventional existence, and that may be the only existence that there is, but that says nothing about whether or not other realities could exist, given that we're dealing with our own contrived existence.

I hope this helps people to at least open their minds to think that it's certainly possible that all of these things could exist in some other time and place, and there could be angels and ghosts all around. It really doesn't make much difference to our practice— except where it does— and the existence of these realities does play some part in our practice.

If one believes definitively that such realities *don't* exist, then the experience of reality that we have as meditators, as shown in the first verse, that when we do evil, when we get angry or upset, when our mind is defiled, when we want things, and so on, that suffering follows— all our striving to understand all of this becomes pointless if such realities aren't believed to be possible, because it would mean believing that there is nothing after death.

The potential existence of every type of being is really the only way to come to terms with what we're starting to open up to— experiencing reality on a fundamental, phenomenological, experiential level, instead of a conventional one, where we have ideas like gravity, inertia, the

concepts of human life and death, procreation, and so on and so forth– all of which is totally contrived, and while true, it's only true of this very small portion of what is possible. All of our actions, ethical volitions and so on are so manifold and so diverse, so it only makes sense to think that the existence of beings, the types of beings, the types of places, the types of destinations, and the types of futures that we might have are equally diverse, and that when we die, it makes no sense for it to be the end; it makes no sense that it possibly could be the end. It's a nothing. It's something that has come to grip us, and as a result, we have this terrible fear of death. On the other hand, some people have gone to the extent where they don't fear, and they think “when I die, that's it, then I'm done and gone,” which is such a dismal thing to think about, and so totally off-base from reality. But to each their own. Many people are not seeing reality as it is, many are not practicing to do so, and many are not going to do so. There are also people who practice meditation, but are still keeping their heads in the sand and still clinging to this idea of the fundamental reality of certain concepts like humanity, physical reality, and finality of death. In fact, physicists generally have come to throw these ideas out the window. For example, the theory of relativity and the theory of quantum physics. Some of the issues that they've had to come to terms with, like that three-dimensional physical reality is really not all there is, and it doesn't describe all of the aspects of reality adequately.

I hope that this is helpful. Finally, to reiterate, the important point here is not the stories– the stories are the context, and in fact, the verse– in the case of the first verse especially– goes far beyond the story itself.

## Chapter 1: Pairs

# Verse 1: Suffering is mind made (Cakkhupāla, the one who guards his eye)

*Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā,*

*mano seṭṭhā manomayā.*

*Manasā ce paduṭṭhena, bhāsati vā karoti vā.*

*Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti, cakkamva vahato padaṃ.*

All Dhammas are preceded by the mind, everything is preceded by the mind;  
they are governed by the mind; they are formed by the mind.  
If one acts or speaks with an impure mind, suffering follows there from,  
just as the wheel of the cart follows the ox that pulls it.

## The Story of Cakkhupāla

This verse was given in relation to the venerable elder monk Cakkhupāla, whose given name means “one who guards his eye.” He trained for five years under the Buddha as a monk, and after that he went to practice in the forest for a time. There, he made a determination not to lie down for the duration of the undertaking— three months. He endeavored to only do walking, standing, and sitting meditation, and to forgo sleep altogether.

During this time, Cakkhupāla began having issues with his eyes. Because of this, he saw a doctor who told him that he needed to lie down and take a certain medicine to treat them. Even so, Cakkhupāla ended up deciding to take the medicine sitting down in order to honor his original determination, and consequently, his eyes got worse. The doctor caught wind of this, and reiterated to Cakkhupāla that he should lie down to take it. Despite this, Cakkhupāla continued to honor his determination.

Finally, the doctor grew suspicious and concerned for his own reputation, and perhaps Cakkhupāla’s well-being. He decided to investigate why the treatment he prescribed wasn’t working. He went to Cakkhupāla’s monastery and ended up seeing in his dwelling that there was no bedding, and he confronted Cakkhupāla about this, telling him that he would go blind if he didn’t lie down while taking this medicine. Still, Cakkhupāla knew that his physical body was much less worth maintaining than his mind, and he continued on with the intensive practice he had set out to do.

Consequently, two things happened: first, he lost his eyes, and second, he gained his eyes. His physical eyes got worse and worse, and as he was doing walking meditation, they suddenly became useless. At the same moment that this was happening, as he saw himself worrying,

clinging, and wanting, he realized the Four Noble Truths. He saw suffering and the cause of suffering, and he let go and realized the cessation of suffering. At the same moment that he went blind, he became an *arahant*.

At the end of the rainy season, Cakkhupāla went and spent some time back at the monastery where the Buddha was staying. He developed a reputation as a good teacher, and the rumor went around that he was an *arahant*, so monks would come to visit.

One night, Cakkhupāla came out early in the morning after it had rained heavily, and he started doing walking meditation. Unbeknownst to him, some insects had come up from their flooded lairs, and would die under his feet.

Later on, some monks came to meet Cakkhupāla. They saw this walking path that was covered with these insects which Cakkhupāla had stepped on, and these monks were terribly offended. They decided to see the Buddha about this, and asked him how someone who had attained nibbāna could have done such a thing.

This is where the Buddha gave this teaching, which is a very important part of the Buddha's teaching of karma: it actually denies the efficacy of karma. People say the Buddha taught the theory of karma; but in fact, one could say he taught against the theory of karma as it was known in the time of the Buddha. The Buddha said, "My son, Cakkhupāla, is not at fault for these insects' deaths." In contrast, the Buddha did say that he went blind in the first place because of his karma. Cakkhupāla had been a doctor in a previous life, and he had intentionally made a dishonest patient of his go blind. This karma he had created led to the physical issues he currently had. Regarding this, the Buddha pointed out that one can never escape their bad deeds. He said, "The mind precedes all Dhammas; the mind is what leads to suffering. If you act or speak with an impure mind, that is where suffering follows."

## Commentary

This verse was given in a negative context– the point being, if your mind is not defiled, then it cannot lead to suffering; karma cannot lead to unpleasant results. This is an incredibly profound statement I think, because it is not something that we would think of ourselves. If someone gets hurt inadvertently because of something we do, we often think of ourselves as guilty; we feel bad. If we don't feel bad, the person might become angry at us, whether we had bad intentions towards them or not.

The point that the Buddha made here really shows the emphasis on the meditation practice and how the Buddha's teaching is really a practice of meditation and contemplation. Buddhism does not admit of things in terms of beings and concepts. Instead of thinking, for example, "I hurt this person," one practicing mindfulness thinks in terms of actual reality that is experienced.

Cakkhupāla did not suffer as a result of these insects dying under his feet, because he did not intend any harm. Likewise, he did not intend to upset these monks, and if they got angry or



lashed out at him, it was, as the Buddha said, like a mustard seed on a needle, or water off of a lotus leaf, because Cakkhupāla's mind was pure and free from clinging and anger.

On the other hand, if he did have anger and ill will towards these insects, this is what would have made it unethical and lead him to suffering. An act is not unethical simply because it fits into a category like hurting or even killing. Rather, one's mind at the time of the act is of ultimate importance.

This also lends to the importance of meditation, because it is only through meditation that we can affect the mind. As we practice mindfulness meditation, we see the clinging, craving, and stress that is caused by an impure mind, and we come to differentiate, and to affect a change in our minds in which we see things as they are. We learn to experience life in an interactive way rather than a reactive way, so that when we see, hear, smell, and otherwise experience things, we are able to take them solely as experience. If someone yells at us, we experience it as a sound; if someone hits us, we experience it as a feeling. We do not think of the person, and we do not cling, because we have seen the suffering it causes us.

This is what the Buddha was referring to: suffering only comes from the mind. Everything we do only has an influence on our minds if we cling to it and if we have some attachment in the mind at that moment. This is a warning from the Buddha that anything we do with an impure mind will influence our minds and our lives; it will lead to greater stress, greater clinging, and greater suffering for us, just as the cart follows the ox. This is the meaning of the verse. The Buddha said, in fact, all things come from the mind. If you act with an impure mind, it will lead you to suffering.

## Verse 2: Happiness Follows a Pure Mind

*Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, manoseṭṭhā manomayā.*

*manasā ce pasannena, bhāsati vā karoti vā.*

*Tato naṃ sukhamanveti, chāyāva anapāyini.*

All Dhammas are preceded by the mind, everything is preceded by the mind;  
they are governed by the mind; they are formed by the mind.

If one speaks or acts with a pure mind,  
happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

### Story

So the story goes there was a man called Adinna Pubbaka. This is what he was known as. He was a man who never gave anything to anyone, so he was a miser. He had a son who got very ill. His father was so stingy that he did not want to send for a doctor because he did not want to have to pay the doctor. It was not that he did not love his son, but he was always scheming. Doctors are expensive and some doctors may charge a lot. What he did is he went around to all the doctors and he just talked to them about what sort of treatment you give to a person when they have this condition. He tried to administer the treatment to his son, but because he really did not understand the condition of his son, his son got so bad to the point that it was quite clear that his life was in danger.

At this point, his father woke up and realized that something had to be done, so he called for a doctor. The doctors came but no one could help because it was too late. The father put the son outside in the bed under some shade, thinking that people who came to visit the sick child would not come inside and see all of his wealth, and as luck would have it, this was a good thing.

It may have been this son's karma that his father put him outside, because his son was blessed thereby to have an opportunity to see something very special. He saw the Buddha walking by one day, and he was overjoyed to see something like this, because here he had lived all his life in his father's house and it was a very dismal existence. His life had been quite miserable and quite dull and void of any kind of pleasures.

It was such a wonderful experience to see the Buddha. Of course this is the Buddha, and there are a lot of stories like this where people would see a monk who was mindful and walking on alms round and it would be such a great sign for them, and give them great faith. This is what it did to this young man when he saw this. He said this is the way it should be, this is the way people should be, this is the path. He was upset that his father had never given him the opportunity to see this before, to see the Buddha. He said if only my father had been less of a

miser, I might have had a chance to go and follow this path, to learn from the Buddha and be his disciple. He was so sick that all he could do was look at the Buddha. He could not even raise his hands up as people do to pay respect to the Buddha. Nonetheless, in his mind he invested his faith in the Buddha. He thought, this is a holy man, and as a result his mind was quite pure. The Buddha saw him and realized what was going on in his mind and said that is certainly enough for him and the Buddha kept walking. The boy died thereafter and was born as an angel as a result, a being who was radiant, because his mind was radiant.

The father was quite upset that he was such an idiot and did not help his son. He could not get over it; it really distraught him. He spent all his time in the cemetery at his son's grave weeping, crying. He was just out of his mind; he could not come to terms with his son's death and what a fool he had been to be the cause of his son's untimely death.

When he was mourning and weeping his son came to him, just as we hear about people and their deceased relatives coming to them, his son came. His son did not let him know right away who he was. At first his father thought it was just a young boy. He would of course not quite look the same, because he was born again and he was born based on the state of his mind when he died, no longer based on his father and mothers genes. He came to his father crying, and his father said, "Why are you crying?"

The son said, "I have this wonderful golden bicycle but I need wheels for it."

The father's fatherly instinct and guilt took over - it came to him as a great opportunity to make up for his stinginess in regards to his son who passed away - he said, "Please let me let me help you," based on his guilt and the idea that maybe here he could do something for someone, where he had been such a miser before and as a result his son had suffered. He said, "I will find you the wheels, what kind of wheels do you need?"

The son said, "Well what I really had my eyes set on is the Sun and the moon. I would like you to get me the sun and the moon as wheels for my bike."

The old man said, "What, are you crazy? You must be a real idiot. I mean gold or jewel or whatever, but getting the sun and the moon as wheels for your bike - you are an idiot!"

The son looked at him and said, "Who is the idiot? You can see the sun, you can see the moon, but here you are sitting crying for something that is gone, something that has passed away. Your son is no longer, his body is lying dead in the ground and is going to go back to the worms and the soil, and yet here you are crying for something that is no longer, something you cannot see, you cannot hope, you can wish for, it is never going to come to you. For me it is possible that the sun and the moon might come to me, you can see them. Your son is not possible."

The father was shocked. He said, "You are right, I have been more of an idiot than you, more of an idiot than someone who is looking for the sun and the moon. As a result he woke up and he was able to overcome his sorrow. The father asked the son, "Who are you? Who should I know you by, you have given me such wise words."

He said, "I am your son, I was your son before, now I am an angel."

"How did you become an angel? You have never done anything good, I never let you out." They had a belief then that when you do good deeds you go to heaven. He did not have any chance to perform rituals, pay obeisance to the gods and so on.

The boy said, "I was lying there as you put me outside on the porch, I had the good fortune to see the Buddha, an enlightened being, and that gave me such faith and tranquility and happiness in my mind that when I died I was born in a pure place based simply on that mind."

The father thought that that was totally unbelievable. They had this belief in karma, that you have to do something, some kind of ritual - build an altar, pour butter, tend to the fire, pay obeisance to the gods, give sacrifices of meat, etc. - so how could you possibly go to heaven just by placing your faith in the Buddha, or simply by giving rise to a clear mind?

He was quite confused, and so he went to the Buddha and he asked the Buddha. He said, "I saw this angel and he was actually quite a wise and intelligent young angel, but he said to me that he became an angel simply by seeing you and by giving rise to a pure mind, how is that possible?"

The Buddha said, "It does not really matter what you do. Thousands, millions, uncountable are the beings who have gone to heaven simply by a pure state of mind. It is not what you do. You can do all sorts of rituals and good acts, but none of these compare to one single act of mental goodness, where the mind is pure."

## **Commentary**

In the first simile we had the Ox pulling the heavy burden of the cart and the idea of the heaviness of the cart and the burden of suffering that follows a person that does bad deeds. Here in the second simile, we have something much lighter: a shadow that never leaves. The imagery that we have of shadows is dark, but in this sense it is actually quite uplifting because the shadow is not a burden. No one has ever been harmed by their shadow. In fact, it is something that we do not often give enough credit to. Our shadow is something that follows us. It is loyal, it never leaves, it never causes a burden, it never stresses us, it never harms us, and when we turn around it is always there. It is something that we can depend upon. Good deeds are the same.

When deeds are done with a pure heart, done with good intentions, no matter what you do, whether you speak or do not speak, act or do not act, when you have a pure mind and you have this intention, you set yourself in a good way and you build happiness up like something you can carry around with you that has no weight, like a shadow that never leaves. This is really the truth. As I said in the first verse, when we do evil deeds, we can see through the meditation practice that those evil deeds lead us to suffering. They are creating this mind, building up habits and tendencies. When we get angry again and again, when we continuously cling with greed and anger and obstinance and views and opinions and conceit and ego, it changes our mind, it

changes who we are. Even when you cling to your idea "I will believe when I see it," even these stories as an example, the state of mind which clings is actually what is leading to suffering.

Now I do not cling to this story whether it is true or not. It serves as a great reminder that when your mind is pure, when you practice you can see for yourself that it leads to happiness. When our mind is pure, it changes our mind in a good way, and it will change everything you do. In fact, our deeds and our speech are dependent on this, even simply sitting still, not speaking, not acting. The verse actually does not tell the whole story. Even though the Buddha said, "When you act and speak with the pure mind," the important point is the pure mind. Even if you do not act and do not speak, simply sitting in meditation with the pure mind, when your intentions are pure, when you are not clinging to anything, when you are seeing and hearing and smelling and tasting and simply experiencing things, when you are able to overcome your addictions and your attachments, even that, without having to do or say anything - if you happen to believe this story - can lead you to heaven, can lead you to happiness in this life, can lead you to fix any arguments, any problems you have with other people, any disputes or war or so on. All of the problems that the world is in right now can be solved in this way.

I think there is no better example of the truth of these sayings than what we are seeing here and now today, that we are a clear example of how this works, with all the problems that are going on in the world, it is clear the truth of this that you can lead yourself to hell and to great suffering through your mind. This is what we are doing. We are developing and cultivating these minds that are bringing us back again and again and again to more and greater suffering and are actually destroying our conventional and conceived reality that we keep coming back to again and again and again.

These two verses are among the most important of the Buddha's teaching. In the sense that they set the framework for our understanding of reality and our understanding of what is important. What is important is the mind. As the Buddha said elsewhere, "the trained mind, the tame mind, leads to happiness, brings happiness."

I hope this has been helpful and beneficial for your own practice and that you are able to use this as a reminder and think of the young angel named Mattha Kundali. His story is a great reminder to us that the most important thing is the mind. If we have a pure mind you do not really have to do anything and even in a situation like this, where his father was a terrible miser, and where his life was not as great as it might be - as some of our lives are, where we might live in a place that is depressing and are devoid of spirituality, and the people around them just do not understand - there are many examples in here of people who also lived in that sort of circumstance and were able to overcome it. It is not the physical, it is not our surroundings, it is not our environment. It is our mind. When our mind is pure, good things will come. When our mind is impure, bad things will come. If we have bad things now, we can think that this could very well be because we have been negligent and we have led ourselves to this, because we did not start when we were born, and we have been going a long time. This is because of how the mind is, and reality is totally based on experience, and that experience never changes, it just

goes on like the ox carrying the cart or the person carrying the shadow. You can choose: you want to pull a cart or carry a shadow, whichever is lighter.

## Verse 3 & Verse 4: Clinging to Perceived Wrongs Only Leads to More Wrong

*Akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ, ajini maṃ ahāsi me.  
Ye ca taṃ upanayhanti, veraṃ tesaṃ na sammati.*

He or she or this person scolded me,  
they hurt me, they beat me, they defeated me, they destroyed me.

A person who clings or grasps onto,  
or binds themselves to these thoughts;  
for them their quarrels never cease and are never appeased,  
are never tranquilized, or are never finished.

*Akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ, ajini maṃ ahāsi me.  
Ye ca taṃ nupanayhanti, veraṃ tesūpasammati.*

He or she or this person scolded me,  
they hurt me, they beat me, they defeated me, they destroyed me.

A person who does not cling to these thoughts;  
the problems they have with people are worked out.

### Story

Fat Tissa was an exceptionally rotund cousin of the Buddha and he came to be a monk late in life. As a monk, Tissa did not take his meditation practice seriously and instead indulged his senses and was quite arrogant.

One day, upon receiving two traveling senior monks who wished to visit the Buddha, Tissa failed to offer the hospitality that is expected of a junior monk. He was senior in age (but had less than a year as a monk) and decided to use his blood relation to the Buddha to denigrate these visiting monks. Upon realizing Fat Tissa's facade, the senior monks castigated him for acting so poorly.

Fat Tissa ran crying to the Buddha about the abuse he was suffering. The Buddha asked if he offered the proper hospitality that is due a senior visiting monk. Fat Tissa replied truthfully and then the Buddha told him that he should apologize to the monks for he is indeed the one at fault. Tissa remained obstinate and unforgiving. The Buddha shared a story of Tissa's past life where he clung to angry thoughts and could not forgive the perceived trespasses of another against him and then proceeded to give these verses.

## Commentary

Angry thoughts create suffering and indulging them builds bad habits. Anger will arise, malicious thoughts will arise, but we endeavor to not cling to them. In this, the Buddha is very specific. When you are bound to anger, when you are tied to these things that cause suffering, when you are caught up in such thoughts your problems never cease.

We may get upset and hurt those we love. By not clinging to these moments of anger, we can let go of them. We may accomplish this in the next moment, or the next day, or the next week. The stronger we cling, the longer we cause suffering for ourselves and others. To refuse any criticism out of anger, as Tissa did, may lead to a festering of self-righteousness in the mind. This is what gives rise to grudges, enmity, feuds, and war. The building of self-righteous, egotistical hate has led to many a religious war.

To think one is right in their anger, that their anger is justified, is a weak covering over of the initial emotion. In an attempt to escape it, an abstraction of self is built to obscure it. To identify with anger in such a way is suffering. To continue down this path by seeking an outgroup to blame as the cause of the suffering leads to horrible outcomes. We can come to loathe even the sight of those we have told ourselves are the cause of our suffering. These stories we tell ourselves are self reinforcing. We have to be careful, because anger itself is not wildly dangerous. It is unpleasant, but it is not the real problem. The dangerous constructions of the ego surrounding anger and the consequent attachment to this ego produces a profound hatred capable of tremendous damage.

This is a fundamental lesson regarding defilements of the mind. You can watch anger and greed and pleasure arise and fall away. The problem is that most of us, most of the time, do not simply let them go. People think pleasure is a good thing and that attaching to the sensuous is just fine. Thoughts of "I like this. I want this." lead quickly to "Okay. I have to get this!" If we train our minds to look at the wanting and examine it for what it is we come to see the stress and tension in this dynamic. Chasing after and getting what you want results in a rush of fleeting satisfaction. The satisfaction does not come from the wanting, it comes from giving up the wanting in one of two ways. The problem with chasing the fulfillment of the wanting is that you are encouraging and developing an addiction. The clinging grows ever stronger and there is no understanding of the root cause. The other way, letting go and unattachment, is the only path to happiness and lasting satisfaction.



## Verse 5: Enmity Is Not Vanquished By Enmity

*Na hi verena verāni,  
sammantīdha kudācanaṃ,  
averena ca sammanti,  
esa dhammo sanantano.*

Not indeed through enmity is enmity appeased,  
not here or anywhere.  
It is appeased through non-enmity.  
This is an eternal truth.

### Story

There were once two women who were married to the same man; one of them was barren and the other one fertile. The fertile woman became pregnant three times, and each time, the barren woman, afraid of being left out or cast aside, caused an abortion in the fertile woman. On the third time, the fertile woman died, and she cursed her murderer and vowed revenge before her death. The barren woman was beaten and killed by her husband for being such an evil person, and she was then born into the same house, as a hen. The fertile woman who died from the abortion was born as a cat, who ate the hen and her eggs. The hen was reborn as a leopard, and the cat was reborn as a deer. The leopard then ate the deer's fawn and killed the deer. And so the cycle continued, with each woman killed vowing to eat each other's children in the next life. The deer was reborn as an ogre and the leopard reborn as an ordinary woman. The ogre ate two of the woman's children, and before the third could be eaten, the woman fled to Jetavana, which was the monastery of the Buddha, near Sravasti. The Buddha at that moment was giving a talk to a large group of his followers. The woman ran right up to the Buddha and dropped her son at the Buddha's feet and said, "Here is my child, please protect him, save his life." The Buddha said to both the ogre and woman, "What are you doing? Do you not realize where this is headed? Three lifetimes you have been the aggressor every time. You cannot hope to possibly win every time, you are creating a cycle of revenge." Then the Buddha said this verse, "Not by enmity is enmity appeased, not here nor anywhere, but only through non-enmity is enmity appeased, this is an eternal truth." By waking them up and explaining to them in this way he was able to help them to overcome the cycle, and the ogre was able to let go.

### Commentary

This story has a lesson that teaches us to open up and see where we are leading ourselves and where our minds are taking us. Every act that we do has an effect on our minds, or can potentially have an effect on our mind if we cling to it. In the story, there is an incredible clinging

to revenge, and we see an example of the results and consequences. It is not only in this life, this is something we lose sight of in this world, because we think of things only in this one life and we think of in terms of getting ahead. We do not mind getting the better of other people, or cheating other people in business or personal lives. The story is a good example of this, as the two women each try to secure happiness for themselves against the other woman. People who cling and build up a cycle of revenge create an incredible energy in their mind that drags them down and places them as a victim in the future as a result of defilement of the mind.

The problem with defilement is that it drags your mind down, it defiles, it soils and sullies the mind. It hurts you, it takes away your ability to function, cripples you. So, the reason why we are in these unpleasant states is because of our crippled mind. In the past, when a person comes out on top, they have developed clinging and evil in their minds, even though they might have great luxury and power externally. It drags them down and if they don't use their power in a good way, the cycle of revenge will continue.

When there is an inability to see beyond one life, it leads us to think that it really does not matter what we do. We can see the effect this is having on the world, leading to deterioration and depletion of our resources. The effect of your mind state and the greed that is in your mind alone will last an eon, because of your attachments and clinging. On the other hand, if you understand that the mind does not stop and experience continues, then do you think it is possible you would go to war? Do you think it is possible to cling to things? If you really believe this, would you ever have any reason to build up and to try to find pleasure in the here and now and to crave for things or run after ephemeral pleasure? If you understand this, you would have no reason to do these things. You would think to yourself that whatever I get in this world, whatever I achieve, whatever I accomplish, if I become rich, if I become famous - it is meaningless. In the end, it is quite inconsequential; it lasts for a moment, and then is gone. This story helps us to see the true nature of reality in regards to why people are victims, why people suffer, why people are in a position of great inequality, where some people are very rich, and some are very poor. We see that there are these waves in which a person who is rich now may be poor in the next life depending on the state of their mind. If a rich person is generous and uses their power and influence in the right way, then good energy will last. Their good deeds will lift them up and make them feel light and free from guilt. This lesson teaches us to give up our quarrels, because any kind of victory that we could gain is ephemeral; it is temporary and it only encourages more and more quarreling and more enmity as the person who is defeated, unless we can let go.

## Verse 6: Those With Clear Knowledge Settle Their Quarrels

*Pare ca na vijānanti, mayamettha yamāmase.*

*Ye ca tattha vijānanti, tato sammanti medhagā.*

There are some who do not see clearly that we will all have to die, but those who do see this clearly settle their disputes because of that.

### Story

Two well regarded monks lived at the monastery Gocitarama. One had a large following and was famous for teaching the Dhamma, which includes the meditation practice and all things that one should do. The other monk also had a large following and was famous for teaching the Vinaya, which includes the rules that monks must follow and the things that one should not do.

One day, as the Dhamma monk left the washroom, the Vinaya monk entered the washroom. The Dhamma monk had left some water in the bucket in the washroom, which is not to be done as it encourages mosquitos to lay their eggs. The Vinaya monk told him, “that is an offense” and the other monk replied, “I’m sorry, I did not realize. Then please let me confess it to you.” When there is an offense against the rules, monks have to confess and make a promise to try their best to not to do it again and make it clear they are aware of the fact that they did it. However, the Vinaya monk said, “if it was not intentional, it is not an offense” and the Dhamma monk agreed and left without confessing.

After this, the Vinaya monk went around telling all his students that the Dhamma monk had an offense that he had not confessed. This story spread throughout the Sangha and the Dhamma teacher responded by telling his students, “first he tells me it is not an offense, now he says it is an offense? That monk is a liar.” This got around quickly as well and soon the monks were split into two different groups. This induced a split in the novices, the female monks, the lay people, the angels who guarded the monastery, the friendly angels in the various heavens, and even the Brahma and god realms. The gods, the universe itself, was split over this incident of some water being left in a washroom bucket.

The Buddha tried to rectify these two wayward monks, but they would not listen. The Buddha left and stayed in the forest for several months, attended upon by an elephant. Without the opportunity to see the Buddha at Gocitarama, the lay people stopped bringing alms for the monks and it was a difficult time. The monks sought forgiveness from the Buddha. Upon his return, he put the monks who were quarreling in a special place and did not let any of the other monks get involved with them. When people came and asked, “Where are those quarreling

monks?" the Buddha would point to them. Eventually, these monks were so ashamed that they came and asked forgiveness from the Buddha and he gave this verse.

## Commentary

There are two important lessons to draw from this verse. The first is in regards to death. In light of rebirth and the continuing of the mind beyond death, the Buddha is telling us how important death is. The mind continuing does not diminish, but increases the significance of death. The body and the mind work together, but they have two different characteristics. Our state of being in this life on a physical level is quite fixed, but on a mental level it is quite fluid. The mind can change moment to moment and is capable of moving from good to bad relatively quickly. You can be reborn in many different ways based on the quality of your mind upon the death of the body. Therefore, we should try to recognize the importance in settling our disputes and recognize the greatest importance in settling the disputes in our mind that involve a recalcitrant and unapologetic opposing party. Clinging to such disputes can only lead to continued suffering.

At the moment of death, the body is totally reconstructed. There is a period where the mind leaves the body behind and begins this immense work required to rebuild another body or to create another human being starting at the moment of conception. Death frees the mind to make choices again, on a level that it is not free to when bound to a physical body because of the inertia of its previous work in creating that being being left behind. This gets to the importance of one's mind state upon death.

The second lesson is the importance of understanding. Understanding the truth of birth and death as occurring on a momentary level is crucial in freeing ourselves up from strife, quarrel, disputes and suffering. Seeing impermanence clearly through the meditation practice is the only thing needed to overcome disputes and suffering. Apologizing to those we have wronged is a good way to overcome a dispute, but in regards to our clinging, craving and attachments, all that needs to be done is to see it clearly. When you are addicted to something you do not have to force yourself to stop, or try to convince yourself that it is wrong, or remind yourself again and again how bad you are for doing it. All that must be done is to see the addiction clearly for what it is. See it objectively, let it arise, and when you see it for what it is, you will let go of it. You will have no desire to cling to it because you will see that everything ceases.

This Buddhist teaching is a reminder that, in light of everything arising and ceasing, our quarrels are futile. We can feel or think that we have come out on top in a fight, but what does it mean to be on top when, eventually, we all die and we are put on the bottom? Once we meditate upon this truth, we see how useless clinging is. Holding onto things may bring us temporary pleasure, but it soon disappears. Clinging conditions the mind to want more and to strive more and to be stressed. When you practice meditation and look at the objects of awareness on a moment-to-moment basis, you no longer look at things in terms of the universe or in terms of

'us and them' and 'I', 'me' and 'mine', or any other conceptual frame. Our everyday points of reference dissolve when we practice seeing clearly and as a result we come to see the world in a new way.

## Verse 7 & 8: A Weak Tree and a Mountain of Solid Rock

*Subhānupassiṃ viharantaṃ, indriyesu asaṃvutaṃ.*

*Bhojanamhi cāmattaññuṃ, kusītaṃ hīnavīriyaṃ.*

*Taṃ ve pasahati māro, vāto rukkhaṃva dubbalaṃ.*

For one who dwells with senses unrestrained,  
who does not know moderation in food,  
who is lazy and of low effort,  
such a one is overpowered by Mara.  
Just as the wind overcomes a tree of little strength or a weak tree.

*Asubhānupassiṃ viharantaṃ, indriyesu susaṃvutaṃ.*

*Bhojanamhi ca mattaññuṃ, saddhaṃ āraddhavīriyaṃ.*

*Taṃ ve nappasahati māro, vāto selaṃva pabbataṃ.*

For one who dwells with senses restrained,  
who knows moderation in food,  
who has confidence and faith and has strong effort,  
Mara does not come to such a person.  
Just as the wind does not overcome a mountain made of rock.

### Story

These two similes were given in regard to two brothers, one verse for each brother. The brothers were wealthy merchants in the time of the Buddha, and the older brother, Mahakala, went to hear the Buddha's teachings and realized that chasing after beautiful things, adoration, and money does not lead to happiness. Sensual pleasure would not bring the peace he was seeking, and he decided to ask the Buddha to ordain. The Buddha told him to go and ask his younger brother for permission, which he did.

The younger brother, Culakala, was incredulous at his brother's request and urged him to think of his wives and his wealth. Mahakala was committed to ordain and could not be swayed. Seeing this, Culakala decided to ordain with him with a scheme to gradually convince him to come back to the lay life.

Mahakala was intent upon practicing the Buddhist teachings, practicing meditation, developing wisdom and understanding, overcoming attachment, and being free from suffering. His younger brother was totally caught up in sensual pleasures, wealth, thinking about his

family, and trying to get Mahakala to give up the spiritual path. They lived very different lives as monks.

Mahakala took his duties as a monk seriously. He went to the Buddha and asked, "What are the duties of the Buddhist religion?" The Buddha replied, "There are two duties, the first duty is to study and teach, and the second duty is to practice and become enlightened." Mahakala thought that he was too old to learn and remember all the scriptures, suttas and all the teachings of the Buddha. He decided to focus on the duty of practice. Mahakala asked the Buddha for a teaching on how to contemplate the foulness of the body and the contemplation of death. Reflecting upon his mortality, incessant birth and death, and impermanence, Mahakala achieved *arahant*-ship. Culakala, on the other hand, spent all his time gossiping, talking, eating, sleeping, being lazy and breaking the rules of monkhood.

One day all of the monks were invited to the family home of Mahakala and Culakala. Culakala returned to the house to prepare it for a meal for the Buddha's retinue, but the servants and his wives dismissed him as an unserious fool and would not help him. In fact, they disrobed him, and gave him white clothes. Culakala had lost any interest in being a monk by this point, and hardly resisted. The Buddha came for the meal, gave blessings and finished all the ceremonies of giving the food, then went back to the monastery. Culakala returned to his lay life, which got the wives of Mahakala thinking about how they could get their husband to return.

The eight wives of the enlightened Mahakala invited the Buddha's retinue once again. At the end of the ceremony the Buddha instructed Mahakala to stay behind and give a teaching, as was custom. All the other monks were surprised by this, thinking that if Culakala's two wives got him to disrobe, what chance would Mahakala have against his eight wives.

As he gave the discourse, his wives surrounded Mahakala and grabbed at his robes. Mahakala, an *arahant*, could not be tempted and entered into a meditative state and floated up into the air, above their heads and actually popped the top of the straw roof, and flew back to where the Buddha was. The Buddha, speaking with the concerned monks, said "those two brothers are as far apart as a rotten tree and a mountain." This was when Buddha gave these two similes as verses and upon finishing, Mahakala landed at his feet, bowed down and prostrated himself.

## **Commentary**

The word "*māra*" means "evil", and there are five kinds of evil in Buddhism. The first one is "*khandha māra*." The physical and the mental part of our being, our aggregates, have an evil side. When we age, when we become sick, and when we face death, there is a danger that we don't accept what is. Such changes may cause a mental struggle. We cling to being young, powerful, able-bodied, and healthy. We are used to freedom from pain and inability, and we cling to a specific way of being, thus introducing *māra* into our lives.

The second type of *māra* is “*kilesa māra*,” the evil of defilements. Greed, anger, hatred, conceit, fear, distraction, and doubt are all evils that cripple us by causing suffering. These are the things that infatuate and intoxicate you, which gives rise to chemical reactions in the brain and addictions in the mind. You become unable to separate right from wrong and fall away from wisdom.

The third evil is “*abhisankhāra māra*,” which means our karma. When we develop bad thoughts, and as a result commit bad deeds, it will come back to haunt us.

The fourth evil is “*maccu māra*,” which means “death”. *Maccu māra* is the fact that we all have to die. This is the ultimate crippling for people who cling. It is an end to the ability to plan and execute. We may have designs and intentions, but death can steal us away without a moment’s notice.

The fifth one is “*devaputta māra*,” which means a “fallen angel”, much in the same way as Christianity’s Lucifer. *Māra* is someone who is said to have followed the Buddha around, trying to find some way to get the Buddha to fall into some sort of defilement or to do the wrong thing to trick the Buddha and the monks who followed the Buddha.

Relating back to the verse, the type of person that *māra* can overpower is the person who sees the beauty and the attractive side of things. The idea that we should give up the beautiful side of things, that we should cease our attachments to the beautiful side of things, is unacceptable to many people. A person who looks at the attractive side of things is partial, they are developing partiality towards this experience. As a result, when they get old, sick and die, they will get upset, and the defilements will arise and bad deeds will result. Why do people fight over dead people and their ideas, inheritances, and property? Why do husbands fight with wives, children with parents, friends with friends? All over the world you see this constantly, why? Because people see the beautiful side of things and cling to them. They do not see the truth. Reality is impartial, there are the ups and the downs, changes in weather, the rising and falling of the sun. When you are clearly in touch with reality, it changes, it moves, but you change with it, and you are interacting rather than reacting. This has to come about through guarding and through restraining the senses, as an example: when you see something, it is simply light hitting the optical nerves in your eye, it is simply “seeing.” Unless you are enlightened, unless you are clearly aware of reality as it is, there is constantly a filter of a difference or the filter of partiality, liking and disliking. This filter, this reaction, is nearly instantaneous without the cultivation of mindfulness.

“*Bhojanamhi cāmattaññum*”: a person who doesn’t know moderation in eating. A person who engages in overeating, or indulgence in sweet foods or salty foods, their likes and their attachments, something which intoxicates the mind, has their ability to see things clearly taken away.

“*Kusītaṃ hīnavīriyaṃ*”: a person who is lazy and does not get up and practice. Those who do not push themselves to develop themselves. It is very easy to let yourself go in a way that is painful and unpleasant. People who indulge this can be depressed for years. It takes effort and



work for us to actually purify our minds, to be clear, to see things as they are. We should always be working on it, a continuous practice. When you are eating your food you can be mindful, "chewing, chewing," "tasting," "swallowing," being aware of it all. The work here is reminding yourself again and again: now I'm meditating, now I'm seeing, now I'm hearing. The continuous practice makes sure you are ready at any moment, and that it will make you strong to be able to resist Mara and the evils and problems of life.

## Verse 9 & 10: Worthy of the Robe

*Anikkasāvo kāsāvaṃ,*

*yo vatthaṃ paridahissati.*

*Apeto damasaccena, na so kāsāvamarahati.*

*Yo ca vantakasāvassa, sīlesu susamāhito.*

*Upeto damasaccena, sa ve kāsāvamarahati.*

One who has not removed the stains from one's mind,  
one without patience or truth who dons the monk's robe as their cloth is not worthy of the  
colored robe.

One who has dispelled and removed the stains from their mind,  
one who is well balanced in their morality,  
one who is endowed with patience and truth,  
such a person is indeed worthy of the colored robe.

### Story

Devadatta was a cousin of the Buddha and a corrupt, conceited, and arrogant monk. He cultivated favor with the lay people by encouraging their desires and wishes. Giving blessings and acting more like a priest than a monk, Devadatta propagated wrong view and turned people against each other. His machinations led many of the village people to turn away from the wise monks who promulgated meditation as the way to truth.

One day, while planning a gift giving ceremony, the lay people were divided on which monk to give a very expensive robe. Sariputta was the initial choice to receive it, however, an argument was made that Sariputta merely comes to visit for alms, and that he comes and goes, whereas Devadatta is always around, always at hand to give a blessing when desired. By a slim majority, the laypeople gifted the fine robe to Devadatta. Devadatta graciously accepted the robe and pridefully walked around in it. Incensed by this, some monks approached the Buddha and questioned whether this world had any justice in it that a negligent monk such as Devadatta would receive such a gift from the laypeople.

The Buddha told a story of the past: eons and eons ago, Devadatta was an elephant hunter. The elephants were very suspicious of humans, due to their predatory habits, and would avoid humans and their settlements. Devadatta observed that there was one exception made. Ascetics, in their ragged clothes, would go off into the forest to practice meditation and leave the evils and the corruptions of society. The elephants honored these people by bending down and paying respects to them. Devadatta proceeded to steal the robes of a particularly

enlightened ascetic while he was bathing in the river. Wearing the robes, Devadatta abused the trust of numerous elephants and killed them as they bowed.

Eventually, the leader of the elephant herd came. It just so happened that the Buddha-to-be was born as this elephant. He noticed that elephants were going missing and decided to investigate the ascetic. He baited Devadatta and, having avoided his spear, began to verbally admonish the hunter and even tried to kill the hunter in anger. However, in the moment the elephant leader was poised to smash the hunter, Devadatta held up the robe over his head. The elephant thought, "that robe has great meaning and if I were to commit violence towards this person, I would be committing a horrible sin. I would be disrupting this tradition of paying respect to people in robes." Devadatta was left living, having been scolded by the elephant leader for his wickedness.

This was the story of one of Devadatta's past lives and the Buddha went on to say that Devadatta didn't ordain for the right reasons. His meditation practice sought only to cultivate magical power and personal gain. In this way, Devadatta's stains never left him and he remains attached, prideful, and deceitful.

## **Commentary**

This story brings up important questions of what it means to be a monk as well as the dynamic between monks and the lay community. People who seek ordination may see the problems in society and find that happiness is elusive. They hear the teachings of the Buddha and they think that following the path will bring them happiness, but they are unable to leave behind their ideas of what happiness is. The idea that sensual pleasures can bring happiness. And so, when faced with the choice between finding praise, fame and material happiness as opposed to effort in terms of giving up, renouncing, leaving behind, straightening and purifying the mind they tend to incline more towards the material side and gravitate towards those acts that bring these results. These monks will become good at chanting, ceremonies, and ritual because of their addiction to gratification, which they seek to do away with. In turn, the lay people come to the monks with their defilements and say, "I want this, I want that." It starts to wear off on the monks as we saw with the story of Chulakala and Mahakala (Verses 7 and 8).

There are many different types of people wearing monk's robes. Simply wearing a robe does not make one a noble or wise person. In fact, those who wear the most beautiful of clothing can be the most internally corrupt. It is naive to think that no monks are corrupt. Buddhist Sanghas are at risk and face the same perils as the Catholic Church has endured. Lowering standards, not openly discussing issues with certain monks out of a sense of duty and respect, caving to the desires and wants of the lay people. A loss of clarity and wisdom for immediate gratification and material gain.

Many people might wonder, "well, why shouldn't a monk do an occasional favor for lay people, at most?" The Buddha declared that monks cannot act as a messenger for lay people,

cannot do work for lay people, give medical care, tell fortunes, or act on their behalf. Three reasons are given for these rules: the first one being that it encourages defilement among the lay people. Monks are allowed to help lay people give up their defilements and improve their state of mind. When you engage in material favors you are setting this idea in lay people's minds that this is the ultimate goal. To find material wealth, health, well-being and so on. It prevents them from ever thinking that there might be something more important in terms of their mental well-being. The second reason is that it corrupts one's own mind. You become surrounded by people who are also thinking about these material goals and your interactions shy away from Buddhist teachings on renunciation and purification. Getting involved in priestly activities takes away from the time that could better be spent meditating. The third reason is that it is harmful for other monks. If some monks are not doing these services, they are going to have hardly any support from the laypeople. The laypeople's support will be focused on the priestly monks and the virtuous monks may have troubles even getting basic sustenance.

The role and duties of a monk are to spend time investigating reality by practicing meditation. The Buddha enumerated specific rules for monks to limit this dynamic of lay people's material requests corrupting the monkhood. However, there are those who wear the stained robes and, lacking wisdom, have fallen prey to their base desires.

## Verses 11 and 12: Essential and Unessential

*Asāre sāramatino, sāre cāsāradassino.*

*Te sāraṃ nādhigacchanti, micchāsaṅkappagocarā.*

This is what happens for a person who dwells on what is unessential;  
they will never come to the truth.

*Sārañca sārato ñatvā, asārañca asārato.*

*Te sāraṃ adhigacchanti, sammāsaṅkappagocarā.*

For a person who does see what is essential as essential,  
and what is unessential as unessential;  
such a person does come to the truth.

### Story

In the time of the Buddha, Upatissa and Kolita were young men who sought the truth. They had grown tired of the frivolities of craving and sensual experience. They left their town in search of a teacher and first found the very popular Sanjahya.

Sanjahya taught his students to avoid any kind of teaching and to not hold any views. No commitment to accept nor deny any particular view of reality. Finding this philosophy appealing initially, over time the young students realized that it was superficial and too simple. Avoiding all questions and committing to nothing was not bringing them closer to the truth and so Upatissa and Kolita began seeking out other teachers.

Upatissa happened upon one of the Buddha's disciples walking for alms. Impressed with how the monk carried himself, Upatissa approached him and began asking questions about what he had been taught. The Buddha's disciple, who was an enlightened being, relayed a verse to Upatissa.

"Those things (dhammas) which arise based on a cause, the cause of those things is what the Buddha has taught."

Upon hearing this first half of the verse, Upatissa became a *sotāpanna*, the first stage of enlightenment. The monk continued.

"And the cessation of those things, this is the teaching of the great sage"

This basic kernel of the four noble truths was all Upatissa needed to be convinced that he had found what he was seeking. He said to the monk, "Stop, that is enough, thank you. Please tell me where our teacher is."

Upatissa sought out Kolita, and upon relaying the same verse he had just heard, Kolita also became a *sotāpanna*. Before going to be with the Buddha, they went to Sanjahya to show him

what they had learned. To their surprise, Sanjahya had no interest and stated bluntly: "Well then, my sons, you go and be with the wise Gautama, and all of the foolish people will come to me, and I will be very famous and have a great following." However, most of Sanjahya's disciples left with Upatissa and Kolita and they all were ordained by the Buddha and eventually became enlightened. After they became enlightened, they asked the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, when we wanted to come see you, we told our teacher Sanjahya, and he said he would stay with the many fools and therefore be very famous, and we can go with the Buddha Gautama and be surrounded by just a few wise people and be relatively insignificant," and this is when the Buddha gave this verse.

## Commentary

The first thing this verse teaches us is about how often we dwell on things that are unessential. Upatissa and Kolita were living a life of luxury and opulence and great sensual pleasure. One day they came to the difficult realization of how pointless it all was.

We might suffer depression and sadness at times in our lives, but most are not able to make the connection that sensual enjoyment can never bring us lasting peace. This is something to take to heart: we are only going to be disappointed again and again by our desire for sensual experience and the material world. Wasting time chasing these cravings is how most people live their lives. It is important for us to remember the Buddha's teaching, to not let the moment pass us by.

The second thing it has to teach us is in regards to the unessential in the religious path. Sanjahya, the deluded teacher, got caught up in fame, praise, wealth and pleasure. He thought it was essential to have lots of students, and it came to the point where he thought it better to be surrounded by many foolish people than to be surrounded by few wise people. Even monks with the best intentions can eventually get caught up in luxury and conceit, and they will not be able to see that these things are unessential.

If you practice meditation, you should be able to overcome material inconveniences. Some days we will go hungry and we may think, "oh no, what am I going to do?" and the answer is that you are going to be hungry. It really does not mean anything. Maybe you will get sick, maybe you will die, it does not really mean anything. When you put your emphasis on these things, thinking, "if only I am healthy, if only I have a full stomach, if only I am alive," you are not seeing what is essential.

The Buddha teaches five things that are essential: morality, concentration, wisdom, release or freedom, and the awareness or the knowledge of freedom. We need all five of these, but we must also prioritize them. We start with morality, which is grounded in the five precepts. Concentration and then wisdom follow. It is important to keep in mind that conceit can follow one after each stage.

The last two essential things are closely related. Release is when a person enters into nibbāna, a state where the mind is no longer coming out and no longer seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling or thinking. The mind goes inside and, for that time, does not come out. The mind has found its center and does not waver. That is true freedom. The fifth stage is the aspect of coming out of nibbāna and realizing what it is that you have experienced and thinking about it. "The realization that you have become free," the Buddha said, "is the greatest benefit, the greatest essence."

This is the essence. And as Buddhist meditators, this is what we are inclining ourselves towards. This is a teaching for us to see what in our lives we may be clinging to that is unessential. The teaching reminds us of what is truly essential and that we should give up what is unessential because it leads us to waste our time and lose the opportunity that we have in this life to put into practice those teachings that lead us to the realization of the truth and to realize true peace, happiness, and freedom from suffering.

## Verse 13 & 14: A Well-Thatched Roof

*Yathā agāraṃ ducchannaṃ, vuṭṭhī samativijjhati.*

*Evaṃ abhāvitaṃ cittaṃ, rāgo samativijjhati.*

Just as a house or a building that is poorly thatched the rain is able to penetrate.

In the same way lust is able to penetrate an untrained mind.

*Yathā agāraṃ suchannaṃ, vuṭṭhī na samativijjhati.*

*Evaṃ subhāvitaṃ cittaṃ, rāgo na samativijjhati.*

Just as a house or a building that is thatched properly the rain is not able to penetrate.

In the same way lust is not able to penetrate a well-developed mind.

### Story

Nanda was brought to the Buddha to which the Buddha magically took him to a burnt-out forest. There was a female monkey clinging to a stump of a tree which was the last standing burnt down tree. Her tail had been singed and she was clinging in great suffering and pain.

“You see that monkey there?” the Buddha said.

“Yes, I see that monkey.” replied Nanda, although he did not understand the Buddha’s point. Buddha then took Nanda to *Trāyastriṃśa* Heaven. There the Buddha showed him 500 dove-footed nymphs. These angel nymphs are much more beautiful than any human being. They were people with great merit, which grants them beauty as a result of their beauty of mind. Nanda was blown away by seeing these 500 nymphs playing around.

“Tell me Nanda, which is more beautiful, your wife or these 500 nymphs?” asked the Buddha.

“Venerable sir, if you compare my wife and that monkey, these dove-footed nymphs are much more beautiful than my wife, as my wife is more beautiful than that monkey,” said Nanda.

“Then I tell you Nanda, if you stay as a monk and you try your best to follow my instructions to live a holy life, I promise you these 500 nymphs will be your entourage,” said the Buddha. “You will be born into this state, to frolic around with the nymphs.”

As Nanda’s mind was untrained, he got caught up with emotions of lust. His mind was wiped of the memory of his wife, and he was overjoyed at the thought of being with these angel nymphs. Nanda replied, “Well, in that case, I’ll work really hard.” This was because he had seen something that most humans had never seen. He thought, “it must be true; this must really be the result of practicing the Buddhist teachings.” The whole idea of a soulmate was thrown out of the window, and from that point on, he practiced diligently. All the other monks came to know of



this agreement and started calling Nanda a hireling, as it seemed that Nanda could be bought with a price.

Slowly his mind changed. His mind calmed down, became relaxed, became clear and was therefore able to see the arising and ceasing of phenomenon. He was able to understand the five aggregates and was able to break them up to the point of where he began to lose his desires and lust. He was able to see that whether it was his wife or these celestial nymphs that it was all just *nāmarūpa*; that it is all just a momentary experience that arises and ceases. That this is impermanent, unsatisfying and uncontrollable. As a result, he gained realization and entered *nibbāna* and became an arahant.

Nanda went back to the Buddha and said, “The bargain that we had, sir, I will release you from that bargain.”

“From the moment you became an arahant, I was released from that bargain,” replied the Buddha.

The monks would tease Nanda asking him, “Are you still thinking about your wife? Still thinking about those nymphs?” To which Nanda replied, “Before, my mind was untrained, so I thought about them, but now, my mind is trained, so I don’t think about them,” to which the monks thought that Nanda was pretending, so they asked the Buddha. The Buddha responded to them, “Before, when his mind was untrained, it was like a roof that was ill-thatched, and now that his mind is trained, it is like a roof that is well-thatched.”

## **Commentary**

There is an interesting aspect of lust. People who think that they have met their soulmate think, “I like this, I like that” or “this is my wife, my lover, my soulmate.” They can then, on a heartbeat, turn and fall for someone or something else. The nature of the mind is that it jumps like a fire. The Buddha said “there is no fire like *rāga*’ (lust).” The mind jumps from one object to another. We come to see our minds as having holes like the holes in a roof. Our minds are permeable, and so our jobs as meditators is to patch the holes. Firstly, through the development of morality. At the beginning we do not have concentration, we just have morality. When you see something, instead of looking at it, you are saying “seeing, seeing.” That is morality: narrowing your mental activity, because that is what is going to bring concentration. Normally when you walk, you are also thinking, and you have no control over the mind. Now you are, in some way, trying to control– restricting yourself by saying “walking, walking.” This develops concentration from morality. Morality is the first layer and it prevents you from getting caught up in distraction and doing many things that would hurt your meditation.

The next layer is concentration. Concentration is the second way to patch up our minds. Once you develop concentration your mind will not give rise to liking or disliking. For example, you watch the rising and the falling of the stomach. You know the rising at that moment and the falling at that moment. Your mind is perfectly clear. The lustful desires can not come in. The

point being that these are impermanent and they are all relative. They don't have the ability to satisfy, but instead only create pleasure for some time. Once you develop concentration your mind will not give rise to such thoughts. You will see things as they are and wisdom will begin to arise. If concentration stops things from arising, then why is wisdom necessary? Concentration is like a roof, as it is temporary. As long as you keep patching it up, it will protect you but when you leave it alone the elements will penetrate it. The mind is the same, when you stop meditation all of it will come back. Concentration is a good way to protect the mind but it is not the ultimate method of protecting the mind.

The ultimate layer to protect the mind is to develop wisdom. As you see things clearly you begin to penetrate the characteristics of things. You see the nature of reality— things arising and ceasing and we begin to see this and break them apart, and see them for what they are, one by one. We realize that this idea of self, this idea of me, being able to experience this or that, is really delusion. The attraction towards some being or some thing is just a mind state that arises and then ceases. You begin to see the progression of mind states. When lust arises, it creates attachment. Attachment leads to disappointment when you do not get what you want. When you dislike, this leads to anger, which leads to suffering. The liking and disliking come from creating ideas about it and ideas of self. Once you see reality for what it is, your mind does not have anything to cling onto. At this point there is nothing positive or negative in anything. This is the ultimate protection, as nothing can penetrate it. Wisdom is not intellectual; wisdom comes as a result of repeated observation and direct experience. When your mind does not give rise to likes or dislikes, then your mind is perfectly well thatched. We start with morality, then we develop concentration, which allows us to see clearly. Once we see clearly our minds will be free.

## Verse 15: Sorrow Here and Hereafter

*Idha socati pecca socati, pāpakārī ubhayattha socati.*

*So socati so vihaññati, disvā kammakiliṭṭhamattano.*

Here he grieves, hereafter he grieves,  
the evil doer grieves in both places;  
he is afflicted, he is destroyed,  
seeing the defilement of his own actions.

### The Story of Cunda the Pig Butcher

This is a teaching about evil deeds, and it is in companion with the following verse, which is about good deeds.

In the time of the Buddha, there was a pig butcher named Cunda who lived right next to Veḷuvana, where the Buddha was staying in Rajagaha. Some monks would walk past Cunda's house on alms round, and they would see and hear pigs being killed. According to the commentary, this man would tie live pigs to posts so they couldn't move, then beat them with a club to make their flesh tender. Then he would take boiling hot water and pour it down the pig's throat, and all the feces and undigested food would pour out the bottom. He would continue this until the water that came out was clean. Then he would pour the rest of the boiling water over the pig's skin to peel off the outer layer of skin, and use a torch to burn off all of the pig's hair. Finally, he would kill the pig by cutting off its head. He would collect the blood from the pig's neck and roast the pig in its own blood. He would then eat as much as he could with his family and sell the rest. This went on for 55 years.

One day, after all this time, the monks noticed that all the doors of the house were closed up. They could still hear screaming and scuffling, so they thought that there must be something grave going on. They started talking about how amazing it was that in 55 years, this man had never learned the weight of his evil deeds, and had never come to listen to the Buddha's teachings or pay respect to the Buddha at all.

This was the case for a week, whereafter the monks were talking about it, saying, "This has all been going on for seven days now, this butcher must be performing a massive slaughter." The Buddha heard this talk and told these monks that that wasn't what was going on. He said, "Seven days ago, this pork butcher became very ill. His affliction went to his head, and he became quite deranged. As a result of this, he started crawling around his house on his hands and knees, grunting and squealing like a pig."

The Buddha went on to explain how the people in the house had been trying to restrain Cunda, but could not. He had begun to see the state of his own mind, and the fear and the concentration of his mind as he was nearing death drove him to see his future, and, recalling his evil deeds, he became terribly distraught. He dwelt that way for seven days, and then died and went to hell.

After describing all of this, the Buddha said to the monks, "This is how it goes– it's not just in the next life that a person suffers; a person who does evil deeds suffers both in this life, and the next."

## Commentary

Meditation allows us to grasp the full magnitude of our deeds. People who don't practice meditation, like Cunda, are unable to do this. They are unable to understand the law of karma. They often think it's some kind of belief or theory, and they do not truly understand. When they do evil deeds, they look around and they don't see anything happening in response; after having killed or committing some other evil deed, they might think, "if karma is true, now I will be punished," but no punishment is evident to them. This is particularly true for those engaged in great evil, like Cunda was. Such people may have done good deeds in the past, and with their relative stability of mind, they were unable to see the small seed growing inside themselves. Moreover, through the power of the mind, they're often able to push it away and to avoid looking at it or thinking about it. Most people spend most of their time covering up their deeds. This gives credence to a belief that there is nothing wrong with doing evil deeds, because one does not see clearly what the result of a good or an evil deed is. They aren't aware of their actions' effects until they become so obvious that they can no longer run away from them. This is especially true when one is nearing death, as one's power of mind becomes much weaker.

When you practice meditation, when you actually look and examine what's going on inside, you'll see that, although good people might suffer, this isn't because of their goodness, and although evil people may prosper, this isn't because of their evil deeds. It can't be. One can see this by watching clearly what happens when these mind states arise– by seeing what they lead to. One can see that a good state can never lead to suffering, and an evil state can never lead to goodness, happiness, or prosperity.

It is true that a person might be born into a position of power and wealth, and as a result they can perform many evil deeds without great repercussions– except in the mind, which of course is much more dynamic and much quicker to pick up on the changes, but eventually, even the physical will begin to change for a person engaged in great evil: one will lose good friends, and gain corrupt friends. One's whole environment will slowly change for the worse. At the moment of death, that all changes. The physical is removed from the equation. The mind is now only depending on the mind; there's no going back to bodily feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling,

and tasting; there's nothing based on the body. Mental activity becomes concentrated, so the person repeatedly recalls the deeds that they have done, memories, whatever is going on in their mind. They might consider the future they've been developing for themselves. If, like Cunda, one has a mind that is full of corruption, then this will repeatedly arise in the mind.

Many people experience this on their deathbed and can relate this. Some people actually leave their bodies, and can see their bodies or can see their loved ones surrounding their body. If they live through a near-death experience, they'll be able to relate what they saw or what happened to them, and it's based on whatever their mind is attaching importance to at that time. If a person is greatly engaged in evil deeds, then they will be born in a place that is full of suffering because of their corrupt state of mind.

It does happen that there are good people who do bad deeds and do feel guilt and remorse, and are able to see how it's affected them. They start to realize the nature of their mind. They might burst out at someone and then realize that they have a lot of anger inside. Then they might feel guilty and that there's something that should be done, and as a result they will begin to refrain from such behavior in the future. It can often be the case that, as in the case of Cunda, the realization only comes when it's too late.

When a person practices meditation, they are better able to realize the weight of their deeds. They're watching every moment and they're seeing quite clearly what the results of their deeds are. When they cling to something, what is the result? When they are angry or upset about something, what is the result? How do these things affect their mind, body, clarity, and character? The law of karma becomes clear and evident.

The Buddha said, "When they see the evil, they will finally realize." To see that you've done bad things, and to actually experience sorrow and shame, despite their unwholesomeness, can be a great awakening and can lead you to having a sense of "*hiri*" and "*ottappa*"— the appreciation of defilements as being harmful, and the results of their harmful nature. In the future, when the opportunity presents itself to do an evil deed, the mind will naturally incline against it, having seen the evil nature of it. This is something we gain very much from meditation. In the very beginning of practicing meditation, it will make people see all of what they have carried with them and built up over the years through not meditating. They'll see all of their habits and tendencies, and they'll often see big waves of defilement. At times it can be great anger and hatred; at times it can be great lust, needing, and wanting. So, although they might feel great suffering in the beginning, eventually it will be a cause for them to change their ways, and in the future, they won't want to do these things, because they know how much it affects and hurts their mind.

## Verse 16: Rejoicing Here and Hereafter

*Idha modati pecca modati, katapuñño ubhayattha modati.*

*So modati so pamodati, disvā kammavisuddhimattano.*

Here he rejoices, hereafter he rejoices. The doer of good deeds, rejoices in both places.

He thoroughly rejoices having seen the purity of his own actions.

### Story

This is the companion verse to the previous verse, verse 15. The story is different, the story here is about a good doer called Dhammika Upasaka. He was “*dhammika*” which means “one who lives by the Dhamma.” “*Upasaka*” is someone who follows the teachings and who takes refuge.

Dhammika Upasaka was a follower of the Buddha who was very much involved and interested with the Buddha’s teaching. He would always go to hear the Buddha teaching and he would listen to the sermons again and again. He would invite monks to his house and ask them to give preachings, and he would always give food to the monks when they came. He was always doing good deeds and was established in morality, and I believe he must have very well been a meditator, because he was very much interested in the Buddha’s teaching on *satipaṭṭhāna*, as this story goes.

It happened that after many years he became ill, and was on his deathbed, just like Cunda, the pig butcherer in the previous verse, but when Upasaka was on his deathbed, rather than becoming deranged or having his bad past deeds overwhelm him, his good deeds came to him. Right away he thought to do more good deeds, when he knew that he was probably at this last moment, he sent the message to the Buddha to ask the monks to come. Upasaka figured that the best way to go out was by listening to the Dhamma and practicing according to the teachings.

The Buddha right away sent monks, and they came and they sat around his bed. The monks asked Upasaka, “What teaching would you like to hear?” and he said, “Please recite for me the *Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta, because it is the teaching of all the Buddhas.” It was clear that he was very much interested in meditation practice.

The *Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta is what our meditation practice is based upon; it talks about the four foundations of mindfulness: the body, feelings, mind and the Dhamma. You probably have read it, but if you haven’t read it, just to explain it, it talks about the body. So, when you are walking, you know you are walking, when the breath comes in, you know that the breath is coming in. For instance, rising and falling, being aware of the physical aspects of the body, movements of the body. When the stomach moves, foot moves, hand moves, even when you are going to the

washroom, eating, whatever you are doing during the day. It talks about being mindful of the body, knowing it for what it is. When you have feeling, you know the feeling for what it is, pain, aching, soreness, when you have thoughts, when you have emotions such as liking, disliking and so on. This is what it talks about.

The monks began to recite, "Oh monks, this is the one way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow, lamentation, and despair, for the destruction of bodily and mental suffering, for attaining the right path, and for realizing freedom..."

It is a very profound discourse, and it is one that, even today, is often recited for people who are dying, or just recited in general at meditation centers to remind everyone of the teachings.

At this time, he would be listening and also be practicing. As he was on his way out, because he was actually such a pure and wonderful person, the story goes that he suddenly had a vision of angels coming from all of the six levels of sensual heaven. They came in chariots and they all began to call to him, "Please be born in my realm, be born in my realm!" They all wanted this guy to come to their realm, and so they were all extolling the virtues of their heaven, of why he should be born there. Nobody else could hear or see them, because it is only the vision that he had.

Upasaka said to the angels, "Wait, wait!" His children and the monks who were with him heard him say this and they thought he must be dying, and was telling the monks to stop reciting, and so the monks suddenly stopped chanting out of respect for his request.

The children were mortified and started crying because they were taught by Upasaka the importance of listening to the Dhamma. They thought he must be totally deranged or he must be experiencing something terrible to not want the monks to teach the Dhamma and so they began crying, saying, "Truly no one is immune to this! Even our own father who was so mindful!"

The monks saw the children crying and the old man saying, "Wait! wait!" and they considered there was nothing for them to do, so they all left. After they left the old man said, "Where did the monks go? Why did they stop chanting?" His children said, "You told them to wait, and we were all horrified and thought you were becoming deranged." To which he said "I wasn't telling the monks to wait, I was telling these angels here to wait... to not come for me yet, as I'm still listening to the Dhamma." The children replied, "What chariots? We do not see them..." Then the story goes, he had them take a wreath of flowers and throw it up in the air. It landed on the *Tusita* heaven's chariot, and it just hung there in the air, and he said, "that's the heaven that I'm going to be born in," and then he passed away. When he passed away, he entered into the chariot and went to heaven.

When the monks went back to the Buddha, they said, "You know, we tried, but the sad thing is he got deranged at the last moment, and he actually told us to stop teaching the Dhamma." Then the Buddha said, "He did not say this out of derangement," and the Buddha explained what happened and the monks said, "Wow, you mean, he was so happy here on earth, and now he's



even happier in heaven... How wonderful!" The Buddha said, "This is the way it goes..." and then he spoke the verse.

## Commentary

From these last two verses, we can understand that both a person who does good deeds has good things happen to them and a person who does bad things suffers.

This is something that is often invisible to us, because we often take it in a very shallow sense. You will often see people who have bad lives, who have bad things happening to them because of the nature of their lives. They will undertake good deeds thinking that it is going to get rid of all their suffering, and then they are disappointed that it doesn't, and they feel that they've been betrayed. They have this incredibly shallow understanding of how good deeds work. There are people, however, who understand how good deeds work, who really feel the benefits of them, and understand how wonderful it is, for example, to give a gift.

I have this story of a girl I knew when we were teenagers. We were walking down the street in the middle of winter. We were walking side by side and suddenly she turned and went into a McDonalds and said, "Wait here." So, I'm waiting outside, and there's this beggar right in front of me, living on a piece of cardboard outside of McDonalds. She comes out with a hamburger, and I know she doesn't eat meat. She bends down and hands it to this guy sitting on the cardboard and says, "Here you go." I'm standing there kind of feeling ashamed of myself. I didn't even see the guy until she went in. I didn't think anything of it right away.

Then we started walking and right away she said to me, "I don't give charity because I want them to feel happy. I do it because I'm selfish. I give gifts because it makes me feel happy." This is a person who isn't religious at all, and I do not know where she is now, but she's just a person who has really felt the goodness of giving, the goodness of charity. I think people who are engaged in giving feel this. It is because it is a pleasure that is unadulterated, it is a pleasure that when you have this pleasure there's nothing tainting it or contaminating it. It is also something that lasts with you forever. It is something that's never going to be taken away, while pleasure based on sensuality is totally dependent on the object. When a person remembers about the good deeds they have done they can repeatedly gain this happiness, this peace. It is something that people misunderstand, I think, it is a part of how people misunderstand karma as being some magical thing, that you can just put money in a box and magically you become rich, or give gifts and suddenly you become happy. But people who do it continuously and who get engaged in it as a practice gain the true benefit of charity.

People feel like morality is a waste of time, or that to not do things that you want to do is just a waste of time. If there is a mosquito near them, they might think, "Why not just kill it?" The people who do practice morality, and most importantly, people who engage in meditation, are able to see the difference. They are able to see that the good and the bad things in their minds have really contributed to how they relate to the present moment and how they react to things.



Through meditation we begin to see the importance of doing good deeds, the importance of being generous, the importance of being moral, the importance of practicing, and the importance of developing and strengthening your mind so that you can see things as they really are. With practice we begin to see the weaknesses in our minds, like the greed, anger, delusion, stinginess, jealousy and so on, and we see how it is causing us great suffering. It is actually easier to see how this works in the present life, even though most people do not see it.

Through a little bit of meditation we can see how it happens. Now we have to kind of, people say, "take a leap of faith" to think about how it is going to happen in the next life, just like with the last one. Wondering if it is really true that this man went to heaven and that man went to hell, and so on is actually really done away with; this idea of taking a leap of faith in regards to what happens when we die, by understanding, by really appreciating the experience that we are having in meditation and internalizing it, realizing that this is reality.

If we look around us, we see that there are buildings, houses, trees, other people and so on, but we're actually just building these constructs up in our minds. The truth is that there is experience: hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling and thinking. So, at the moment of death, the theory in Buddhism is that this doesn't change, because there is no reason for it to change. The physical aspects of our reality are really just a part of our experience and our moment to moment experience continues on. It really helps to make sense of why the universe is the way it is. It is very much based on past causes and conditions, so the future as well will be based on these same causes and conditions.

The Buddha says, "Suffering follows us if our mind is impure. Happiness follows us if our mind is pure." This is how we understand that a person who does good deeds benefits both in this life and in the next. It is very much a part of our practice of meditation. Through the practice of meditation, we are purifying our minds, overcoming greed, desire, this and that, because we are understanding that the greed and desire are causes for suffering. An act is pure or is defiled based on the intentions of the mind. Even when you walk, you can walk with a pure or impure mind. When you speak, you can speak with a pure or impure mind.

Obviously, the practice of meditation is what allows us to see purity and impurity, and it is what allows us to refine our behavior. This is really what you are doing, because again and again you are reacting to things. With practice you will see the reaction to things, then you will slowly refine those reactions until it just becomes an interaction. You are not liking things or disliking things. You are just doing them, saying to yourself, "Now I'm seeing... now I'm hearing.... now I have pain... now I have pleasure," and so on. You are not clinging to anything. This is what the Buddha said in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* Sutta, "not clinging to anything." This is something for us to keep in mind when we do our practice. We are purifying our thoughts, speech and our deeds.

## Verse 17: Burning Here and Hereafter

*idha tappati pecca tappati, pāpakārī ubhayattha tappati.*

*"Pāpaṃ me katan" ti tappati, bhiyyo tappati duggatiṃ gato.*

The evil-doer suffers here and hereafter; he suffers in both the worlds.

The thought, "Evil have I done," torments him,  
and he suffers even more when gone to realms of woe.

### Story

Devadatta, a cousin of the Buddha, was caught up in the baseness of his own mind. While the other monks became *sotāpannas* and achieved *arahant*-ship, Devadatta focused solely on his inside world and cultivated tranquility. He was only able to gain magical powers such as flight and telepathy. Because he had no wisdom and no radiance, he resorted to using these magical powers for devious ends such as garnering the attention and support of the king's son and the laypeople. The king himself was a *sotāpanna* and could not be swayed by such tricks.

Devadatta made schemes for the king's son to murder his father and he himself devised ways to kill the Buddha. However, after a time even the king's son came to see how evil and power hungry Devadatta was. And so, having lost his reputation, Devadatta sought to break the Sangha. He devised a plan to ask the Buddha to instate strict rules, such as: a monk should always have to live in the forest, a monk should always go on alms, the monks should only wear rag robes, and so on. Some of these rules the Buddha had already stated, but there was some flexibility depending on circumstance. The Buddha refused to make these rules absolute. Devadatta proceeded to go around saying the Buddha is a fraud and a false ascetic.

Devadatta asked the Buddha to step down, and said, "You are old now, let me run the Sangha." The Buddha replied, "I wouldn't even give the Sangha to Sāriputta or Moggallāna, let alone a lickspittle like you. A lickspittle is someone who looks spindly. The Buddha saw from the beginning where Devadatta's ordination would lead. If he let him be a layperson, maybe he would have aroused an army to wipe out all the monks. The Buddha thought that the Sangha would be a refuge for Devadatta, and so he let all of this happen. The reason why he called him a lickspittle was to make it very clear to Devadatta and the whole world that he thought him evil and that this should be public knowledge. The Buddha wasn't beating around the bush, because this was his last life, he could not play games anymore. However, Devadatta had left after being rejected, and did not know that the Buddha was beginning to spread the word.

Devadatta went around calling the monks together and asking those who agree with these five strict rules should join me. Some of the new monks who did not know right from wrong thought, "Yes, this monk is serious about the practice, perhaps the Buddha is not as serious," and joined him. The Buddha sent Sāriputta and Moggallāna after him. When Devadatta saw

Sāriputta and Moggallāna, he thought that they were going to join him, and that it was only a matter of time before he had his own Sangha. Sāriputta and Moggallāna didn't say anything and when Devadatta set himself up like the Buddha, lying down and listening. Sāriputta and Moggallāna saw Devadatta fall asleep, and they turned to the monks and started teaching them. They were able to convert these followers of Devadatta and they became enlightened in the process. Sāriputta led the enlightened back to the Buddha.

Devadatta's assistant woke Devadatta up and castigated him for being such a fool to trust Sāriputta and Moggallāna and then kicked him in the chest. Devadatta was injured and became sick as a result of the evil in his heart. In the process of becoming progressively weak, he started to realize the evil in his heart. He could no longer overpower it, he was no longer in charge, and he had to succumb to his evil deeds. His evil deeds became a prison. He was left only with a couple of his cronies and he asked them to bring him to the Buddha. Shocked by this, they questioned him why; after trying to destroy the Buddha, he now wanted to visit him. Devadatta responded that the Buddha never harbored any ill will towards him and that it was time to reconcile.

The Buddha was told by the monks, "Devadatta wants to come to see you." The Buddha said, "Let him come, he'll never see me again." They brought Devadatta on this chariot all the way to Jetavana. He sat up on his bed and put his feet on the ground, thinking that he was going to walk over to where the Buddha was. His feet sunk into the earth. The earth could not hold his weight. He sank right into the earth and all the way to hell. Devadatta died there and the fires of hell came up and he was totally torched and burned.

## **Commentary**

Devadatta tried to attack the Buddha and tried to attack the Dhamma. The eternal Dhamma, that which is impossible to shake. By trying to attack the truth, Devadatta himself became transfixed and immovable. He was encased in iron with a spike going from his head through his bottom and from the right side out through the left side, burning in fire constantly, transfixed and immovable for eons and eons. The Buddha said, "It would have been worse for Devadatta if he had not come in contact with him and he had not woke him up in this way." At the very end, Devadatta realized his evil and gained wisdom and understanding. The story goes that after all the time he spends in hell, he will be reborn as a *Pacceka Buddha*. It is a story of great importance, one that is always talked about and remembered. It is a story of what not to do when you become a monk, about the sort of monk that you do not want to be.

For a person who actually has some wits about them, and is not totally corrupt as Devadatta, when they do an evil deed it really hits them very hard. The realization comes that evil really does exist. For people like Devadatta, they are able to use their force of will to cover it up. For Devadatta, only when he was weakened by sickness did he realize for himself the evil that he

had done. For the person who does bad deeds, bad things happen to them; they can even burn in hell, engulfed in all of the anger that has built up inside of them.

## Verse 18: Delighting Here and Hereafter

*Idha nandati pecca nandati, katapuñño ubhayattha nandati.*

*“Puññaṃ me katan” ti nandati, bhiyyo nandati sūggaṃ gato.*

Here she is blissful and here after she is blissful.

The doer of goodness is blissful in both places.

Thinking “I have done good” she rejoices  
and even more she rejoices having gone to heaven.

### Story

Anathapindika was one of the Buddha’s chief lay disciples who would go to see the Buddha every day. He would listen to the Buddha’s teachings but would never ask him to teach on a specific topic, because he would always think, “The Buddha has so much work; he is a prince and he is a very special person, so I will try not to tire him.” The Buddha would know of this but would know of what Anathapindika needed to hear. *Anathapindika* means one who gives food, who feeds the poor and who feeds those without any refuge. He was an example of a good rich person, which does exist in the world. He would also feed the monks, and whenever someone wanted to feed the monks they would bring Anathapindika along as he knew the monks well. He was a very busy person, so he would ask his eldest daughter to stay at home. If monks came to the house, she was to give them food and listen to their teachings. As a result of listening and practicing these teachings she became a *sotāpanna*. Then, having grown up, she got married and went off to her husband’s house. The job was passed over to the second daughter, and the same thing happened. She became a *sotāpanna* and got married and left home.

Then came the third daughter, Sumana, where not only did she become a *sotāpanna*, but she also became a *sakadāgāmi*, which is the second stage. *Sakadā* means “with only one rebirth,” so she was almost to the point where she had no more greed or anger; her mind was very pure, and as a result she would come back to this world at the most once before becoming enlightened. Sumana became ill and got very sick. She was at the point of death and, wanting to see her father, she sent someone to the monastery to call for him. Hearing this, Anathapindika rushed back home and asked her, “What is it, Sumana? What’s wrong?”

Sumana didn’t hear him very well, and said, “What did you say, younger brother?”

Anathapindika was shocked, thinking that she became deranged and lost her mind. He asked her, “Is your mind unclear?”

Sumana said, “No, no. My mind is not deranged, younger brother.”

Anathapindika didn’t understand why she was calling him younger brother and asked, “Are you afraid?” He figured maybe she was afraid of death, so she was hallucinating.

“No, I’m not afraid, younger brother,” and Sumana passed away with those words.

Although Anathapindika was also a *sotāpanna*, he couldn’t bear to hear this and started crying. Weeping, he went to see the Buddha and the Buddha asked, “How is it, Anathapindika, that you are crying?”

Anathapindika said, “My youngest passed away.”

The Buddha said “Well, haven’t you been listening? Everyone has to die. She has passed away and that is just a part of life.”

To which Anathapindika replied, “Yes, I know, I understand that but what makes me so sad is that even though she was such a good girl, she died totally deranged with an unclear mind. I am afraid of where she may have gone.”

The Buddha asked, “Why do you think she was deranged?”

“She called me younger brother,” said Anathapindika.

The Buddha said, “Well, you are her younger brother.”

Anathapindika asked, “How is that?”

The Buddha said, “She has become a *sakadāgāmi*. As she is older than you in the paths and fruition, you are her younger brother as you are only a *sotāpanna*.” It seems that she may have actually been trying to give some teachings to Anathapindika, trying to say to him, “Look, you’re still only a *sotāpanna*, you should work hard to get to the higher path.”

Anathapindika asked the Buddha, “Where has she gone?”

The Buddha said, “She’s gone to *Sita*, the heaven where all the future Buddhas live.” She was happy here doing good deeds, and now she is rejoicing up in heaven. This is where the Buddha told the verse, “they rejoice here and rejoice here after.”

## Commentary

We are not out there in the world like Anathapindika giving alms to poor people, supporting a Buddhist teaching, or hardcore studying the sutta, so how does this relate to us? The answer is by practicing meditation. Although it might not feel like it, since we are sitting here, torturing ourselves by having to deal with the chaos in the mind, mosquitoes, and so on, the answer is not difficult. If you study Buddhism, it is easy to understand. When we talk about goodness, we always say *dāna* (charity), *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (mental development) is goodness. *Dāna* means giving but in a Buddhist sense it means giving up.

As a monk, when desire comes up, you are forced to be objective about it and see the greed for what it is: wanting of entertainment, wanting good food, wanting a nice bed, wanting to sleep more. Looking at these desires objectively, and staying strong, you can feel your mind become straighter, as crookedness comes from clinging. A hand which is crooked can cling, but a hand that is straight can not cling to anything. The mind is the same, when it is straight it can not cling to anything. Meditation is the greatest *dāna* as we are giving freedom from our defilement

to all beings. We're training ourselves to need less and less, and if we get to the point of the *arahants*, then we will not need anything and our lives will be a blessing to the world. Morality is practiced to stop our minds from becoming angry, to stop creating suffering for others, by giving up the evil inside.

With *bhāvanā*, the purpose is to give up defilements. Although ordinary meditation can help to root out anger (loving-kindness), or lust (loathsomeness of the body), or to invigorate oneself (mindfulness of death), to root out delusion, you have to practice *vipassanā*, which is the true *bhāvanā*. One has to not only look at reality, desire and anger but the objects of desire. Through this act, one is able to develop their minds. Like a roof that covers you from the rain (concentration), your mind is protected from greed and anger, but never secure from delusion. The only way to secure delusion is to take the roof off and be open to the world. Through this, one is able to see things for what they are, without partiality or categorization. One sees things as impermanent and unsatisfying. One understands that these things do not satisfy us.

There is a story of a man who told the Buddha, "You can rain if you want because my roof is well thatched." The Buddha replied, "You can rain if you want, as I do not have a roof." Buddha was telling the man that his mind is able to encounter anything without any prejudice, even on an open field while it rains. At the start, it takes concentration, and some problems will have to be pushed away, as all of them can not be dealt with at once. One who practices *samatha* will push everything out of the way so they can slowly pick things one at a time and look at them. If you practice *samatha*, you should open your mind up and reflect on the five aggregates, as without focusing on the aggregates, one will not understand *dukkha*, and therefore there will be no understanding of the four noble truths. Even after this, one has to come back to slowly pull off the roof to look, until you don't need the roof anymore. True mental development is opening up the heart and keeping the mind perfectly balanced and centered, but letting be, open to anything.

The greatest goodness is practicing. By doing so, you are changing your mind and therefore will be less inclined to do evil. You will find that your mind becomes pure, which will lead you to a better life. People often think that meditation is good merit, so they practice with the goal of having some good fortune happen. When they are finished, sometimes the opposite happens—sometimes horrible things happen to them. This can happen because meditation clears out garbage in our minds, and what can remain is really bad karma that had no opportunity to arise previously. What meditation does is that it helps you to stop thinking about "my suffering, my happiness" then you start thinking about purity and impurity, because you know where happiness and suffering comes from. The difference between before meditating and after meditating is that whether it is suffering or pleasure, the mind suffers far less. The evil that happens is not due to meditation. Meditation only clears the way for it to come, and it can also clear the way for good things to come. The result is that karma comes quicker, because one's universe is much purer. The goodness from meditation takes time and often does not come quickly. It might come in this life or the next, but even still, an incredible power is building up

inside of you for our future lives. Thus, this is the training to protect others from your defilements. It is the training that is necessary to be kind and compassionate, generous, helpful and beneficial to the world, as without wisdom there is only a limited amount of benefit that you can bring to the world. It is with wisdom that one is able to solve people's problems and bring clarity to oneself and others. Although there might still be a lot of baggage one is still carrying around, if one is patient, it will bring great power to them as time goes by.



## Verse 19 and 20: Who Partakes in the Fruit

*Bahumpi ce saṃhita bhāsamāno, na takkaro hoti naro pamatto.*

*Gopova gāvo gaṇayaṃ paresaṃ, na bhāgavā sāmāññaṃ hoti.*

A person who thought they know a lot but doesn't practice accordingly, are negligent and heedless, and they don't have a part in the fruit of the teaching.

*Appampi ce saṃhita bhāsamāno, dhammassa hoti anudhammacārī.*

*Rāgañca dosañca pahāya mohaṃ, sammappajāno suvimuttacitto.*

*Anupādiyāno idha vā huraṃ vā, sa bhāgavā sāmāññaṃ hoti.*

But a person who studied a little bit and maybe knows very little and can explain very little but still practices according to the teaching, they become one who partakes in the fruit of the truth.

### STORY

Two inseparable friends approached the Buddha to ordain as monks. The Buddha told them that there were two duties in the Buddhist teachings, the practice of *vipassanā* and the memorization of texts. The older friend thought himself unable to memorize so many texts and decided to focus on the practice of *vipassanā*. The younger friend decided to focus on study and memorization.

The older monk put together a set of robes and asked the Buddha for a meditation teaching. The Buddha taught him *vipassanā* meditation all the way up to *arahant*-ship. He went off into the forest and became an *arahant*. The younger monk memorized all of the *Tipiṭaka*, but he did not practice. However, he did become a well known and well respected teacher. Some of his students went on to get training from the Buddha and went out to the forest to practice with the older monk and became *arahants* as well.

The new *arahants* asked the elder, "We'd like to see the Buddha." The elder said, "Fine, go back and pay respect to the Buddha, pay respect to the Buddha's student chief disciples and all of the eighty great disciples, then go and pay respect to my friend and tell him you are paying respect in the name of your teacher." They did as he asked and when they relayed this message to the younger monk, their former teacher, he asked, "Who is your teacher?" To which they replied, "It's your friend, who you became a monk with." Then he said, "He has students? What could he have possibly taught you?" The younger monk knew that his friend did not study and

thought to himself, "He can't teach, he doesn't know anything. When he comes back from the forest, I'm going to ask him questions and show everyone that he is a fraud!"

Eventually, the senior *arahant* left the forest to visit and pay respects to the Buddha and also see his young friend. The Buddha found out about the question scheme, and realized that if he let this happen the younger monk might go to hell. In order to interrupt such a terrible thing, he went walking to the monastery and sat at his seat, which was always ready, in the presence of the two friends and all their students. First, the Buddha asked the studious monk about the first *jhāna* and he could not answer. Then, he asked the same of the older monk who promptly gave the answer. The Buddha went on to ask about all eight *jhānas*, the four *rūpa jhānas*, the four *arūpa jhānas*, and the first path to *sotāpanna*. The studious monk was not able to answer a single one of them. The *arahant* monk was able to answer every single one of them. The Buddha was asking questions that relate directly to the practice. Questions about the experience of the path and descriptions of it. Since such things are not described in the text, it was not something the studious monk could have memorized. Upon each correct answer, the Buddha expressed his appreciation by holding up his hands and saying "*Sadhu.*"

The students of the studious monk muttered to themselves, "Why does the Buddha keep praising the older monk? Isn't it crazy that the Buddha keeps praising this monk who knows nothing?" The Buddha turned to them and said, "What are you talking about?" They explained what they were saying, and Buddha said, "Monks, your teacher is like a person who looks after the cows of another farmer, he looks after them, he doesn't get any of the milk, he doesn't get any of the butter, he doesn't get any of the cheese, he doesn't get any of the fruits of the cow. But my son is like the farmer who owns the cow." He then gave these two verses.

## Commentary

A teacher should not waste their time only spreading the Dhamma to others and not practicing themselves. It is considered negligent. Many scholarly monks may become conceited and attached to their knowledge. They are not aware when the emotions arise, when the defilements arise, and thus they are not able to skillfully address them when they do.

Let us break down the verse. "*Dhammassa hoti anudhammacārī*" is someone who practices the Dhamma, practices the teaching. One who does not sit around studying all day. One who takes the time to go and find a cave, find a tree, find a hut and practice. And then "*rāgañca dosañca pahāya moharū*", this is key. Some people don't find it quite clear what we're trying to do. What the measurement of our practice is. How do we measure our practice?

The measure of our practice is based on the amount of *rāga*, the amount of *dosa*, the amount of *moha*. Greed, anger and delusion. The more of these that we are able to do away with, the further we have gone into practice. We have less *rāga*, less lust, less anger, less delusion and so forth. The way to abandon it is in the next verse. "*Sammappajāno*," "*samma*" which means "right", and "*pajāno*" which means "clear seeing", or "seeing thoroughly". We

translate this often as “clear comprehension”. It really means the “perfect awareness of reality”. Watching the stomach is a simple example. Perfectly knowing what’s going on. This is the rising and this is the falling. When you’re walking, knowing that your foot is moving, when you’re sitting knowing that you’re sitting, and so on. When you’re in this awareness, when you’re in this full and complete “*samma*” which means “proper awareness”. It means it’s just full knowing, you know that is rising, you don’t like it or dislike it or cling to it, whatever experience arises, so we are not getting upset or attracted. You see something not to be attached to it, just rightly seeing as it is. This is “*sammappajāno*.” “*Suvimuttacitto*” means “with the mind that is well released”. There are different kinds of release that the commentary talks about, but the most important one is the covering up of the roof. You can cover it up with morality and concentration, but most important is to cover up the roof with wisdom. To create a seal of wisdom, so your mind has no room for it to arise, because the mind is perfectly air tight. Complete knowledge, you know the truth. Basically, it means to see nibbāna, when you see nibbāna your mind is perfectly protected.

The first time a person becomes a *sotāpanna*, the mind is perfectly freed from “*sakkāya-ditthi*,” which means “view of self”, “*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*,” which means attachments to wrong practices and wrong morality; abstaining from things that are not necessary to abstain from, and taking on practices that are not necessary practice. Thinking that by abstaining, by practicing this way or thinking that these abstentions and these practices are necessary. You never do any of this, because you know what is the right practice. You know what leads to the results. “*Vicikicchā*”, which means “without doubt”, because you’ve seen nibbāna so you have no doubt about whether nibbāna exists, or with what the Buddha taught, because you’ve come to see the truth for yourself. Then when you get *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi*, and *arahant*, and when you become an *arahant*, the mind is well freed. There is no greed, no anger, no delusion, no ignorance. Full understanding of the Four Noble Truths. Everything that you experience is seeing for what it is, or “*sammappajāno*”.

With practice, you shouldn’t feel conceited, but you should feel confident and feel good about yourself. We should remind ourselves that what we are doing now is a good thing, and we should see the benefits we are receiving, and not disparage the wisdom that we have gained in the practice. Every moment we are gaining something. Learning something more about ourselves. It can be easy to become discouraged, because it is very difficult. We are dealing with things that we habitually cover up and avoid. When they arise, the instinct is to repress them and push them away. It can be so disheartening that some people decide they do not want to deal with it anymore. It is important to remind ourselves that what we are doing here is important, and in fact, quite incredible. Remember the goodness of what we are doing, don’t lose sight of what we have gained and what we are gaining. Indeed, it is a most precious gift.