

Brahmavihara Dhamma
Part-III, by Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw

(39) The Metta Sutta Paritta

1. Karaniya matthakusalena,
yamtam santam padam abhisamicca.
Sakko uju ca suhuju ca,
suvaco ca'ssa mudu anatimani

Santam - blissful, *padam* - Nibbana, *abhisamicca* - if desirous of achievement and realisation, *atthakusalena* - a person who knows or realises the desirable advantages which are essentially required, *yam* - this practice of *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*, *karaniyam* - needs to be exercised and performed. Tam - this practice (*katum* - for the purpose of exercising it), *sakko ca* - is capable of, *assa* - achievement.

1. Must be capable of practising

The gist of it is: If a person who fully knows the real advantages that can be accrued, if desirous of achieving and realising the blissful Nibbana, must invariably indulge himself in the practice of *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (concentration), and *panna* (insight wisdom). He must be capable of taking up this practice. What is indicated by this expression is that if one wishes to be liberated from all miseries and tribulations, he should have the ability to practise *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna* without any regard for his own self or material body to the extent of sacrificing his own life.

To amplify a bit more, it may be stated as resembling a worldling who, realising the worldly advantages that can be derived, is striving to acquire the best advantage under the given circumstances either by way of earning his livelihood as an agriculturist, or a trader, or a paid public servant. Just as gold, silver and other kinds of properties will be of benefit to him in the pursuit of his worldly business affairs, *sila*, *samadhi* and *Panna* are really the best advantages to be gained in his long journey through *samsara*. These are the essential things to be practised and acquired. In the least, if one is accomplished in his *sila*, moral conduct, he will not descend to the realm of *apaya*, and instead, he is sure to reach the world of human beings and of Devas, where pleasant and favourable conditions prevail.

If he could attain *jhana-samadhi*, he will be elevated to a happy life existence in the abode of Brahmas, where the life-span lasts for aeons. If one is accomplished with Vipassana insight knowledge and has fully achieved *sotapatti magga-phala*, he will forever be emancipated from landing in the four apayas. He will later enter into *Parinibbana* on his demise after attainment of Arahathship and after having been reborn in the abode of *sugati* for not more than seven existences. If accomplished with *arahatta-magga-phala-nana*, he will totally escape from the woes and worries of life existences, i.e. there will be no more future life-existence for him. That is the reason why *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna* are

the real advantages insofar as *samsara* is concerned. These attributes should be gained through the practice of meditation.

Such being the case, one who is thoroughly proficient in the practices of *sila*, etc., should be capable of exercising Vipassana meditation with complete understanding. It is a practice which should invariably be performed without any misgiving that these higher morality and learnings are hard to be practised. One should not feel disappointed that realisation of insight knowledge is not within his reach. Neither should he find fault with it nor feel that it would perhaps be better and happier for him to avoid taking a training in the exercise, and that the practice of *samadhi bhavana* is difficult and tiresome. One should not give it up through indolence and weakness. Follow the Motto-

Genuine advantages of *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna* fully grasped with keen proficiency. Having understood as such, one should be capable of practising meditation leading to the acquirement of advantages."

The statement "Genuine advantages ... be fully grasped with keen proficiency" is in consonance with what has been stated as "*atthakusalena*". One must therefore be competent to resort to this noble practice. To enable one to do so, one must have *saddha* (conviction) and *viriyā* (perseverance or exertion). Only if one has absolute faith with a firm belief that the advantages or benefits are sure to derive, he will be inclined to take up the practice of Vipassana meditation, which will eventually lead to the attainment of Nibbana after achieving *magga-phala*.

On the other hand, those who have no faith in the Buddha's Dhamma will not be able to practise *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*. Some of those who pretend to be real Buddhists have said that these practices are not required to be exercised, and if practised, it will only end in misery. This sort of indiscreet remark is more wishful thinking. They 'are the people who have no faith or belief in the Doctrine of the Buddha. Such people have no inclination to indulge themselves in the practices of *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*. If they fail to do so, since it has been preached as "*karaniyam* " i.e. "should be practised without fail", (and) "*sakko*" - "must also have the ability to practise", they shall be deemed to have held dissenting views contrary to the Teachings of the Lord Buddha. As a matter of fact, they are absolutely lacking in *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*, just like a pitiable penniless person. They are destined for the Nether World.

Moreover, unremitting effort is essential. If lacking in diligence, it becomes difficult to fully maintain the attributes of *sila* (morality). Thus, it will be all the more burdensome to practise *samadhi* and *panna*. Some are even reluctant or lazy to listen to the sermon on the subject of the practice of Vipassana meditation. To a person who is diligent, nothing is difficult or burdensome. He will make his relentless effort to achieve fully in anything which needs to be accomplished. Hence; "utmost endeavour should be made to practise for the achievement of *sila*. He must have the ability to practise and perform the exercise with vigour and enthusiasm. To be capable of doing so, faith and exertion is essentially required to be accomplished. There fore, it is of paramount importance to carry on the practice of *sila*, etc., diligently, after having accomplished oneself as stated.

2. & 3. Must be frank and honest

Next, *ujju ca* - honest, *assa* - he must be, *suhuju ca* -extremely straightforward and honest, he should be. When first becoming an ordained Bhikkhu, though he may be honest at the initial stage of practising meditation by the strength of his faith and conviction, at a later stage when the strength of faith (*saddha*) and exertion (*viriya*) is at a low ebb, as he becomes slack and defective concerning his or her morality, "*suhuju* " the quality of extreme honesty will deteriorate. Only by practising without defect throughout the lifetime, "*suhuju*" will remain intact. To put it in another way, if freed from treachery or craftiness without any pretension of having possessed the attributes which he is not really endowed with (*satheyya*) he shall be deemed to be straightforward (*uju*).

If free from the defect of pretension as stated, he may be regarded as extremely honest. In other words, if not cunning and treacherous from the point of view of physical and verbal behaviour, one shall be regarded as being honest and straightforward (*uju*). It is "*suhuju* ", if a person is not crafty or cunning. The last method is that if refrained from revealing the truth of the attributes which he does not really possess, it would amount to being honest (*uju*). If no acceptance is made of the offerings or donations given by others through reverence under the false impression of the attributes which he (a Bhikkhu) does not really possess, he shall be deemed to be very honest and upright(*suhuju*).

In practising meditation, the qualities of honesty and uprightness are fundamentally important. If spoken under the pretence of having possessed the attributes of the Special Dhamma which one has not yet achieved, or in other words, if a false assertion of a claim is made without actually possessing the attributes, it is a clear case of dishonesty. Such a person who makes a false claim under pretence, will have no chance of making progress in his meditation practice. The spiritual teacher will also find it difficult to mend him, or rather, put him on the right lines. If one does not truly admit his faults and does not know his responsibility to tell the truth, he is devoid of the quality of "*suhuju*". If the mind wanders or flirts, he must openly admit as such and tell what has actually happened in his exercise. Otherwise, he will not be regarded as being very honest.

Only if he tells the truth of what has taken place, or in other words, only if he reveals his incompetence or failure to achieve the Special Dhamma truthfully, it would amount to accomplishment of the attributes of "*uju*". Only when he is candid and honest, will the spiritual teacher be able to put him on the right track. If he sincerely and respectfully meditates as guided by his spiritual teacher, *samadhi-nana*, penetrating knowledge (by concentration), will soon be developed with progress. If it is done so, treacherous feeling, if any, may be wiped out, and honesty may be revived. In particular, when reaching the stage of *udqyabbaya-nana*, *passaddhi* - calmness, together with *lahuta* - buoyancy, *mudita* - gentleness of mind, *kammannata* -adaptability or readiness to do what is to be done, *pagannata* - observation and familiarity, and also *ujukata* - honesty of purpose, may become conspicuous.

It is stated that at one time, when a female meditator had reached that stage in progressive insight knowledge, she made a confession to her spiritual teacher as: I have done wrong to my husband in the past. From now onwards, I will never commit such faults or offend him." It is really essential that a person who is now developing *metta* should be really frank and honest. Some, of course, with a false pride, make an exaggeration claim of how they are developing *metta*. This kind of behaviour, both mental and verbal, is a clear evidence of a person's dishonesty and reflects his character. Hence, there is food for

thought in regard to people giving a false impression of being lofty and noble in character by putting on airs with ornamented or big strings of beads.

4. Should be docile or disposed to compliance

Next, *suvaco ca* - meek or obedient or in readiness to comply, *assa* - he should be. One who is stubborn or not amenable to taking good advice or admonition is an unruly person known as "*Dubbaca*". Such a person is obstinate and pig-headed and is not ready to listen to the benevolent advice given by others. He is in the habit of speaking counter to what others have said with -a tendency to hold a contrary opinion. He may think of the other as being bossy. When he is admonished or rebuked by his teachers, he behaves or reacts badly and when asked, he "refuses to admit his own fault. If he remains silent, it would cause mental distress or annoyance to others. Even though a person may admit his own fault then and there, he may later continue to do mischief without amending 'himself. This also amounts to disobedience or non-compliance. The Commentary goes to say that such a person is remote, or rather, miles apart from achieving Special Dhamma.

A person, who is meek and mild (*suvaca*) and is ready to comply with or abide by the instructions given, will accept any kind of good advice or sincere warning with pleasure. He will also reform himself. The Commentary had said that such a person is close to attainment of Special Dhamma. Presently, Yogis who comply with the instructions of their 'spiritual teachers, are found to have made great strides towards the region of progressive insight.

A person who is inclined to disobey due admonition given, is likely to become angry without being able to develop Metta, being predominated by an offensive. feeling against the other who tenders good advice or reprobate. It is really essential for a Yogi to be docile and obedient. If properly reflected, what others have said with the best of motives is for his own benefit. For instance, a person whose face is stained with soot will be a laughing-stock if he goes to a public function or a ceremony. If another person who has seen him with dirt on his face, has made him known of this fact, he can very well wash and cleanse the dirt on his face.

If he goes to the function after cleaning the dirt on his face, he will escape ridicule. If any shortcomings of a person is pointed out by the other, one should be grateful to the well-wisher. Therefore, one should gladly rectify his own fault or mistake if his attention is drawn to it by a friend or a relative. Rahula, when he was seven years old, piled up a mound of sand and even prayed earnestly that he might receive admonition many a time, or, as much as there were grains in the heap of sand. It is imperative for a person who is practising metta *bhavana* or other kinds of meditation to become a "*Suvaca*" individual.

5. Must be gentle

Next, *mudu ca* gentle and pliant, *assa* - he should be. However, it is not permissible (for the Bhikkhus) under the Rules of Discipline to speak or offer things or do any act to ingratiate oneself with the male and female benefactors and to earn their reverence, in a meek, mild and gentle manner. Nevertheless in matters not contrary to the Rules of Vinaya, it would be proper for a Bhikkhu to speak and deal with his benefactors mildly, gently and amiably. More important, however, is to behave in an agreeable and conciliatory manner without being blunt and indolent in matters relating to the practice of *Patipatti*.

6. Should not be haughty

Then comes, "*anatimani ca*" - not to be conceited and arrogant, *assa* ' - as he should be. A Bhikkhu should not be proud and haughty relying upon his lineage and the attributes of his knowledge and achievement in the field of Pariyatti and Patipatti and of the nobility of his sect. He should not behave in a rude manner and underestimate others with arrogance. If he slights others, taking pride in himself or assumes a nonchalant attitude, it will be difficult for him to successfully develop genuine *metta* - loving-kindness. Some are lacking in deference to others who are worthy of respect simply on the ground that they belong to a different sect. It will be hard for him to nurse a feeling of genuine loving-kindness.

Looking at it from the viewpoint of mundane affairs, one may meet with trouble and danger by being discourteous to others who might appear to him as "having no aptitude and initiative". The disaster which came upon the royal family of Sakya Clan brought about by Vidudabha was the consequential effect of negligence and conceit. Hence, one should be gentle in mind without being arrogant and quarrelsome. In this regard the Commentary has pointed out that "one should humiliate himself just as the Venerable Ashin Sariputta has inculcated the habit of humbleness like a mendicant." The mental disposition of the Venerable Ashin Sariputta described in Tuvataka Sutta (on page 38 of the Burmese version) is as stated below:

A beggar, whether a boy or a girl with an earthenware container in hand and with shabby clothes on, when entering a village, practises humiliation. The Venerable Ashin Sariputta respectfully put up to the Enlightened One that he had submitted himself to humiliation like this beggar boy or girl begging for food. This is really wonderful considering the fact that Ashin Sariputta though born of a high caste Brahmin had condescended to that low level. One should, therefore, emulate his exemplary behaviour. Let us go on the second stanza:

2. Santussako ca subharo ca,
 appakicco ca sallahukavutti.
 Santindriyo ca nipako ca,
 appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho.

7. Should be easily contented

Santussako ca - easily contented, *assa* - as one should be. To be contented means (1) to be satisfied with what is available; (2) to be satisfied with what can be obtained within one's own ability; (3) to be satisfied with what is suitable or proper. These are the three kinds of "Contentment". If it is multiplied with four kinds of requisites (necessities) for a monk, [3 x 4], it will come to twelve [12]. One should be contented in the light of these twelve qualities of contentment.

With reference to the mode of contentment mentioned in No. (1) above, a Bhikkhu should content himself with the four kinds of necessary things or properties, viz: meal, robes, monastery or dwelling place, and medicine, as may be available under any circumstances. As regards meal (food), the Lord Buddha had given exhortation to the bhikkhus from the time of their first entering into Bhikkhuhood as: "*Pindiya lopa bhojanam nissaya pabbajja, tattha to yavajivam ussaho karaniyo.*" It means, a Bhikkhu should truly maintain his observance of the precepts as a Bhikkhu by merely depending upon the food - may be a spoonful, or a handful - obtained from the respective house of the faithful donor by going in person for alms. The newly ordained Bhikkhu should endeavour to live on this kind of food obtained from the donor throughout his life. The significant point is that he should go round for alms and lead a holy life befitting a Bhikkhu without giving trouble to others, nay, without causing any other person to become burdensome for him.

It would be a very heavy responsibility on the part of a benefactor if he or she were to cook meals and serve the Bhikkhu everyday. Nobody will have any trouble if the Bhikkhu can obtain food by going round for alms to the houses from where he can receive food and other eatables as may be willingly and generously offered by the benefactors. It is for the Bhikkhus to be contented with whatever is available. It will be *dukkata*, a breach of *sekhiya* conduct, of Bhikkhu if he asks for food from a person who is not a relative, without being invited, unless he is sick (*a Gilana*). It will amount to committing an offence of *pacittiya* if, for instance, a Bhikkhu receives cash for food or asks for delicious buttered rice, etc.

Even at the time of serving the meals, if a Bhikkhu is not invited, he should not ask for it. Nowadays, one can come across some Bhikkhus near a famous shrine, or a crowded place like a wharf or a jetty, asking for cash to be donated to them. These are a few instances where breach of conduct of Bhikkhu is involved. Some might offer cash. Every time a Bhikkhu handles the cash that is offered it will amount to committing *Nisaggiya Pacittiya* offence of Bhikkhu. Such a faulty conduct is harmful to the Sasana.

This misconduct, according to the Rules of Vinaya, and its degrading effect on the prestige of the noble Sasana are due to discontentment. It will be of advantage to a Bhikkhu if there is contentment. He will be free from fault and this will be in the interests of the Sasana. All good and noble Bhikkhus should be contented with whatever is available for, their daily consumption of food.

As regards robes, Buddha had instructed to be- content with *pamsukula* robes, i.e. robes made of rags taken from a refuse heap. Permission has been granted to wear. the robes

donated by the benefactors of their own accord and out of generosity. As such, a Bhikkhu should remain in contentment with any kind of robes which he may receive in accordance with the Rules of Discipline. If he seeks for any other kind of robes contrary to the Bhikkhu's conduct, he is deemed to have committed an offence.

In respect of lodging and bed, Buddha has instructed the Bhikkhus to stay at the foot or under the shade of a tree, or reside in a monastery or a building offered as a gift. To remain in contentment is essential. If a Bhikkhu accepts cash and requests that a building be constructed with that money, or if he receives the gift of money in person and keeps it in his possession, or if he personally spends this money for the purpose of building a monastery, he is guilty of the Bhikkhu's offence. It is also against the Rule of Discipline for Bhikkhus to dwell in such a building either by him or any other Bhikkhu.

Next, in so far as medicines or drugs are concerned, Buddha had laid down instructions for Bhikkhus to take urine of cattle as medicine, called *putimutta*. It is learnt that some people who suffer from neurotic pain have been cured by taking orally the cattle urine. Medicine which has been discarded as rotten and putrid is called *putimutta* in a way. This definition calls for consideration whether it is the real intention of the Buddha because according to the present day pharmaceutical plants or pharmacologists they have instructed to avoid taking medicines or drugs the potency of which has expired. If the stinking and putrid drugs are taken, it may not have the desired effect for not being efficacious to remedy the disease. Also, it may be difficult to search for a medicine that has been discarded. Hence, there is food for thought as to whether, according to the interpretation of the grammatical term "*putimutta*", it will fall in line with what is really intended to mean by the Buddha Himself.

In regard to medicine, a sick Bhikkhu can ask for it from any person. However, it will be a Nissaggiya offence for a Bhikkhu if he asks for a gift of money from others, buys medicine and makes use of it. Contentment is also necessary relating to the medicine that is available. If he remains in contentment with what is available, it is known as "*yathalabhasantosa*".

Then, because of sickness, or, general debility, when a Bhikkhu makes use of suitable food, robes, monastery, bed and medicines which he received in exchange for his own properties which are unsuitable, it is called "*yathabala santosa*". What is meant by it is: to be contented with what is available to him in his own capacity or within his own ability.

And then, consuming food or wearing robes, etc., which are pure in quality and which have been received in exchange for his properties that are considered too good and improper for him to make use of them is called "*yathasaruppasantosa*". It means, "to be contented or satisfied with properties appropriate or suitable for the purpose". In brief, one should have entire satisfaction with the said three kinds of contentment, and more broadly speaking, with the twelve kinds of contentment. Otherwise, one can be guilty as stated. In this mundane world, to have satisfaction with one's own lot is important. If no contentment can be found, one can become miserable. Being eagerly desirous of something which is not within his own reach, if one does anything that ought not to be done, he is likely to commit a criminal offence. If he yearns for a thing which is not obtainable, extreme misery will befall him.

If the head of a household is not satisfied with the meals cooked and served at his own home, he can be at loggerheads with the housewife, or that he may pick up a quarrel on that score which will thereby cause misery to him. In the present day world, there are a number of multi-millionaires who have become miserable for not being contented with what they own and possess. However, a person who is living from hand to mouth, if

satisfied with his lot, can find happiness. That is the reason why Buddha has preached as: "*Santutthi*" - Contentment is, "*Paramam dhanam*" - the best and the noblest gift (or property). This noble dictum is very natural. Hence, a person who is practising meditation should have contentment in everything.

8. Should be frugal

The next word is: "*subhara ca* - easily supported by both male and female benefactors, *assa* - as it should be. Despite the fact that meals, robes, etc., offered as gifts by the benefactors may not be good enough to meet one's taste or liking, these should be accepted and made use of without grumble and uttering' with grunt. It is not for a Bhikkhu to pick and choose any kind of gift offered in donation. Otherwise, it will be a burden to the benefactors to support easily. It was stated that at one time during the British regime in Moulmein district, there was a Bhikkhu who refused to take meals without a dish of chicken curry. Hence, his benefactors had to be always worrying about a dish of chicken curry to be provided. And then while travelling, if no chicken dish was available due to circumstances the said Bhikkhu totally abstained from taking meals for the whole day. It is not understood why he had behaved in that odd manner. Whether because he had made a vow emulating the example of a Samanera by the name of *Pandita* who was desirous of taking his meals only when a dish of "Ngagyin" fish was included in the menu, as mentioned in the Dhammapada Vutthu, no one can say for certain. Such an attitude would amount to *dubbhara* instead of '*Subaru*' (frugality). It is for Bhikkhus at this Yeiktha to be satisfied with frugal meals as may be offered by the benefactors.

Some of the narrow-minded Bhikkhus might become surly and make a wry face despite the fact that the offerings. made by the benefactors are of good quality unless these are to their liking. Sometimes, in the presence of the donors, he might give vent to his anger and greed, blaming the donors churlishly and then parted with the offerings by giving them away to others. Such a Bhikkhu is one hard to be pleased and easily supported by the benefactors. A Bhikkhu who is frugal accepts what is offered whether good or bad, with satisfaction and delight which will be reflected on his face. A Bhikkhu who is avaricious and not frugal will find it difficult to develop a feeling of 'metta or loving-kindness. It will also be difficult for him to achieve realisation of knowledge in the practice of other kinds of meditation. That is why Buddha has given instructions to become a frugal person to make it easier for the development and attainment of genuine *bhavana*, such as, *metta bhavana*, etc.

9. Should be carefree

The next expression is "*appakicco ca*" - having few duties, or free from care, *assa* - as it should be. The best thing for one who is earnestly developing any kind of meditation, is to be abstemious, or, rather, to abstain oneself from performing other duties, OR, to keep himself free from other duties except in matters which are unavoidably essential to be attended to. it has therefore been instructed to have few duties (*appakicco*).

10. To be temperate in the way of living

The other word is: "*sallahukavutti*" - light or unwise, *assa* - as one should be. In this regard, to have light weight and to be nimble means: "to be frugal or contented with just the eight requisites of a Bhikkhu, such as robes, bowl, etc. Possessing a lot of personal belonging will make one become burdensome and preoccupied with the work of managing these properties. If a number of things are to be carried when proceeding to a certain

place, it would cause a lot of trouble and inconvenience. The eight requisites of a Buddhist Bhikkhu. (*parikkhara*) are, the three robes, the bowl, the girdle, a needle, a razor, and a water-strainer. These are not clumsy and many to be kept and cared for at any place of residence, and can also be taken along personally without being burdensome. Hence, to live with these essential requisites is not an encumbrance. These eight requisites may be said to be unwieldy or light.

Among those eight requisites of a Buddhist Bhikhu, during these days the needle is not really essential for the Bhikkhus living in Burma. The robes are readily available and there is no need to be sewn -or stitched by hand personally, and no robes worn by the present day Bhikkhus are in rags. As these are in good condition, it will never come into one's head to take along a needle when travelling to any other. place away from the residence. When I proceeded to Indonesia to promote the Sasana in the year 1321 B.E., I entirely forgot to take along with me - the needle and thread. All three robes which I took with me were all brand-new.

However, at one time, it was found that in one of the robes, a line of stitches, which was originally defective, had gone loose. Then, I had to think of the way how it could be mended. On consultation, being made with one Ashin Ariyavamsa, a Ceylonese Bhikkhu, who was with us, he said he had with him a needle and thread and that he would do the stitching. I had to tell him that it would not be troublesome for me to stitch it up and requested him to lend me his needle and thread for the purpose. In view of this incident, it has occurred to me that it would be advisable to take along a needle and thread when travelling on a long distant journey. Carrying a needle and thread is not at all burdensome. It is quite easy and light.

11. Should cultivate Indriya (calmness)

The next expression is "*santindriyo ca*" - have the moral quality of calmness and self-restraint, *assa* - as one should be. In Pali it is "*Indriya*". In English, it means: "the six doors of senses, viz: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch and mind." One can see only if there is an eye. When an object is seen, it can be perceived as much as the eye with its strength of vision can see. Therefore, the eye is governable insofar as the faculty of seeing is concerned. Because it is so governable, the eye is called "*Cakkhundriyam*" The ear, etc., in respect of its faculty of hearing, is also governable.

That is why the ear, etc., is called "*Satindriyam*" All these *Indriyas* should be kept under restraint, with a tranquil mind. If good or pleasant sights and sounds are seen, or heard as the case may be, a person who is attracted to these sensational objects will find them pleasurable and then he will become fidgety. He becomes' restless, smiling and laughing when sensations arise from good smell, fine taste, and pleasurable touch. In the same way, when he sees an ugly sight, hears unpleasant sound, smell bad odour, etc., he becomes perturbed and restless if he is unable to tolerate such bad sensations. He may even murmur and grumble.

Hence, it is necessary to exercise restraint and remain calm and unperturbed in connection with both good and bad sensations. He should keep his mind at peace and control himself by reflection and also by contemplating and noting. The best way is to keep control of one's own mind by contemplating and noting at the moment of seeing, hearing, and so on. It will not be easy to do so for those who have no experience in contemplating mindfulness. Therefore, it will be sufficient enough for him to remain indifferent whether the sensations are good or bad. If however, painful sensations become extreme, one should try his utmost to control them through reflection.

12. Reflective knowledge must be mature

The next word is: "*Nipako ca*" - prudent and wise, *assa* - as it should be. In respect of reflective knowledge, one must be mature and fully developed. mentally. Young children are lacking in maturity. The more a person advances in age, the more he becomes mature. This is how one's imaginative power or knowledge becomes fully developed and strengthened. In Visuddhimagga, the knowledge of *pariharika* has been elucidated by an expression - "*Nipako*". This knowledge of *pirihirika* is nothing but the reflective knowledge or sound imagination which is capable of carrying out any task to completion. This is the knowledge which reflect with full consciousness whether what one is doing is advantageous or not (*sappayasampajanam*). This knowledge is extremely useful in matters relating to both lokiya (temporal) and lokuttara (spiritual).

This is the kind of knowledge which should be accomplished. In the Commentary which serves as an introduction to this Metta Sutta, this knowledge has been markedly shown as: (1) the knowledge that protects the preservation of sila, (2) the knowledge which is capable of managing or which takes care of the robes, (3) the knowledge which fully understands the seven kinds of sappaya, i.e. known as to what is suitable or profitable or advantageous. These are the reflective knowledge called *pariharika*. Among these knowledges, the one which knows how to manage things relating to robes, etc., does not seem to be urgently required in the matter of developing metta *bhavana*. However, an insertion of this particular knowledge has been probably made as it might become essential when practising meditation (*bhavana*) for a considerable length of time.

Seven Sappalyas or desirable things

These are (1) suitable accommodation which is profit able to one who is devoting to meditation, (2) suitable village where offerings of food or alms can be obtained, (3) suitable or appropriate speech, (4) suitable teacher and companion - Bhikkhus, (5) suitable food, (6) suitable or congenial weather, (7) suitable posture or deportment. It is for a Bhikkhu to be accomplished with the knowledge that can properly reflect and decide as to which monastery is suitable for him to reside, etc., etc.

Satthakasampajanam

It is necessary to consider whether it will be proper to reside in a wooden monastery, or a monastery made of bamboo, or masonry, and whether the place is peaceful, tranquil and congenial. In connection with the village where alms can be obtained, it is to be considered whether offerings of food will be received and whether there can be molestation particularly because uncommon or different kinds of sensations may arise. It is to consider as to what kind of talk that is uttered or heard, can be harmful to the practice of meditation. If there is nothing in particular, the best thing would be to abstain from talking anything not relevant to Dhamma.

As regards individuals, it is to reflect whether there is any progress or lack of progress relating to Dhamma by relying upon such and such a spiritual teacher or other persons with whom he has to deal. With reference to food, it is to consider what kind of food will be agreeable and beneficial for him to depend upon from the point of view of health and of the Dhamma. One should also reflect as to what kind of posture will be best suited to make progressive strides in the exercise of his meditation. This is the way how mature reflective knowledge should take place or has taken place, whether it will be profitable or not, in connection with the selection of suitable monastery. The Motto is :

"Reflection made as to whether it is profitable and agreeable or not, is *satthaka*.

Sappayasampajanam

Although advantages may be derived, it needs consideration whether it would be proper (i.e. feasible) or not. If it is a room in a monastery, it will not be proper for a junior Bhikkhu to occupy the place if it, is meant for the senior or an elderly Bhikkhu, and vice versa. In regard to speech, it would be improper to preach these who are busy even if the preaching on Dhamma will be of benefit to them. One should weigh and consider if it is proper or not to preach *asubha* Dhamma on an auspicious occasion. This is "*sappayasampajanam*". The Motto is composed in the following _ expression: -

"Reflection whether it is proper or not is *sappaya*".

13. Should be free from rudeness

The next expression is: "*appagabbho ca*" - free from impudence, *assa* - as it should be. To be free from impudence conveys the meaning of being impolite or rude. There are three kinds of incivility, viz: (1) rudeness of physical behaviour, (2) rudeness of verbal behaviour, and (3) rudeness of mental behaviour.

(1) Rudeness of physical behaviours manifests itself. under eight situations or conditions. Of these eight, what is generally found at the present time, needs elaboration. Whether in the midst of an audience of sanghas, or amidst the public, to take a sitting posture with knees up, or with the thighs widely extended, is a clear evidence of rude bodily behaviour, or rather, unrefined manners. Sometimes, posture may be taken with either one knee up, or both the knees up with the hands folded across the knees. Such sitting postures also indicate rudeness of physical behaviour.

(2) If sitting or standing by touching the body of Maha Theras, or, sitting or standing in front of them, or on an elevated place, or sitting by pulling over the long skirt - "longyi" on the body from head to toe, or, talking to others in a standing posture, or talking or chattering with gesticulation, i.e. expressive motion of the limbs, are clear instances of rudeness of bodily behaviour. If one squeezes himself in a congested place where young Bikkhus are sitting, or if one occupies the seats meant for the Maha Theras, or if one overtakes the Maha Thera while walking, etc., is obviously rude and uncultured. One should avoid, all such impolite physical behaviours and mannerisms.

At the present day, it is learnt that some elderly Bhikkhus under the guise of noble personages even make a pretentious display of supernatural powers by caressing or making a fondling touch on the head of the damsels with their hands as if they are blessing them. Such indecent behaviours are totally prohibited under the Rules of Vinaya. It has been strictly laid down, under the said Rules that the Bhikkhus should not - even give a fondling touch to their own daughters and mothers. A condition has been prescribed Prohibiting Bhikkhus from handling even a doll representing a female figure with pleasurable sensation. Hence, a fondling touch made as stated in the foregoing, may be said to be a rude bodily demeanour.

Another thing is that while sanghas are taking meals, or when taking meals together with others, emitting nasal secretion, or ejecting phlegm by coughing, or spitting are regarded as unrefined manners inasmuch as these are despicable. Such disgusting behaviours should also be avoided.

(2) Relating to rudeness of verbal behaviour, there are four conditions. In the midst of an assembly of Sanghas or of people, or in the presence of Maha Theras, if there is anything to be said, one should speak only after permission has been sought from Maha Theras. Any utterance made without permission, is rudeness of verbal behaviour. If an explanation is given relating to a problematic issue without seeking permission, it would also amount to verbal misbehaviour. It is discourteous, or rather, rudeness of verbal behaviour if resorted to making utterances in the midst of an audience of Sanghas, or in the presence of Maha Theras, and also asking the benefactors as to whether there is something to eat, or whether there is any meal or food, etc., ready to be offered to him while visiting the homes of the benefactors. Bhikkhus should refrain themselves from behaving in the like manner, which, in fact, is in contravention of the Rules of Conduct for Bhikkhus.

(3) Rudeness of mental behaviour means: to be disrespectful by thoughts to those who deserve respect. To think of a person superior in caste or racial status as being his equal, or imagine a noble personage endowed with *sila, samadhi and panna*, as being his equal, or if a person who is lacking in knowledge or rather, unlearned in scriptures imagines an intellectual person as his equal, or if a person imagines the other as being unintellectual, nay, unknowledgeable as compared to him, or if a person who does not meditate imagines a well-accomplished meditator as his equal, are instances of rudeness of mental behaviour. Therefore, one should totally be free from all physical, verbal and mental misbehaviours.

14. To be freed of attachment to both male and female benefactors

The next word is "*Kulesu*" - among relatives - (The meaning of '*kula*' is given as 'relative' as translated ordinarily in Burmese). However, the word 'relative' (*kula*), in fact, does not convey the sense of 'kinsman' (relative) or a race. What it really means is a 'household' or a family. Hence, in this regard, it seems as if the word "*kulesu*" is to be interpreted as members of a household family. Nevertheless, this interpretation itself does not really make sense if considered in relation to Bhikkhus. As such, it would be more clear and convincing to translate the word "*kulesu*" as: male and female benefactors in a household family. *Kulesu* - as regards male and female benefactors belonging to a family, *ananughiddho ca* - desirable attachment is also got rid of, *assa* - as it should be.

Actually it means that there should be no attachment to male and female benefactors. When a Bhikkhu is going round for alms to receive offerings of food or other things from his male and female benefactors, he should make an approach assuming himself in the role of a noble person worthy of offerings, called "*dakkineyya*". The benefactors should also donate bearing in mind that the receiver is a noble personage worthy of offerings in order to gain as well as to promote better advantages. Familiarity should be avoided by the Bhikkhu regarding a benefactor as his own kin and kin, or as a close acquaintance. If close intimacy is created by a Bhikkhu, it amounts to taking possession of, or rather, accepting or seizing the offerings with desirable attachment like an eclipse of a planet (*gaha*).

It would be something like attachment to himself. In that case, one is likely to become either rejoiced or sorry. This means, if the benefactors become prosperous and wealthy, the Bhikkhu will also feel happy. Similarly, if the benefactors meet with trouble or any kind of disaster, the Bhikkhu will also become sorry or dejected. This is not the way a noble Bhikkhu should feel or behave. Of course, the benefactors may feel glad if their teacher, the Bhikkhu, shares their feeling of joy and sorrow. However, this is not what the Lord Buddha wishes to happen. Buddha's wish is to see the Bhikkhus fully accomplished

with *sila*, etc., and to preach the Dhamma to his benefactors to gain the noble virtue of *kusala*.

Hence, it is for the benefactors to consider their spiritual teacher and guide as a plot of land which is to be cultivated for the germination of the seeds of *kusala* and to make offerings to him and revere him. For the purpose of cultivating a land, it is really important that this plot of land should be fertile. In the same way, it is essential for a Bhikkhu who is receiving the offerings to have good fertilisers, such as *Sila*, etc. No financial benefit can be derived by him in the shape of a considerable sum of money by being sorry or dejected or in other words, it does not pay him to lament. If he renders assistance, the most he may probably benefit is by way of receiving gifts to the value of only a hundred or a thousand kyats.

A Bhikkhu who is a noble *Dakkhineyya* with purity of *Sila* for not having attachment to his benefactors, should not expect any thing. On the part of the benefactors for having generously donated to such a noble Bhikkhu accomplished with the admirable attributes of a holy personage, he is sure to derive *kusala* - merits - worth millions if considered in terms of money. A person by the name of Eindaka by virtue of *kusala* offered a spoonful of food to the Venerable Ashin Anuruddha was reborn as a very powerful *Deva* in the heavenly abode of *Tavatimsa*. Considering this fact, it is quite obvious that it is really noble and magnanimous to donate with a virtuous bent of mind on the golden attributes of *Sila*, etc., of the recipient Bhikkhu.

On the contrary, if the benefactors revere and make offerings of gifts to a Bhikkhu treating him as a close associate expecting temporal advantages, such as, wealth and prosperity, it would amount to grasping or seizing pleasure (*gaha*). It is something like taking hold of or, influencing the Bhikkhu as a personal secretary. The Commentary has said that if there is dishonest relationship between both the Bhikkhu and the benefactors, it would tantamount to *gahagaha*. Both the teacher and the benefactor are then considered to be making a seizure, i.e. the one seizes the other, while the other also seizes in retaliation.

If the benefactors are dishonest despite the fact that a Bhikkhu is dealing with the benefactors in the capacity of a *Dakkineyya*, it would amount to *muttagaha*. This means that the benefactors make a seizure but the Bhikkhu has escaped on his part. The effect would be quite the reverse if the Bhikkhu were dishonest. This sort of thing is fairly rampant. If both parties are dealing with one another honestly, it is "*Mutta-mutta*". Then, both are said to have escaped, or rather, been released from eclipse. Such kind of dealing or relationship is indeed very essential. Explanation given relating to the second verse (*gatha*) appears sufficiently comprehensive. We shall go on teaching the third *gatha* (stanza):

3. Na ca khuddamacare kinci,
yena vinnu pare upavadeyyum.
Sukhino va Khemino hontu,
Sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta.

15. The last fundamental rule of conduct

Ca - moreover, *yena* - for that kind of vice, *vinnu pare* other intellectuals, i.e. other men of wisdom, *upavadeyyum* - will blame by pointing out the fault. *Khuddam* - such an insignificant and vile, *tam* - baleful vice, *kinci* - even anything that is a trifle, *na acare* - should not be done or practised. This is the last rule of conduct which ought to have been accomplished long before, out of the fundamental principles or rules of conduct in the practice of *Metta bhavana*. To make it convincingly clear, these 15 principles will be enumerated.

(1) *Sakko* - should be able or competent to practise, (2) *Uju* - must be straightforward, (3) *Suhuju* - must be extremely honest, (4) *Suvaco* - should be meek and easy of compliance, (5) *Mudu* - should be gentle, mild and supple, (6) *Anatimani* - should not slight others with self-pride thinking very highly of oneself, (7) *Santussako* - should be easily contented, (8) *Subharo* - must be a person who can be easily supported by male and female benefactors, (9) *Appakicco* - should have few duties and free from care, (10) *Sallahukavutti* - should not be clumsy or burdensome keeping only a few belongings in his possession, (11) *Santindriyo* - should have the moral qualities of serenity without being affected by the sensations arising out of the perception through the eye, etc., (12) *Nipako* - should have the mature reflective knowledge, (13) *Appagabbho* - should be polite and modest and free from impudence, (14) *Ananugiddho* - should be free from passionate attachment to male and female benefactors, (15) In regard to the principles of personal moral conduct, one should avoid any kind of vice, no matter how trivial it may be, which men of wisdom would find it blameworthy. Nothing should be done, spoken or imagined - even a very trifle thing - with which other wise men would find it faulty and reprobate. However, it would, of course, be difficult to completely control the imaginative mind. Therefore, in this regard, it should be rejected as far as possible.

After these fifteen principles of moral conduct which should have been accomplished from the very outset, the method of ordinarily developing *metta* has been initially shown as follows:

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