Pahankanuwa Sermon #14

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

Author: Ven. Katukurunde Nanananda Thero

(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-Enlightened One)

Pali Stanza:

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma, verinesu averino;

Verinesu manussesu, viharāma averino.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma, āturesu anāturā;

Āturesu manussesu, viharāma anāturā.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma, ussukesu anussukā;

Ussukesu manussesu, viharāma anussukā.

From:

Verses 197-199 from the Sukhavagga (Chapter on Happiness) of the Dhammapada

Dear Listeners,

The desire for happiness is a common phenomenon shared by all living beings in the entire human world. The whole world is engaged in a journey of seeking happiness. However, this journey in search of happiness often ends in suffering (*dukkha*). The reason for this is that the ordinary worldling, whose eyes are covered by ignorance and bound by craving (*taṇhā*), seeks happiness through the wrong path. They have fallen into this state because they do not correctly know either true happiness or the path to it. Aspiring to fulfill the perfections (*pāramīs*) for four incalculable aeons and a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, our Teacher of the Three Worlds, the Buddha, attained Supreme Enlightenment on a Vesak full-moon day like today, in order to introduce the true happiness and the path to true happiness to the beings of the world who are running around in search of it. The Buddha, utilizing His great

wisdom and great compassion, intervened on many occasions and delivered Dhamma discourses to steer the beings of the world away from seeking happiness through the wrong path and to introduce them to true happiness. Now, these three verses we have taken as our theme, along with their related story, demonstrate to us how the Buddha, relying on His quality of supreme guide of persons to be tamed (*anuttaro purisadamma sārathī*), employing skillful means out of great compassion, and clarifying the true nature of the Dhamma with great wisdom, brought peace and solace to the world.

A river named Rohini flows between the city of Kapilavastu, belonging to the Sakya clan, and the city of Koliya, belonging to the Koliya clan. Having built a dam across this river and utilizing its water, the farmers of both these cities—of both these kingdoms—cultivate their fields. During a certain drought, both groups realized that the water was depleting, saying, "Both of our groups cannot carry out this cultivation; this water is sufficient only for one group." Then, these two factions gathered and began to dispute and argue to claim the water for themselves. Having fallen into bickering, quarreling, and trading insults about their lineages, this commotion eventually reached the ears of the royal clans and the royal palaces of both factions. Ultimately, circumstances developed to the point of a major war. The kings of both sides, chanting battle slogans, set out for war. Precisely at dawn on that day, when the Buddha was surveying the world with His great compassion, He saw that if He did not visit the place, his own two relative royal clans would destroy each other, resulting in a great bloodbath. Seeing this, the Buddha traveled alone through the air and sat cross-legged in mid-air over the middle of the Rohini River.

As soon as the Buddha arrived there and they saw Him, the kings of both the Sakya and Koliya clans cast down their weapons and paid homage to Him. The Buddha asked, "Great kings, what is the cause of this dispute?" Those kings were unable to declare in one voice what the primary cause of this war was. Why? Because after they had insulted each other's lineages, it was actually the hatred (*dosa*) arising from those insults that had dragged them into war in this manner. Even the kings themselves did not know the underlying cause. Then they stated to the Buddha: "We do not know. Perhaps the commander-in-chief knows." When the commander-in-chief was summoned and questioned, he too said he did not know. He said, "Perhaps the viceroy (*yuvarāja*) knows." Questioning in this manner, it was finally revealed that the dispute initiated by the farmers was the cause that had set the stage for this war. Then the Buddha asked both factions, "Great kings, how much is this water worth?" "Water, Venerable Sir, is worth very little. Water is a thing of negligible value." "How much are these warrior-kings (*kṣatriya*) worth?" "That, indeed, is of priceless, inestimable value." "Then, great kings, why do you destroy precious human lives for the sake of something so worthless?" When the Buddha questioned thus, the kings had no answer to give. Thereafter, the Buddha preached the Dhamma through the verses we have themed. He uttered those verses declaring, "You are all keeping your minds in an extremely restless state through hatred, defilements, and the

pursuit of fivefold sensual pleasures; but among such a world, I live experiencing true happiness in this manner."

"Ah, happily do we live, free from hatred among the hateful;

Among hateful men, we dwell free from hatred."

"Ah, happily do we live, free from hatred among the hateful"—among hateful human beings, among the hateful living beings of the world, we—"we" refers to the Buddha and those noble ones who have calmed their defilements—dwell free from hatred. "Ah, happily do we live" means very happily; *sukhaṃ* means happiness, and *susukhaṃ* means extreme happiness. Experiencing happiness of the very highest level, we dwell free from hatred among a hateful world. "Among hateful men, we dwell free from hatred." We dwell free from hatred among hateful beings. Similarly, "Ah, happily do we live, free from affliction among the afflicted"—among beings afflicted and diseased with defilements, we live very happily, free from affliction—without that affliction of defilements. "Among afflicted men, we dwell free from affliction"—among such beings afflicted by defilements, we dwell free from affliction. In the same way, "Ah, happily do we live, free from anxiety among the anxious"—among restless beings who are anxious and straining themselves in the pursuit of the fivefold sensual pleasures, we live happily, free from such searching. In that manner, the Buddha uttered these three verses based on the happiness of Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-sukha*) He had attained. Upon hearing this, many attained the fruit of Stream-entry (*sotāpatti-phala*). Furthermore, the war ended right there.

Now, let us direct our thoughts toward this peaceful message of solace given by the Buddha. Particularly, with reference to this incident, we can understand the manner in which anger, rage, and hatred arise in the world. Whatever wars occur in the world, the beginning of every single one is the human mind. The hatred that arises as a seed in a human mind gradually matures. Once this becomes resentment, and ultimately deep-seated hatred, that defilement burns oneself while burning others, directing beings toward destruction for a long time. Furthermore, you have heard the past stories regarding the elder Devadatta. How many aeons (*kalpas*) into the future did that hatred Devadatta conceived against the Bodhisatta in the past extend? It is the impermanent (*anicca*) nature of such things in the world that we must contemplate first of all. Especially, this era is one in which the fire of hatred, the fire of anger, is spreading everywhere, both in this country and in the entire world. In such a context, what the worldling considers as happiness is fighting and gaining victory. There is a concept called "drinking the cup of victory"; many people, without recognizing the restlessness within themselves, expect peace and solace by subduing or putting to death their opponent and then celebrating victory. But the Buddha has declared:

"Victory breeds hatred; the defeated lies down in suffering (*dukkha*).

The peaceful one lies down happily, abandoning both victory and defeat."

If someone achieves victory, what arises from it is further hatred. The peaceful person, having abandoned both victory and defeat, dwells happily. Moreover, it is the word of the Buddha that hatred is never appeased by hatred. Thus, we understand how much destruction this thought of hatred causes throughout the world. If this is not properly treated at its very inception, it is just like a pathogen. Now, in a place where pathogens spread, some form of vaccination or immunization is required. Where there is no immunization, pathogens multiply dangerously and make a person sick. It is the same with this hatred. In some people, when proper practices like loving-kindness meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*) are absent, these tendencies become character traits. There is a constant state of irritability, hatred, and overflowing anger. Such a person is described in the Dhamma as *arukūpamo puggala*, "a person comparable to an open sore." *Aruka* means a wound or sore. When a person with an open sore goes into a crowd, whenever the crowd jostles even slightly here and there, this person gets angry because his wound gets irritated. In that way, a person with intense hatred is compared to a wounded patient. Due to that hatred, a nature of constant collision arises. He collides everywhere—with people, and often with things. With every such collision, what is the transformation that occurs within this person's mind? Not only does that dangerous defilement of hatred manifest at that particular moment, but it also leads him to states like demons, hungry ghosts (*petas*), or hell (*niraya*) according to karma over a long period in *saṃsāra*, bringing him long-lasting suffering (*dukkha*). Moreover, once that thought grows, it expresses itself through the tongue as harsh speech. It does not end there. After bickering and quarreling, it manifests in action, leading one to dangerous unwholesome deeds such as the destruction of life. In this way, one must contemplate the disadvantageous side (*ādīnava*) of hatred beforehand.

Next, the Buddha has declared five methods to appease deep-seated hatred—which is called *āghāta*, harboring resentment or a grudge. First—there is no need to explain this anew—is loving-kindness (*mettā*) itself; practicing loving-kindness meditation. Second is compassion (*karuṇā*). In certain situations, compassion also helps to understand the weaknesses of one's opponent. Considering it as a saṃsāric weakness, as an illness, one should look at the person who has harbored resentment or hatred as a sick person, as a wounded patient. Then, by making compassion the path and the medium, one can appease the deep-seated hatred or intense resentment that has arisen within oneself. In other instances, equanimity (*upekkhā*) is used. Equanimity means impartial looking. Contemplating: "This person's body and my body are both made of these great elements—earth, water, fire, and wind (*pathavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo*). Toward which part of this person am I directing hatred?" In this way, one endeavors to arouse equanimity. The Buddha has declared that equanimity is also something that aids in appeasing hatred. Also, there is "forgetting and non-attention" (*asati amanasikāra*—not remembering, not paying attention). Hatred grows because it is repeatedly brought to mind. To remove this tendency of its arising, one must try not to pay attention to it. One must direct the mind to ignore it. It is because of the intention of revenge for the wrong done to oneself that it keeps

arising repeatedly. Instead, one must try to forget it. Also, another method is shown: contemplating in accordance with the Dhamma that all beings are owners of their karma (*kamma-dāyāda*). That is, thinking of the natural law (*dharmatā*) that according to karma, whoever does wrong will experience its fruits and results. Now, for many people, hatred arises—what they call "righteous anger"—in order to "teach others a lesson." Thinking in that way: "I must teach them a lesson." But one does not see the hatred within oneself. It remains hidden as a deceptive state (*vañcaka dhamma*). Therefore, one must think: "This is the natural law of the world. If someone commits a wrong, they will have to suffer the consequences according to karma. We should not become the instruments for that. If we become the instruments to punish them, we too will have to experience the retributive results." In this manner, the Buddha has shown five ways to appease deep-seated hatred.

This is something one can experience and utilize for oneself in daily life. Furthermore, a monk highly renowned in this dispensation for virtues such as loving-kindness and compassion is the Chief Disciple, the Great Sariputta. On one occasion, he expounded five ways to the community of monks to appease this deep-seated hatred called *āghāta*. He presents incredibly wondrous similes. He demonstrates: suppose someone has conceived hatred or resentment toward another person. That person's physical conduct is impure—that is, his bodily behavior is very bad—but his verbal conduct is very pleasant and good. Or, there is no fault in his verbal behavior. Venerable Sariputta demonstrates with a simile how one should act when hatred arises toward such a person. Just as a monk who uses rag-robes (*paṃsukūla-cīvara*), while walking along a path or street, upon finding a piece of cloth, steps on one end with his left foot, tears off the clean portion with his right hand, takes it and goes his way; likewise, at that moment, one should not contemplate that person's bad physical conduct. Without thinking about his physical behavior, one contemplates only the good side. Bringing to the fore the fact that his verbal behavior is good, one appeases one's own hatred. This is the simile he gives. This is not to be taken as something unique only to those monks, but each individual must understand it through the help of this simile. This refers to a person who has both a good side and a bad side. Or let us say, the bad side is the physical conduct, and the good side is the verbal conduct. If we want to cultivate our hatred and resentment, we are inclined to think only of the bad side. Sometimes, the virtue of a person, which is as vast as a mountain, can be erased by a fault as small as a shred. One enjoys a certain misplaced pleasure, a misplaced delight, through that thought of hatred. But one does not benefit; one burns. That happens because of contemplating what should not be contemplated. Therefore, Venerable Sariputta declares, taking that simile to heart—monks who wear rag-robes do not just abandon a dirty piece of cloth when they find it. They take only the usable portion of it. In the same way, recollecting the good side of that person, one inclines one's mind toward loving-kindness. One inclines it toward compassion. Thus, one appeases that deep-seated hatred which yields dangerous results.

Similarly, in the next simile, there is a person whose physical conduct is pure, but verbal conduct is impure. That is, the actions done by body are good, but the things done by speech are bad. What is the simile Venerable Sariputta gives to appease the deep-seated hatred that arises toward such a person? Suppose someone, in a time of great drought, during the hot season, comes searching for water with a severe thirst. There is a pond, but its water is covered with algae. Since he needs to drink water, he somehow pushes aside the algae with both hands, drinks as much water as he needs, and goes his way. In that simile, the algae represents the shortcomings in that person's speech. What is shown is that without contemplating those, one should take only the good part. In that manner, according to the diversity of each individual, Venerable Sariputta has shown a way to discipline one's feelings, a method of proper reflection.

Next, thirdly, it is shown: indeed, there can be a person whose physical conduct is very bad, and verbal conduct is also very bad, but occasionally, from time to time, a pure and clear state of mind arises, though very rarely. The simile Venerable Sariputta gives to appease hatred toward such a person is truly wonderful. Suppose in a time of drought, a person is searching for water, extremely thirsty. On his way, there is no water anywhere else. There is only a little water in a puddle formed by a cow's footprint. Seeing this, this person does not think, "Now I must bring a bucket and drink this water" or "I must put both hands in and drink it." Why? Because then the water will get muddied. That is something that cannot be done. Therefore, depending on the situation, what does that person do? He falls on all fours like a cow and laps up the water with his tongue. Why? Because of his thirst in the drought. What does Venerable Sariputta show through this simile? No matter how bad a side that person has—there is nothing of worth in his physical conduct, nothing of worth in his verbal conduct—yet occasionally, just like a brief flash of lightning in a pitch-black night, a tiny opening appears in his mind. That is enough for one to cultivate loving-kindness and arouse compassion. That is the lesson Venerable Sariputta teaches. Forgetting the unsuitable side and contemplating, "Oh, although he is so bad, is there not at least this little bit of good to be taken from this person?" one appeases one's hatred. All this is done for one's own sake. If that fire of hatred grows in one's mind, one will have to suffer grave consequences in *saṃsāra* as well. Not only that, but even in this life, because it grows and ultimately leads to brawls, murders, and so on. That is the third simile.

Next, Venerable Sariputta demonstrates: indeed, there can be a person whose physical conduct is very bad—nothing of worth. Verbal conduct—also nothing of worth. Furthermore, it is said that not even occasionally, like a flash of lightning, does any goodness arise in his mind, nor does any pleasant state arise. To put it briefly, he is a person of whom there is "absolutely nothing of worth." Yet, the attitude one must adopt even toward such a person is shown next. Suppose someone sees an extremely poor, sick, and helpless person traveling on a desert road. He has no food to carry, no water to drink, no guide to show the way, no food, and no medicine. In that manner, in an extremely miserable and helpless state, he travels

along the path. How does a wise person who sees this contemplate? "Oh, if only someone would help this helpless person and show him the way! If only someone would give him some food, some medicine, so that he would not perish but somehow survive!" In this way, a thought of compassion is aroused. Generally, such thoughts arise in those who feel compassion when seeing such a person. Through this simile, we are to think that even if there is absolutely nothing of worth to be taken from the person who has done wrong to us, we must still show compassion to that person. What we show through all these similes is the application of one's mind to the simile, and thereby taking what is useful for one's own life. This concerns the fourth person.

Next, fifthly, it is shown: now, sometimes such things also happen in society. A person’s physical conduct is very good, and verbal conduct is very good. There seems to be absolutely no fault, yet for some reason, hatred arises, perhaps due to a personal matter. When such hatred arises, it is very easy to appease it. For this too, Venerable Sariputta gives a simile. Suppose in a drought, a thirsty person searching for water finds a full lake or pond, with good shade, clean water, and shaded trees all around. Just as that person, without any trouble, drinks water, bathes to his heart's content, and remains peacefully and happily under a tree; likewise, contemplating the good side of that person, and thinking, "Even though hatred arose in me toward him, he is a person of such good virtues," and bathing in those virtues—bathing in that river of virtues—one must appease the fire of one's hatred. This is what Venerable Sariputta demonstrates.

In this manner, we must now contemplate. What do we see through this? Underlying the path of our life and every action we perform is the attitude we adopt toward something. "Attitude" means the way we look at something. We can change that; it is not a permanent thing. We are capable of changing it. The Buddha declares that this change must be done in accordance with the Dhamma. Now, in the Dhamma, there are two types of reflection: wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) and unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*). All defilements (*kilesa*) arise from that improper way of reflecting on things related to them. Therefore, to be freed from them, one must train oneself in proper reflection, which is wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). Here, Venerable Sariputta has demonstrated exactly this wise attention through these similes. The Buddha has explicitly permitted that if, in any manner, unwholesome states are subdued and wholesome states (*kusala*) arise, one must reflect in that manner. Utilizing any simile as an aid, or employing any method, one must contemplate in such a way that unwholesome states—namely, greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*)—are suppressed. One must reflect in a way that eliminates them, not in a way that increases them. For that, one has the right to guide one's mind by prioritizing any simile, mental image, or wholesome thought. It is by systematic cultivation in this manner that what we call an "attitude" is formed. Now, if we consider a person who does not even know what loving-kindness meditation or loving-kindness is, his perspective on the world—the way he looks at the world—is such that he collides everywhere. He makes his entire life a mess. He destroys himself and destroys others as well.

On the contrary, if someone starts at least gradually, and instills in their mind the statement we made at the beginning of this sermon—that is, the desire for happiness is a natural law in the entire world of living beings. Then, loving-kindness (*mettā*) means digesting this concept of the desire for happiness in the world into one's own mind. The reason why this mind is constantly scattered and does not rest on a single object is the arising of these defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion. Therefore, if we feed our mind a certain natural law common to the world—that everyone desires happiness—we can settle our mind within that. Thus, by condensing it into a single phrase like "may they be happy" and repeatedly bringing it to mind, bringing it to mind again and again, one's attitude is transformed. Moreover, many other virtues, such as concentration (*samādhi*), are developed because of it.

The Buddha has shown countless benefits of these. You may have heard of the daily experienced benefits of loving-kindness meditation mentioned in the *Mettānisaṃsa Sutta*. If a person's mind is liberated through that loving-kindness meditation—what does it mean for the mind to be "liberated"? When we say "deep-seated hatred," right there is a bond, a bondage; the mind is bound. Due to some repulsive sign, or due to the intention of revenge for a wrong done to oneself, the mind is in a state of friction both day and night. It is like a bondage. It is a grave bondage—the bondage of hatred. It is because of this that some people continue to take revenge on each other throughout *saṃsāra*. Therefore, instead of that, one brings forward the liberation of the mind. This is called the "mind-deliverance of loving-kindness" (*mettā-cetovimutti*). When loving-kindness meditation is well-digested into the mind, the state of having a pure mind of loving-kindness spread toward the entire world is shown as mind-deliverance—*mettā-cetovimutti*. The Buddha has shown eleven benefits, experienced even in daily life, of a mind that has reached such a state of mind-deliverance—the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness. One can obtain very peaceful sleep—peaceful sleep in daily life. Next, one can wake up refreshed. One does not see bad dreams. Next, one is dear to human beings. One is dear to non-human beings. Even the protection of devas is secured. Furthermore, from various dangers that may come to oneself—dangers from poison, weapons, etc.—one is often protected by the very power of that mind of loving-kindness. Also, the mind quickly becomes settled; it becomes concentrated. The color or radiance of the face increases. Moreover, at the time of death, one can pass away with clear mindfulness. If one has not attained any paths and fruits, if one has not realized Nibbāna, at the very least, one is reborn in the Brahma worlds. In this manner, the Buddha has declared numerous benefits for the person who develops loving-kindness meditation to the level of mind-deliverance.

Therefore, on such a noble Vesak full-moon day, we must make a resolution—not much is needed to steer our lives in the right direction. Only a very small change needs to be made. Now, we know that even to operate a massive machine, perhaps a machine that has stopped, only a small bolt is needed, or just correcting a small defect. In the same way, it is not a huge thing that helps to change one's attitude here. Sometimes, it is just a single word. One instills the concept, the word "may they

be happy," into one's mind as meditation. Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is not something strange. It is a special power developed by repeatedly bringing a wholesome mind, a wholesome object, to one's mind. This power is called "repetition" (*āsevana*). That is, through repeated association, one can generate great power in one's mind. That is why when speaking of meditation, it is said: *āsevitā, bhāvitā, bahulīkatā*—associated with, developed, cultivated. Constantly associating with the thought of loving-kindness means repeatedly bringing it to mind.

In that way, there is a nature in that thought that liberates the mind. Why? Because the mind is narrow and enclosed. Within the fence of selfishness, the minds of the world's beings are narrow and enclosed. It is by freeing oneself from that selfishness that one is able to maintain the thought, "may others be happy." That making happy often begins with those around oneself, with one's relatives, parents, children, and so on. But one must not stop there. Next, neighbors, then neutral people, and finally even enemies—everyone. Conquering enemies in the true sense is not done through wars and such, as mentioned before. Conquering the enemy is done by appeasing that thought of hatred. The enemy is inside the mind, not the enemy outside. It is that same person; but once anger arises, he becomes the enemy. The difference between enemy and friend is nothing other than the attitude one has toward that person. Therefore, the moment that attitude changes, that enemy becomes a friend. That is why Buddhist scholars have stated—as a simile—if we want to walk on this earth, and if we think of walking only after removing all the thorns on the earth, that will never be accomplished. Instead, when one wears shoes, one is not harmed by those thorns. In the same way, if one thinks, "I will sleep peacefully only after killing all the enemies in the world," that can never be completed. Killing enemies in the world and leaving only those whom one likes is never something that can succeed. Instead, what is to be done, as shown in the simile of wearing shoes, is to guard one's mind. When the enemy within one's mind is slain—for this enemy is born in one's mind—if that enemy is slain, it is as if all enemies have been slain. In this manner, Buddhist philosophers have presented various principles and hypotheses. It is through developing one's own mind in terms of meditation based on these that those benefits can be seen.

Thus, it is so regarding hatred. Regarding other defilements too, we must constantly contemplate according to the phenomena of wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) and unwise attention. It is these three defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion that carry us through *saṃsāra* for a long time. Now, greed is what the Buddha has shown there as "affliction." The world is constantly sick. Afflicted by defilements—to be freed from this affliction of defilements, one has to appease the defilements of craving (*taṇhā*), desire, and greed. Similarly, the world is in a state of anxiety, always restless. Because of that endless search, because of the intense greed for fivefold sensual pleasures, we see how much destruction or how much suffering (*dukkha*) the world accumulates due to its running in search of various fashions, trends, or useless things. Sometimes falling into debt, they accumulate a mass of suffering because they lack an understanding of true peace, the happiness of peace. Therefore, according to

the Buddha's word, we must always contemplate, especially with loving-kindness. This era is one in which the entire world is being destroyed by hatred. Because of this, in daily life, one must consider some meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) as one's "workplace." To carry on daily life, one does various industries and jobs. But all of these help only to maintain one's body—to maintain the body which one thinks experiences happiness. It is this mind that carries us throughout the entirety of *saṃsāra*. We leave the physical carcass here. But it is in the form of paying debts to the defilements developed in the mind, and to the karma performed, that beings travel in *saṃsāra* for a long time.

Therefore, much more special care must be given to this mind of ours than to this body. This mind can be soiled very easily. Various objects in the world flow in, and the mind is prone to be agitated either by hatred, by lust (*rāga*), or by delusion. To prevent this, some method must be applied to concentrate the mind. If a person instills the thought "may they be happy" into the mind at the very moment of waking up in the morning, and then, resolving for a few minutes, practices maintaining the mind within that thought, he gradually becomes able, as the Buddha declared, to bring up that thought from time to time in all four postures, even while performing other activities. Furthermore, he gains the power to emit that thought of loving-kindness—that stream of loving-kindness—to everyone who comes before him. The person who has developed such mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is the one who experiences numerous benefits of loving-kindness, just as the Buddha declared.

Next, another thing that is helpful is compassion (*karuṇā*). Loving-kindness is generally toward beings who are similar to oneself. Compassion is mostly toward those who are in suffering (*dukkha*). "Being in suffering" means sometimes those who are not seen before us, or seeing someone who has got injured, we sometimes feel compassion. But like the Buddha's great compassion, we must think that all beings in this *saṃsāra* must be the objects of compassion. Every being fallen into the suffering of *saṃsāra* can be made the object of compassion. Thinking thus, we use compassion to help remove that thought of hatred.

Likewise, to dwell happily in daily life as the Buddha declared—to dwell happily in the manner of "Ah, happily"—the virtue called appreciative joy (*muditā*) is helpful. These are shown as the sublime abodes (*brahmavihāra*). Often, there is envy in society. If someone appears higher than oneself, or uses more luxurious things, there is envy toward that person. There too, there is a state of irritability, of intolerance. Instead, the entire world of beings desires happiness—every single one. One must think of their being happy as one's own being happy. This is what appreciative joy is. Even for oneself. Now, parents are happy when their children grow and develop. But those same parents, when their neighbors achieve some progress, conceive jealousy about it. There we see, then, that this happens due to a certain defect, a flaw, in the mind. Instead, one must think: just as one thinks of one's own children, especially the entire world of beings desires happiness. Thinking, "Every single person being happy is just like my being happy," one cultivates the virtue of appreciative joy. The

virtue of appreciative joy is an extremely rare virtue in society. It is because of its lack that envy and the like spread excessively.

Next, it is the same with equanimity (*upekkhā*). There are many things in the world we cannot change; they are just as they are. Other than looking at them, looking at them with equanimity, if we go to collide with them, it will lead to our downfall. Why? Because each individual's lifespan and actions are things that came according to karma. If we can help that person to some extent through a wise course of action such as loving-kindness or compassion, that is what we have to do. If in any way we cannot, equanimity is what is brought forward—impartiality. "It is that person's karma; it is something that arose according to karma. There is nothing for me to worry about regarding it. There is no way to worry," thinking thus, one must develop equanimity.

In this manner, when those virtues of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity increase in society, one can experience that noble happiness called *susukhaṃ* declared by the Buddha. On the other hand, if we make no effort to shape our lives, our lives will be destroyed by being caught in the dangerous fire of hatred and fire of anger spreading in this society. Now, through various mass media, what is heard throughout the day are objects that lead to hatred, anger, and resentment. When one hears them and sees them, if one can develop a certain attitude, a strength of attitude, so that ignorance (*avijjā*) does not arise in the mind through them, then that person can live safely in society, like walking with shoes on in an area full of thorns. Therefore, what helps in all of this is the development of our mind. If one thinks of being satisfied merely by engaging in his jobs, other worldly activities, and daily life, neglecting the mind and neglecting the power of the mind, his destruction is very near. A Buddha appears in the world to show the nobility of this human mind—to show to what a supreme state it can be elevated. In this dispensation, those who attained Arahantship and received worship and offerings even from devas and Brahmas were sometimes those who were marginalized in society, considered of extremely low caste, or sometimes those who lived as extremely violent bandits like Angulimala, or those who were engaged in various vices. All of them became recipients of the Buddha's great compassion, and by the power of that great compassion, as well as the skillful means—skillful means employed through wisdom—the defilements in their minds were removed, those temporarily covering defilements were discarded, and the power of training in *saṃsāra* emerged, enabling them to attain such states. A Buddha cannot give Nibbāna to someone who does not have it. It is by bringing out the power that person has developed throughout *saṃsāra*, training them, and bringing it to maturity that He elevates a person to noble states like Arahantship.

Therefore, every one of us must contemplate: there can be countless merits, good things we have done in this *saṃsāra*. They are covered up, like embers under ashes. They do not emerge on their own. The method of bringing them out is what is called meditation—accustoming the mind to a meditation practice. Therefore, on such a

valuable full-moon day, we must make a resolution. It is not correct to regard these noble things, or things that many in the world search for and see, in a light manner. Some people think of meditation as something to be done after reaching old age, when thinking about the next world, saying, "We will be interested in these sermons and meditation then." That is a wrong idea. In a concentrated mind, one receives the strength to obtain solutions—solutions in a very short time—to numerous problems that arise in daily life. Particularly, in a mind prepared with the sublime abodes (*brahmavihāras*) of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity, the power of decision-making is extremely strong. Such a mind is not shaken when making a pure decision. Now, the cause of all these wars and brawls throughout the world is that very undeveloped mind. What the world means by "developing the mind" is directing this mind toward things like education, machinery, or science. Through them, a certain artificial transformation occurs in the mind. A real systematic development of the mind—a real "growth" called meditation—does not take place. Only one aspect of the mind, namely logic and reasoning (*tarka-vitarka*), is developed. This thing called the mind goes hand-in-hand with the heart. A mind does not arise devoid of the thoughts and feelings that occur in the heart. Therefore, some purification of the heart must be done through these meditation methods like loving-kindness. Otherwise, that person, succumbing to some intellectualism, succumbing to logic, succumbing to deceptive states (*vañcaka dhamma*), turns his mind into a beastly state instead of developing it. Through logic, they present even various unwholesome deeds and sins as good things.

Now, you are well aware of the various types of wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*) that have come onto the stage of this society. Now, regarding livelihood, if we think about the reasons why we cannot protect the precepts we undertook on this occasion, it is because the world has discarded righteous ways in various manners and exerts itself excessively regarding the economy. Because of those unwholesome thoughts, they forget the unwholesome side of sinful deeds and instead believe that happiness in daily life is the progress made from the economic side. Now, that is what has come to the fore in society. The Buddha has spoken of the "happiness of blamelessness" (*anavajja-sukha*)—the happiness a person receives from a blameless life in daily life—one's own mind does not blame oneself. The Buddha has pointed out four fears: fear of self-reproach (*attānuvāda-bhaya*), fear of others' reproach (*parānuvāda-bhaya*), fear of punishment (*daṇḍa-bhaya*), and fear of an evil destination (*duggati-bhaya*). "Fear" means danger—there are four dangers for the world. "Fear of self-reproach" means one's own mind blames oneself. No matter how secretly from the world one commits those sins, murders, thefts, etc., one's mind knows it. Such a person cannot sleep properly. If someone says "thief, thief," he turns around to look. Even if someone says "murderer," he turns around to look in terror. Why? Thinking it is said of him. To that extent, one's own mind blames oneself. Likewise, "fear of others' reproach" means, upon their finding out about it, having to hear insults, accusations, etc., from others. Likewise, if caught in the web of the law, one has to suffer punishment because of it. Even if one escapes all of these, in the end, one has

to suffer the dangerous retributive results called evil destinations—being born in hell, etc., born in the four woeful states; the Buddha's word is indeed true. All of this happens due to neglecting the mind—the true value of the mind.

Therefore, contemplating these things, you, the virtuous devotees, must give a great place to the meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in daily life on this valuable Vesak full-moon day. As a start, for a short time in the morning, before going to your duties and work, thinking, "This is my real work," you must practice directing your mind, even for a short time, to some meditation subject—especially something like loving-kindness, because it mostly helps you when interacting with society—or recollecting the Buddha (*buddhānussati*) which increases your faith (*saddhā*), or foulness (*asubha*) which subdues those defilements, or mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*) which demonstrates the value of this spiritual life and trains you to act without delay; you must practice starting the day's activities by training the mind within such a meditation subject even for a short time. Likewise, at the end of the day, before you go to sleep—a time when the mind settles down—if you generate some meditative mind before falling asleep, that person will not have troubles like seeing bad dreams, as declared by the Buddha. One can reach sleep with great peace. Thus, for someone who places the mind in meditation at the start of the day and at the end of the day, gradually, while maintaining the four postures in daily life, when the mind is about to wander, the meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) will come to mind almost effortlessly. Such a person, during his travels and daily activities, in those wasted moments called "loitering," will gain the ability to develop his mind through that meditation subject. What we mean by "developing" in this Dhamma of the Buddha is not using intellectualism today, learning and memorizing what is in books, and obtaining some worldly benefit like passing exams from them. As the Buddha declared, we must generate some effort through this meditative mind to eradicate the three root defilements of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) that bring beings to suffering (*dukkha*) for a long time in this *saṃsāra*.

Therefore, approaching those who can give such meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*), receiving those instructions with respect, and guiding one's mind within them, one must endeavor to attain in this very life that supreme happiness called *susukhaṃ* declared by the Buddha. The Buddha declares that all the happiness obtained even by other devas is defeated by this nectar of Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-amata*), the happiness of Nibbāna (*Nibbāna-sukha*). The happiness of Nibbāna is not a happiness obtained in some strange world, or obtained from some strange drink. It is the happiness of peace in this mind, the solace, the cooling down (Nibbāna) that can be brought out from within the mind itself. The Buddha declared that the entire world, becoming (*bhava*) itself, is burning. *Sabbam ādittham*—the entire world is burning. The worldling does not understand this burning. When we see moths falling into a lamp, it appears to us that they are burning. But they do not understand it; those creatures do not understand it. In the same way, what the worldling always does is jump into these three fires of greed, hatred, and delusion. Because of the attractive nature of that fire, they do not understand that it is a fire. In

the same way that the entire world is on fire in terms of greed, hatred, and delusion, the Buddha has demonstrated that everything associated with our senses, called the six sense bases, is burning. The eye is burning. Forms are burning. The ear is burning. Sounds are burning. In this manner, He has shown how every one of these senses, the entire world, is burning with the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion. Therefore, the place where those burnings are extinguished is what is called Nibbāna. It is cooling down. For that, then, by settling the mind through a meditation like loving-kindness and developing insight meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*), understanding the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) of impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) which is the true nature of this world, one can realize the noble, supreme Nibbāna through the penetration of the paths and fruits of Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*), Once-returning (*sakadāgāmi*), Non-returning (*anāgāmi*), and Arahantship.

Thus, Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Great Arahants appear in the world to introduce this very happiness of appeasement—the happiness of Nibbāna—to the world, having realized it themselves. That is the goal. That must be the goal of every Buddhist as well. With that goal, making good resolutions today, resolving, "I will live a meditative life from now on," you have listened to the Dhamma today, having established yourselves in such virtue—some of you having undertaken the noble precept of eight precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla*) on this valuable full-moon day, and others having undertaken the eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth (*ājīva-aṭṭhamaka-sīla*). To listen to the Dhamma means directing your ear during this time with the faith (*saddhā*) you have generated toward the Triple Gem. It is by bringing forth energy (*viriya*) that followed that faith that you are engaged in this task. Faith, energy, and along with that, through energy, you generate a certain mindfulness—the virtue called *sati*—in your mind. By maintaining that very mindfulness for a considerable time, one can experience some concentration (*samādhi*). It is to that concentrated mind that deep understandings regarding the Dhamma come as wisdom (*paññā*). Therefore, we must rejoice, thinking: "Today, we have utilized this occasion to cultivate those wholesome qualities shown in the Dhamma as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom (*saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, paññā*), which at times serve as spiritual faculties (*indriya*) and spiritual powers (*bala*) that aid in Nibbāna." May the mental strength generated from this mass of accumulated merit help us to realize Nibbāna through the noble penetration of the paths and fruits in this very life!

Likewise, may this mass of merit we have accumulated through both preaching the Dhamma and listening to the Dhamma be shared with all living beings from the Avici hell up to the Akanittha heaven, who desire merit and desire Nibbāna, including the guardian deities and Brahmas, and our relatives. Having rejoiced in these merits, may they be freed from this dangerous suffering of *saṃsāra*, and may they reach solace in the noble, supreme Nibbāna, freed from all saṃsāric suffering such as birth (*jāti*), aging and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), sickness (*vyādhi*), and all other sufferings. Making such an aspiration, now let us dedicate the merits by reciting these verses.

“*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……*”