Pahankanuwa Sermon #115

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.173)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

Virūḷhamūlasantānaṃ, nigrodhamiva māluto;

amittā nappasāhanti, yo mittānaṃ na dubbhati ti.

From:

Mūgapakkha Jātaka 538 (Verse 21), Khuddaka Nikāya

Dear Listeners,

A friend has the capacity to bring about one's welfare as well as one's ruin. Through a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitta*), welfare is brought about, and through an evil friend (*pāpamitta*), ruin is caused. To help understand the blessings of being a true friend, a set of verses has been included in our book of protective chants (*pirith*) under the name *Mittānisaṁsa Sutta*. The verse that comes at the end of this sutta, which you chant or have chanted to ward off misfortune and bring about prosperity, is what we have taken as our theme today.

This *Mittānisaṁsa Sutta* is actually found in the *Jātaka Pāḷi* of the *Jātaka* collection. The *Mūgapakkha Jātaka* is known to many today as the *Temiya Jātaka*. Let us briefly mention the background context regarding these verses in the *Temiya Jātaka*. At one time, our Bodhisatta was born as the son of the King of Kāsi in the city of Benares, and was named Temiya. In his infancy, Prince Temiya recollected his past births through the knowledge of recollecting past lives (*jātissara-ñāṇa*). When he recollected them, he remembered that in the distant past, he had ruled that very city for twenty years, and consequently suffered in hell (*niraya*) for eighty thousand years. Understanding this, and out of fear that he would be given the kingship again, he followed the advice of a deity and resolved to spend his future as a cripple, deaf, and mute. Although his parents made various attempts to change him, he remained steadfast in that resolution, spending sixteen years amidst indescribable suffering and hardship, even wallowing in his own excrement. Ultimately, the king became

despondent about this son and ordered the charioteer named Sunanda: “Take this unfortunate son to the forest, to a cemetery, and bury him.”

The charioteer Sunanda placed Prince Temiya in a chariot, drove him to a deep forest, stopped the chariot, and began digging a grave. While he was digging, Prince Temiya slowly stretched his limbs, and realizing that he was able to stand, walked over to the grave and said to the charioteer: “I am neither a cripple, nor deaf, nor mute.” Having said this, he added: “Even though the king, my father, ordered you to bury me, this is who I am.” However, the charioteer was skeptical. He was afraid that by not carrying out the order, he would incur the royal wrath. Seeing his hesitation, Prince Temiya declared: “Charioteer, as a subordinate servant of my father, for you to kill me is like cutting off the branch of a tree under whose shadow you stand.” He called it betraying a friend (*mittadūbhī*). It is in connection to this that Prince Temiya declared the blessings of not betraying friends in that series of verses. Those verses are very simple. You must have heard and read them many times. Let us briefly bring forward those verses at this juncture:

“Pahūtabhakkho bhavati, vippavuttho sakā gharā,

bahūnaṁ upajīvanti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“He who does not betray his friends, when he goes far from his own home, obtains abundant food; and many depend on him for their livelihood.” That is the first verse. Next:

“Yaṁ yaṁ janapadaṁ yāti, nigame rājadhāniyo,

sabbatha pūjito hoti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“He who does not betray his friends, whichever province, market town, or royal capital he visits, is honored in all of them.” *Nigame rājadhāniyo sabbatha pūjito hoti*—he is honored everywhere. In the next verse, it is said:

“Nāssa corā pasahanti, nātimaññeti khattiyo,

sabbe amitte tarati, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“He who does not betray his friends, thieves cannot overpower him through theft or other means—*nāssa corā pasahanti*. Likewise, *nātimaññeti khattiyo*—the king does not despise him. *Sabbe amitte tarati*—he is able to overcome all enemies.” Next:

“Akkuddho sagharaṁ eti, sabhāya paṭinandito,

ñātīnaṁ uttamo hoti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“That person who does not betray his friends, when he goes to any assembly, returns to his home unwrathful and welcomed—*sabhāya paṭinandito*. *Ñātīnaṁ uttamo hoti*—moreover, he becomes supreme among his relatives.” Next:

“Sakkato sakkato hoti, garu hoti sagāravo,

vaṇṇakittibhato hoti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“That friend, who does not betray his friends, by honoring others, becomes worthy of receiving honor himself—*sakkato sakkato hoti*. *Garu hoti sagāravo*—by respecting others, he becomes worthy of receiving respect; he is respectful. Then, *vaṇṇakittibhato hoti*—he is endowed with praise and fame.” That is the meaning of that verse. Next, it is said:

“Pūjako labhate pūjaṁ, vandako paṭivandanaṁ,

yaso kittiñca pappoti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“By worshipping those worthy of worship, he himself receives worship—*pūjako labhate pūjaṁ*. *Vandako paṭivandanaṁ*—by paying homage, he becomes worthy of receiving homage in return. He also attains glory and fame—that person who does not betray his friends.” Next:

“Aggi yathā pajjalati, devatāva virocati,

siriyā ajahito hoti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“He shines like a blazing fire; he glows like a deity—that person who does not betray his friends. Next, *siriyā ajahito hoti*—fortune never deserts him;” that is what is declared in this verse. Next:

“Gāvo tassa pajāyanti, khette vuttaṁ virūhati,

vuttānaṁ phalamasnāti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“The cattle of the person who does not betray his friends multiply. What is sown in his field grows well. He enjoys the fruit of what is cultivated.” All of these are shown as the blessings. Next:

“Darito pabbatā to vā, rukkhato patito naro,

cuto patiṭṭhaṁ labhati, yo mittānaṁ na dubhati.”

“If a person who does not betray his friends falls from a mountain cleft, a mountain, or a tree, he finds a support, a refuge—*cuto patiṭṭhaṁ labhati*. He does not meet with disaster, due to that quality of not betraying friends.” Next, we come to our verse, the final verse:

“Virūḷhamūlasantānaṁ, nigrodhamiva māluto,

amittā nappasahanti, yo mittānaṁ na dubhatī.”

“That is, just as a storm cannot shake a banyan tree with deep-spreading and well-established roots, so enemies cannot overpower him.” In this manner, ten verses on the blessings of friendship are contained in our book of protective chants.

Directly following this in the book of protective chants, a sutta called the *Mettānisaṁsa Sutta* is mentioned. Although we have explained the sections related to this *Mettānisaṁsa Sutta* in two previous sermons, for those who are interested in listening to them, we shall mention their numbers: Pahankanuwa Sermons No. 147 and 163. On those occasions, when we explained loving-kindness (*mettā*) and the deliverance of mind through loving-kindness (*mettā-cetovimutti*), those eleven blessings of the *Mettānisaṁsa Sutta* were mentioned. Next, we specifically mentioned the blessings of loving-kindness (*mettā*) because nowadays, many people confuse loving-kindness (*mettā*) with friendship (*mittatā*). Many who write and speak about loving-kindness (*mettā*) begin by saying that “loving-kindness is friendship.” That is entirely wrong. At first glance, indeed, loving-kindness (*mettā*) and friendship (*mittatā*) seem to share a commonality. Why? Because loving-kindness (*mettā*) is also defined as the absence of hatred—the absence of aversion (*paṭigha*) and hatred (*dvesa*). However, if we look at the words, the Pāḷi word for friendship is *mittatā*, while the Pāḷi word for loving-kindness is *mettā*. Perhaps because the two words are similar, many people confuse them. Therefore, listen carefully; we hope to present the difference between loving-kindness (*mettā*) and friendship (*mittatā*) in six brief points so that you can keep them in mind:

1. Friendship is personal; loving-kindness (*mettā*) is universal.

2. Friendship is mutual; loving-kindness (*mettā*) is universally impartial.

3. Friendship is narrow; loving-kindness (*mettā*) is broad.

4. Friendship is a bond (*bandhana*); loving-kindness (*mettā*) is a deliverance (*vimutti*).

5. To develop friendship, at least two people are required; loving-kindness (*mettā*) can be developed in solitude.

6. Friendship is limited; loving-kindness (*mettā*) is limitless, immeasurable, and infinite.

Thus, we have summarized the difference between loving-kindness (*mettā*) and friendship (*mittatā*). However, this confusion is not only found among ordinary people. As far as we can see, even Ven. Buddhaghosa, the author of the *Visuddhimagga*—not because he did not know Pāḷi words, but for some reason—seems to have confused these. He has presented the foundation for loving-kindness (*mettā*) by using the concept of friendship based on: oneself, the neutral person, the dear friend, and the hostile person. It is by associating this that he has begun to analyze loving-kindness (*mettā*). We pointed out on that occasion that the true foundation of loving-kindness (*mettā*) is the desire for happiness inherent in all

beings—the common aspiration. It is not a division into those who are friendly, neutral, or hostile to oneself. That division arose out of a wrong understanding. We also pointed out that some who are subservient to traditionalism are not ready to accept our statement, even though we show that this is the word of the Buddha. But if we respect the word of the Buddha, the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā-bhāvanā*) must be developed from the very beginning in terms of radiating it in the directions (*disā-pharaṇa*). However, according to Buddhaghosa's words, the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā*) must be developed by starting and basing it on that narrow foundation of: oneself, the dear friend, the neutral person, and the hostile person.

Furthermore, a point was mentioned here for you to ponder. Since you might doubt it, we shall explain it further: the point that friendship requires two people, whereas loving-kindness (*mettā*) can be developed even in solitude. We shall give a good illustration for this. In the text called the *Sutta Nipāta*, there is an extraordinary sutta called the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta*. It consists of forty-one verses. It highly praises a sage's life, which means, for the sake of the spiritual goal of Nibbāna, abandoning all relatives and friends, going to the forest, and living like a lion—using wonderful similes. Even today, there are very rarely such people. It is a set of verses praising such a life. Every single one of those forty-one verses ends with the same remarkable refrain: *"eko care khaggavisāṇakappo"*. *Khaggavisāṇa* means the horn of a rhinoceros. A rhinoceros has only a single horn. If we translate *"eko care khaggavisāṇakappo"* into Sinhala, it means: "wander alone like the horn of a rhinoceros!" This is the idea contained throughout all forty-one verses. However, what we are about to mention is a special point. Even those sages who lead such a solitary, wandering life are able to attain the *brahmavihāras*—loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*)—which are deliverances of mind (*cetovimutti*), as stated in the fortieth verse. That verse describes how that sage develops loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity according to the occasion.

From this, we can see that even though one is solitary, loving-kindness (*mettā*) can be developed. For friendship (*mittatā*), however, there must be two people. Simply because we have said this, one should not think that we are disparaging friendship. On the contrary, the Buddha has praised the value of friendship (*mittatā*) in a layperson's household and social life, as well as the support a monastic receives from a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) in their spiritual life, in an extraordinary way in numerous suttas. In short, the Buddha declared: "Monks, as an external factor for a person's progress and welfare, I do not see any other single factor that is as great as spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*)." Therefore, we must recognize those teachings in their respective places and not confuse them. It is for this reason that we mentioned this.

The Buddha, as Prince Temiya, showed the blessings of not betraying friends here. Moreover, in various sutta discourses, the Buddha showed not only the blessings of

not betraying friends but also the blessings one receives by having a good, true friend. He also exposed those who act as friends in the guise of a friend—called counterfeit friends (*mitta-paṭirūpaka*)—who pretend to be friends but cause ruin, and showed how to identify them. If we use a Sinhala term for *mitta-paṭirūpaka*, it is a "puppet friend" (*rūkaḍa mitrayā*). A puppet of a friend. That is, they falsely project themselves as a friend. The Buddha has analyzed how to recognize such people very clearly. Furthermore, he has analyzed the mutual duties between two friends in a wonderful way, in a manner that is helpful even to modern sociologists. He has also shown how to identify a true friend, that is, a warm-hearted friend (*suhada-mitta*) and a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitta*). A short sutta mentioned in the *Sutta Nipāta* is the *Hiri Sutta*. It is not very well known. In it, too, mention is made of those who are friends in words only (*vacīparama*), who falsely pretend to help only in speech. If someone says, "I am your friend," but does not offer help that they are capable of giving, then a wise person should understand: "He is not a true friend."

Similarly, if someone speaks pleasant words saying, "I am your friend," but does not act in accordance with those words, he is an enemy. The Buddha gives a beautiful simile there: *"Na so mitto yo sadā appamatto, bheda-saṅkī randham evānupassī."* He who is constantly on the lookout for faults, expecting a split, and is engaged only in finding weaknesses, is not a friend. Who, then, is a friend? A beautiful simile is given: *"Yasmiñca seti urasīva putto, sa ve mitto yo parehi abhejjo."* It is a small simile. You can comprehend it. When a small child falls asleep on the chest of their mother or father, leaving behind the whole world, they are completely confident that the mother or father will not cause them any harm. They turn to the side on the chest and sleep. This is the simile the Buddha has given here. *"Yasmiñca seti urasīva putto"*—upon which friend another can trust, like a child sleeping on its parent's chest, such a friend is a true friend, as declared in the *Hiri Sutta*.

Instead of mentioning a bit from here and there, you might also be expecting us to speak about that extraordinary sutta which describes all of this, which lay devotees use with great affection: the *Sigālovāda Sutta*. From ancient times, it has been known as the "Layman's Vinaya" (*gihi vinaya*). Why? Because the Buddha has analyzed and presented every aspect—every facet, to use a modern word—of lay life, household life, and the social life of a layperson in an extraordinary manner. It is a sutta so valuable that it can serve as a guidebook for modern sociologists. Its background story, in brief, is as follows: At one time, when the Buddha was residing at the Veluvana monastery in Rajagaha, a householder's son named Sigālaka, as a custom, would go out in the morning with wet hair and wet clothes, and with clasped hands, worship the six directions. While walking, the Buddha saw this and asked: "Why, householder's son, do you worship these directions?" Then Sigālaka replied: "My father, on his deathbed, told me, 'Son, worship these directions.' That is why I do this."

Then the Buddha said: "According to our Noble Discipline (*ariya-vinaya*), according to the Noble training, the six directions are not worshipped in this manner." Then the

householder's son asked: “Then how, Venerable Sir, is it in your Noble Discipline?” The analysis that starts from that question is what is expounded in this sutta. Actually, it is at the very end that the six directions are identified. But let us mention what those six are, according to the context. Many of you know this.

Parents are the Eastern direction: *mātāpitaro disā pubbā*. Teachers are the Southern direction: *ācariyā dakkhiṇā disā*. Wife and children are the Western direction: *puttadārā disā pacchimā*. And friends and companions are the Northern direction: *mittāmaccā ca uttarā*. Remember that. Then the other two are also mentioned: servants and workers are the downward direction, and ascetics and brahmins are the upward direction. These are the six directions. Having said this, he began a long analysis, but we shall try to highlight only the portion relevant to our topic today, in keeping with the time. Indeed, this *Sigālovāda Sutta* is so extensive that it is difficult to compress it into such a short sermon. In brief, the Buddha shows that the counterfeit friend (*mitta-paṭirūpaka*), who is actually an enemy, merely wears the guise of a friend. Such people do exist. On the other hand, a true friend is called a warm-hearted friend (*suhada-mitta*). There, he describes in detail four types of counterfeit friends who wear the guise of a friend. Let us mention them briefly.

Four types of counterfeit friends are shown. *Aññadatthuhara* is the Pāḷi term. In brief, *aññadatthuhara* means, in short, an exploitative or selfish friend. That friend goes to his companion’s house—you must have heard this in many sermons, but let us think about it—carrying some small thing, but expecting to return with something much larger. Or, he returns with something even without giving anything. Those who deceive in this selfish manner are called *aññadatthuhara*; they look only after their own self-interest. Next is the one called *vacīparama*—one who is a friend in words only. That is, when his friend is in need, say of money or resources, he says: “Oh, I had that money yesterday, I had it earlier. But now it is gone, it is finished. I will give it to you in the future.” Or, he gives something of no value. In this way, he saves his own skin and remains a friend in words only. Next is the *anuppiyabhāṇī*. *Anuppiyabhāṇī* means one who, to please his companion, flatters him; even if the companion does a wrong deed, he says it is good. He praises him to his face but speaks ill of him behind his back. He is a person who shows friendship only through pleasant words. Finally, the one shown is the *apāyasahāya*. *Apāyasahāya* means a companion in ruin, who leads his friend to ruin by introducing him to alcohol and other intoxicants. You must have heard about this; such people are the most common in society—drunkards and other profligates, or what we would call loafers today. Such people lead their friends to ruin. They are the counterfeit friends—the puppet friends.

On the other hand, there are the warm-hearted friends (*suhada-mitta*). The Buddha describes each of these in detail. We shall mention them briefly according to the context. The first warm-hearted friend shown is the helpful friend (*upakāraka*). Indeed, if his friend is in difficulty or has fallen into negligence, he protects him. If the friend is about to lose wealth due to negligence, he safeguards it for him. When

the friend is afraid, he becomes a refuge. In this way, the helpful friend is a true friend. To help in difficult situations, if there is a need for money, he is prepared to give even double what is required. Next, the *samānasukhadukkha* friend is one who, as we say, is ready to share both happiness and suffering. That is, he does not abandon his friend when the friend falls into misfortune. He would even sacrifice his life to help when necessary. Next, the *atthakkhāyī* friend (the mentor) is one who, for the sake of his friend's well-being, restrains him from evil, directs him toward wholesome deeds, teaches him the Dhamma on suitable occasions, and helps him embark on the path to a happy rebirth (*sugati*). Finally, the compassionate friend (*anukampaka*) is shown. That friend grieves over his friend's misfortune and rejoices in his prosperity. Furthermore, if someone speaks ill of his friend, he prevents it; and when someone praises his friend, he rejoices. Such is the compassionate friend.

This is how they are described. The idea behind worshipping the directions is mutual assistance—helping one another. Indeed, you have heard of parents and children, husband and wife, teacher and pupil, and so on; in these relationships too, there are two friends. How one friend should treat another is shown by the Buddha as follows. You must have heard of the four bases of sympathy (*cattu saṅgahavatthu*): giving (*dāna*), pleasant speech (*peyyavajja*), useful conduct (*atthacariyā*), and impartiality (*samānattatā*). To this is added non-deceitfulness (*avisaṁvādanatā*). This is how a friend should treat another friend. One should treat them through giving—by giving what is needed; next, through pleasant speech; through useful conduct—by helping in a way that brings about their welfare, and by giving them advice; and next, through impartiality—by treating them as equals. Finally, *avisaṁvādanatā* means non-deceitfulness. If one treats a friend in this manner, it is said that the friend will treat one in return in the same way. In what way? In the manner of the helpful friend mentioned earlier. That is, he protects his friend when the friend is negligent. He safeguards the wealth that the negligent friend is about to lose. When the friend is afraid, he becomes a refuge. He does not abandon him when he falls into misfortune. In this manner. Not only that, it is stated there that if this friendship goes well, and the other treats one as a friend, he goes so far as to care even for his friend’s descendants—*apara-pajā* means even their children—reflecting on the good qualities of their father.

In this manner, the Buddha spoke wonderfully about household life, keeping the spiritual aspect especially in mind. Moreover, many who come to us say with great sadness that they have been dominated by evil friends, trapped by those counterfeit friends—the puppet friends—and have fallen into trouble and suffered, and they say that nowadays there are no spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitta*) at all. Therefore, we too had to say that, given the way the country and the Dispensation (*sāsana*) are going, it might be easier to find black ginger (*kaḷu-nika*) than to find a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitta*). We mentioned this on a previous occasion as well. Now, we have spoken sufficiently about this concept of friendship in relation to lay life. As we mentioned earlier, whether in lay or monastic life, among the external factors that

bring about welfare, the Buddha has declared in many instances that spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) is supreme and foremost.

Similarly, regarding the lives of the Sangha, the life of a practitioner (*yogāvacara*) who is striving to realize this Dhamma of Nibbāna, or for lay devotees who hope for Nibbāna, the Buddha has declared the value of spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamitta-sampatti*) in various ways. On one occasion he declared: "Monks, the foremost factor that helps to arouse the Noble Eightfold Path within oneself is spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*)." The simile the Buddha used is extraordinary: "Just as, monks, the dawn appears before the sun rises—as you know, the sky turns red before the sun rises, which is called the dawn—even so, spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) is the harbinger for the arising of the Noble Eightfold Path." Furthermore, he told the Sangha that if there is a monk who helps one fulfill one's spiritual goals, possessing such and such qualities and virtues, one should follow him even if he drives one away—*paṇujjamāno'pi*, even when he chases you away saying "Go away!", one should somehow come back to his presence. Those seven qualities are summarized in a certain verse. Let us first recite that verse:

"Piyo ca garu bhāvanīyo, vattā ca vacanakkhamo,

gambhīrañca kathaṁ kattā, no caṭṭhāne niyojaye."

Those seven qualities are mentioned there. *Piyo* means: is that spiritual friend, that monk, endearing and pleasant? *Garu*: is he respectable? *Bhāvanīyo*: is he worthy of adoration and veneration? *Vattā*: is he capable of giving counsel and instruction? *Vacanakkhamo*: when his shortcomings are pointed out, does he have the strength to accept it with appreciation, just as Ven. Sāriputta received instruction from a novice monk and accepted it saying "Sādhu"? That is, is he patient under criticism? Next, *gambhīrañca kathaṁ kattā*: is he skilled in deep Dhamma discussions? *No caṭṭhāne niyojaye*: does he refrain from directing his friend, his pupil, or disciple, toward inappropriate and unsuitable paths? The Buddha has declared that one should follow such a teacher, a spiritual friend and teacher, even if driven away.

Furthermore, you may have heard of this incident declared by the Buddha. One day, King Kosala came to see the Buddha and said: "While I was in solitude"—the King, even though he fought wars and so on, must have engaged in meditation on certain occasions, having associated with the Buddha at least to some extent—"while I was sitting in meditation, this thought occurred to me: 'This Dhamma has been well-expounded (*svākkhāta*) by the Blessed One. This Dhamma belongs to, or can be attained by, only those who have spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitta*), spiritual companions (*kalyāṇa-sahāya*), and spiritual associates—meaning those who associate with spiritual friends, spiritual companions, and have a good disposition. It is not for those who have evil friends (*pāpamitta*) and evil companions.'"

When he expressed this, the Buddha declared: “So it is, Great King! So it is, Great King! That is indeed so,” and confirmed it. One can understand the deep connection the Buddha had with King Kosala from this incident he revealed.

“Great King, at one time, when I was residing in a market town in the Sakyan country, the monk Ānanda came to me and said: ‘Venerable Sir, it seems to me that spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) is half of this holy life (*brahmacariya*).’” He was telling King Kosala what Ven. Ānanda had said to him. “I said: ‘Do not say so, Ānanda. Do not say so, Ānanda. It is not half; this spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamitta-sampatti*) is the entire holy life (*brahmacariya*)!’” The Buddha made it an equation. Next, as a proof of this, it is mentioned there that the Buddha declared to Ven. Ānanda: ‘Why, Ānanda, do I say so? For one who has spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamitta-sampatti*), it is to be expected that they will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nibbāna.’ That is, the eight factors—Right View and so forth—as everyone knows. On this occasion, those eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are described in connection with four phrases: ‘dependent on seclusion’ (*viveka-nissitaṁ*), ‘dependent on dispassion’ (*virāga-nissitaṁ*), ‘dependent on cessation’ (*nirodha-nissitaṁ*), and ‘resulting in relinquishment’ (*vossagga-pariṇāmiṁ*). One who has spiritual friendship has the ability to develop each factor of the Noble Eightfold Path directed toward Nibbāna. Having declared this, the Buddha finally said: ‘By relying on me as a spiritual friend, beings subject to birth (*jāti-dhammā*) are freed from birth (*jāti*); those subject to decay (*jarā-dhammā*) are freed from decay; those subject to disease and death (*marana-dhammā*) are freed from death (*marana*), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair—by associating with me as a spiritual friend.’”

From this, we can see that the Buddha called the entire holy life (*brahmacariya*) spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) because, by being able to associate with a spiritual friend, one can achieve even that final spiritual goal. Therefore, in accordance with this, you too must make an effort, on the one hand, to become a spiritual friend, and on the other hand, to search for a spiritual friend. The blessings of becoming a spiritual friend were mentioned in the *Mittānisaṁsa Sutta*, and the blessings of finding a spiritual friend were mentioned in suttas like the *Sigālovāda Sutta*. At the same time, why must we take special care and effort in this regard? Because the majority of people in the world are those counterfeit friends—the puppet friends. To achieve various selfish ends, they show a superficial friendship and get close to you, and in the end, that person falls into ruin. Especially those companions in ruin (*apāyasahāya*), such as those associated with drugs and alcohol. Indeed, you might know, those who have studied psychology, that it is the nature of drugs and other vices that while one is drawn to them, one also seeks to increase one's group. Many have heard that the first time someone wants to introduce a friend to alcohol, they pay for it themselves, saying, ‘Today it’s on me.’ Even regarding other vices besides alcohol, though I do not mention them, you must have heard that such a thing exists in the world.

Once they become addicted to that drug, they increase their circle through that addiction. Through this, what is given from one's own pocket in the beginning is later taken from the other's pocket. Such a dangerous situation exists in society today. This is not something of today or yesterday; since it existed even during the Buddha's time, the Buddha pointed out the counterfeit friend, the one who wears the guise of a friend, in that manner. The Buddha described such people as: *'amittā mittapatirūpakā'*. Every word is important. *Amittā mittapatirūpakā*—enemies in the guise of a friend. Others are described, in ordinary lay life, as *'mittā suhadā'*—warm-hearted friends, friends with a good heart. Thus, the first group we mentioned is the counterfeit friends. The next group is the warm-hearted friends. Whether we think of lay life or spiritual life, in both aspects, the majority of people in society are of the former type; those who have suffered from them, fallen under their influence, and been in trouble for a long time, come to us and tell us so. That is why we said that, according to the principles and hints given by the Buddha, we must be circumspect when choosing a friend. One must try to understand their good and bad sides well. Once one falls under their influence, one eventually meets with terrible ruin. That is why we said at the beginning that a friend has the capacity to bring about our welfare as well as our ruin. We must know this. This is an external factor. The rest is what we must develop internally within ourselves. This is something that exists in the external world, within society.

The *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, which we mentioned earlier, is not very popular nowadays. We do not despise friendship; we praise it. If there are true friends, we praise them too. Now, what I am telling you is about the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* which I mentioned earlier. As we said, it is an extraordinary sutta of forty-one verses bearing the simile of the rhinoceros horn. That is, those who expect to see the end of the spiritual life, seeking Nibbāna in an intense manner, those ancient sages or monks, would abandon society and enter forests inhabited by wild beasts. In those verses, it is said: "unselfish friends are rare today" (*nikkāruṇā dullabhā ajjamittā*). That is, in this day and age, unselfish, altruistic friends who are not driven by self-interest are very rare. Instead, what is seen is described elsewhere as: "humans are wise only in self-interest, hence they are impure" (*attatthapaññā asucī manussā*). This is also in another sutta. The ordinary nature of humans is *attatthapaññā asucī manussā*. Its meaning is that humans are wise only for their own self-interest. That wisdom exists only to achieve selfish ends, not for the welfare of the world—*attatthapaññā*. For that very reason, they are "impure humans"—*asucī manussā*. *Attatthapaññā asucī manussā*. It is because of this that *'eko care khaggavisāṇakappo'*—when one does not find support to fulfill those noble aspirations within such a society, when one does not find spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitta*), one is told to enter the forest. Such is the situation.

This situation is not of today or yesterday; it was the same in the past. But on the one hand, one must be particularly careful not to betray friends. Prince Temiya said this. Many people forget, and do things like cutting off the branches of the very tree that sheltered them. They even do such things sometimes. Those who have read the

Jātaka stories know that within the stories of Devadatta and the Bodhisatta, there are deeply moving incidents, even in animal births. Because of that deeply-held grudge, how much suffering and pain did he cause the Bodhisatta when they were monkeys and so forth? Once, he was so violent as to break the neck of the monkey who had helped him—the Bodhisatta monkey. Due to various such forces of kamma, or due to other social causes like poverty, the betrayal of friends is seen. Nowadays, only these external factors are visible; they do not care much about the results of kamma (*kamma-vipāka*). Various other external psychological reasons are presented.

In any case, in brief, if those valuable virtues of the Buddha's teaching—loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*)—are not integrated into one's character, there grows in society that type of "wisdom of self-interest" (*attatthapaññā*) we mentioned. On a previous occasion, we explained in detail in a sermon the four bases of sympathy (*cattu saṅgahavatthu*) mentioned here. The Buddha has described them as the linchpin of the social chariot, which causes the progress of the social chariot: giving (*dāna*), pleasant speech (*peyyavajja*), useful conduct (*atthacariyā*), and impartiality (*samānattatā*). Giving, pleasant speech, useful conduct—acting for the welfare of others, and impartiality. These are factors that help in useful conduct, or generally bring about the welfare of everyone in society. It is said of those great lay disciples of the past, like Hatthaka Āḷavaka, who practiced these four bases of sympathy, and who also developed meditation and attained high stages of the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*), that they gathered large followings precisely by practicing these four bases of sympathy. Similarly, for those who develop the virtues of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and appreciative joy (*muditā*), some people may draw close to them through those very virtues.

Very bad things, like drugs and other corrupt things, spread very easily like diseases—like epidemic diseases. But virtues grow very slowly. Few are drawn to them. However, having understood what is good and bad, one must develop virtues in accordance with the word of the Buddha, the Dhamma. Selfish people must reflect that even if they gain a temporary benefit from it, they will have to pay for those terrible results of kamma (*kamma-vipāka*) in the future. *Avisāṅvadanatā* means non-deceitfulness—not deceiving one's friends. Furthermore, it is always said of good friends that they are prepared even to make self-sacrifices for the sake of their friend. As we said when describing the true friend, the *samānasukha* and others, they do not abandon their friend when the friend falls into adversity.

"True friends desire happiness and suffering alike,

They do not turn their backs like painted figures on a wall,"

as our ancient poets said. A true friend does not turn back like a wall painting. He does not abandon you even in times of adversity. This is what was said about true friends. Many people flock like bats to a fruiting tree when prosperity comes. At the slightest hint of scarcity, or when one falls into difficulty, they abandon you and

leave. Instead of this, one must try to develop those virtues of warm-hearted friends shown by the Buddha. Furthermore, if those qualities shown of counterfeit friends exist within oneself, one must make an effort to discard them. The Buddha has shown extraordinary facts in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, of which we took only one side here. We touched upon only one direction out of the six directions. We spoke of only one-sixth of the *Sigālovāda Sutta*. Yet, even within that, there is much for us to ponder for our daily lives—not only for laypeople but also for monastics and for all inhabitants of the world, because we have to live our lives within a society. That society begins at home. Starting with parents, children, and spouse, the concepts of trust and mutual care come naturally. This is the very thing that exists between friends. A good example of the spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇamitta*) between two friends is how Kolita and Upatissa shared the Dhamma they had attained.

In that manner, on certain occasions, one would remain starving to help one's friend, sharing even one's plate of rice. If we believe in the law of kamma, we must understand according to the Dhamma that there are blessings in cultivating such qualities. That is why the Buddha has shown this; if we limit this to this world alone, indeed, it is the evil friend who wins, it is the counterfeit friend who wins. When we look around, it appears so. But that winning is indeed a defeat when viewed according to the Dhamma. Why? Because it does not last long; when they fall, they fall. And when that person falls, there is no one to help him. Therefore, reflecting wisely, as we travel on this long journey of *saṁsāra*, if there is something to be learnt from the Jātaka stories, we must acquire it. That is, the conduct of the Bodhisattas, the extraordinary sacrifices they made over a long period in *saṁsāra* even for Devadatta, who came as their enemy. We do not value Jātaka stories much nowadays. But we must extract the valuable essence within them. In any case, it is not about being immersed in the narrative flavor of these stories and forgetting the rest. Here too, there is the extraordinary willpower of Prince Temiya—we did not narrate it at length because the Jātaka story is long. We mentioned the essential part. There is an extraordinary character who even gave up his kingship, and in order to abandon it, finally went to the forest and practiced the ascetic life.

Therefore, in our daily lives, we must be circumspect; to ensure our progress and development, we must avoid those counterfeit friends and evil friends, and draw close to warm-hearted spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitta*). Not only for our daily lives, but in the manner of the *atthakkhāyī* friend, to enable us to reach a happy rebirth—at the very least, to reach a happy rebirth, and at the very most, to attain the supreme goal shown in this Dispensation: to bring an end to all the suffering of *saṁsāra*, such as birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), disease, and death (*marana*). We must resolve to realize our supreme spiritual goals through the Dhamma declared to the world by that supreme Spiritual Friend (*Kalyāṇamitta*), the Buddha. Today, this virtuous gathering has experienced this to some extent according to their capacity. You have observed the precepts and spent the day directed toward meditation. At this moment, using the sermon we have delivered as a support, correct any shortcomings in your lives, and with the help of associating with spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitta*)

for your journey ahead in the spiritual life, make an effort to quickly realize the supreme, deathless Nibbāna through the realization of the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*)—Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, and Arahant—before the lamp of this Dispensation (*sāsana-pahana*) is extinguished. If there is anyone from Avīci to Akaniṭṭha who wishes to share in the merit of this Dhamma sermon and Dhamma listening, may they, by sharing in it, find peace in the supreme, deathless Nibbāna through their aspired Bodhi. Now, recite these verses.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……..*"