Pahankanuwa Sermon #127

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.56)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

Na brāhmaṇassa pahareyya, nāssa muñcetha brāhmaṇo;

dhī brāhmaṇassa hantāraṃ, tato dhī yassa muñcati;

na brāhmaṇassetadakiñci seyyo, yadā nisedho manaso piyehi;

yato yato hiṃsamano nivattati, tato tato sammati-c-eva dukkhaṃ ti.

From:

Dhammapada 389–390 (Brāhmaṇavagga)

Dear Listeners,

We generally consider attachment and clashing (aversion) as two completely different mental states. Why? Because attachment is towards what we find pleasant, while clashing is towards what we find unpleasant. However, the Buddha points out to us that even within clashing, there is a certain gratification or pleasure that is experienced. To put it briefly, we are inclined to repeatedly recreate conflict and clashing because we derive some happiness or gratification from it. What is that happiness? Revenge, paying back in kind (tit-for-tat), or seeing one's opponent fall into Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*). Now, the two valuable verses we have taken as our theme today clarify this very subtle point. The background story to these verses as recorded in the texts is highly exemplary.

While the Buddha was residing at Jetavana monastery, one day a conversation arose among a group of people gathered in Sāvatthī. It was a discussion praising the immense virtues of Ven. Sāriputta. "This Ven. Sāriputta of ours is a truly marvelous person. He possesses a wondrous power of patience and forbearance. Even if someone gets angry with him or strikes him, he does not get angry." Hearing this praise, a certain heretical Brahmin who was there asked, "Is there anyone in the world who does not get angry? Who is it that doesn't get angry?" When they replied,

"Yes, our Ven. Sāriputta cannot be made angry," the Brahmin made a sort of bet: "Well, is it impossible to make him angry? I know how to do it. I will show you how to make him angry."

Next, what was the method this Brahmin employed? While Ven. Sāriputta was walking for alms, the Brahmin walked up behind him and struck him extremely hard on his back. Without even turning back to see what it was, Ven. Sāriputta continued walking forward at his normal, natural pace. Seeing this, a cold sweat broke out on the Brahmin. "Oh, what immense virtue this person possesses!" he thought. He immediately ran ahead, fell at the Elder's feet, and begged for forgiveness: "Venerable Sir, forgive me." Ven. Sāriputta asked, "What is this about?" The Brahmin replied, "I struck you to test you." Even before the Brahmin could beg further, Ven. Sāriputta immediately said, "I forgive you." Then the Brahmin said, "Venerable Sir, if you forgive me, out of compassion please walk to my house and accept almsfood." Having said so, he asked for the Venerable's almsbowl.

Taking the bowl, the Brahmin walked behind. Having conducted Ven. Sāriputta to his house, the Brahmin offered him almsfood bountifully. Meanwhile, the news that a Brahmin had struck the Elder spread, and a large crowd of people armed with sticks and clubs gathered near the house, saying, "This Brahmin must be killed! He has struck our innocent Elder." They stood outside the house, waiting. When Ven. Sāriputta looked out after finishing his meal, he saw these people. The Elder reflected with wisdom and employed a certain skillful device. What was it? He handed the almsbowl to the Brahmin. Ven. Sāriputta then walked in front, and the Brahmin followed behind carrying the bowl. The people did not know what to do. They appealed to Ven. Sāriputta, "Venerable Sir, please take your bowl and let us have this Brahmin." "Why?" the Elder asked. They replied, "This Brahmin struck you, Venerable Sir. We know what to do to him." Then Ven. Sāriputta asked, "Did this Brahmin strike you or me?" "He struck you, Venerable Sir," they said. "Ah, if he struck me, I have already forgiven him. You may all go." Thus, he sent away the lay devotees who had come to assault the Brahmin with sticks and clubs.

After sending them away, Ven. Sāriputta returned to Jetavana. When the news spread among the community of monks, a discussion arose: "What is the meaning of what Ven. Sāriputta did? He went to the very house of the Brahmin who struck him and accepted alms! What will happen to us now? If someone can strike the Chief Disciple like this, that man will go around striking all of us!" In this way, an uproar arose among the monks. At that moment, the Buddha arrived there and asked, "Monks, what were you discussing?" When they told him the story, the Buddha first remarked, "Monks, a (true) Brahmin does not strike another Brahmin. What has happened here is that a lay Brahmin has struck an ordained Brahmin." Then, using that incident as a basis, the Buddha expounded these two verses to the world as a Dhamma instruction, which we have taken as our theme.

Na brāhmaṇassa pahareyya, nāssa muñcetha brāhmaṇo

Dhī brāhmaṇassa hantāraṁ, tato dhī yassa muñcati

These few lines express a deeply profound meaning. On that occasion, the Buddha used the word 'Brahmin' in a deep sense. As some of you may have heard, for instance in the Vasala Sutta, in this Dispensation, a 'Brahmin' in the truest sense refers to an Arahant, not one who is a Brahmin by birth. Accordingly, the Buddha took the Arahant as the true Brahmin. That is why he said a (true) Brahmin does not strike. What happened here was that an ordinary lay Brahmin—that is, one who is a Brahmin merely by birth—struck an ordained Brahmin, an Arahant.

Employing the word 'Brahmin' in this manner, the Buddha declared: *Na brāhmaṇassa pahareyya*—one should not strike a Brahmin, that noble Arahant. That is a grave unwholesome deed. *Nāssa muñcetha brāhmaṇo*—similarly, after being struck, if one is a true Brahmin, he does not unleash hatred towards the assailant. He does not harbor hatred or anger. Next: *Dhī brāhmaṇassa hantāraṁ*—the word *dhī* is used in Pali to mean "shame upon!". Shame upon him who strikes a true Brahmin, an Arahant, because it is such a grave and serious unwholesome deed. Then he says: *tato dhī yassa muñcati*—yet, worse than the act of striking is when the victim unleashes his wrath or hatred against the assailant.

Then he further declares:

Na brāhmaṇassetadakiñci seyyo, yadā nisedho manaso piyehi

Regarding the true Brahmins who possess those noble virtues in accordance with the Dhamma, what is about to be said is no small thing. What is it? *Yadā nisedho manaso piyehi*—restraining the mind from what is dear. Here, "what is dear" (*piya*) refers to what one holds as dear or pleasant. Now, for someone who is angry, what is "dear" is taking revenge, venting anger, or reacting towards the person who struck him. Restraining the mind from that "dear" reaction is no minor good thing; it is a great and valuable thing. That is to say, if someone insults or strikes us, our mind "likes" to strike back or insult back. Restraining the mind from that "dear" reaction is an extremely noble quality—this is what the first two lines mean. The reason for this is explained as a natural law (*dharmatā*) in the next two lines. Often, the Buddha makes a statement and then confirms it by showing the natural law. What is that natural law?

Yato yato hiṁsamano nivattati, tato tato sammati-c-eva dukkhaṁ

Yato yato nivattati—wherever the harmful, violent mind is restrained or turned back, *tato tato sammati-c-eva*—to that very extent, in accordance with those situations, one's samsaric Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*), which can arise as mental distress due to unwholesome deeds and bad kamma, is calmed. That is to say, even if taking revenge, retaliating in anger, or blaming the other person seems pleasant and dear to us, if we restrain the mind from them, what is the result, the benefit we receive? To the extent that we restrain the mind, to that very

extent our samsaric Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) is calmed. This is the advice. We first briefly summarized the story and the verses as they appear in the texts. Now let us go a bit deeper into this to see the examples and lessons we can draw for our lives.

Let us first reflect on the nature of the great Ven. Sāriputta's noble virtues. You have heard much about the sublime character of the Chief Disciple, Ven. Sāriputta. Generally, the Chief Disciple Ven. Sāriputta is recognized among the disciples in this Dispensation as the one foremost in wisdom. However, if we take wisdom in this day and age as mere cleverness or scholarship, it does not necessarily require noble character or virtue. But Ven. Sāriputta's wisdom was of such a high order that it was accompanied by a marvelous store of virtues: humility, patience, loving-kindness, compassion, and gratitude—all these great virtues were established in his character. What is illustrated here is Ven. Sāriputta's quality of patience, which is called *khanti* (forbearance/patience), not anger (*kēntiya*). Do not misunderstand this. Patience is the polar opposite of anger. What we have here is a story illustrating that valuable quality of forbearance, the quality of patience.

Moreover, if we reflect deeply on this story, we can see both a poignant side and a somewhat humorous side. The poignant aspect is that, for whatever reason, the Brahmin struck the back of the Chief Disciple who possessed such high virtues. Indeed, in those days, the news must have spread as: "A Brahmin struck Ven. Sāriputta!" There were no advanced communication media back then. If such an incident were to occur today, it might appear in bold black letters as a front-page newspaper headline: "Brahmin Attacks Ven. Sāriputta!" The news spread in a similar manner. But that is not all. The striking was not done out of anger or hatred. It was not a blow struck out of enmity towards Ven. Sāriputta. That is why I said there is a humorous side to it; the Brahmin struck him merely to win a bet!

Such things happen in society. People make bets and then try to pull off some stunt to show off their prowess. But although done in jest, it is a deadly serious matter. Due to his wrong view and dogma of self-illusion / view of existing group/body (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), the Brahmin did not realize this. Striking such a person is a grave unwholesome deed, regardless of the motive. But the Brahmin did not learn this lesson from some deep sutta expounded by the highly wise Ven. Sāriputta. There are extremely deep suttas taught by Ven. Sāriputta, but we can learn valuable lessons not only from them, but also from his character and the way he acted in such situations. Here, Ven. Sāriputta did not preach a long sermon. He preached a silent sermon. After being struck, he quietly kept walking in the same manner. He did not even look back to see who had struck him. If the Brahmin had not run ahead to beg for forgiveness, he wouldn't even have known who struck him. You can well imagine what would normally happen if such an incident took place in a city: blow for blow, word for word, happening almost instantaneously. Instead, Ven. Sāriputta continued to walk in his natural, composed manner. It was this very composure that made the Brahmin break into a cold sweat. It was a silent sermon. Through it, this heretical

Brahmin was completely transformed in a single moment, instantly becoming a devoted lay follower. That is why he took the almsbowl and conducted Ven. Sāriputta to his house to offer alms.

Meanwhile, the news spread through word of mouth—the communication medium of that time. Today we have various media. You all know about word-of-mouth news; like the story of the "crow's feather," only one side gets exaggerated. Even regarding newspapers today, we know that headlines are designed to agitate and provoke people, rather than report the complete truth. These are open secrets. It was the same back then; it is a common trait of society. So, the story went: "A Brahmin struck Ven. Sāriputta." The people came armed with sticks and clubs. Even though Ven. Sāriputta was calmly eating his alms, the people's anger did not subside. Ready to take revenge and pay back the Brahmin, they asked the Elder to take his bowl. At that moment, the words Ven. Sāriputta wisely uttered were highly valuable: "Did he strike you or me?" When they replied, "He struck you, Venerable Sir," he said, "Then, if he struck me, I have already forgiven him. What business is it of yours?" Here too, we find a valuable lesson from Ven. Sāriputta's character: his wisdom, which is called situational wisdom or tact (*sthānōcita prajñā*). If Ven. Sāriputta had not used situational wisdom at that moment, it would have resulted in a massive entanglement.

If Ven. Sāriputta had finished his alms and walked away, thinking "let whatever happens to this donor happen," what would have occurred? The mob would have assaulted that poor man with their sticks and clubs. Now, this man was no longer just an assailant; he had become a devotee in a single moment. A person's character can transform in an instant. But the world does not know this; they became enraged upon hearing the partial news. Ven. Sāriputta pacified the crowd and returned to Jetavana. But the issue was not over. Next came the protest from the monks—in modern terms, the reaction of the Maha Sangha. Their reaction was: "What is the meaning of what Ven. Sāriputta did? How can we face society now? If they can strike Ven. Sāriputta like this, how can we walk down the streets?" Thus, the monks made a huge uproar. These are also typical of things that happen, and we must learn lessons from them. The main problem had already been solved on the spot, but its echoes and repercussions were still spreading. It is through the spreading of such partial/incomplete news that dangerous crimes and severe situations arise.

Next, let us look at the Buddha's reaction. We can learn a lesson from this too. When it was reported in such an exaggerated way, the Buddha downplayed its severity. How? "A (true) Brahmin striking another Brahmin does not happen. What happened is this: a lay Brahmin—that is, one who is a Brahmin merely by birth—has struck a practicing Brahmin (Brahmin by conduct)." By analyzing it this way, he reduced its gravity and drew a lesson for the world. What is the practice of a true Brahmin? A true Brahmin does not strike, nor does he take revenge. Instead, what does he do? What is his effort, his vigor (*vīriya*)? To calm his own mind. His mind might urge him to take revenge or pay back in kind, but he restrains it. Restraining the mind is

no small achievement, the Buddha declares. Why? Because if one restrains it to any degree, to that extent the Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) of oneself and the world is calmed. The pressure and harm on society from escalated conflict is stopped. By calming one's own mind, one appeases a mountain of Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*)—such as anger, remorse, defilement of the mind, and the accumulation of unwholesome kamma. This is what the Buddha declares here.

So, from this short story and these two verses, you can gather many things to help your own lives. Anger (*kōpaya*) is a common weakness we all know. We know that in sudden anger, people even go to the extent of killing their own parents, or defiling their minds toward the Buddha and other noble ones. You know the story of Devadatta. That anger can turn into multi-lifetime hatred, leading to a host of terrifying unwholesome deeds. If such a thing is not pacified at the very beginning, there is no end to it; it drags on and on in samsara. Instead, the Buddha advises us to stop it right where it arises. People in the world often think that when someone does something to them, they must pay them back in kind (tit-for-tat). They think this solves the problem. But instead of solving it, it escalates it. Why? Even a child knows this; it is not a complex calculation: 1 + 1 = 2. Paying back 'one for one' makes the problem 'two.' Then, based on how the other reacts, those two become four, four becomes eight, eight becomes sixteen, and so on. This is how conflicts escalate. Therefore, the Buddha says: do not pay back in kind. Do not answer back in kind. By doing so, Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness / Stress (*Dukkha*) grows. The Buddha has given a valuable teaching on not answering back in another verse of the Dhammapada:

Sace neresi attānaṁ, kaṁso upahato yathā

Esa pattosi nibbānaṁ, sārambho te na vijjati

That is to say, when someone insults you or says something provoking, if you restrain yourself (*sace neresi attānaṁ*)—even though words rush to your tongue, if you restrain your mind, discipline your speech, and remain silent—the Buddha gives a beautiful simile. How do you calm yourself? What is the simile? Like a broken bronze/copper vessel. Let us think of a cracked bronze vessel, or one with a broken rim. If you strike it, the sound stops right there; it does not reverberate. A normal bronze vessel, even if lightly tapped, resonates and reverberates for a long time. Similarly, when someone says a word to an ordinary person, it reverberates in their mind: "I know what to do to him! I will show him!" echoing in the mind until they take revenge. Just as a normal bronze vessel rings continuously when struck, the ordinary mind keeps echoing with thoughts of revenge.

Here, the Buddha gives the example of a cracked or broken bronze vessel: when struck, its sound ends immediately and does not spread. If you restrain your mind according to this simile, you are truly stilled, as if you have realized Nibbāna. You experience the taste of Nibbāna right within your mind in a temporary way

(*tadaṅga*) at that very moment. *Sārambho te na vijjati*—because of that calming, you do not engage in retaliatory speech. The Buddha has explained this regarding retaliatory speech. In society, conflicts and clashes occur because we forget this natural law (*dharmatā*). We try to solve these problems through *ayoniso manasikāra* (unwise attention), grasping the wrong end, the wrong side of things. Instead, the Buddha points out Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*) as explained in the Noble Eightfold Path. As soon as the mind is freed from the unwholesome, one is liberated from a host of terrible dangers, and great peace is brought to the world. This is what is meant here regarding retaliatory speech.

Anger arises in all of us depending on the situation. Today, there is a common phrase in society: "justifiable anger" (*sādhāraṇa kōpaya*). In truth, anger is never justifiable, and there is no anger in what is truly just. Yet, this term has become very common in social usage, perhaps due to a wrong concept among other religions. Why is anger never justifiable according to the Dhamma? The Buddha declared that once a person falls into anger, they cannot see things as they truly are; the mind becomes dark. If you cannot see things as they are, how can there be any justice? Not only that, you have heard of the four biases or ways of falling into wrong (*satara agatiya*). Going to *agatiya* means being driven to do what should not be done. Four are mentioned: *chanda* (desire/favoritism), *dosa* (aversion/hatred), *bhaya* (fear), and *moha* (delusion). Under the influence of *chanda*, out of excessive attachment, one can become biased and commit a wrong. Under the influence of *dosa* (hatred/anger), one can act unjustly, depriving someone of what they deserve. Out of *bhaya* (fear), one can do unjust things. Or out of *moha* (delusion/ignorance). Here too, *dosa* (aversion/hatred) is mentioned. This is why there is no such thing as "justifiable anger." The Buddha has shown how to handle sudden anger using various wonderful similes in different suttas. There is another valuable simile we should keep in our minds:

Yo ve uppatitaṁ kodhaṁ, rathaṁ bhantaṁva vāraye

Tamahaṁ sārathiṁ brūmi, rasmiggāho itaro jano

If someone restrains the anger that has arisen in their mind—and here is the simile—like quickly bringing back to the road a chariot that has veered off. In those days, there were horse chariots. If the horse drags the chariot toward a ditch, and you do not turn it back immediately, the chariot falls into the ditch or down a slope and gets destroyed. Therefore, one must immediately bring it back onto the road. Similarly, as soon as anger arises, one must try to steer the mind away from it. *Rathaṁ bhantaṁva vāraye*—just like bringing a runaway chariot back to the path, if someone quickly pacifies the anger that has arisen, "him I call a true charioteer, a true driver." Of others, the Buddha says: *rasmiggāho itaro jano*—they are merely holding the reins, as if sleeping. The Buddha uses such wonderful similes. He also says:

Yo uppatitaṁ vineti kodhaṁ, visataṁ sappavisaṁva osadhehi

Thus, he gives a simile of snake venom. *Yo uppatitaṁ vineti kodhaṁ, visataṁ sappavisaṁva osadhehi*—how should one act when anger arises? When a snake bites, one does not just wait and watch, because snake venom spreads rapidly. As soon as anger arises, just as one would quickly neutralize the spreading snake venom with medicine (*osadha*), one must pacify anger immediately. This is the true practice declared by the Buddha. Often, we do not understand the true nature of this basic disturbance in our minds. We either consider it justifiable or think that taking revenge is something that must be done. A world-famous Dhammapada verse taught by the Buddha is:

Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṁ

Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano

As an eternal law, the Buddha declared that hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is it appeased.

However, we do not try to realize this truth for ourselves. We see only the opposite side. We think we must pacify it by paying back in kind. One has to calculate and see if this actually works. This is the situation. The Buddha spoke of anger in this way. Then, he pointed out many methods in various places to help us calm anger and bring these practices into our lives.

Everyone knows that the direct opposite of hatred/aversion (*dosa*), or the quality that helps calm it, is loving-kindness (*mettā*). Almost all of you practice *mettā* meditation to some extent. But when speaking of *mettā* meditation, some people today experience a certain dryness or lack of interest. In this modern world, running after worldly things, meditation has been marginalized as something done only by going to the forest for a short time, and then returning to the world to live a completely different life. Therefore, if we express the function of this meditation in a term familiar to the world, we must say this: through *mettā* meditation, what we expect to build is an attitude of loving-kindness. You must have heard this word "attitude" (*ākalpaya*) often. When we build a certain attitude, then when a sudden situation arises, we react according to that attitude. If a person who has built an attitude of loving-kindness faces a problem, their solution will follow the path of loving-kindness. But a person who has developed an attitude of aversion or hatred will act accordingly. Therefore, what helps us in daily life from *mettā* meditation is that attitude of loving-kindness.

In this Dispensation, there are higher things that can be achieved through the *jhānas* (meditative absorptions). These are the highest states. *Mettā cetovimutti* (mind-deliverance through loving-kindness) is a marvelous liberation of the mind that can be attained through loving-kindness. For those whose minds do not easily take to formal meditation in daily life, they should think: "What I am doing through *mettā* meditation is building an attitude of loving-kindness. This is a small exercise I do to prevent myself and others from falling into grave suffering due to sudden anger in

dangerous daily-life situations. This is an exercise in training the mind in daily life." Thinking thus, they should engage in *mettā* meditation to build an attitude of loving-kindness.

Next, there are situations where one cannot pacify anger through loving-kindness alone. In such situations, thinking about that person's ignorance or lack of understanding, one should arouse compassion (*karuṇā*). Not only compassion, the Buddha points out that in some situations, equanimity (*upekkhā*)—impartiality/neutrality—is helpful. This is the level that the person has brought with them; one cannot expect more from them. Thinking thus, one elevates the mind to equanimity. Or, one avoids paying attention to the cause of anger, directing the mind elsewhere. Or, one thinks about kamma: "His kamma belongs to him, my kamma belongs to me." The Buddha points out: "beings are owners of their kamma, heirs to their kamma" (*kammassakā, kammadāyādā...*). What he does is his kamma, what I do is my kamma. Usually, the world considers taking revenge as something that must be done, an absolute necessity. But because that "necessary action" leads to terrifying consequences (*dukkha*), the true thing to be done instead is to withdraw the mind from it, thinking: "That is his kamma. I do not need to create more kamma through this."

These are the things the Buddha has shown on various occasions. The wonderful patience and forbearance of Ven. Sāriputta, which we discussed, was demonstrated in his character during this incident. He also gave a valuable sermon showing how much patience and forbearance he possessed. On one occasion, he gave a discourse to the monks on how to subdue resentment/malice (*āghāta*). Resentment (*āghātaya*), dear devotees, is the most severe, extreme end of aversion, hatred, and anger. Everyone knows that when anger arises, it starts as a minor disturbance in the mind. There are stages to it. First, there is the state where one says, "My mind is a bit upset." Next, "I got angry," then "I felt wrath," "hatred," and "enmity." When this enmity becomes multi-lifetime, it is called *āghāta* (entrenched resentment/malice)—a very grave thing. It is called bound enmity (*baddha vairaya*). Resentment (*āghāta*) means bound enmity. Ven. Sāriputta shows ways to remove even this bound enmity. The similes he uses are wonderful, very deep though they seem simple. Since he was preaching to the monks, he presented them in a way relevant to a monk's life. Suppose a monk develops resentment (*āghāta*) toward another monk. Why? Because that person's bodily conduct is very unrefined and improper. His verbal conduct is also very improper. How to subdue resentment toward such a person? Ven. Sāriputta explains it as follows.

First, he speaks of a person whose bodily conduct is unrefined, but whose verbal conduct is refined. In this first stage, Ven. Sāriputta says we should ignore the unrefined aspect and think only of the refined side. The simile he gives helps us grasp this: Monks who wear rag-robes (*paṁsukūla*) find the cloth they need for their robes by picking up discarded rags fallen on the road while walking for alms. They sew their robes from these. He uses a simile based on this. A rag-robe wearing monk

walking on the road sees a dirty rag. It is so dirty that he cannot even touch it with his hands. But he needs the cloth; he cannot just throw it away because he has a need. What does he do? He steps on the dirty rag with his left foot, tears off a clean piece with his right foot, and takes it with him. Similarly, one should ignore that person's unrefined bodily conduct, focus only on their refined speech, and thus calm one's resentment.

Next, he presents the opposite case: a person whose bodily conduct is refined, but whose verbal conduct is unrefined. What he does with his body is good, but what he says is bad. He gives a similar simile: In the hot season, a traveler comes along, extremely thirsty, looking for water. He finds a pond that is completely covered with algae/moss. Even though it is covered with algae, he is thirsty and must drink. What does he do? He pushes the algae aside with both hands and drinks the clear water. Similarly, at that moment, without thinking ill of the person's words, one should think only of their good bodily conduct and remove one's hatred.

He gives another simile for another type of person: a person whose bodily conduct is completely useless, and whose verbal conduct is also completely useless—extremely unrefined. However, occasionally, even for a brief moment, wholesome, good, valuable thoughts arise in that person's mind. Rarely, once in a while. The simile for this is: In the hot season, a traveler is walking along a long road through a great wilderness, and there is no place to drink water, no well anywhere. Suddenly, he sees a little water in a puddle left by a cow's hoof-print. Since there is so little water, he cannot scoop it up with a bucket or a large cup. What does he do? He gets down on his knees like a cow, laps up the water with his tongue, and continues on his way. Similarly, at that moment, do not focus on that person's bad bodily conduct, nor on their bad verbal conduct. Think only of that rare moment when their mind became calm and their good qualities briefly emerged, forgive them, and withdraw your mind from hatred.

Next, he speaks of another person: a person whose bodily conduct is not good, whose verbal conduct is not good, and in whose mind there is not even a single wholesome thought or good state occasionally. There is absolutely nothing good to take from him—he is 100% useless, so to speak. Yet, Ven. Sāriputta shows how to remove hatred even toward such a person using this simile: Suppose someone sees a very sick, ailing traveler on the highway. He has no medicine, no travel allowance, nothing to eat, and does not know the way. Seeing him, a person feels great compassion: "Oh, how good it would be if there were someone to show him the way, someone to give him food, someone to give him medicine and attend to him." At least that compassionate thought arises. Similarly, Ven. Sāriputta states, even toward that completely unrefined, 100% bad person, what helps remove hatred is compassion (*karuṇā*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and sympathy (*dayānukampā*). One must arouse these qualities.

Fifth, he presents what is a very easy thing, but we must understand it: Suppose there is a person whose bodily conduct is entirely good, and whose verbal conduct is

entirely good, yet for some reason, out of some personal dislike, anger or hatred arises toward them. This can be calmed very quickly. The simile for this: A thirsty traveler sees a beautiful, delightful pond. It is full of clean water. He can drink as much as he wants, and he can bathe. Going there, he bathes and drinks as much as he likes. Similarly, that person should think of the immense heap of virtue in that individual: "How could I develop hatred toward someone who possesses such a heap of virtue?" Reflecting on those virtues, he quickly removes his hatred. In this way, Ven. Sāriputta has shown various strategies, having analyzed our minds deeply. Our minds have different states/tendencies (*pravṛtti*). There are times when it is easy to calm them, times when it is very difficult, and times when it seems impossible. But to cover all these, the Buddhas and the likes of Ven. Sāriputta have given these wonderful similes. Based on these, we must reflect that the reason we travel in this long samsara is due to the three unwholesome roots: greed (*lobha*), hatred/aversion (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

As we said at the very beginning, greed (*lobha*) and hatred/aversion (*dosa*) appear to be opposites at first glance. But underlying them is this: when we do not get what is dear/pleasing to us, or when someone does not behave as we wish, then hatred/aversion arises toward that person. Then, that hatred continues and drags on because we see revenge, tit-for-tat, or seeing that person suffer as something "dear" (pleasurable). "Ah, he did it to me, now here is the result!"—seeing this and finding a chance to be happy is what drives us to harm and take revenge on that person. Such attitudes exist in the mind. When we cannot fulfill this, we have to wander endlessly in samsara. The best proof of how long the hatred in the mind can last is the conflict between the Bodhisatta and Devadatta. Those who read the Jataka stories can see how far the hatred and resentment (*āghāta*) that arose between the two of them from a small beginning dragged on over countless aeons (*kalpas*).

From this, we can understand how grave this hatred/aversion is. In short, it is described as a fire—the fire of hatred. That is why the Buddha called the subduing of hatred a "stilling/extinction." Hatred is a harsh, rigid state of mind, while loving-kindness is a soft, gentle state of mind. One must try to make the mind soft and gentle. One cannot just wait for the right moment. Some say, "We generate loving-kindness in our minds and radiate it to so-and-so, or to the world, but there is no use in just saying it." But what is the nature of our minds? If we think about something repeatedly, if we maintain thoughts accordingly, our mind bends in that direction. The Buddha has declared this: there is a bending, an inclination of the mind in this world. If a person's mind is bent toward hatred and anger, if they act in that direction, if they maintain thoughts in that direction and think of its benefits, that person bends more and more toward anger. Instead, if one tries to develop loving-kindness, if they consider the benefits of loving-kindness, their mind becomes soft and gentle. There is a huge difference between the solution that comes to a soft and gentle mind and the solution that comes to a rigid mind when a problem arises. That is why we used the word "attitude." The difference lies in that attitude. Another word used in society is "reaction" (*pratichāraya*). We spoke of the reaction of the monks.

These are the reactions of different individuals. The reason is the shaping of the mind. If the mind is not properly shaped, the reaction follows accordingly. Ven. Sāriputta's reaction was not like the reaction of the monks who protested at Jetavana. It shows the level of development in each individual's mind.

Therefore, we must strive to understand these facts. The Buddha has not shown us something impossible. It is something possible. But if we do it systematically according to proper instructions, we will receive the benefits declared by the Buddha. You have often heard of the benefits of *mettā* meditation. The Buddha has shown eleven benefits. In addition to helping in daily life, if one attains a state of concentration (*samādhi*) or absorption (*jhāna*) through loving-kindness that helps one's samsaric liberation, that too can be used to support Nibbāna. In short, this loving-kindness is a liberation of the mind—called *cetovimutti* (mind-deliverance). Because the mind is trapped within fences and barriers. The very first fence is the notion of "I" and "mine" (*mamaya, māgēya*).

The Buddha has declared that there is no one in this world as dear to oneself as oneself. That is a truth. Some think their children are dearer, or others are dearer. But they are all dear to us because we hold ourselves dear. That is a reality. If we accept this, then in practicing loving-kindness, we must think that just as we are dear to ourselves, others are also dear to themselves. This is the basic illustration of non-harming (*avihiṁsā*) shown by the Buddha.

Attānaṁ upamaṁ katvā, na haneyya na ghātaye

One does not like to be beaten, insulted, or to fall into suffering. Similarly, thinking of others, keeping oneself in the witness stand and comparing oneself to them, one should not harm others—this is what the Buddha has shown. On the other hand, some love only themselves; this is called selfishness. But a mother, for instance, will protect her child even at the cost of her own life. The Buddha shows us how to gradually expand that attitude, not just to one's family, not just to one's friends, but to neighbors, and then to all beings. For some, this can be done very easily. Although we think of these as fences/barriers, the practice here is not about forcefully breaking them, but understanding roughly that there are many such fences and expanding very deep, valuable concepts of loving-kindness to break through them. Sometimes, the phrase "May they be well and happy!" (*suvapath vetvā*) can be useful. One does not need to add many words to it. Often, what happens to us is getting lost in a multitude of words.

What many people do as "meditation" is chanting a large number of beautiful words in a beautiful melody. It does not penetrate within. Meditation is often done as something external, something heard outside. It is broadcast through loudspeakers and other devices, rather than entering within. But to enter within, one does not need such a large pile of words. One word that is meaningful to you is enough: "May they be well and happy!" "May they be well and happy!" As the Buddha has declared, to the extent that one repeatedly brings this to mind, the mind becomes accustomed to

it, and an attitude is built. Thus, to build an attitude of loving-kindness, one does not need to go very far. One word, depending on the opportunity, starting in one's quiet, dedicated meditation posture during free time, determinedly practicing it even for a short while. Based on that habit, gradually during other activities and postures, the Buddha has declared: *Tiṭṭhaṁ caraṁ nisinno vā, sayāno vā yāvatassa...* as you have often heard in the Karaṇīyametta Sutta. When the meditation is well-developed, some can maintain this mindfulness in all four postures—standing, sitting, lying down, walking—at least until they fall asleep. Some can maintain this mindfulness throughout the entire day. To the extent they maintain it, the mind becomes unified, concentrated, and enters *samādhi*, and then, as declared by the Buddha, the mind is liberated (*vimukta*). "The mind is liberated" means it breaks through those barriers—the barriers of selfishness.

Breaking through the separation of "my people" and others, finally, the word gains a marvelous depth that encompasses the entire universe, including all animal beings. It is just one word. But when it is aroused, the entire world is already encompassed by the mind. It breaks through everything. It is a marvelous thing. Thus, from a small start, a great thing is accomplished. Through this, the grave unwholesome root of hatred/aversion is dispelled. The roots that carry us through this samsara—greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*)—are like a triangle. Delusion (*moha*) is the very illusion of "I" and "mine." Once we grasp things as "I" and "mine," then what "I" like is greed (*lobha*). The obstacles to getting what "I" like, as well as what "I" dislike, form the other side, which is hatred (*dosa*). If delusion (*moha*) is "I", then on either side are what "I" like and dislike. The world exists between these two as attraction and repulsion, attachment and clashing. It is because of the things we accumulate as kamma within this that we travel in samsara for a long time. In the Dhamma, it is mentioned that when looking at the results of kamma (*kamma-vipāka*), as a minor result of hatred/aversion, one becomes ugly/disfigured. Similarly, skin diseases and other ailments occur. Diseases and afflictions become abundant due to harming others. Furthermore, as Devadatta did, if one takes revenge against those who have attained the noble state—the highest treasures in the world, such as the Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and Arahants—it is like smashing one's head against a rock. It is the end. Some are said to have been swallowed by the earth. This is a cosmic law (*loka dharmatā*). For you know that the severity of an unwholesome deed done with a defiled mind is affected both by one's own mind and by the spiritual quality of the person one harms.

Harming a Buddha, a Paccekabuddha, or an Arahant is not the same as harming an ordinary animal. They are not the same. This is because harming the most noble treasures in the world, even with a single thought of the mind, generates grave unwholesome kamma. Therefore, in a world inclined toward such defilements, the mind is like having the steering wheel of a fast-moving vehicle placed in your hands. If you do not know how to turn this steering wheel when necessary, if you do not know how to bring it back to the road when needed, you can imagine where it will end. That is why the Buddha has shown the simile of the charioteer. On the other

hand, what is the first thing you do when a snake bites? Before the venom spreads, you apply medicine as quickly as possible. You look for a snake-stone (*nai gala*) or try some method to draw out the venom. Similarly, when greed or hatred arises, the Buddha directs us toward the internal conflict/struggle by reflecting on its danger, rather than the external conflict. The world tries to solve problems through external conflict, through paying back in kind—one and one make two, two and two make four, and so on.

Usually, we consider the cause of anger—some word spoken or action done by someone—as a challenge to show our power and capability. Instead, the Buddha points out that it is a challenge given to us to shape, calm, and quieten our own minds. How much has our mind developed through meditation? How quickly can we bring our mind to that state of stilling/extinguishment? Thinking of the word spoken or action done by that person as a good challenge, it is only through this internal struggle that we can achieve our true victory. Thus, you have received a lesson from the noble character and example of Ven. Sāriputta. Moreover, we have come here amidst these daily conflicts and a multitude of samsaric defilements. With the help of the Buddha, we hope to conquer our samsaric weaknesses and escape this terrifying samsara as quickly as possible.

You have established yourselves in the noble virtue of *Ājīva-aṭṭhamaka-sīla*. There too, restraint of speech is mentioned. There are also those who observe even higher precepts. What everyone expects through practicing virtue (*sīla*), meditation, and all of these is the training of the mind. Many facts related to this were mentioned in this sermon. If you reflect more deeply on these similes and stories and bring them into your lives, you will receive the true benefits of this Dhamma sermon, the benefits of hearing the Dhamma (*dharmasravaṇānisansa*). As we always remind you: this opportunity has helped develop faith (*saddhā*), which supports our realization of Nibbāna, along with energy (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Through this, you have received the opportunity to develop Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*) to conquer the unwholesome and cultivate the wholesome. By directing your minds to this Dhamma sermon, you have had the opportunity to develop mindfulness (*sati*), and also to attain concentration (*samādhi*) through recollection of the Dhamma (*dhammānussati*), recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*), and recollection of the Sangha (*saṅghānussati*). Through all of these, may you cultivate the quality of wisdom (*paññā*) by gaining deep understanding of the Dhamma with a calmed mind.

May the merit of hearing this Dhamma accumulated so far definitely help remove the dangers that may arise in daily life and in samsara, and help you live with Dhamma peace! Furthermore, by developing meditation through the association with noble friends (*kalyāṇa-mitta*), may this store of wholesome merit accumulated today definitely be a supportive condition for realizing the path, fruit, and penetration of *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī*, and *Arahant*, and for attaining the peace of supreme, deathless Nibbāna! Similarly, may this store of wholesome merit be shared

with and rejoiced by all deceased relatives, as well as the noble friends, the deities and Brahmas who protect the Dispensation, and all beings from Avīci to Akaniṭṭha who hope to receive such merits! May they all rejoice in our merit of preaching and hearing the Dhamma! Having rejoiced, may they as quickly as possible be liberated from all samsaric suffering such as Birth / Arising (*jāti*), Decay and Death / Aging and Death (*jarāmaraṇa*), sickness, and death, and attain the peace of supreme, deathless Nibbāna! Wishing thus, let us share the merits by reciting these verses.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……..*"