Pahankanuwa Sermon #132

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.62)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

Idha socati pecca socati, pāpakārī ubhayattha socati;

so socati so vihaññati, disvā kamma-kiliṭṭham attano ti.

From:

Dhammapada 15 (Yamakavagga)

Dear Listeners,

The question of livelihood is a serious issue that affects everyone living in this society. It is with the intention of living comfortably, without want, that a person chooses a certain path of livelihood, a profession. But the Buddha points out that if that choice is not made with wisdom in accordance with the Dhamma, one can even fall into great ruin.

The Buddha reminds us that one should choose a profession with both eyes: the economic eye that sees the way to earn wealth, as well as the righteous eye that helps to identify good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome. Otherwise, if one lives like a one-eyed blind person, possessing only a squinted eye that sees only the way to earn wealth, one is likely to fall into a multitude of terrifying sufferings / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*) both in this world and the next. A good illustration of this very point is the background story to the verse we have taken as our theme today.

During the time the Buddha was residing near the Veluvana monastery, there lived a pig-slayer named Cunda. This pig-slayer lived for fifty-five years killing, eating, and selling pigs. This is how his livelihood is described: During times of food scarcity in distant areas, this man would travel in a cart taking paddy, collect piglets in those villages in exchange for a measure or two of paddy, and return with a cart full of them.

After rearing them—as you, devout devotees, know, the main food of pigs is found behind houses anyway—after they ate all those things and grew fat, he would light a furnace, bind the pig nearby so that it could not move, and beat it thoroughly with a square club to make its flesh firm. Having finished beating, next, just like driving in a wedge, he would insert a wooden peg to keep its mouth open, and pour boiling water heated in an iron vessel down its throat to wash away the animal's excrement and filth. Once the intestines were completely cleansed, he would pour the remaining water over its body to peel off the skin, singe the bristles with a torch of grass, and finally sever the neck with a sharp sword. Having severed it, he would collect the flowing blood, cook that pork with the blood gravy, enjoy it thoroughly with his family, and sell the rest. In this manner did Cunda's livelihood continue.

Having lived in this way for fifty-five years, finally, at a time we would now call retirement, Cunda contracted a severe disease due to his kamma. His entire body was burning. He began running up and down the house, wailing exactly like a pig. What was the reason for that? He began to see the place where he was to be reborn after death—Avīci. Avīci, the great Avīci purgatory. So, in fear and trembling, in fear of death, he ran here and there. The family members tried to close his mouth, but it was so loud that even the neighbors in the surrounding houses could not sleep. The doors of the houses were closed. This man was running here and there like a pig. Having spent seven days in this manner experiencing suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*), on the seventh day he died and was born in the Avīci Great Hell. In the meantime, when the members of the Sangha were passing near this house, they heard this sound and, thinking that Cunda had been slaughtering pigs for seven days, went to the Buddha and said, "Venerable Sir, there must be some festival or wedding at the house of Cunda and his family; for seven days they have been slaughtering pigs in this manner. That man has no compassion or loving-kindness at all." "No, Bhikkhus, he was not slaughtering pigs; rather, as a result of his kamma, in a manner appropriate to that kamma, he has been running up and down, wailing like a pig for seven days, and died today and was born in Avīci." When this was said, the monks remarked, "Venerable Sir, having suffered in this world, this person has gone to a place where he will suffer indeed, hasn't he?" "Yes, Bhikkhus, the one who does evil grieves in this world, and grieves in the next world." Expressing this idea, the Buddha uttered the verse we took as our theme today:

Idha socati pecca socati pāpakārī ubhayattha socati

The evil-doer grieves in this world. He grieves in the next world. He grieves in both places, this world and the next.

So socati so vihaññati disvā kamma-kiliṭṭham-attano ti

Seeing the defiled nature, the impurity of his own deeds, he grieves; he is also vexed, distressed, and sorrowful, so it was declared.

From this story, you devout devotees can learn certain things. However, everyone might not look at this story in the same way. In modern parlance, Cunda had a pig farm behind his house. The way Cunda farmed that pig farm is what was described at the beginning. Thus, if one looks at it from an economic perspective, this is how Cunda reared animals and carried out his profession. If someone is studying the condition of pig farms during the Buddha's time, this is a good story for that. But if we look at it according to the Dhamma, what we have here is a story of terrifying kammic retribution. Cunda performed such evil deeds for fifty-five years and finally retired. Instead of the ease of retirement, what he received was distress of body and mind.

Although this story appears to us as such a sorrowful one, we all know that in this era, animals are slaughtered both individually and collectively on farms in an even more cruel manner. Especially in Western countries, you devout devotees might have heard that slaughter of animals is done on a massive scale using machinery. Sometimes, a herd of living animals enters through one door of a hall as raw material, and from the other door, tins containing meat products exit as the finished product. So, what is done through these various machines is the very same evil deed that Cunda did. No matter what kind of machines exist, dear devotees, everything is subject to the most miraculous machine in the world, the machine of kamma. According to the words of the Buddha, we can say that everyone who produces machinery and turns towards the slaughter of animals will be subject to the machine of kamma, caught up in it, and suffer for aeons. Therefore, we must direct our minds toward this machine of kamma. No extraordinary fuel is needed for the functioning of this machine of kamma. Volition (*cetanā*) alone is sufficient. Through volition, one is drawn into the machine of kamma. As a result, not only does one go to places like hell, the animal realm, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the Asura realm, but sometimes one even has to suffer severe consequences in this world, just as Cunda suffered. If someone is seen not experiencing such painful retributions, it is due to the power of the meritorious deeds (*puññakamma*) they brought with them. They remain protected because of the power of that wholesome force that granted them a human rebirth. The moment that is diminished, those retributions begin to take effect. That is what the Buddha declared:

Na hi pāpaṁ kataṁ kammaṁ, sajju khīraṁ va muccati;

dahantaṁ bālam anveti, bhasmacchannova pāvako.

An evil deed done does not bring retribution immediately, like milk curdling. It follows the foolish person, burning him, like a spark of fire covered by ashes.

Now, some people in society think: there are so many people who slaughter animals on a large scale like this. Where are their retributions? They do not seem to receive them; they seem to be doing well, don't they? But the reason for that is the strength of the wholesome kamma by which they obtained this human rebirth. The moment that is exhausted, it begins to yield its retribution. Now, from the story of Cunda, it is

very clearly seen that even in this very life, he experienced retribution corresponding exactly to his kamma; he ran here and there on all fours, bellowing like a pig. That is a characteristic of kamma itself; it means that retribution is often provided in accordance with the kamma itself. The machine of kamma prepares the environment to suit it. What we describe as the Avīci Great Hell and so forth are the planes where that aforementioned kamma is activated. In short, the entire thirty-one planes of existence where this kamma ripens are what we designate as heaven, the Brahma world, hell, and so forth. If there are realms like heaven and the Brahma world for the ripening of wholesome kamma, we must accept that there is also such a thing as hell, even if it is not visible to us. It is those who have done such evil deeds who are mostly born in the animal world as well. In this way, we can understand the side of retribution for those evil deeds as taught by the Buddha. Not only that, but in this very life, *so socati so vihaññati*—he suffers, grieves, and is vexed—refers to remorse. The reward that comes with retirement to someone who has done a good job, a righteous livelihood, is the bliss of blamelessness (*anavajja-sukha*). One who has led a righteous livelihood can breathe their last breath in peaceful comfort, thinking: "I led my life in accordance with the Dhamma. I did not live by wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*)."

Otherwise, for someone who lives by wrong livelihoods (*micchā-ājīva*) such as rearing animals for meat, trade in flesh, trade in weapons, trade in poisons, and trade in intoxicants, remorse arises. This is because a multitude of unwholesome thoughts are generated in their mind-stream. Nowadays, when even some Buddhists see non-Buddhists running animal farms that slaughter animals on a large scale, they look at those of wrong views with envy and are tempted to emulate them. That is a great foolishness. Although they may appear to prosper temporarily, the wealth they accumulate is like a bungalow built on the seashore during the monsoon season; it breaks down and is destroyed in the same manner. Regarding the acquisition of wealth, the Buddha declared to lay devotees that wealth should be earned righteously, through the sweat of one's brow. It is not out of envy toward lay devotees becoming rich quickly that the Buddha declared this.

Livelihood is presented in this manner as one step of the Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddha saw the immense suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*) that one would have to undergo in this world and the next through such a livelihood. To tell the truth, wealth acquired righteously, though earned with difficulty and through the sweat of one's brow, is stable wealth. It is as strong as a termite mound built with the hard work of termites. It is as delicious as a honeycomb constructed with difficulty by bees; wealth should be earned in that manner. Instead, if one slaughters animals that love life and fear death, mercilessly slaughtering them and accumulating wealth through unrighteous means, that person will have to burn in this world and the next as a retribution of that evil deed, caught in the machine of kamma. So, that is the natural law (*dhamma-tā*) in the world. We must ponder on that.

Especially in this era, some people think that if we are to eradicate rapidly growing poverty, we must adopt such short-cuts according to economics. To accumulate great wealth as quickly as possible, they propose unrighteous methods like animal slaughter to solve these problems. These are short-sighted paths. Through them, the entire human race is defiled. It is through this that various crises next arise in society. Children do not care for their parents; there are occasions when parents kill their children, and children kill their parents. If, when a festival day, a wedding day, or sometimes even a meritorious day arrives, animals kept as pets at home are dragged to the backyard and slaughtered while crying, to enjoy their meat, then in such homes, there is no room left for virtues like caring for parents to remain, because of what is witnessed. Next, another similar issue is the eating of meat. Various arguments are presented: "It is indeed bad to slaughter animals, but there is nothing wrong with eating meat." But here, one must realize that just as one cannot drink medicine secretly from one's throat, one cannot eat meat secretly from one's tongue. There is a nature in the tongue to be greedy for the taste of meat. Why? Because having been born in the animal realm where we preyed on one another during this long *saṁsāra*, and having been born as demons (*yakṣas*) and monsters (*rākṣasas*) and consumed flesh, the tendency to be drawn to meat and its taste lies deposited in this tongue. It is awakened when the taste of meat comes near.

Next, if meat is not naturally available, one is tempted to eat by killing, or having someone else kill. The tongue is dangerous to that extent. Therefore, one has to contemplate on this meat-eating diet as well. It is because the demand is high that there is a corresponding supply in the world. As those who are fond of meat-eating increase, those innocent animals are sacrificed to death on a massive, large scale in the world. Sometimes, they are slaughtered raw and alive in various ways, even more cruelly than Cunda did. Because getting fresh meat is just like getting fresh vegetables. Generally, humans like fresh things. So, what is fresh meat? Killing that animal while the warm blood is dripping, and then dicing and slicing it like a carrot or a cabbage. Thus, a multitude of such concepts exist in this society. There is also a faction that approves of them.

What wise devotees should learn from such a Buddhist story is not a study of animal farms in ancient India. What should be done through this is to direct the mind to how terribly this machine of kamma, which has eternal power, affects us. When choosing a profession or a livelihood, instead of letting it happen automatically, or doing it because there is nothing else to do, choose it after wise consideration. Even if it is slightly less profitable, even if one has to put in sweat and hard work, one must try to choose a righteous profession. Now, in this era, even some Buddhists, though they talk about other things, do not like to talk much about this. They do not agree, mostly because lay devotees get displeased. Therefore, many of them like to create more Cundas. They give loans and other allowances to Cundas to encourage them further. But we must try, as true Buddhists, not to be a Cunda, and not to belong to Cunda's family.

Cunda, together with his relatives, greedily enjoyed the taste of meat daily. It was only what remained that he sold. That very greed for the taste of meat was perhaps the reason for continuing that job further. In the same way, once one becomes greedy for meat, if it is not easily available, one is tempted to kill animals oneself. In that light, the most delicious food—the most delicious meat—is human flesh. Therefore, sometimes—and this is no secret—on certain occasions, even if human flesh is given under the guise of animal meat, a person who has followed that craving / thirst (*taṇhā*) for taste (*rasa-taṇhā*) would consume even that. There are instances where, having eaten human flesh, that person later regretted, thinking, "Throughout my life, did I not regress to a barbaric age?"

There is a multitude of such disadvantages (*ādīnava*) connected to this aforementioned livelihood, wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*). We must contemplate deeply on that. Various arguments and disputes can be presented. But it is the tongue that presents those arguments and disputes that ruins us. There is a story: a person greedy for meat came home at noon. The wife had given the remaining meat at home to someone else. He could not eat without that flesh. Therefore, it is said that he cut off the tongue of a cow in the backyard, cooked it, and ate it. It is also said that as a retribution, while eating, his own tongue fell off. Such a Dhamma story is recounted. Whether retribution is given immediately or not, a person is tempted to do such cruel things because of that greed for the taste of meat.

When we contemplate in that manner, we see through these stories that the evil-doer has to suffer retribution not only in the next world but also in this very world. Indeed, the burning that occurs in this world is what is called 'remorse' (*pasutävilla*). When an evil deed is done, what arises first through it is remorse; the mind burns within. Next, a physical burning is added to that burning, as a result of that very burning; as a development of that very seed of kamma (*kamma-bīja*), one is drawn to places like hell, the Avīci Great Hell, which possess the necessary instruments for that. Not in just one or two places in the Dhamma, but in various places, to such an extent that it cannot be said to have been added after the Buddha's time, stories of this hell are found in those places of the Dhamma. The four woeful states (*satara apāya*) are spoken of. Now, we cannot say that the animal realm does not exist, because it is visible to our physical eyes. That a realm of hungry ghosts (*peta-loka*) does not exist cannot be said, as you devout devotees can infer even from the incidents you hear of at home, and the spirit troubles that occur in households. The Asura realm too can be inferred through demon afflictions and so forth. Hell is what some people doubt the existence of. But those who have attained direct knowledge (*abhiññā*) have no doubt about it. They see all these things just as one sees with the physical eyes.

It is mentioned that Ven. Maha Moggallana on certain occasions reported what he saw through his direct knowledge (*abhiññā-ñāṇa*) to the Buddha. Some people ridicule the descriptions of hell found in books. They laugh, asking how these things can happen. Think of it this way for a moment: we know that in hospitals in this

world, there is something called the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). They are set up in a manner suitable to provide intensive care to those patients. Similarly, we can describe this hell as an 'intensive retribution unit'. The machines here are not enough to yield retribution for these severe evil deeds. There is not enough space for them in the human world. Therefore, through that very machine of kamma, certain methods of yielding retribution are created in places like hell. So, just like in that intensive care unit, in the intensive retribution unit, when one screams, "I am thirsty!" molten metal is brought and poured into the mouth. When one screams, "I am hungry!" red-hot iron balls are put into the mouth. The Buddha describes these in several suttas. Although these appear somewhat ridiculous, these are real things. Wonderful things. They occur through the machine of kamma. In short, the entire universe stands ready to yield the retributions of this volitional energy (*cetanā-shakti*) of ours. It is from the great elements of earth, water, fire, and wind (*paṭhavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo*) that heavenly worlds and so forth are created, and heavenly pleasures are created. These four elements are also the cause of the pleasures and sufferings we experience in the human world. In hell too—especially because of that aforementioned intensive retribution unit in hell—there are massive fires and sheets of flame appropriate to it. It is described that they are made to run on red-hot iron ground. Now, even in hospitals, sometimes they make patients do exercises, don't they? Moving this limb, moving that limb. In hell, however, the doors are locked. In short, what did Cunda do for seven days? He displayed to his family members a rehearsal of the mountain of suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*) he would have to undergo in Avīci in the future. Because he did it behind closed doors, others could not see. Cunda experienced that suffering as a pig, as a rehearsal of the mountain of suffering he would have to undergo. Even in these times, we occasionally hear of such stories. As if they went to hell alive. As if the earth split open and swallowed them. There is such a nature of retributions yielding so severely to some people. If someone is not yielded retribution so quickly, that is no reason to doubt kamma. As we said before, the evil deed done does not yield retribution immediately. Just as when a cow's udder is squeezed, milk does not come out immediately, it does not yield retribution that quickly.

Na hi pāpaṁ kataṁ kammaṁ, sajju khīraṁ va muccati;

dahantaṁ bālam anveti, bhasmacchannova pāvako.

Burning the fool, they follow behind him like sparks of fire hidden under ashes. In this manner, we must contemplate according to the natural law (*dhamma-tā*). Especially in this world, some people talk about the universe and the future in various ways. They blame the environment. They talk about the shortcomings of the environment. They talk about the neglect of the environment. Something more important than that is this spirituality/interiority (*adhyātma*). As long as the inner mind is defiled, the environment is also defiled. No matter how much we clear away other things in the environment, if this inner mind is defiled, the environment is also definitely defiled.

Now, if slaughter is done on such a large scale, if streams of blood and rivers of blood are flowing, the environment cannot be clean, no matter how beautiful it is made. In that way, we must realize that the Buddha solves these problems by administering the medicine to the very source where it should be solved. Therefore, the Buddha's statement, *"mano-pubbaṅgamā dhammā,"* reminds us constantly that the mind precedes all things. Thinking of that, the Buddha declared that one should depart from wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*) on the Noble Eightfold Path and turn to right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*). Some people think of these as things that cannot be done. If one thinks so, we can find a very valuable example from history—the reign of King Dharmasoka (Ashoka).

To tell the truth, the king who was later known by the name Dharmasoka was previously called Candasoka (Ashoka the Fierce). Having destroyed hundreds of thousands of people in war, together with the remorse that arose within him, by hearing the Dhamma, a complete transformation occurred in his life. Through that itself, the king reached the state of being known entirely as Dharmasoka. Not only did he stop battles and wars, but he also gave sanctuary (*abhaya*) to animals. That is what we have to take note of in particular. Even modern historians declare that in the lineage of kings containing tens of thousands of kings in this world, King Dharmasoka shines like a star. The reasons for that can be shown in this way: in this era, what is done at the state level is assisting wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*)—by giving loans, allowances, etc., in that manner. But King Dharmasoka set up stone pillars, proclaimed the Dhamma to the world, eradicated even slaughter, stopped the slaughter of animals even in the royal household, and set an example. Next, instead, he even built hospitals to treat sick animals. In that way, he taught the world on a large scale about loving-kindness (*mettā*), non-violence (*avihiṁsā*), and compassion (*karuṇā*). That is why King Dharmasoka is accepted as a great king even by non-Buddhist historians in this era. This historical experiment itself is sufficient to see whether we can transform our lives personally, and whether these can be implemented broadly at the state level.

Not only that, in the Jātaka stories and also in our lineage of kings, there were many kings like Buddhadasa who acted with great compassion toward animals. To tell the truth, an animal is also a being like us that feels pain, loves life, and fears death. So, if we give food to an animal, we should give it with the thought, "May this animal live for some more time." But in those cruel animal farms where animals are slaughtered, food is given to animals to keep them alive either for three days or for several weeks. The certificate of those animals is already written. Food is given to that animal only until it fattens up to the required number of kilograms. Those who follow such a way of thinking and perform such terrible evil deeds will definitely have to suffer in the future in hell and other places, and even if they come to the human world. Next, the Buddha, in the Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta where kammic retributions are specifically spoken of, declares: if a woman or a man, with blood-stained hands, slaughters animals without any mercy, that person either goes to hell or is reborn in the woeful state. Even if they come to the human world at some point, they become

short-lived (*alpāyuṣka*); their lifespan is shortened. What is the meaning of a shortened lifespan? Deaths increase. The number of deaths of that person in *saṁsāra* increases. By shortening the lifespan of others and slaughtering animals by limiting them to days and weeks in that manner, one inherits a short lifespan for oneself in *saṁsāra*. One dies untimely. So, we see those things even in this world; how beings like mayflies and locusts are born and die within a very short time, and die attracted to fire in bulk. One should understand that all of this demonstrates the operation of the machine of kamma.

Next, in the animal world, there is preying on one another. That very habit of preying on one another is finally added to society through this meat consumption. Therefore, regardless of the taste of meat, the way of thinking (*cintana*) generated through it is terrifying. Its retribution is terrifying. That is what we have to understand. The Buddha reminds us of all this with foresight, against the background of *saṁsāra*. The way of thinking of ordinary worldly people is like seeing through the squinted eye of a one-eyed blind person; it is a plan for the present, or at most for thirty or fifty years. It is within that that ordinary worldly people operate. If we do it this way, in fifty years this will overflow with milk and honey; regardless of milk and honey, those streams of blood will certainly flow. It is with a view to an economically developed era and prosperity that economists generally show such short-cuts. But the Buddha, because he understood the natural law of kamma in this universe, points out with foresight that if one lives according to short-cuts, that person will have to burn in this world as well as in the next. Not only that, but in the life one leads, especially in the final phase, one will be subjected to severe remorse. When there is nothing else to do, that person has only this thought. Lying in bed, unable to move, like the four legs of a bed, on all fours; the stream of thoughts that comes is about the animals one slaughtered, the way they were slaughtered, the crimes committed—it is within these that that person lives. So, it is like a hell on earth. Although some people do not express it in words, they suffer such things.

We are still talking about the Cundas, not about you devout devotees. It is the fate that befell Cunda that we have to reflect upon. Then, we must resolve not to become a Cunda. A good example for that is what we mentioned earlier about King Dharmasoka. The discourses the Buddha preached about hell are indeed astounding. Some are born in the midst of flames, yet they do not die. That is an unimaginable wonder. Now, we know that if one falls into fire in this world, one must die. It is said that they are kept alive without dying by the force of kamma—through the power of kamma. Now, that they are kept alive through that kamma... if one looks at it from a scientific perspective, one can argue: how can someone burn in such an intense fire for a long time? But, dear devotees, we use the term "suffering/enduring" (*viñdavanavā*) in our daily life. In some of these hospitals, we see patients, and even doctors are surprised: "This person is not dying." Sometimes they have no limbs. They are infested with worms. Even their heads are infested with worms, yet they do not die. Somehow they remain, suffering. What is meant by "suffering/enduring"? It is the power of kamma that operates there. The evil deed is that severe. Retribution

must be yielded for it. If a certain volitional energy (*cetanā-shakti*) arose in the machine of kamma, that is a universal natural law. There is a reaction to every action.

Thus, if a certain system of volitions associated with ignorance (*avijjā*), craving / thirst (*taṇhā*), and wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) has arisen in our mind-stream, these four innocent elements are there to provide the appropriate retribution. Or rather, those four elements are drawn to it, to put it briefly. Now, you devout devotees have also heard of the sayings: "the earth split open," "a thunderbolt struck." Even in the Bodhisatta stories, these are present; even if one escapes from other things, finally, a natural thunderbolt in this universe strikes down. Such incidents are heard of even in these times; what are called "crimes that heaven and earth cannot bear," "crimes that strike thunderbolts." It is not wishing it upon anyone, but because such things happen. So, such a wonderful natural law exists in this world. Even though they are heard of occasionally, they are covered up. They are not brought to light, because then it becomes an obstacle to the path we tread, a hindrance to our wrong livelihoods (*micchā-ājīva*); hence they are kept as secrets. Such things might be happening to one's own neighbors day by day. They do not go to speak about them; they cover them up. But that is the real situation.

That the seed created in a mother's womb at the moment a person is born survives for ten months without being destroyed is a great miracle; that too happens through the power of kamma. If one is fit to receive that birth, it exists through that power of kamma. In the same way, even in the midst of a great fire, one does not perish, but screams and wails, and dies only after those retributions are exhausted. Even when one dies, one is born there again. The Buddha has shown in the Dhamma that this occurs millions of times in such places. Therefore, special machines are required. Just as there is a separate unit called the Intensive Care Unit in a hospital, here too, in this universe, among these world systems, in the thirty-one planes of existence (*tis-ek talaya*), there is a portion that is an "intensive retribution unit." Those who have done evil deeds get to go there. What is done in them can be seen only by those who have attained direct knowledge (*abhiññā*). Those who are blind, possessing only physical eyes, do not see it. Therefore, no matter how much one claims to look with a critical mind, they cannot be rejected. It is a word of the Buddha. Not only the Buddha, but other possessors of direct knowledge have declared them as true. Therefore, one must have faith in them. This *saṁsāric* journey of ours is a long one. If it were to end here, we could live within a twenty-year plan or a fifty-year plan as mentioned. Even though such big plans are laid, sometimes things do not happen that way. They turn completely upside down in a way we did not expect. Economists spend days and nights sleeplessly making plans, but all of them are sometimes destroyed due to the evil deeds done by those individuals. In the present, due to various anomalies in the environment, it is said that this world system is heading toward destruction. The cause for that is shown in the Dhamma to be the coarseness, the roughness of the mind-streams of beings. As our mind-streams become coarser, our environment also follows suit. There lies the true origin of environmental science. Thus, *"patirūpa-desa-vāso ca, pubbe ca kata-puññatā"* and so forth are

shown for this reason. *"Patirūpa-desa-vāso"* means an environment where there is a group of people living righteously.

"Pubbe ca kata-puññatā" means there must be merit done in the past. If there are evil-doers, along with them, the environment is destroyed. Next, thirdly, there is *atta-sammā-paṇidhi*—establishing oneself in the right way. These three factors must be brought out. If we are to reduce even slightly this running within these world-destroying forces, we must pay attention to those three factors. *"Patirūpa-desa-vāso"* does not mean a place with good electricity and water facilities; that is not the real environment. It is an environment with the association of noble friends (*kalyāṇa-mitta*) and facilities to worship and pay homage to the Triple Gem. That is what is presented in the Mahāmangala Sutta as "dwelling in a suitable locality." Having merit done in the past. We can see that from the way that person behaves and acts. The merit that is inside must be brought out to some extent. To bring that out is what is called *atta-sammā-paṇidhi*—straightening one's mind. That straightening itself is the Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddha has declared that the Noble Eightfold Path is a straight path: *"ujuko nāma so maggo, abhayā nāma sā disā"* (Straight is the name of that path, and fearless is the direction). This path is straight. The direction it goes is fearless. *"Abhaya"* means without fear—fearless. The side it goes is fearless. There is no fear. It is secure. The path is straight. Then, if the path is straight, having started the Noble Eightfold Path from Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and come to Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), one cannot escape by saying, "That is not such an important thing, it is fine if the other things are there." It is from there, in truth, that we can understand which direction a person's life is taking. Now, because Cunda turned to that profession, through that he became subservient to the taste of meat. So, it was by reason of both of these that he inherited such a mountain of suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*).

Similarly, due to the gains and benefits obtained through a profession, due to their unjust advantages, one is tempted to continue it continuously. That is why the Buddha declared to lay devotees: "Do not remain like a one-eyed blind person, and do not remain like a completely blind person; use both eyes." Thus, if we adjust our livelihood after understanding good and bad in accordance with the Dhamma, the beginning might be painful. One must be prepared according to the Dhamma to lead a simple life, saving with difficulty through the sweat of one's brow. Although that person may appear to have lost in that competitive world, at the time of retirement, they automatically receive the reward called the bliss of blamelessness (*anavajja-sukha*), and achieve a great victory in their mind-stream. Rejoicing in that, they can breathe their last breath in peace; that is what we can demonstrate according to the Dhamma.

This path of virtue, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*) shown by the Buddha, or the Noble Eightfold Path, is a straight path. It is one where one factor fits and connects well with another. Thus, if we have understood good and bad through Right View, if we have understood the true nature of *saṁsāra* through the truth, we

must reflect that we have a very long journey ahead. To say it is a long journey means that whether we go in *saṁsāra* or not, there is a bag of kamma we have brought with us in our mind-stream. If we are not careful, the retributions of the kamma we perform go a very long way. They go a very long way, not just for this life. Therefore, we have to act with foresight.

Thus, with a Right View, in accordance with it, one must develop good intentions called Right Intention (*sammā-saṅkappa*), which are presented as renunciation (*nekkhamma*), non-ill-will (*avyāpāda*), and harmlessness (*avihiṁsā*). Two of those factors in Right Intention are connected to loving-kindness (*mettā*). They are connected to compassion (*karuṇā*), kindness, and sympathy. *Nekkhamma* means separation from the pleasures of the five senses, or departure from the household life. *Avyāpāda* means the absence of hatred, or thoughts associated with loving-kindness. *Avihiṁsā* intentions mean abstaining from violence. Then, if those thoughts of abstaining from violence are present, one cannot, as a profession or for one's livelihood or for one's life, slaughter animals that wish to live and dislike pain just like oneself, or feed them to fatten them up to the required kilograms with the intention of slaughtering them. The mind does not allow it. Instead, one becomes accustomed to looking with kindness and compassion.

According to the description shown by the Buddha in the Karaṇīyametta Sutta, *"ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi..."* and so forth, without distinction of large or small, near or far, one is shown to make every animal the object of thoughts of loving-kindness. Therefore, we cannot think that these animals are born for us to eat, like cabbages and carrots.

Similarly, if we accept kinship in *saṁsāra*, we must reflect that one's past relatives and parents are likely to be born in one's own households. Sometimes they are born as cattle, as goats, as pigs, and as chickens. Then, if we drag animals to the backyard and slaughter them to perform meritorious deeds to transfer merit to those parents, what is the meritorious deed there? One must contemplate in that manner. When thinking about *saṁsāra* in this way, one has to accept that through slaughter, one might even be killing one's own parents without knowing it. Not only that, even as mentioned in those Jātaka stories, sometimes they take birth as animals. If so, through the slaughter of such an animal, one performs an even more severe unwholesome deed. Because even if a Bodhisatta takes birth in an animal realm, there is a great power in that Bodhisatta aspiration. Even if done unknowingly, there is a great unwholesome kamma in bringing about the death of such an animal. Now, even when we think about humans, we know that harming or killing a Buddha, an Arahant, a noble disciple who has attained the path and fruit, or a virtuous person is not like harming an ordinary unvirtuous person. Likewise, there are special characteristics regarding the power of kamma.

Thinking about that, everyone has to spend their daily life very carefully, especially regarding their profession. Therefore, you devout devotees must contemplate wisely:

we received all these lessons from Cunda. "Oh, may you not have to experience what happened to me. Do not become a Cunda. This is the lesson you must take from me," as if Cunda were saying so, is the idea we must understand from this Dhamma discussion. We also understood the verse preached by the Buddha on this occasion. For you devout devotees, observing the precepts on a Uposatha day like today means turning toward such a pure life. Having generated those good thoughts, next, in accordance with that, abstaining from destruction of life, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, etc., which is good Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*), next, turning to a good livelihood, and the sermons and meditations done accordingly are what are called Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), and Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). It is toward developing the Noble Eightfold Path in this manner that you devout devotees have turned. Especially on this occasion, we mentioned the livelihood-as-the-eighth precept (*ājīv-aṭṭhamaka-sīla*). One must be particularly careful about one's livelihood. It is not merely about earning wealth day by day. It is not merely about obtaining some food and drink somehow. If that is not done righteously, not only individually but collectively, this entire universe will finally become an animal world. Taking up the perception of beasts (*miga-saññā*) and killing one another is because of that very way of thinking. One must contemplate wisely on the facts that the environment is defiled because of that aforementioned defilement of the inner mind.

I think that you devout devotees, by today's observance of precepts and by listening to the Dhamma, have developed those virtues of faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) in your mind-stream. Resolve thus: "May this multitude of wholesome thoughts indeed become a supportive condition (*hetu-vāsanā*) for us to end this *saṁsāric* suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*) as quickly as possible!" Similarly, may all the guardian deities and Brahmas of the Sasana from Avīci up to Akanitha, and all our relatives, rejoice in this merit of our preaching the Dhamma and listening to the Dhamma! Having rejoiced, may they end all *saṁsāric* suffering / unsatisfactoriness / stress (*dukkha*) as quickly as possible, and attain peace through the supreme, noble Amata Mahā Nibbāna: by means of an aspired Bodhi! With that aspiration, recite these verses and transfer merit!

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi.....*"