Pahankanuwa Sermon #139

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.50)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

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

Pali Stanza:

"Na hi verena verāni,

sammantīdha kudācanaṃ;

Averena ca sammanti,

esa dhammo sanantano."

From:

Dhammapada Verse 5 (Yamaka Vagga)

Dear Listeners,

Attachment as well as conflict can be identified as mental forces that cause beings to encounter one another repeatedly in this saṁsāra. We all know that attachment or desire possesses an attractive force. In the same way, this conflict is what brings two individuals together repeatedly in the long course of saṁsāra, due to a certain attractive force inherent in the intention of revenge. Once the mind is corrupted to the state of harboring hatred as anger intensifies, the intention of revenge arises, followed by a mutual desire for retaliation. The Blessed One, using an illustration, taught a stanza showing that this retaliation does not end with one or two instances, but becomes an endless competition in the long saṁsāra. This is the very stanza we have chosen as our theme.

In Sāvatthi, a certain young man, after his father passed away, looked after his mother by performing all the work in the house and the fields himself. Recognizing that her son was exhausting himself alone, the mother thought of arranging a marriage for him. When she proposed this, the son objected, saying, "As long as my mother is alive, I will remain as I am." However, as the mother repeatedly urged him, the young man fell silent. Next, the mother prepared to visit a certain house to make

a marriage proposal. At that moment, the son redirected her attention, saying, "There is another family that I prefer more."

The mother went accordingly, brought the young woman, and married her to her son. However, it was revealed that this young woman was barren. Therefore, the mother later told her son, "I arranged a marriage for you from the place you preferred. But she is barren, and a family without children will perish. The lineage cannot be continued. I shall bring you another wife." The son objected to this. But the barren wife overheard this conversation. She reflected: "If she brings another wife by some means, that woman will bear children and become the mistress of this household, and I will have no place. Therefore, I must manage this matter myself." With this cunning thought, she went to a certain house and said, "I am a barren woman. Give us a daughter from here to be a wife to my husband." When they objected and questioned her intentions, she presented her reasons, saying, "A family without children will perish, and that is why."

In one way or another, she persisted, brought that young woman, and handed her over to her husband. But what was the secret thought in her heart? "If this woman somehow becomes pregnant, I must take measures to prevent it." Thus, acting in a very friendly manner, she told her, "When a child is conceived in your womb, let me know." The other woman, completely unaware of her motive, informed her when she conceived. What did the barren woman do? She mixed an abortifacient drug into her food and gave it to her. Consequently, the child was lost. In the same manner, she destroyed the second pregnancy of that woman as well. Meanwhile, the neighboring women inquired about this matter and told the second wife, "Why are you so foolish? Your co-wife—according to the social customs of India at that time, women who shared the same husband were called co-wives—is the one doing this. Therefore, do not inform her when you conceive next time." Because of this advice, she did not inform her on the next occasion. As the pregnancy advanced, the co-wife asked, "Why did you not tell me?" The second wife replied, "You brought me here and twice caused me great suffering (*dukkha*). Why should I tell you?" Nevertheless, the barren woman managed to slip the same drug into her food. Since the pregnancy was in an advanced stage, the second wife was thrown into severe labor pains and met her death.

At the moment of death, harboring intense hatred and deep anger, she made a resolution—it was like a curse: "May I be reborn as a she-demon with the strength to devour you and your children!" With that very thought, she died in immense pain. After her death, she was reborn in that very house as a cat. Later, the husband beat the barren wife severely, saying, "Because of you, my family has been destroyed." Due to the injuries from that beating, she died and was reborn in that same house as a hen. The cat would come and eat the eggs laid by the hen. When the cat ate her eggs two or three times in this manner, the hen conceived deep hatred towards her, and at the moment of death, resolved, "I must devour you and your children!" Harboring such hatred, she died and was reborn as a leopardess.

Later, the cat died and was reborn as a doe. The leopardess would come and devour the fawns born to the doe. This happened three times. Then, the doe made a resolution of hatred in the same manner: "May I be reborn as a she-demon and devour your children!" Reflecting thus, the doe died and became a she-demon. After the leopardess died, she was reborn as a young woman in Sāvatthi, and upon reaching the proper age, she married and gave birth to a child. On that occasion, the she-demon arrived at the very moment of birth, pretended to examine the baby, devoured it, and left. This happened a second time as well. Consequently, when she was about to give birth to a third child, the woman told her husband, "A she-demon comes to this place and devours my children. Therefore, let us go to my parents' home." Thus, she went with her husband to her parents' house as the birth drew near. Meanwhile, as recorded in the accounts of these non-human beings, there is a figure named Vessavaṇa. Vessavaṇa is the lord of the yakkhas. From time to time, he assigns she-demons water-carrying duties as a form of punishment. This she-demon too had been assigned her turn to carry water. Because of the delay caused by this duty, the woman had the opportunity to go to her parents' home and safely give birth to her child.

Later, having been released from her water-carrying duty, the she-demon came searching. Disguised as a friend, she asked, "Where is our dear friend?" The neighbors replied, "She has gone to her parents' home to give birth, because there is a she-demon in this place." Thinking, "No matter what, you will not escape me," she ran swiftly towards Sāvatthi. Coincidentally, that very day was the naming ceremony for the newborn child. Having bathed and named the child, the woman told her husband, "Let us go home now," and they set out on the path passing through the Jetavana monastery. On the way, the woman bathed in the pond located within the Jetavana grounds and sat nursing her baby while waiting for her husband to finish bathing. At that very moment, she saw the she-demon approaching. Seeing this, she screamed to her husband, "Here comes the she-demon!" Since her husband delayed in coming, the woman took the child and ran desperately towards the monastery.

At that moment, the Blessed One was preaching the Dhamma to a large gathering of the Sangha. The woman ran in, placed her child at the feet of the Blessed One, and cried, "Blessed One, I offer this child to you. Please grant him his life!" At that juncture, it is mentioned that the divine king Sumana—who is none other than Saman Deviyo of our Sri Pada region—was guarding the gate of Jetavana. That deity did not allow the she-demon to enter. However, the Blessed One instructed Venerable Ānanda, "Go and summon the she-demon." When the she-demon entered, the woman became terrified. The Blessed One said, "Do not fear, be silent." Then, the Blessed One addressed the she-demon, "Why do you attempt to appease hatred with hatred in this manner? Hatred is never appeased by hatred. Had you not encountered a Buddha like me, your hatred would have persisted for an eon, just like the mutual hatred between crows and owls." Thus, He uttered the stanza we stated as our theme:

Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṁ;

Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano.

"Never in this world is hatred appeased by hatred; it is appeased only by non-hatred. This is an eternal, timeless law." Thus the Blessed One delivered this four-line stanza. In that Dhamma narrative, it is stated that upon hearing this stanza, the she-demon—whose name is recorded as Kāḷī—attained the fruit of Stream-entry (*Sotāpatti-phala*). Then, in order to reveal the transformation that had occurred within her, the Blessed One told the other woman, "Place the child in the hands of this she-demon." The woman cried, "Oh no, Lord, I am afraid!" The Blessed One assured her, "There is nothing to fear, hand him over."

The infant was then placed in the hands of the she-demon. She kissed and embraced the child, handed him back to the mother, and began to weep. The Blessed One asked, "Why do you weep?" She replied, "In the past, even when I lived as I pleased, I did not receive a bellyful of food. How shall I survive now?" This meant that she could no longer kill and eat as before, due to the inner transformation that had occurred. To settle this matter, the Blessed One instructed the mother, "Take this friend of yours, who is now well-disposed, to your home. House her in a suitable place, and regularly entertain her with good food and drink."

It is then recorded that this woman, having appeased her own hatred, took the she-demon home and began providing her with food and drink. However, the she-demon later complained that the place was not suitable. The reason? When they pounded paddy in the house, she felt as if the pestle was striking her. Consequently, she was relocated to several other places, such as near the water-pot and near the hearth. At each of these places, she complained that it did not suit her and was troublesome. Finally, they housed her in an open space outside the village specifically dedicated to her, and brought her food and drink daily. The she-demon, wishing to show her gratitude, advised the woman, "There will be heavy rains this year; cultivate on high ground. There will be a drought this year; cultivate on low ground."

Accordingly, the woman's crops flourished while the crops of others failed. The villagers then asked her, "How is it that only your crops are so abundant?" She replied, "I perform a certain service. My friend regularly informs me about the rainy seasons." She added, "If you also entertain her with food and drink, she will help you too." The people of that region likewise brought food and drink to the she-demon in a manner similar to the ticket-food system. Consequently, the she-demon faced no shortage of sustenance, and the villagers' crops also flourished. This is how the story is recorded in the Dhamma commentary. In this day and age, some might doubt such accounts of a she-demon. However, only an extremely minute portion of the occurrences in this universe falls within the grasp of the ordinary human mind. Be that as it may, let us extract the significant points that are of value to us from this very story.

When we look at this story, we can see that even when considering modern society, these are not strange phenomena. What is described here is a hatred that emerged from a commonplace problem of domestic life. In ancient India, the institution of co-wives existed. That is to say, there were several wives sharing a single husband under polygamy. In such situations, they were referred to as co-wives (*sapattnī*). However, jealousy often arises within this setup, and jealousy turns into hatred. For this reason, a word was added to the language: *sapatta*, which carries the meaning of "enemy." It is a word derived from *sapattnī*. It became a word meaning "enemy" precisely because hatred arises through jealousy among co-wives. Here too, we see two co-wives becoming enemies, satisfying their mutual hatred birth after birth, taking animal and demonic existences in saṁsāra. From this, we can see how hatred travels for a long time through saṁsāra. The aforementioned conflict and the intention of revenge within that conflict act as the attraction. There is a certain attraction within that intention, which provides the opportunity to collide.

These two individuals spent such a long time attempting to satisfy their hatred. In reality, they were merely retaliating, but were unable to appease their hatred. It was the Blessed One who demonstrated the timeless law that hatred can never be appeased by hatred, no matter how many eons pass. He made the she-demon realize this as a natural law. Instead, as the short advice of this stanza indicates, one must employ non-hatred in place of hatred to break or appease the power of hatred. Yet, some may wonder how such a profound transformation could occur in a she-demon upon hearing this.

We know that the realization of the paths and fruits of liberation often occurs when one looks at the inner side of a mental conflict. This she-demon was indeed an individual subjected to such a mental conflict. She had thought of appeasing hatred with hatred. Hearing the Dhamma verse taught by the Blessed One, she looked at her own mind with *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention / radical attention). "This cannot be appeased through hatred." By looking at the mind operating within, she attained even the supramundane state.

Accordingly, there is a lesson for us to learn as well. A cannibalistic she-demon, who had come intent on devouring the child, cradled and kissed the baby after attaining the fruit of Stream-entry. Furthermore, she turned to a vegetarian diet. Thus, we have much to learn from this she-demon for our society. Her mind became so soft and gentle through this stanza uttered by the Blessed One. Her mind became so gentle that, having attained the Noble state, she showed affection to the child at the end of the story and took up a vegetarian policy. These are the examples we must gather from this story. When we contemplate the deep meaning of this stanza, it seems there is not much to explain extensively. Yet, here the Blessed One declared that hatreds are never appeased by hatred, but are appeased by non-hatred. Here, the word *avera* (non-hatred) is used. This is a word with a very broad meaning. Generally, when we speak of malice or anger, the opposite term we apply is loving-kindness (*maitrī*). However, the Blessed One refers to deep-seated hatred as *baddha*

vaira (bounden malice), and also uses the word *āghāta* (resentment/grudge). The Blessed One teaches that such deep-seated resentment cannot be broken instantly by loving-kindness alone.

In the *Āghātapaṭivinaya Sutta*, the Blessed One teaches five methods for dispelling resentment or deep-seated hatred. First is loving-kindness. That is, if one harbors intense hatred toward someone, one uses thoughts of loving-kindness to appease that hatred. If that fails, one should employ compassion. Here, compassion means considering that the person harbors hatred due to a mental weakness such as ignorance or a lack of Dhamma understanding; thus, treating that person as a sick patient or someone with a mental disability, one generates compassion and removes the hatred toward them, relinquishing the urge for revenge from one's own side. Thirdly, it is shown that one can also employ equanimity depending on the situation. Now, these are things you can test practically. We say "practice loving-kindness" quite easily in words. But sometimes, it is difficult to raise the mind to loving-kindness. Therefore, the Blessed One provides further assistance by pointing out additional methods. Just as one gathers various tools when a deeply rooted tree cannot be easily uprooted, here one employs not only loving-kindness but also compassion, and not only compassion but also equanimity. As you know, equanimity means bringing the mind to a state of balance. Whether filth or a flower falls upon this great earth, the earth expresses neither special praise nor criticism. The same is true of fire. Similarly, whether perfume, soap, or filth is washed in water, the water has no complaint. In the same way, the mind is brought to equanimity. Through that equanimity, one can sometimes eliminate hatred.

Fourthly, He presents a deeper method: *asati amanasikāra* (non-attention / non-recollection). That is, consciously and effortfully directing the mind away from the trigger of hatred, from the object of hatred—which is what the person did—to another object. To use an analogy, when a blinding, harsh light that we do not wish to see approaches, we close our eyes or look the other way. In the same manner, one deliberately removes that thought from the mind. That is what is meant by *asati amanasikāra*.

Fifthly, He points out another method: *kammassakatā* (ownership of Kamma). Ownership of Kamma means that one is the heir to one's own deeds. In ordinary society, those who think in accordance with the Dhamma use a common expression to help eliminate such angry thoughts: "What he does is for him; what we do is for us." This is where that idea is expressed. "What he does is his own." Therefore, if someone harbors hatred, intends revenge, and attempts to retaliate, that is a Kamma for him; it is his inheritance of Kamma. If we perform actions with a good mind and loving-kindness, that is for us. In this manner, the Blessed One points out the nature of Kamma as: *kammasako'mhi, kammadāyādo, kammayoni, kammabandhu, kammapaṭisaraṇo*—stating that what belongs to each person, what they can call their own, is their Kamma. One's inheritance is Kamma; one is born of Kamma; one's relative is Kamma; one's refuge and support is the very Kamma one performs.

Recalling this natural law, one does not go to clash or retaliate with the person who hates or tries to take revenge.

The Blessed One reminds us that this retaliation does not stop with one or two instances. It continues for a long time in this saṁsāra. You have also heard of this regarding the Blessed One in the Jātaka stories. Everyone knows the conduct of the individual known as Devadatta in his final birth. As told in the *Serivāṇija Jātaka* of the past, having become a merchant named Serivāṇija, he harbored hatred against the Bodhisatta merchant named Kacchapuṭa over a golden bowl. This hatred, carried over for countless eons, finally ended with Ven. Devadatta committing *ānantariya-kamma* (grave offenses with immediate retribution). By shedding the blood of the Buddha and causing a schism in the Sangha, he committed these terrible *ānantariya-kamma* and fell into the Avīci hell. This hatred is something that brings such terrifying consequences; it goes that far. Even from that perspective, we can see that once hatred takes root, it cannot be easily removed. That is why the Blessed One has shown such a variety of methods.

We have now mentioned loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity, and the effort to forget the trigger by diverting mindfulness and attention. One removes the contemplation of it. It can also be said that one trains the mind not to contemplate it. Finally, by recalling the law of Kamma known as *kammassakatā*, one calms one's mind.

Let us reflect on each of these again. You have all heard about loving-kindness frequently, and you practice it to the best of your ability. In the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta*, the Blessed One describes how to practice loving-kindness toward all. To whatever extent there are beings who exist—whether trembling or firm, classified by their body size, near or far, born or seeking birth—in this manner, He encompasses all beings under the term "all living beings." Not only that, the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta* further states: *na paro paraṁ nikubbetha, nātimaññetha katthaci naṁ kañci*—not only does one refrain from hating, but one wishes that let no one deceive another, let no one despise anyone anywhere. *Byārosanā paṭighasaññā, nāññamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya*—let no one, through anger or resentment (which is bounden malice), wish suffering (*dukkha*) upon another.

What is the habit of the ordinary world? One does not wish to take revenge directly; one does not wish to burn one's own hands, but would prefer someone else to carry out that revenge on their behalf. At the root of this lies anger and hatred. In contrast, the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta* states that while wishing well for everyone, wishing "may all beings be well and happy!", one does not even wish to witness such conflicts. If one purifies this loving-kindness, one can gradually conquer that hateful mind. When we say "all," not a single person is left out. The method of cultivating this loving-kindness lies within the words "may they be happy and well!" But this must be understood deeply.

Next, compassion means treating that angry mind as a weakness of that individual, viewing them as a helpless person who, due to lack of Dhamma knowledge and understanding, has harbored a mind of hatred. One makes a wish through compassion: "May their hatred be dispelled! May their anger be dispelled!" Just as one wishes "may they be healed!" for someone suffering from a disease or pain, one should think of the hostile person as a sick patient. "May they be freed from this suffering (*dukkha*) called hatred!" In this way, compassion is cultivated. Next, as we mentioned, one strives to develop equanimity like the great earth. We can learn certain lessons even from these inanimate objects. One attempts to cultivate that quality of equanimity found in inanimate objects within oneself.

We have already spoken about non-contemplation. Next, by deeply reflecting on Kamma and its fruit, one softens the mind from anger. Furthermore, if we go deeper, within all of these lies the quality called *khantī*—patience or forbearance. First, one must develop the strength to endure the pressure that comes upon oneself. Having endured it, one then practices loving-kindness by wishing well for others. Another factor is attention. *Yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention) means grasping these thoughts precisely at the point where they arise. If we reflect further on the stanza, how did the she-demon attain Stream-entry upon hearing it? To state it briefly, it is evident that supramundane states—namely, the realization of Nibbāna—often arise through a mental revolution or conflict.

Nibbāna is the stilling of preparations (saṅkhāra). If Nibbāna is the stilling of preparations, what assists this is comprehending and realizing the true nature of preparations (saṅkhāra). We fail to comprehend the true nature of preparations because our minds are constantly running along thoughts (*vitakka*). They run in a web of thoughts, either along lust, along hatred, or along conceit and other defilements. This running is a race that ignores the very place where thoughts arise. It is just like a deer running after a mirage. The cause of the mirage lies in incorrect perception. If the perception is corrected, the deer will not run. It is due to a distorted perception (*vipallāsa-saññā*) that the deer runs after it, thinking it can get closer. Similarly, what is the nature of our minds? The momentum of preparations, which is the momentum of thoughts, chases after the object presented by those thoughts. Even if we chase for countless eons, we cannot appease them, just as we cannot satisfy hatred. Now, this stanza speaks about appeasement: *Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṁ*. Here, the precise word *sammanti* (are appeased/stilled) is mentioned. Never in this world is hatred appeased by hatred. There, He speaks of stilling. Next, it is said: *averena ca sammanti*. It is stilled only by non-hatred. Thus, the two words, hatred (*vera*) and non-hatred (*avera*), are spoken.

Let us consider that moment. The Blessed One infused a certain secret, a realization, into the she-demon who was filled with intense hatred. He gave her an understanding: "You can never satisfy this hatred in this way; it will only go on endlessly. Instead, what you must do is look back." Thus, *yoniso manasikāra* (wise

attention)—as we all know, attention means turning this reflection inward. One turns it back to the very place where these thoughts arise. Suppose we are directing a powerful beam of light outward, to the external side. With it, we are busy looking at forms. We can project it very far. But if, at some point, we turn that very beam of light backward, at that moment, that individual fully realizes what is within their own mind. This is precisely what happens there.

The momentum of preparations (saṅkhāra) was stilled in that manner. While she was running along preparations (saṅkhāra), the Blessed One pointed out that non-hatred, and not hatred, is the medicine here. Non-hatred means the removal of hatred. To one who had experienced all the turbulence caused by hatred, He demonstrated that true stilling lies only when this hatred is appeased. Through this, the word *sammanti* (are stilled) becomes very clear—the momentum of thoughts could be stilled. Within that lies the extinguishment of suffering (*dukkha*)—the opening of Nibbāna. This long saṁsāra proceeds upon these thoughts and concepts. As everyone knows, once attachment arises, how far it goes! When a faint sound, a sweet voice, or a form is seen, there is no need to explain extensively how far the attachment born within it goes, and into what kind of abysses it finally leads. The same applies to conflict. Thus, it is a race like running after a mirage. In contrast, attaining the supramundane state and liberating oneself from saṁsāra means stopping instead of running. In short, one stops right there. The moment the light is turned backward, one sees: "Here is the true source; this is the very place where it genuinely arises."

This is what is stated in the Dhamma: *rāgo ca doso ca ito nidānā*—lust and hatred have their origin right here. When we look at a banyan tree, can anyone find its original root once the tree has grown very old? The true root cannot be found because the aerial roots have descended and finally turned into a massive, tangled, and confused mass. What happens through thoughts is precisely the same. We chase after individuals. We chase after other objects. But we do not see the true arising, the origin of this. To see the origin, we must turn that beam of light backward. That turning is what is called wisdom (*paññā*), *Yoniso manasikāra* (Wise attention), or wise reflection. What is done through wise reflection is turning the wisdom or comprehension—which we normally direct outward—backward to look at one's own mind. In that moment of looking, there is a stopping. There is no running. There is a halting. That halting, that extinguishment, is what is called Nibbāna. The she-demon realized this extinguishment through the first path-knowledge (*Sotāpatti-magga-ñāṇa*). Consequently, as a result that goes hand in hand with virtue (*sīla*), her mind became soft and gentle, and she turned to a vegetarian diet. A wonderful miracle of the Dhamma is recorded in this story.

We extracted another factor here that assists in appeasing hatred, which is the aforementioned *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention). When such hatred arises, we often do not merely retaliate, but we attempt to go beyond what was done to us. In the Dhamma, this is referred to as *karaṇuttariya-kamma* (surpassing actions). If someone glares, one abuses them. If they abuse, one strikes them. If they strike, one

kills them. Such is the nature of surpassing actions—doing more than what was done. There is no end to it. Ultimately, it keeps intensifying hatred in saṁsāra in a terrifying manner. Instead, one turns toward stilling. One looks back at this. One looks back for a moment with *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention). Then, there may be various external causes for anger—the weaknesses of that person, the things they did to us. But the immediate cause lies within oneself. That is why it is said: *rāgo ca doso ca ito nidānā*—lust and hatred arose right here, not out there. Lust, hatred, and other defilements did not arise from that object or from that person; they arose right here. This is the truth the Blessed One revealed to the world. Understanding this is what is called the path of Dhamma, what is called *yoniso manasikāra*.

Ordinary worldlings possess *ayoniso manasikāra* (unwise attention). In ancient terms, *ayoniso manasikāra* means reflecting unwisely or inappropriately. It is like running after a mirage. Instead, what is found here is looking back at the thought itself. With the understanding that "this stream of thoughts arose due to this, didn't it?", it is stilled, because its secret has been revealed. Just as when a lamp is brought into a dark place, darkness can no longer be found. The moment the lamp is brought, darkness is not there. In the same way, it is instantaneous; the realization of the paths and fruits is instantaneous. Darkness does not wait to disappear saying, "Now the lamp has arrived." It vanishes along with the light of the lamp. The realization of the paths and fruits is a similar instantaneous occurrence. We often use the expression "a blessing in disguise." Similarly, here too, there was a life crisis. The she-demon was able to resolve this crisis and attain stilling right there through *yoniso manasikāra* (wise attention).

Furthermore, another factor that assists in appeasing hatred is mentioned in the Dhamma as *paccavekkhaṇa* (wise contemplation / retrospective reflection). Retrospective reflection means looking back, or contemplating with wisdom. Although we say "looking back," it is not a looking with the physical eye, but a contemplation with wisdom. This, too, sometimes assists in appeasing hatred. One advises oneself by wisely recalling how hatred was conquered in the Bodhisatta's life, such as in the perfections of loving-kindness (*mettā-pāramī*) and patience (*khantī-pāramī*). In doing so, one gives foremost place to wisdom.

Generally, hatred and anger are things that arise from the heart based on emotions. In those moments, wisdom is suppressed; intellect is suppressed. Here, through retrospective reflection, one brings wisdom to the forefront. By bringing wisdom forward, one creates an opportunity to understand this. That is what is called retrospective reflection. For this, one can employ examples such as the Bodhisatta's life, other Dhamma passages, and the teachings of the Dhamma as reflections. The Blessed One has declared a Dhamma passage in the *Anamatagga Saṁyutta* that can be used as a reflection: "In this incredibly long saṁsāra, it is not easy to find a being who has not been your mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter." Through this, one can contemplate how long we have spent in this extended saṁsāra. According to this word of the Buddha, every person here must have been, to one

another, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a son, or a daughter. The Dhamma states that by reflecting on this, one should free one's mind from anger and hatred.

According to this truth, according to this long-term existence in saṁsāra, there is no one who has not been our relative. Thus, having been relatives, they must have helped us in various ways in those instances; they must have sacrificed their lives for us. One should reflect: "It is such individuals who have now come disguised as enemies in this long saṁsāra." It is like a play. But one must understand that if this is not comprehended correctly, one will head toward woeful states like hell as a terrifying consequence. Just as happened to Ven. Devadatta, one can go to Avīci by letting this hatred go on and on. Therefore, this may be a timely sermon, because in this day and age, not only in our country but even in the wider world, the tendency is to attempt to appease hatred with hatred. Even in international forums, these things are spoken of, because the ordinary world easily forgets this. The word of the Buddha is that hatred can never be appeased by hatred.

Yet, we still attempt to appease hatred with hatred. We may not be able to do this collectively. Now, this very story reveals that they were reborn in animal existences to prey on each other. The hen's eggs fell prey to the cat. Next, the doe's fawns fell prey to the leopardess. In this manner, for those who wish to take revenge and satisfy hatred, Māra has arranged this world such that they can obtain existences where they prey on each other. In short, the Blessed One has declared that the domain of beings and the domain of Kamma are unthinkable (*acinteyya*). It is so wondrous that it is beyond thought. Yet, beneath all of this lies Kamma; it is our thought. It is through thought that these are brought together and separated, and ultimately, stilling too can be achieved only by looking at this mind. But from this we see that if our expectation is to be reborn in animal existences to prey on each other and satisfy hatred, we can create the opportunity for it. That is precisely what happened here. Furthermore, this shows the terrifying nature of saṁsāra. We tend to view the gradual growth of a hateful mind as a trivial matter. Anger is easily aroused in anyone. With a slight provocation, anger arises. Anger becomes resentment. Resentment becomes malice. Malice becomes hatred. Hatred becomes bounden malice, reaching up to the term "resentment" (*āghāta*). Having grown in this manner, just as a deeply rooted tree cannot be easily uprooted, sometimes thoughts of loving-kindness do not find a listening ear, and it becomes difficult to raise the mind to loving-kindness. That is why the Blessed One has shown so many methods and strategies for one to compose one's mind.

All of you listen to the Dhamma not as a mere custom, but to compose your own minds. Therefore, from this story, we must take to heart the examples and illustrations, as well as the depth contained within this Dhamma verse. Through all of this, the qualities of being well-proclaimed (*svākkhāta*) and timeless (*akālika*) in the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, and the manner in which results can be experienced right before one's eyes, become clear. Now, especially when looking through retrospective reflection, we are advising our own minds. We are giving place

to wisdom. Instead of being slaves to emotion, we give place to wisdom. Thinking in accordance with the word of the Buddha and framing it within the Dhamma, one then advises oneself: "Is it not in such a saṁsāra that you are journeying?"

When describing this long saṁsāra, another analogy the Blessed One used is: "Monks, if one were to cut all the trees, plants, and branches in this entire Jambudīpa into four-inch pieces, and stack them saying, 'This is my father, this is my mother,' the number of parents one has had in this saṁsāra would still not be exhausted." Such is its long duration. When we think thus, no one is a stranger to anyone else. It seems as though everyone could be our saṁsāric relatives. But due to ignorance (*avijjā*), we forget this. Therefore, the Blessed One brings to light this eternal, timeless law. Never can the aforementioned hatred be appeased by hatred. Instead, it occurs when the inner operation of this is understood. This becomes clear through it. One is caught in a trap of one's own making, and is running after it.

Loving-kindness means gentleness—developing a soft and gentle mind. This is something that must be done systematically. One may not be able to raise the mind to it instantly, but we must train the mind gradually. That is what the Blessed One has shown in the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta*. He has not spoken of individuals separately there. Instead, what we must contemplate is that to whatever extent there are beings who experience pain and suffering (*dukkha*), all of them desire happiness and dislike suffering; they dislike violence. We must bring this thought to our minds.

Then, the capacity to wish well for everyone arises within us. As a meditation, we can regularly generate the thought: "May all beings be well and happy!" The Blessed One has shown that this meditation can be practiced in all four postures. When a certain thought is repeatedly cultivated, the mind naturally leans in that direction. As a natural law, the Blessed One has declared: *yaṁ yaṁ deva bhikkhū bahulaṁ anuvitakketi anuvicarati, tathā tathā nati hoti cetaso*—whatever a monk frequently thinks and ponders upon, that becomes the inclination of his mind. *Nati* means an inclination or a leaning. We all know that our minds currently have leanings toward various directions. But often, the leaning is not toward the good side. Often, we journey through this saṁsāra with a leaning toward the bad side; we prefer to lean toward those things.

But here, what is required is an inclination, a leaning, that must be developed through effort. That is what is called meditation (*bhāvanā*). Meditation is described as the repeated arising of wholesome states of mind. In the Dhamma, this is presented as the condition of repetition (*āsevana-paccaya*). *Āsevana* means maintaining something by way of frequent association. *Āsevitā, bhāvitā, bahulīkatā*—cultivated, developed, and practiced frequently. In this way, one generates a certain strength in the mind. Even a few drops of water falling from a tree onto a rock will eventually begin to wear a hole in it over a long period. In the same way, when a thought is repeatedly raised, a certain special inclination is created within.

Now, what is done through the meditation on loving-kindness is directing the mind toward an inclination that removes resentment, removes hatred, removes anger, and brings well-being to others. Once that gentleness is systematically established, one can very quickly appease the anger and hatred that arise. Even if it is not possible instantly, by reflecting again and raising the mind to that meditation, one gains the strength to banish them. That is why the daily practice of the meditation on loving-kindness is so important. Especially for those living in society, it is words, rumors, and news that tend to cultivate anger and hatred from all sides that fall upon our ears and meet our eyes. Through these, our minds are disturbed, and starting from small beginnings, they ultimately reach the level of hatred.

Because of this, we sometimes attempt to take revenge, either individually or collectively. Not only in this country but in Western nations and everywhere in the world, the cause of these massive conflicts is the result of anger arising in a single mind. Where did all these massive, terrifying bombs originate? Where did all these terrible weapons, these nuclear weapons, originate? Where were they conceived and manufactured? In the human mind—in the aforementioned mind of hatred. It started from there. It started from the mind of hatred.

What was manufactured was not something that brings well-being, but an instrument that destroys a world. What assisted its manufacture was that very mind of hatred. The individual who manufactured it knew that it would destroy a world. Thus, if for some reason, whether considering profit or otherwise, they directed their mind toward it, then the factory where it was manufactured was that very mind filled with hatred.

The Blessed One declared: "The world exists within ourselves." The world exists within ourselves. We attempt to recognize the world through various communication media. You too probably watch the world every day without sleep. But that is not the world the Blessed One points to. There, one must look back. One must stop that viewing apparatus for a moment and look back at this eye that views. One must look back at this ear that hears, and at the others. It is on the day the light of wisdom is turned toward oneself that the world can be understood.

It is because He understood this world of the six sense-spheres—namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—that the Blessed One is truly the Knower of the Worlds (*Lokavidū*). In this day and age, scientists too may be called "knowers of the world" according to their own understanding. But that is not what the Blessed One, in the deepest sense, calls "the world"—it is this internal world. It is to conquer this world, to cross over this world, that the Blessed One has taught His Dhamma.

We have gradually gone into the depths of this Dhamma through a short, simple stanza. Each of you must have understood it to some degree, according to your capacity for comprehension. We listen to all these sermons in order to generate those valuable qualities of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom within our minds—qualities that will assist us in realizing Nibbāna at some point. Thus, you

have been listening to a Dhamma sermon on the appeasement of hatred, which is highly timely and relevant to this era. The faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom developed through this must be cultivated and developed by way of meditation in this very life.

The Blessed Ones and the Arahants crossed over from a terrifying saṁsāra of the kind described here, where beings take revenge on one another and devour each other. After attaining Nibbāna, the Arahants declared: "I am freed from the slaughterhouse." That is how the Arahants looked back at saṁsāra and spoke: *mutto āghātanā yathā*—just like one freed from a slaughterhouse. We must think in this manner. Thus, we have listened to a Dhamma that assists in freeing oneself from this slaughterhouse, which we now think of as "the world."

May this hearing of the Dhamma certainly be a supportive condition for us as human beings to also acquire those supramundane states acquired by the she-demon—who made her mind soft and gentle—by relying on the association with noble friends (*kalyāṇa-mitta*), practicing the Dhamma, and meditating, so that we may be released from all saṁsāric suffering (*dukkha*) and find peace in the supreme, deathless Nibbāna! Furthermore, may all the guardian deities and Brahma kings of this universe who protect the Dispensation rejoice in this store of merit we have accumulated through the preaching and hearing of the Dhamma, and may they attain the supreme, deathless Nibbāna through their aspired Bodhi! Likewise, may all beings from the Avīci hell up to the Akaniṭṭha heaven, including our departed relatives, who desire merit and Nibbāna, rejoice in this store of merit we have accumulated through the preaching and hearing of the Dhamma, and by doing so, may they be released from all saṁsāric suffering (*dukkha*) such as birth (jāti), decay (jarā), disease, and death (maraṇa), and find peace in the supreme, deathless Nibbāna! With a mind of compassion, let us dedicate these merits by reciting the stanzas.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……*"