



How to grow a good life and happiness

Quentin Genshu

Printed for free distribution by

The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation

11F., 55 Hang Chow South Road Sec 1, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel: 886-2-23951198 , Fax: 886-2-23913415

Email: overseas@budaedu.org

Website: <http://www.budaedu.org>

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How to grow a good life and happiness

Two thousand six hundred ago, there was a man who really wanted to look clearly into the nature of things and gain understanding of the interrelationship and working of things in this world, and use this knowledge to find a way to develop a good life and deep happiness. He sort after, and trained under many teachers so as to develop this understanding and see things clearly as they really are. He did this for six years studying under all the great teachers of his time, but found that their teachings did not satisfy his desire to become a fully awakened being. So he decided to try by himself using the meditation methods he had learned, to clean his mind and examine clearly how things really are.

A person who really sees things clearly as they really exist is called a ‘Buddha’, or ‘Awakend One’. The meaning of the word ‘Buddha’ is a person who is no longer dreaming but who is fully awake and who see things are they really are.

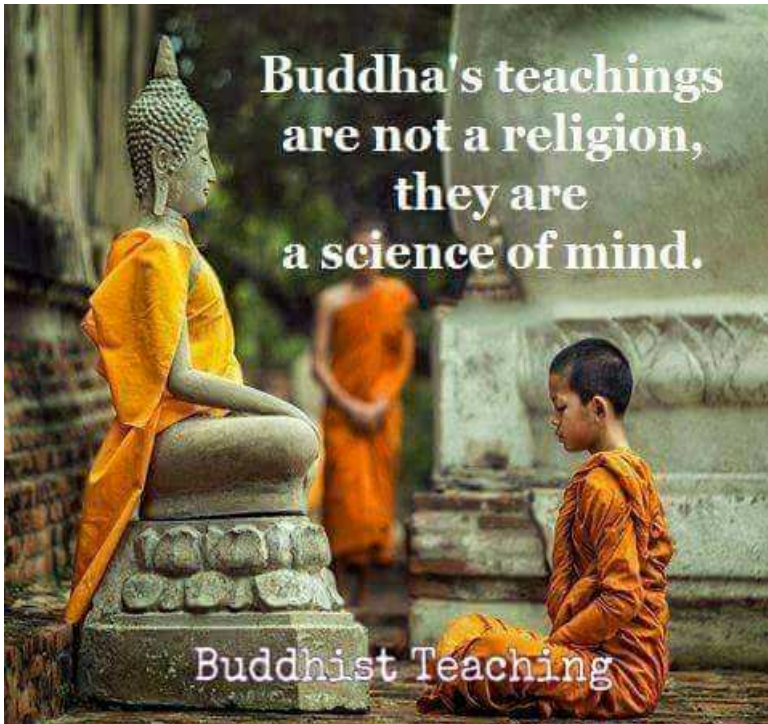
After he had come to understand and see reality, he went and found those who had been practicing with him under other teachers and helped them to gain full understanding too. Soon many people came to recognise his great understanding and wisdom and came to learn the method of gaining this understanding from him. He taught them how to develop a good life and deep happiness and reduce unhappiness and suffering.

If a person wants to follow his teachings, it requires some hard work, for our minds are full of lots of desires and stupid thoughts that are distracting and result in us doing things that result in problems and unhappiness. However, if we are really determined and practice well, and following his teachings, then we can gain great peace and happiness and a really good life.

Some religious leaders two thousand years ago used his teachings and understanding, especially on love and compassion, to strengthen their teachings.

We can see this reflected in these religions today, which developed some 600 years after the Buddha's death. So it is most appropriate that these religions today work with these teachings to help men and women develop good and happy lives and strong and peaceful communities.

Today many people call these teachings the **Science of the Mind, or the Science of the way We Think.**



In this book there are sections headed: **Words of Wisdom**. All the quotations in these sections have been handed down over the centuries, in oral and written traditions, as coming directly from the Awakened One—written down in the Pali language in the **Itivutakka, Anguttara Nikaya and Samyutta Nikaya**.

Words of Wisdom:

The Four Truths

There are, students, four truths. These are: The truth of unhappiness and suffering, the truth of the cause of unhappiness and suffering, the truth of the end of unhappiness and suffering, and the truth of the way or Path to follow to end unhappiness and suffering.

The truth of the basis of our unhappiness and suffering is: the five things that we hold strongly onto—our body, feelings, memories, beliefs and discernments, our train of thoughts and mental states, and our states of consciousness following on from what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and dream.

The truth about the cause of this unhappiness and suffering is: Our attachment to wanting or craving for a particular feeling to get happiness, and trying to hold onto something that is constantly changing. We find happiness in one place and then

another by trying to hold onto things, wanting something to come or not to come.

The truth about the end of unhappiness and suffering is: Letting go of these desires and cravings, getting completely rid of them and free from them, and having no more interest in following them.

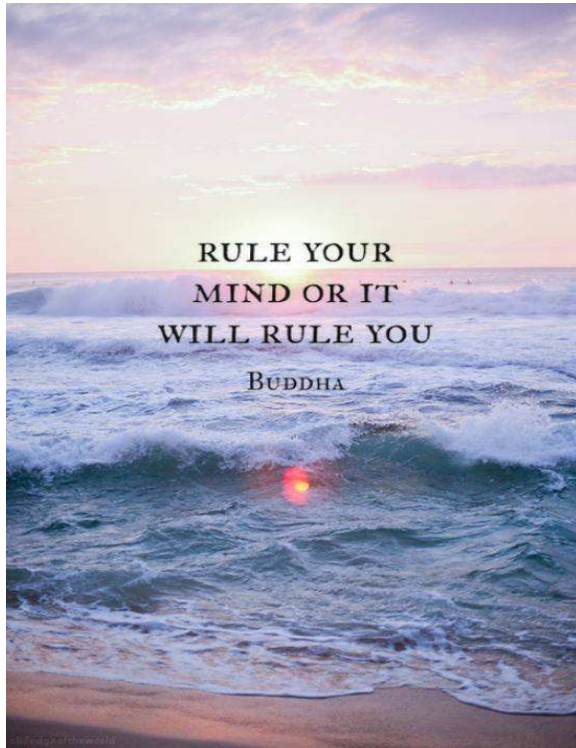
The truth of the way to follow to end unhappiness and suffering is: The eightfold Path or eight steps of developing the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

To always recognise unhappiness and suffering we must try hard. To recognise the cause of the unhappiness and suffering, we must try hard. To recognise the end of unhappiness and suffering, we must try hard. To follow the Path to finish unhappiness and suffering, we must try hard.

The Sea

The deep sea, deep sea! A person who has not learned the eightfold Path would say this. But this is not the deep sea according to the path. It is only a great amount of water, a lot of water.

There are things to see with the eye, to hear with the ear, to smell with the nose, to taste with the tongue, to touch with the body, to dream of with the mind, that are nice, that make you feel happy for a short time, to develop a liking for, to develop desire and craving for, and want to hold onto and keep. This is the true deep sea pointed out by the Path. It is in this sea that important people, those who desire recognition and fame, and all types of people swim in, get caught in. It is just like a person tied up with a rope and they cannot get free—free from unhappiness, suffering, and ending up in difficulties and in dangerous places, and subsequently born in unhappy worlds.



The story of a young child

Almost everyone gets their pleasure by following their desires and likes. If one youngster of a good family gives these up and follows the eightfold Path, we would think he is doing so following his own understanding, because the young find it easy to just

follow their desires and feelings, whether strong or weak, for all kinds of 'happiness'.

Now if a young child lying on his back puts a small piece of wood or nail into his mouth and his mother, or whoever was looking after the child, saw him do it, she would immediately take it out as quickly as possible. If it became stuck in his mouth, she would pull it out, even if it caused some bleeding. This would cause pain to the child, but she would do it because she wants the child to stay well and healthy, for she does the best for the child out of love and compassion for him. Later when the child is grown up, she would no longer worry for she realises the child can look after himself and would not do such things.

It is the same if a person does not believe in good behaviour, and is not ashamed and frightened of doing bad things, and he is not clear about being strong in doing good. I have to watch and help such a person. But if he shows his strength in following the Path, I need not worry more about him for he is able

to look after himself, and will not do anything stupid to harm himself and others.

Nirvana

Once student Sariputta was at Nalaka in Magadha and one Pastor, Jambukhadaka, came and asked him:

‘Nirvana, Nirvana! They say this, my friend, but what does it mean?’

‘It means the end of greed, hatred and unclear thinking, my friend. That is Nirvana.’

‘But is there a way or a behaviour a person can follow to achieve Nirvana?’

‘Yes there is a way or Path a person can follow to achieve Nirvana.’

‘And what is the way, my friend?’

‘It is the eightfold Path of right understanding,

right intentions, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.'

'This is a good way, my friend, one right way of behaving, to achieve Nirvana, and a great reason to try hard to do so!'

The importance of good friends.

Once student, Ananda, said to the Buddha:

'Part of this holy life is being with good people, going around with them and becoming good friends with them.'

'Do not say that Ananda!' It is the whole of this holy life, being with good people, going around with them, and being good friends with them. If a person stays with good people, he will grow, and practice this good eightfold Path. He will grow and develop right understanding, right intentions, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right

mindfulness and right concentration. He will no longer have strong likes and dislikes, no more strong desires and cravings for feelings and things; he will see clearly the change in everything and stop trying to hold onto things that always change.'

'A person, Ananda, who stays with, and is friends with, good people, will grow and practice the eightfold Path.'

'So you must be clear, Ananda: the whole of this holy life is to be with good people, go around with them and be good friends with them.'

'When someone takes me as a good friend, he will overcome being born again, overcome becoming old again, overcome dying again, overcome all sorrows, unhappiness, worrying and crying.'

'So Ananda, you should be really clear that all of this holy life is in staying with good people, going around with them and becoming good friends with them.'

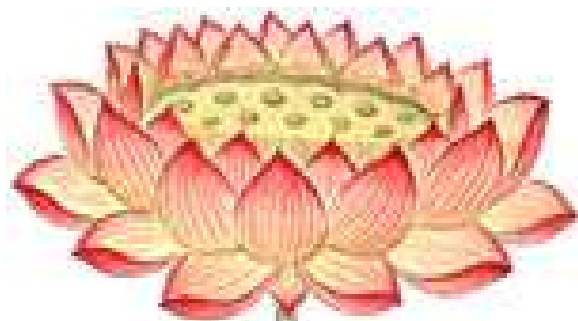
Dust on the fingernail

Thus I have heard: Once the Buddha was staying near Savatti in the Jetta Grove in the school house Anathapindika built. The Buddha put a little dust onto his finger nail and said to the students: ‘What do you think? Which is bigger, the dust I put on my fingernail or this ground we are sitting on?’

‘Teacher, the ground we are sitting on is much, much bigger than the dust on your fingernail.’

‘OK. If a person follows this school of the eightfold Path and achieves clear understanding, this is more: All sorrow, worries and suffering will finish and no longer exist for him. Only a little will remain when compared with what was present previously. It is the same as the small amount of dust on my fingernail, and the suffering and worries and unhappiness previously were like the ground we are now sitting on. Such a person would be only re-born seven times more.’

‘Achieving clear understanding is a really great thing. It is a really great achievement to come to see and understand things as they really are.’



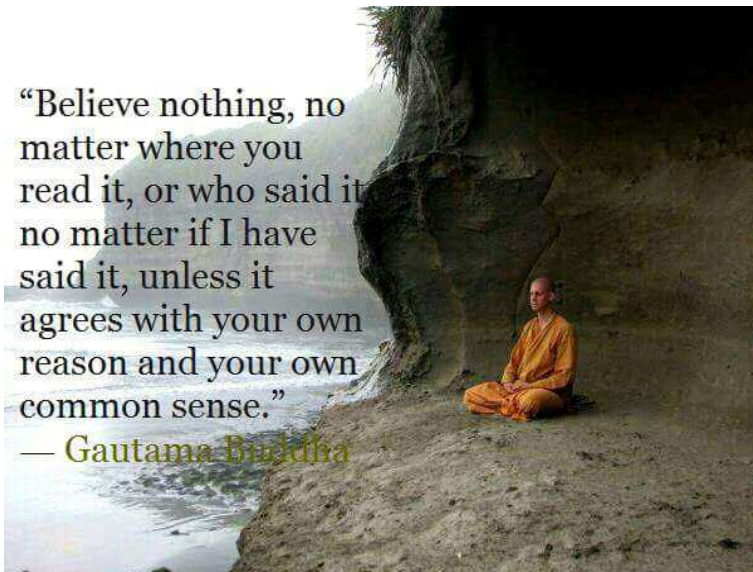
The Eightfold Path is as given in the following eight steps:



1. Right View

If we want to follow a path to help ourselves, we should first examine carefully the path to see if it really works and whether it gives a true picture of life and the world around us. We should not just believe what people say to us or tell us to believe, or because they have a high position in our community. We should listen carefully and discerningly, and examine its accuracy and truthfulness. When believing what people say they get some power over us, so we should

be very careful who and what we believe. We should never just believe something because someone tells us to, or has a loud mouth! We each have our own brains and intelligence to assess things as to whether they are true and accurate, and helpful or not.



If we examine things clearly we can see that:

- Everything is changing all the time. There is not one thing that does not change and there is not one

thing inside of anything, or anybody, that does not change.

- One thing makes another thing occur or come up, which in turn causes another thing to change or develop, which in turn causes another thing to develop or change...on and on... like this. Nothing develops out of nothing. There is always a cause.
- What a person does has an effect and a result that comes back to that person. If a person does a good thing, then this will result in a good thing coming back to him. If he does something bad then the result coming back to him will be bad,
- All our thoughts follow on from what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, feel, remember or dream of. Our thoughts change very rapidly and with our thoughts we develop the picture of the world we live in. The power of our thoughts cause new thoughts to arise, speech to occur, and actions and certain behaviours to develop and take place.

Words of Wisdom:

The most important thing to attain:

‘If a person loses his friends or relations, or his money, or his good name, it is not such a big loss as compared to losing clear understanding of the reality of the world we live in.’

‘If a person has a lot of friends and relatives, money and a good reputation, it is not nearly as important as if that person deepened his understanding of reality.’

‘So you must instruct yourselves like this: “We will grow by gaining more understanding.”’

—If we look clearly when we have problems and unhappiness, their causes, and how they finish, we can start to see that most of these follow on from our own desires and cravings which confuse us and make us do stupid and harmful things, which cause the unhappiness and problems to arise. Often we

like to put the blame for our problems onto others, but if we look carefully we can see that we ourselves really cause the problems to arise. The things that we do, and the things that we say all follow the thoughts that are in our heads and we let develop. Some thoughts, if we allow them to grow and develop, can cause unhappiness and problems to arise, following the words that leave our mouths and our behavior. Some thoughts if we allow them to grow and develop can cause happiness to arise, following the words that leave our mouths and our behavior. What kind of speech and behavior we give to another will often cause that person to give similar to us. So it is important to watch carefully what thoughts give rise to unhappiness and problems, and what thoughts give rise to happiness.

Words of Wisdom:

What is happiness and what is unhappiness

When I had not seen reality clearly and become

enlightened, when I was still a Bodhisattva, I used to think: ‘What is happiness and what is unhappiness in the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming?’

I understood that whatever happiness comes in the body arises and stays as long as the body does not change. Likewise whatever happiness arises from stays in the feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness, arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming, as long as these do not change. If they change and do not stay the same, this causes unhappiness to arise. If I stop trying to hold onto these with desire that the happiness would stay, I could let them go and they would not cause me to try and hold onto them.

When I was not clear what was happiness and what was unhappiness, and if I did not let go of

holding onto things that are constantly changing—the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming—and I did not see clearly how they constantly changed and tried to hold them so they did not change, I was not able to see reality and become enlightened.

When I was clear what was happiness and what was unhappiness, and if I did let go of holding onto things that are constantly changing—the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming—and saw how these constantly changed, they did not cause me to have the desire to try and hold onto them, and I started to see things clearly as they really were, and this enabled me to become enlightened.

So after understanding clearly, I became free, completely free without having any more unhappiness or rebirths.

Understand the Body and Mind

You are not able to remember the start of the cycle of your births and deaths. Whoever is not able to see reality clearly, and who still has desire to follow likes and feelings, is not able to remember the start of his life cycles of birth and death.

It is the same as if a dog is fastened by a rope to a tree, if he wants to walk around, he only goes close to the tree. If he stands up, he can only stand close to the tree. If he wants to sit down or sleep, he can only do so close to the tree.

It is the same for a person who has not learned the eightfold Path when he looks at his body—it is mine, I am this body, this body is me! Similarly when he examines his feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming he believes—they are mine, I am them, they are me! When he wants to walk around, he is attached to them. If he stands up, he

stands close to these things that he holds onto. If he sits down or sleeps, he sits down or sleeps attached to these.

‘So you students must remember always: This mind has been affected by greed, hatred and unclear and deluded thoughts for a long time. If the mind is affected badly like this, so is the person. If the mind is clean and clear, then the person too becomes clean, clear, and good.’

‘Have you seen a picture a person has painted?’

‘Yes, teacher.’

‘The origin of the picture was in the mind of the person painting it. The mind has many more things in it than just the one picture.’

‘So students, you must remember always: This mind has been affected by greed, hatred and deluded, unclear, thoughts for a very long time. If this mind is badly affected in this way, so is the person. If the mind becomes clean and clear, the person also will become

clean and clear and good.'

'I have not seen anything more different than all types of animals. The mind discerns all types of animals. So the mind has got even more types of thought than all these types of animals!'

'So you must remember always: This mind has been badly affected by greed, hatred, and deluded, and unclear, thoughts for a very long time true. If the mind is affected in this way, so is the person. If the mind is clean and clear, the person can become good, clean and clear also.'

'It is the same if an artist is able to draw a detailed picture of all the parts of a man or woman on a piece of cloth, a person who has not learned the eightfold Path makes the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming, develop also.'

Our thoughts that develop unhappiness and problems are greed, desires, lust, sensuality, hatred, anger, irritability, jealousy, conceit, selfishness, the belief that we are separate and different from others. Worry, stress, baseless fears and lack of confidence also affects clear thinking. When we allow these types of thoughts to develop and proliferate, unhappiness and problems will develop, just like an artist who has these kinds of thoughts would paint a picture showing these kinds of situations.

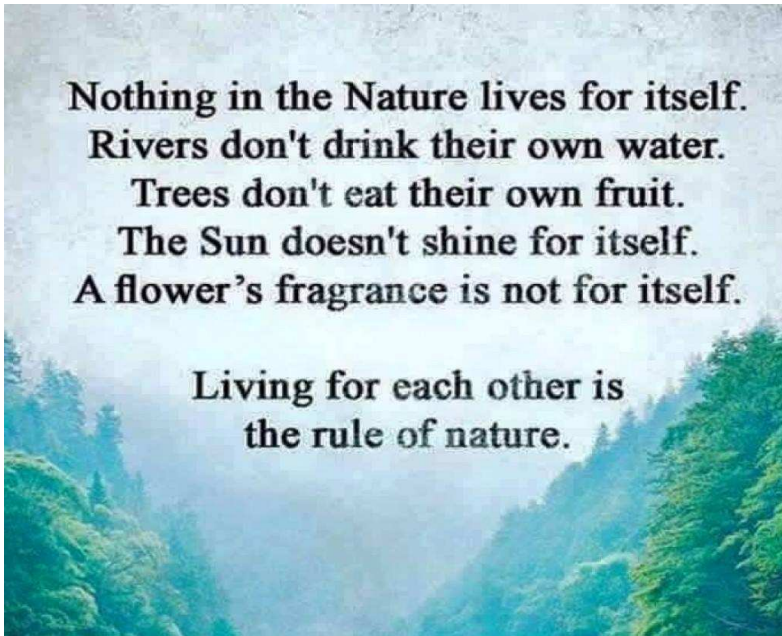
Good thoughts of love, compassion, happiness with others success, peace, patience, fearlessness and strength, produce happiness and contentment.

If we examine things clearly we can see that there is nothing that stays the same. Everything changes all the time—trees, mountains, motors, and ourselves. Today we are not the same as yesterday. Today we are not the same as some years ago.

Our thoughts have changed. Our body has changed. Everything has changed and keeps changing.

If we did not change we would not be able to change our behavior and thoughts and develop happiness and understanding. Unfortunately often we want things to stay the same, or we do not like it when things change, and this cause worries and unhappiness to develop. This occurs when we do not look clearly at reality. We should let go of things and not try and hold onto things as if they were not going to change.

We should understand that our body and mind are not separate entities. They are both inter-related and inter-dependent. When our mind changes, the body and the feelings that run on the skin change also. When the body changes, our feeling and thoughts change also.



Words of Wisdom:

Three enemies that are inside:

'There are three things that cause harm inside us, three enemies, bad things, three things that can kill us, three things that will fight us. They are greed and sensuality, anger and hatred, and deluded and unclear thoughts and beliefs. These three leave unhealthy marks inside a person, they are three

enemies to peace and happiness, three bad things that can kill or fight us and cause disruption.'

Four things that confuse understanding, thinking and beliefs.

'There are four things that confuse understanding, thinking and beliefs and these are:

If a person believes that something stays the same when it changes continually.

If a person believes that there is happiness amongst unhappiness.

If a person believes there is an ego or self that is separate and constant, when there is no ego, or constant self, existing.

If a person believes that something that is not clean and smells, is smart and beautiful.

All these four things cause confusion in understanding, thoughts and beliefs.

Now there are four things that do not cause confusion in understanding, thinking, and beliefs. These are:

If a person sees that something is changing all the time when it is changing continually.

If a person sees that when there is unhappiness there is only unhappiness.

If a person sees that something or someone does not have an ego, or self, that is separate and constant, when there is no ego or constant self existing.

If a person sees that something that is not clean and smells, is not clean and smells.

These four things do not cause confusion in understanding, thinking and beliefs.'

Guitar

If there was an important person who had never heard the sound of a guitar before, and when he heard

one said: 'Friend, what is that making the beautiful and sweet noise, and entrances me?'

'That's a guitar, boss.'

'Please bring it to me.'

He went and brought it to him, but the man said:

'I do not want this thing. I want only the sweet sound!'

He responded: 'This is what a guitar is. It is made up of strings, screws for tightening the strings, the wooden part above which the strings run, and the box under the strings with its sides. When it is tuned properly it makes a beautiful and sweet sound.'

Now the man took the guitar and broke it into small pieces, then broke them again into smaller pieces and burned them all. He then collected the ashes and went to a nearby creek and threw them into the water, and said:

'What you call a guitar is not a good thing. For a

long time it has made people too happy with it, and this gives them all kinds of feelings and desires.’

In the same way a student of the eightfold Path should assess the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming.

If the student looks with deep understanding, he can see that they are all not him, nor belong to him, and they have no ego or ‘me’ existing separately from anything else.

Understand that there is no ego, or self, existing separately from other things

Student Radha came to the Buddha and after showing respect sat alongside of him and asked him:

‘Teacher, how can I come to clearly see that this body and mind does not have a constant self or ego, that there is not something belonging to me present,

and how can I finish all conceit and thoughts of pride?

‘Whatever kind of body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming, Radha, from before, in the future or from now, inside or outside, big or small, above or below, far away or close by, you must understand: “It does not belong to me, I am not this, this is not my ego or self.” If you can see this clearly with deep understanding, you can start to see what is really there. And you will see clearly this body and mind does not have a ego, or self, existing separately from other things, that there is nothing belonging to you there, and this will cause all thoughts of conceit and pride to cease.

Afterwards, Radha went and stayed by himself and practiced hard as instructed, and realized the reality of how things existed and became free, and became a really good man with deep understanding.

Like a flower called the Lotus

I do not have arguments with others, but some want to argue with me. Whoever teaches the Dharma of reality will not argue with others. What all wise people do not believe, I also must say that things are not like that. What all wise people say things are like, I also agree with them.

Now what is it that wise people do not believe? They do not believe that the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming, do not change and they always will stay the same, and I agree with them.

And what is that the wise understand? They understand that the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming, continually change and do not last for ever, and I agree with them.

There is in this world, where everything develops following another thing, things that a Tathagata (one who can see clearly how things exist), has seen clearly and is awake to, and understands fully. And what are these? They are the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming.

If there is a student that the Tathagata (Buddha) teaches and shows him this, and explains it clearly, and he is not able to understand or comprehend clearly, then he is a person who cannot open his eyes to the truth, and has no understanding, and I am not able to help him.

Just as a lotus flower, or water lilly, grows in water and comes up through the water and does not get damaged, a Tathagata grows up in the world and achieves understanding, and does not get damaged or become tainted by the world.



When you understand that everything changes all the time following a change in another thing, and that there is nothing that stays the same in anything or is not affected by another thing, we must appreciate that we are like this also.

We should understand that this body consists of the combination of elements from the earth, which enter us through our food, water, from the clouds and

rain and rivers which we drink, air and oxygen, which we take in when we breath in and which comes from photosynthesis in leaves and algae, and energy from the sun—which also allows our food to grow, steam from the sea to become rain, and photosynthesis to take place. In other words this body is not separate, but interdependent with the earth, water, air and sun.

We should understand that the thoughts in the mind arise following changes in the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. In other words the mind is interdependent with body, feelings, memories, beliefs and what we see, hear smell, taste, touch and dream. One thing leads to another and is interdependent with another. One thing needs another to develop and further changes another.

Words of Wisdom:

The body will not stay the same

The body does not stay the same. Whatever does not stay the same and changes constantly, when you want it to remain the same, causes unhappiness. Such a thing that causes unhappiness does not have a separate unchanging self or ego that is not related to other things around it. A thing that does not have a separate constant ego should be seen as not being me, or mine, or my 'self'. If you can think like this, then you will start to see reality clearly and how things really exist.

Feelings change all the time and do not stay the same, memories change as do beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. Unhappiness arises when something you want to stay the same, changes. Such a thing that causes unhappiness does not have a separate unchanging self or ego that is not related to other

things around it. A thing that does not have a separate constant ego should be seen as not being me, or mine, or my 'self'. If you can think like this, then you will start to see reality clearly and how things really exist.

The things that made the body do not stay the same either

The body does not stay the same. The things that make up the body do not remain the same either. If the things that make up the body do not remain the same, how can the body remain constant?

Feelings change all the time and do not stay the same, memories change as do beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. The things that cause these to arise do not remain the same either. If the things that caused them to arise do not remain the same, how can they remain constant?

If a student of the eightfold Path understands this

clearly, then he will let go of trying to hold strongly onto the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. When his desire to strongly hold them ceases, then he can let them go, and will no longer try to hold on to them, and he will become free—free from attachment and rebirth, understanding that he has lived the good holy life, and what he was supposed to do he has done, and he will not have any more of this type of existence.

Let go of things that are not yours

At one time the Buddha was at Savatti and gave this teaching:

‘Let go of things that are not yours. If you let them go it will greatly help you and you will achieve deep happiness.

‘And what are the things that are not yours and

you should let go of? They are the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. If you can let them all go then it will help you to achieve happiness.

‘It is the same if a person brooms and burns all the leaves and twigs on the area we are sitting on now. If a person comes and cleans up like this would you think: “This person is taking us all away and going to burn us?”

‘Of course not, teacher!’

‘Why?’

‘All these things he is brooming and burning do not belong to us!’

‘Likewise, this body does not belong to you, let it go! Likewise all feelings do not belong to you, let them go! All memories, beliefs and discriminating thoughts do not belong to you, let them go! All mental

states do not belong to you, let them go! All the states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming do not belong to you, let them go!

If you can lose the habit of trying to hold onto these things that change constantly following changes in other things, this will help you to be happy!'

Lessen your fondness and desire for the body

'A person who has not learned the eightfold Path can become weary of his body when he sees his body getting older or sick or will die. And he will be able to let go of holding strongly onto the body and see that it continually changes. However the mind and the flow of thoughts and consciousness are much harder to let go of and a person who has not learned the eightfold Path would find it very difficult to let go of them and become free. Why is this? The person would believe that the mind and thoughts and conscious states are really himself and not related or interdependent with

other things, and he would hold on to them believing them to belong to him, that he is them, and that they are his self or ego. A person who has not learned the eightfold Path is not able to become tired of the mind and its thoughts, and let them go, and win his freedom.

‘But it would be better for this person, who has not learned the eightfold Path, to believe that the body, which is the compilation of water, air, earth (through food) and energy (from the sun) is his self or ego and not believe that the mind is his self or ego. Why is this? We know that the body will last two, or five, or ten, or fifty or more years. But this mind, this flow of thoughts and states of consciousness, arises and finishes all the time, day and night!

‘It is just like a monkey when it is jumping around tree branches, it holds onto one branch, lets go then holds another, then lets go and holds another on and on. The mind, these train of thoughts, these states of consciousness, are just the same. They arise in a moment, then finish when another arises,

continually changing day and night.

‘Now a person who has studied the eightfold Path knows that something always arises following another thing. If that thing is present, then the other can arise. If it is not present, then it will not arise. If the thing continues then the other will continue to arise. If the thing ceases, then the other will no longer arise.

‘Unclear and confused thinking is the basis for following desires and likes,

And what a person does follows from the energy of his thoughts (karma).

The energy of thinking (karma) is the basis for the mind and body.

The mind and body is the basis for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming,

And these six are the basis for contact.

Contact is the basis for feelings,

And feelings the basis for desires,

And desires are the basis for holding onto things.

Holding onto things is the basis for doing things and making things happen,

And these are the basis for new things arising and being born.

Being born is the basis for suffering, old age, sickness and death.

If unclear and confused thinking ceases, all these things will no longer arise and suffering and unhappiness will finish.

‘A person who really understands the eightfold Path is weary of, and no longer wants to hold onto, the body, feelings, memories, beliefs, discriminations, mental states, and states of consciousness arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming. He does not hold onto them with the belief

that they do not change, and that they are not interdependent with other things. When he becomes weary of them and no longer holds onto them, he comes to realize he has let them go and gains freedom—no longer to be reborn into suffering—I have lived the good life and the work that I was supposed to do I have done, there is no more to be done!’

Understand what happens when you hold onto things

‘I will teach you so that you will understand what happens when you hold onto things.

The conscious state of seeing arises when the eye and something to see are both present.

Contact arises when all three are present.

Feelings arise following contact.

‘So, a person who properly understands the eightfold Path will lose interest in the eye and things to see, and the conscious states that arise following

looking, and contact and feelings. When he loses interest, he no longer holds onto the thing, and when he no longer holds onto things he gains freedom, and when he is free he knows the habit of holding onto things he sees is finished.

‘It is the same when the conscious state arises following the ear hearing something, the nose smelling something, the tongue tasting something, the body or hand touching something, and thoughts dreaming of something.

Contact arises when the three are present.

Feeling arises following contact.

‘A person who understands the eightfold Path loses interest in the ear, nose, tongue, body and thoughts and the things heard, smelt, tasted, touched or dreamed about, and the conscious states that arises accordingly and contact and feelings. When he loses interest, he stops holding onto things that are always changing, and when he stops holding on he becomes

free, and when free he knows his habit of holding on to things is finished.

This is the teaching to help you understand what happens when you hold onto things.'

Nine things that follow strong desire.

'There are nine things that follow on from strong desire. Note these carefully

These nine are:

Following strong desire, finding a way to get the thing or someone arises.

After finding a way to get it, the person goes and gets it.

After getting it, the person assesses it.

After assessing it, strong feelings arise for it.

After these feeling arise, thoughts of holding it for oneself arise.

After thoughts of holding it for oneself arise, the person keeps it for himself.

After keeping it for himself, greed arises.

After greed arises, thoughts of keeping others away from it arise.

After thoughts of keeping it away from others arise, thoughts of getting things to keep others away arise, and what to use to do this, and anger, swearing, lying and violence arise.

All these have the origin in strong desire.'

The origin of things

'Maybe someone will ask you: "What is the origin of things? How does everything come about? Where do things come from? Where do things go and end up? What causes them all to arise? Who controls them all? What is above them all? What is the basis of them all? Where do they all end up? Where do they finish?"

*If you are asked this, then you can reply like this:
The basis for everything arising is desire. They stay
when held onto, following contact with them, and they
cause feelings to arise. Strong and sharp thoughts are
the basis of them all. Awareness of thoughts control
them all. True and deep understanding is above them
all. Freedom is the basis deep inside them all. All
things arise and do not finish or die but only change.
Nirvana is the ending of them all.'*

What is alive?

*Student Radha asked the Buddha: “We call
things alive. Why, teacher, do we call something
alive?”*

*‘We call them alive because they are attached to
liking things, like holding onto things, like feelings,
like all types of happiness, have strong likes for the
body, feelings, discriminations based on memories
and beliefs, thoughts and mental states, and conscious
states arising from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting,*

touching and dreaming.

‘Just like kids who like playing on muddy ground. If these kids have not satisfied their desires to play in the mud, to hold onto things, to have certain feelings and happiness, they have a strong desire to stay playing and hold strongly onto this desire. However when they are tired of playing around and thoughts of holding on to the mud, feelings, this type of happiness, and desires finish, they breakup what they have made in the mud with their hands and legs and throw them away and do not play any longer in the mud.

‘It is the same, Radha, if you are able to let go of feelings and desires for, and throw away, the body, feelings, discriminations based on memories and beliefs, thoughts and mental states and states of consciousness.

You can let them go and no longer play with them if you practice well to finish strong desire for them.

If we can look clearly at reality and see how things are changing, we can see how things arise and change, and understand that everything has a cause and does not arise out of nothing. Everything has something causing it to arise. This is the same for our thoughts and whatever we do. Our thoughts generate what we say and do and our behavior. If we look clearly we can see that good things come to those who say, do, and behave in a good way, and bad things come to those who say and do bad or disrespectful things. Whatever happens to a person is related to his actions he has performed. This is termed ‘karma’, meaning the power of thought energy.

Words of Wisdom:

***‘I am the father or mother of all that I do
(karma),***

Son or daughter of the things I have done,

Arise from what I have done.

My situation today follows what I have previously done.

Whatever I do, good bad,

I will receive similarly in the future'

Four kinds of Karma

'When I became awake to reality, I came to understand that there are four types of karma. These are:

'Dark karma with dark results; light karma with light results; dark and light karma with dark and light results; karma that is neither dark or light which finishes the strength of karma.

Dark karma with dark results arises when a person does something with his body, speech or thoughts to cause unhappiness or pain. If he does this it will result in his coming into, or born into, a world where there is unhappiness and suffering. When he is

born in, or comes into, a world where there is suffering and pain, he will receive this suffering and pain. When this suffering and pain comes to him, he will feel great suffering and pain as if he were in hell. This is what is called dark karma with dark results.

‘Light karma with light results arises when a person does not do anything with his body, speech or thoughts to cause unhappiness or pain. If he does this it will result in his coming into, or born into, a world where there is no unhappiness and suffering. When he is born in, or comes into, a world where there is no suffering and pain, he will not receive any suffering and pain but he will feel only happiness as if he were in heaven. This is called light karma with light results.

‘Dark and light karma with dark and light results arises when a person does something with his body, speech or thoughts to cause unhappiness or pain and he also does things that do not cause unhappiness or pain. If he does this it will result in his coming into, or born into, a world where there is both unhappiness

and suffering and at other times no unhappiness or suffering. When he is born in, or comes into this world, he will sometimes receive suffering and pain and sometimes not feel any suffering or pain. This is as when he is in the world of men or some kinds of angels or devas. This is called dark and light karma with dark and light results.

‘Actions that are neither light nor dark with neither light or dark results, and finishes the strength of karma occurs when a person no longer makes dark karma with dark results, nor light karma with light results, nor dark and light karma with dark and light results. This is termed karma that is not dark or light with no dark or light results, and this finishes the strength of karma.

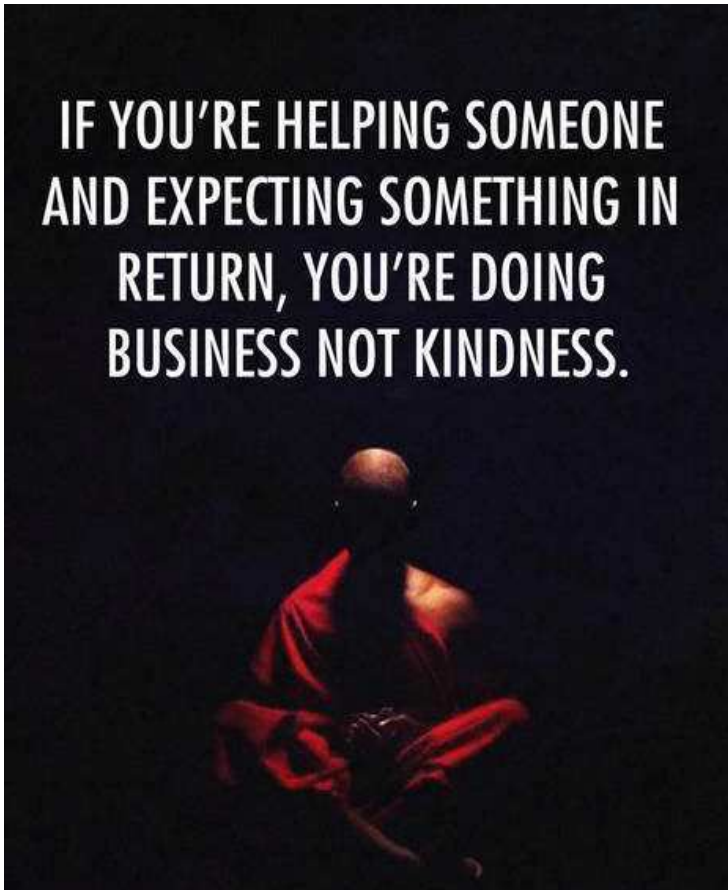
‘These are the four types of karma I came to understand when I awoke to reality.’

Giving

‘If people were clear, as I am clear, that what must arise after a person gives something, they would not eat anything unless they shared part of the food with another, and no thought of having it all for themselves comes into their mind.

‘If it came to the last time they were to have food, the last time any food was to go into their mouth, they would not eat unless they first shared it, if there was another person present who could share this present with them.

‘Unfortunately, however, most people do not understand what arises after a person gives something and they eat without sharing. The thought of benefiting only themselves is strong in their mind.’



The results of karma

“The results of karma cannot be known by thought, and so should not be speculated about. Thus, thinking, one would come to distraction and distress.”

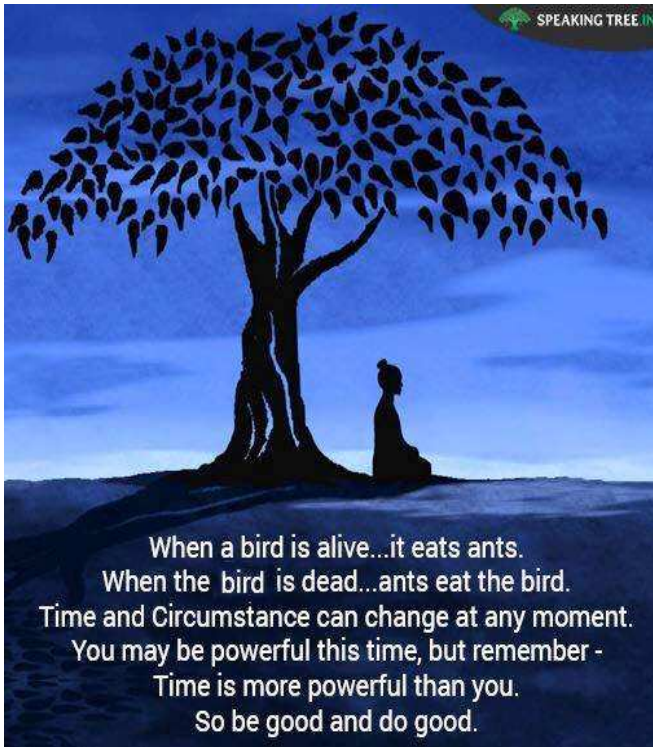
“Therefore, Ananda, do not be the judge of people; do not make assumptions about others.

A person is destroyed by holding judgements about others”

Whoever wants to have a good life in the future must do good things now!

Whoever is not worried as to what will happen in the future can do whatever they like now and bear the consequences of their actions!

If you really loved yourself, you would not do one thing that would cause you to have suffering or pain in the future.



Words of Wisdom:

People who truly love themselves

Thus I, Ananda, have heard: Once when the Buddha was staying at Savatthi in the Jeta Garden in the school constructed by Anathapindika, Chief Pasenadi of Kosala came and after showing respect to

the Buddha sat by his side and talked with him, saying:

‘When I was sitting by myself I thought about who really loves himself and who does not. I came up with the answer that those who do not follow good behaviour in what they say and do, do not really love themselves. If they say that they love themselves, they really do not follow it through. They treat themselves as a person who they hate and want to damage or destroy. Truly they do not love themselves!

‘However, those who do only good things and follow good behaviour with their speech and bodily actions really do love themselves. Even if they say they do not love themselves, they really do! How come? They treat themselves as one would treat their best friend. In fact they really do love themselves!

‘hat is true, chief,’ replied the Buddha.

‘Whoever really likes himself is not able to do bad or stupid things. Whoever does bad and stupid things is not able to gain happiness that is going to

last. Death will come to him and he will not be able to carry those things he has gained with him when he dies. What will follow him like his shadow follows his body? All those things he has done, good and bad, will follow him when he dies. They are really the things that belong to him and he will carry them with him after death. All the things he has done will follow him like his shadow follows his body, and they will not leave him.'

'So it is most important that a person only does good things now in order to ensure a future good life. Doing good things will help you have a good future life.'

If we look clearly we can see that we are not isolated beings and do not exist separately from others. What we do and say affects others and what they do and say affects us. Each of us gets strength from our friends and relatives. We also get help from animals, trees and everything around us. We do not exist in

isolation separate from everything else. If we do good things and help others, then good things will come back to us. Compassion helps to open our minds and deepen our understanding of life.

If a problem or difficulty arises, we should not try to run away and do, take, or watch things that will create feelings that will make us forget this difficulty or pain. It is best to use and examine this problem to help us develop deeper understanding of reality.

Words of Wisdom:

Everything arises following on from another thing

'I will teach you now how everything arises following another thing.

'When a person is born, he must age and die. If there is a Buddha or Tathagata existing at that time, it does not make any difference, but this is the nature of things, this is how things relate to each other, this is

how one thing exists in relation to another. A Tathagata comes to understand this clearly and looks deeply, and when he truly understands, tells others, and teaches others so they also gain this understanding.

He teaches like this:

‘When one is born, aging and death must follow.

One is born following actions that make it happen.

The basis for these actions is holding strong onto a person or thing.

The basis for holding strong is strong desire.

The basis for strong desire is feelings that arise following seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or dreaming.

The basis for feelings is contact with these things through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and thoughts.

The basis for contact is these six things.

The basis for these six things is the body and mind.

The basis for the mind is feelings, discriminations, memories, beliefs, mental reactions and mental states, and states of consciousness arising following what is seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, and dreamed of.

The basis of the body are the elements from the earth that come in food, water, oxygen in the air, and power from the sun.

This is called the body and mind.

The basis for the arising of the body and mind together is the energy derived from karma.

The basis for this is when one does something by choice—making karma or thought energy. There are three ways to make karma, with the body, with speech or with thoughts.

The basis for making this karma is confused and unclear thoughts, such as when one is not clear about suffering and unhappiness, their origin, how they finish and how to finish them.

‘When a person sees clearly how everything arises following on from something, and cannot arise out of nothing, he no longer worries whether he as existed before, or what he was before, or how did he exist previously, or how he arose previously.

He also does not worry about whether he will exist in the future, or what he will become in the future, or what type of existence will he have in the future, or what he will become if he exists like that.

He will also not have thoughts about whether he exists or not now, or what he is, or how he exists, or how did he arise and what will happen to him in the future.

And why is this? This person understands fully and clearly how one thing always follows another—

that things are interdependent.'

Like water flowing down the side of a mountain

'When there is rain on the top of a mountain, water will flow down the side of the mountain and fill creeks below, and these creeks will flow into small rivers, and these small rivers flow into larger rivers and lakes, and on down into the sea.

'It is the same when confused and unclear thinking results in saying and doing things following these thoughts and desires

What a person says and does results in karmic energy,

And karmic energy causes the arising of the body and mind.

The mind and body are the basis for looking, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming,

And these six things are the basis for contact

with things,

And contact is the basis for feelings to arise,

And feelings are the basis for desire,

And desire the basis for holding onto things and people,

And holding is the basis for taking action and doing things,

And doing things is the basis for things to be born,

And being born is the basis for suffering and problems.

Suffering and problems can be the basis for understanding reality

And this is the basis for happiness,

And this happiness is the basis for deep happiness,

And this is the basis for peacefulness,

And this is the basis for sharp and clear thinking

And this is the basis for understanding how things arise,

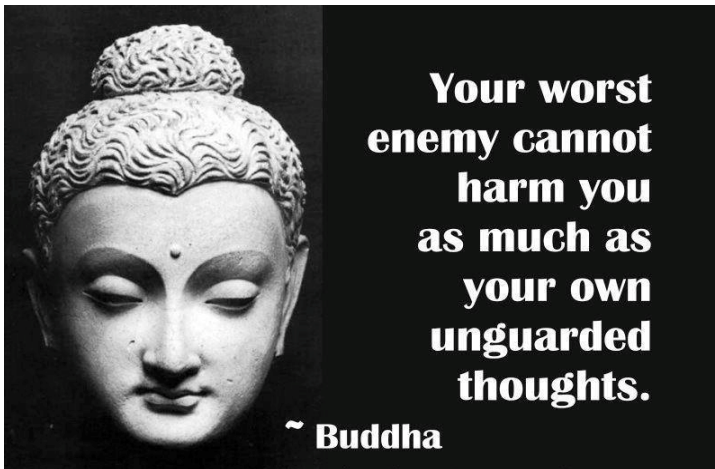
And this makes a person not want to hold onto things that change constantly,

And this makes a person let go of things,

And when a person lets go of things he becomes free,

And freedom allows a person to realize that he is really free, an Arahant,

A person who has awoken, and understands reality, is at peace



We should be clear that our thinking is behind everything we say and do. The picture we have of the world around us, and the people around us, how we ‘see things’, is determined by our thoughts. This picture changes according to our moods and feelings and what kind of thoughts are running in our mind. When we are angry our picture of things and people is quite different from when we are happy and relaxed. The feelings and thoughts that arise when we see someone, or something, determines what further thoughts are generated and subsequent speech and behaviour.

Our behaviour follows on from what type of thoughts and pictures we are holding in our brains. If we are having disturbing, detrimental, and unsettled thoughts then we are likely to do things that will harm and cause problems. If our thoughts are uplifting and good and helpful, then we are likely to do beneficial things.

Words of Wisdom:

‘We are what we think.

Everything that we are arises in our thoughts.

With our thoughts we determine our world.

If speak with bad, or angry, or harmful thoughts in our mind,

Then unhappiness will follow, just like a cart follows a buffalo pulling it.

If we speak when we have good, loving, and

compassionate thoughts in our mind,

*Then happiness will follow just like our shadow,
which we cannot remove.'*

'Thoughts generate our speech,

Our actions follow on from what we say.

*What we do often becomes a habit of our
behaviour.*

*Our habit can strengthen and become part of
our character.*

*So we must watch the train of our thoughts
carefully and let them arise from love and
compassion for all life.'*



You can see reality (Dharma) clearly

At one time one leader came and asked the Buddha:

‘They say, Mr Gotama, that each of us can see the reality of life–Dharma–clearly and in this moment, and come to understand things and realize what is best to do. How can we do this?’

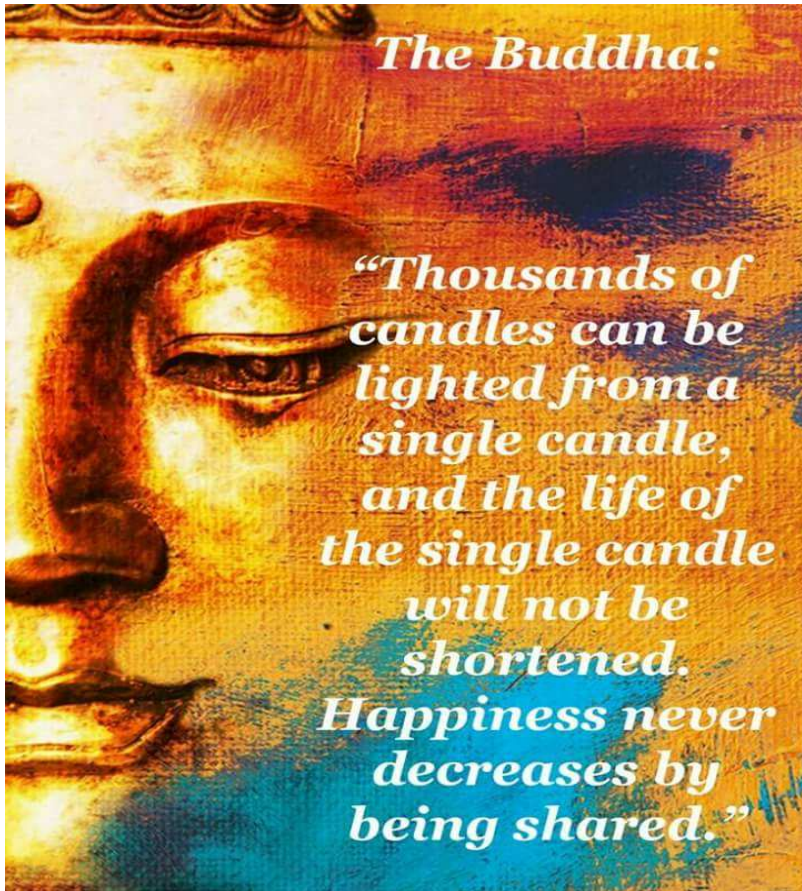
‘When, my friend, a person holds onto desires and sensual feelings, anger or hatred, and is full of these types of thoughts and enjoys having them, he starts to think of harming himself or others, or both himself and others, and this results in problems and

unhappiness. He also does stupid and bad things in his behaviour and speech following on from these types of thoughts and he is not clear as to what is good for him, or for others, or for both himself and others.

‘However, when he lets go of these types of thoughts, and they no longer fill his mind and he no longer likes them, he no longer thinks of harming himself, or harming others, or harming both himself and others; and he no longer creates problems and unhappiness. Also he no longer does stupid and harmful things in his behaviour or speech following on from these types of thoughts, and he is clear about what is good and beneficial for himself, for others, and for himself and others.

‘It is in this way, my friend, that a person can see the reality of life–Dharma–clearly in this moment, and come to understand things and realize what is best to do.’

Your relationship with others is very important in helping you to be happy. If you let anger, or irritability, or jealousy, or stupid thoughts affect your relationship with others, then you will cause problems and unhappiness to arise and come back to you. If you let love and compassion arise in your relationships with others, then this will bring happiness back to you.



Words of Wisdom:

Father and Mother

‘They are with the gods, the families who, in

their homes, really respect their mothers and fathers. They are with the angels, the families who, in their homes, really respect their mothers and fathers. They are with the best teachers, the families who, in their homes, really respect their mothers and fathers. They are with the best people to give something to, the families who, in their homes, really respect their mothers and fathers. 'The gods' are the mother and father. 'The angels' are the mother and father. 'The best teachers' are the mother and father. 'The best people to give something to' are the mother and father. And how is this? Mothers and fathers do a great deal to help their children. They look after them, give them food, and help them go out and live well in the society.'

Repay the hard work of your parents

'There are two people who you cannot repay their hard work. And who are they? They are your mother and father.'

If you carry your mother on one shoulder and your father on the other, and you do this for 100 years, and you look after them, washing them, drying them and massaging their legs and hands, and clean them when they urinate or defecate, all this would not repay their hard work in looking after you. And if you helped them to become important and rich with a lot of all sorts of possessions, this too would not repay their hard work. And why? Mothers and fathers do a great deal to help their children, they look after them, give them food, and help them go out and live well in the society.

However if a person helps their parents to learn about and understand and follow the eightfold Path instead of having other beliefs; helps them to follow beneficial behaviour instead of doing stupid and hurtful things; helps them be generous instead of being selfish; helps them to become compassionate; and helps them to awaken to a clear understanding of reality; this repays their hard work, and gives them even more than what they gave.'

A good Friend

It is good to have a good friend if that person has seven types of behaviour, and these are: He can give something that is hard to give, he can do something that is hard to do, he does not get upset if difficult times come to him, he does not keep secrets from you, he keeps the secrets other have told him, he does not leave you if you are suffering hard times, he will not be upset and say bad things if you lose something.

What are we? If we die what happens to us? What is being born? Try and see these clearly and understand them fully.

Death is does not mean finish. Birth does not mean to come from nothing. Everything is interdependent—one causes another and nothing can arise by itself from nothing. Everything has something as it's cause. There is only change.

There is not anything that always stays the same

and never changes, in anything or in ourselves.

Understand clearly that death does not mean the end



(Ven. Tich Nhat Hanh, a great teacher, taught:)

If you stop quietly and look at a leaf that is dying on a tree, this leaf will become red and later fall off the branch of the tree.

The leaf is like the mother of the tree. We think that the tree is the mother of the leaves, but if we look clearly we can see the leaves too are mothers of the tree. The water inside the tree and the elements from the earth, both come through its roots, but these are not able to keep the tree alive by themselves. The tree sends water up to

the leaves, and the leaves use the water together with the sun's energy and wind to make energy and food for the tree to use, so that the tree can remain strong.

So really this leaf is really a mother of this tree.

It is easy to see that the leaf is part of the tree, as the tree has branches which holds the leaves.

We do not have branches or physical connections that connect us to our mothers in this way, but when we were in our mother's stomach we did have one—the umbilical cord. Fluids, food and energy came through our mother's blood in this cord to our body. When we were born this cord was cut, and we began to believe that we were separate from our mother. But this is not true. Our mothers looked after us for a long time. And we have other mothers too.

Our home or village is also our mother. We have lots of connections to our home. There is another that runs to the clouds in the sky. If there were no clouds, we would not have any water to drink. A big part of

our body—over 80%—is water! So there is really a connection between us and the clouds! It is the same to the rivers and the forests, and the people growing food in gardens and cutting the timber in the forests. There are thousands of connections running between us and everywhere from our homes, to the ground and sky.

Can you see the connection between you and me? If you were not here, I would also not be here. If you do not see this clearly, try to slow and focus your thoughts and look closely. This is not a belief, it is a real thing!

I asked the leaf whether it was frightened to die. It replied that it was not, because it had worked hard to give strength to the tree, and the result of this hard work is in the tree as it is today. The leaf said: ‘You cannot say I am just the leaf you are looking at now. I am the tree! I am inside the tree and when I fall to the ground and decompose, I will still be giving strength to the tree. So I am not worried. When I fall from the

branch, I will sing out to the tree: “See you soon!”

I was really surprised and this awakened me to the truth that we must see Life. We should not say the life of the leaf, but we must say Life is in the leaf and also in the tree. My life is only Life, and you can see it both in myself and in the tree.

Just then a wind blew up and I saw the leaf come off the branch and drift and dance downwards to the ground, as it saw itself part of the tree already. It was happy and enjoying itself! I bowed my head in respect, as we have a lot to learn from this leaf. It was not frightened, it understood that there is not anything that is born from nothing, and nothing dies or finishes and becomes nothing.

The clouds in the sky are not frightened. If it is the time for the cloud to change and become rain, it is happy to fall down, singing, and become a river, like the Sepik, Fly, or Lawes Rivers, or onto a lady’s garden and go inside some sweet potato and become part of a man. It is something to be happy about. The

clouds know that when they become rain they can become part of the sea too. They are not frightened. It is only people who are frightened!

If you look clearly and understand deeply how things are interrelated and interconnected, you will no longer be afraid of death and dying. Birth and death are just thoughts inside our heads, and they are not deep truths. It is the same if you say something is above us or below us. If I put my hand up, it goes up, and if I put it down, it goes down. Heaven is above and hell below. However, people on the opposite side of the world have a different view, for up and down are not in the same direction for the whole world. It is the same for the words birth and death.

So, look clearly and you will see that you have always been. Look deeply at the life of the leaf and see that our lives are the same as the leaf's. Look deeply and you can see your inter-relationship with the clouds, the waves on the sea, and understand that much of your body is water, and get rid of your fears.

If you look deeply and gain deep understanding, you will overcome birth and death.

Tomorrow I will still be here, but you must look clearly with deep understanding to find me. I will be a leaf or flower. I will be like that and say hello to you. If you look clearly, you will see me and be able to say hello to me too. I will be really happy if you do!

Words of Wisdom:

Fear of Death

Once Jamissoni, a religious man, came to the Buddha and said:

‘Mr Gotama, I do not believe there is a person who is not afraid to die, and who is not afraid of death.’

‘These are, my friend, people who are afraid to die and are afraid of death. But there is also those who are not afraid to die and are not afraid of death.’

Now who are those who are afraid to die and who are those who are not?

‘There is the person who is not free from desires, who is not free from craving to follow desires, not free from becoming excited by desires, and is not free from strong desires and likes for many things. If such a person becomes very sick his thoughts run like this: “I am going to lose all those good things that I had wanted and got, and it looks like I am going to lose them now!” And he worries, cries, sings out, and strikes his chest and becomes really upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is afraid of dying, and is afraid of death.

‘Now there is also the person who is not free of strong attachment to his body, not free from getting excited about the body, not free from desires for all sorts of bodies. And if he gets very sick he starts thinking: “I am going to lose this body, which I really like and am attached to, and it looks like I am going to lose it now!” And he worries, cries, sings out, and

strikes his chest and becomes really upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is afraid of dying, and is afraid of death.

‘Now too there is the person who did not do good things, who did not make a good house, who did bad things and harmed others. And when he gets a severe illness he thinks: “I feel sorry now! I did not do good things. I did not make a good house nor lead a good life, but I did many bad things and harmed other people. If I die now I will suffer from all my wrong doings.” And he worries, cries, shouts out and hits his chest, and his thinking becomes frightened and confused. That is what happens to a person who is afraid of dying, and is afraid of death.

Now there is also a person who is not clear or sure about the eightfold Path of Dharma, and has not developed clear understanding of reality. If he gets severely ill he thinks: “I am not clear about the eightfold Path, nor do I have a good understanding of reality and what is true!” And he worries, cries, sings

out, and strikes his chest and becomes really upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is afraid of dying, and is afraid of death.

Janussoni, that is four types of people who are afraid of dying and afraid of death. But there are some people who are not afraid of dying, and not afraid of death.

There is the person free from desires, free from craving for desires, from getting excited about desires and is free from strong desires and likes for many things. If such a person becomes very sick his thoughts run like this: "I am going to lose all those things that I used to want and got, and it looks like I am going to lose them now!" And he does not worry, cry, or sing out, or strike his chest or become really upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is not afraid of dying, and is not afraid of death.

'Now there is also the person who is free of strong attachment to his body, free from getting excited about the body, free from desires for all sorts

of bodies. And if he gets very sick he starts thinking: “I am going to lose this body, which I really liked and was attached to, and it looks like I am going to lose it now!” And he does not worry, cry or sing out, or strike his chest or become really upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is not afraid of dying, and is not afraid of death.

‘Now too there is the person who did good things, who made a good house, who did many good things and helped others. And when he gets a severe illness he thinks: “I did many good things. I made a good house and led a good life, and I did not harm other people. If I die now I will go to a good place following all the good things I have done.” And he does not worry, cry, or shout out or hit his chest, and his thinking is not frightened and confused. That is what happens to a person who is not afraid of dying, and is not afraid of death.

Now there is a person who is clear and sure about the eightfold Path of Dharma, and has

developed clear understanding of reality. If he gets severely ill he thinks: “I am clear about the eighfold Path and I have a good understanding of reality and what is true!” And he does not worry, cry, or sing out, or strike his chest or become upset and confused. That is what happens to a person who is not afraid of dying, and is not afraid of death.

That, Janussoni, is four types of people who are not frightened about dying, not frightened about death.’

‘Thank you, Mr Gotama! Thank you very much! I would like to become a person who joins your school and gets help from you from today onwards until I die!’

Anathapindika’s Death

Anathapindika was a businessman who bought a beautiful park for the Buddha to build a practice centre and school on.

Even though he was busy at work, he made time to be a good practitioner.

When he was old and was getting ready to die, the Buddha sent two of his senior students, Ananda and Sariputra, to go and see him.

When they arrived he tried to get up, but he was not strong enough and they said to him: ‘Do not try to get up, we will sit down close to you.’

When they were seated, Sariputra asked him: ‘My friend, how are you feeling? Are your pains getting better or worse?’

Anathapindika replied: ‘The aches and pains seem to be getting stronger and stronger!’

When he heard this, Sariputra told him that the three of them should practice some meditation on the things that can give help to a person—the example of the Buddha, his teachings (Dharma), and those who follow his teachings (Sangha). This practice makes a person happy who has been following the eightfold

Path.

Sariputra knew that Anatathapindika had been helping the school and followed its teachings for some 30 years.

When doing the practice and remembering the three things that can help him, Anathapindika felt better and smiled.

After this Sariputra taught him the meditation about change and that trying to hold onto things that change causes unhappiness and suffering.



‘Things that we like to call us or our self continually change:

When I breathe in, I understand that I am not this body, and I am more than this body. When I breathe in I am clear I am not these feelings...discriminations and beliefs and memories...these mental reactions and mental states...these states of consciousness following on from what I see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or dream...and I am more than these all things.’

He continued by leading a meditation of how all things arise from another things, which causes another thing to arise and on and on like this; that everything changes and there is not anything constant unchanging in anything or anybody; and that everything is inter-related. That nothing arises or is born out of nothing and nothing finishes or dies but only changes.

After a while tears came down on Anathapidika’s face and Ananda asked: ‘My friend. Why are you crying? Are you worried about something?’

‘No Ananda’, he replied, ‘I am not worried about anything.’

‘Are you finding it hard to follow Sariputras instructions then?’

‘No Ananda, I am following them well!’

‘Well, what is the problem?’

‘No problem at all, but my tears are from the deep happiness that is arising in me. I have been with Buddha, listened to the teachings and been part of the Sangha for some 30 years but have never heard a great teaching like this before!’

‘But we full time students get this type of teaching every day!’ replied Ananda.

‘Please Ananda,’ replied Anathapindika, ‘When you leave me and go back to our Teacher, tell him that even if there are lots of people too busy to receive this type of teaching, there are still others of us who are working who have the time and would like to

receive them. So please ask him to give this type of teaching to those who work as well!

‘OK’, replied Ananda. ‘I will tell him!’

This was the last request that Anathapindika made before he left his life.

We must try hard and lose the desire to hold these things that constantly change. If we do not, and try to hold onto them, we will suffer, for they are going to change whether we like it or not!

We have to see that which does not change, which is really there, and when we do this, we can gain great peace and happiness.

Words of Wisdom:

Nirvana

There is one thing that is not born—does not arise—there is not something that creates it—it does

not arise following on from another thing. If there was not this thing that is not born—does not arise—there is not something that creates it—does not arise following from another thing, there would not be a way to become free of that which is born—arises—arises following another thing.

But there is that which is not born—does not arise—there is not something that creates it—it does not arise following on from another thing.

Born, arises, something causing it, arising following another thing,

Always changing and is not permanent, ages and dies,

And will get sick and damaged.

It arises following on from all types of 'food' and follows desires and likes,

And is not something to be proud of.

If one leaves all these then one will have a

peaceful life,

*Something that stays for good, far from problems,
not born,*

*Nothing has made it, has not arisen from another
thing,*

*No unhappiness, completely clean, no more
worries,*

Nothing more to arise, deep happiness.

The running river

‘There are four kinds of people in this world, and what are these? There is the person who goes with the tide; the person who swims up against the tide; the person who stands up and stays strong; and the person who swims to the other side of the river and stands on dry land.

The person who goes with the tide is one who just follows his desires and does bad and stupid things.

The person who swims against the tide is one who does not just follow his desires and do bad and stupid things, but tries hard to follow good ways and improve himself, but finds it hard and is upset and worries about this.

The person who stands up and stays strong is one who no longer holds on to the four things that holds him back—holding a belief of having an constant unchanging self, or ego, separate for other things; not believing the Buddha’s teachings; belief that by just saying some words, or doing a particular type of thing, deep understanding will arise; and holding onto greed, and desires, anger and hatred. This type of person will be born again in heaven and from there achieve Nirvana, and will not have to come back to this type of world again.

The person who swims to the other side of the river and stands on dry land is one who has removed all destructive and bad thoughts, and his mind is clean and he has gained deep understanding of reality

The Eightfold Path is as given in the following eight steps
1. Right View

*and become free due to his hard work and practice,
and becoming awakened to reality.*

These are four kinds of people in this world.



2. Right Intentions

We should have a strong desire to develop deep understanding and do things that will be of benefit to ourselves and others. We should let go of things that always change, for trying to hold onto them will always cause unhappiness. We should think always of helping others and not doing anything that will cause them to suffer. We should get rid of beliefs and fears that blind us by restricting our view of the world and our understanding. If we just follow what others say and tell us to believe, we will not be able to open our eyes to the truth of reality, and we will just see the world through those beliefs. When we believe that we are right or a particular belief is the only right one,

then we are shutting our eyes to what is really happening around us and see the world according to these beliefs and not as it really is, and can become angry when others do not believe as we do, which is the basis of much misunderstanding and wars. We should not believe that we are right all of the time!

Often our desires and stupid thoughts confuse us and harm us. So we must have a strong desire to do things that will result in deep happiness coming to ourselves and others. We just cannot say this and let our destructive thoughts continue, making us become conceited and self-righteous, and harm others. This will only cause unhappiness to ourselves and others.

We must stop any jealousy arising as well as arrogance and conceit. If we can do this, we can reduce the number of times we get cross. We should have the desire to be happy with others.

Destructive and stupid thoughts can go around and around in our heads and grow and increase if we do not let them go. This type of thinking destroys

good thoughts and makes the body sick. So we must learn to let go of them quickly. We must develop the desire to look after ourselves by only allowing good and beneficial thoughts to run in our mind, and grow love and compassion for ourselves, and others.

We should develop the desire to develop love and compassion to help others and not see our selves as being completely separate beings. We should have a strong desire to open our minds and become awake to things as they really are. This is the basis of how we are going to get rid of all the unhappiness and suffering within ourselves.

The basis of everything that we do and all the talk we make is in our thinking. Thinking has great power!

So we must develop the strong desire to practice good behavior, meditation and develop understanding and wisdom.

Words of Wisdom:

Help yourself

To help yourself you must carefully watch your thinking. There are four aspects of doing this:

‘I want my mind not to have any thoughts of excitement and attachment for things or people that will cause me problems, confusion and unhappiness, and I do not want my mind to have desire for the type of things that will stimulate such thoughts.

To do this I will practice watching my thoughts carefully to help myself.

‘I want my mind not to have any anger or hatred for things or people that stimulate such thinking. To do this I will practice watching my thoughts carefully to help myself.

‘I want my mind not to have confused or stupid thoughts or beliefs about things or people. To do this I will practice watching my thoughts carefully to help myself.

'I want my mind not to have strong desires or urges for those things that can cause such feelings to develop. To do this I will practice watching my thoughts carefully to help myself.'

'A person no longer has excitement and attachment for things that can excite, if he has no more thoughts of attachment; has no more anger or hatred for things that stimulate such thinking, if he has no more anger or hatred inside him; has no more unclear or confused thoughts or beliefs about things or people, if he does not hold onto such ideas and beliefs any more; has no strong desires or urges for those things that can cause their development, if he no longer has any strong desires or cravings; when a student is like this, and he will not stray from the path or become frightened or lose strength, nor will he be caught up in beliefs of other teachers.'

A Person who is strong

'If when a person is walking, standing, or sitting,

and has thoughts following attachments and cravings, or bad thoughts, or anger, or breaking or hitting something or someone, and he does not let them go immediately, get rid of them, destroy them and clean his mind, and if he does not try hard to do so and become a better person, then we call him a person who is slack and not strong.

But if when a person is walking, standing, or sitting, and has thoughts following attachments and cravings, or bad thoughts, or anger, or breaking or hitting something or someone, and he lets them go immediately, gets rid of them, destroys them and cleans his mind, and if he tries hard to do so and become a better person, then we call him a person who is strong and always tries hard.

The growth of understanding

‘There are four things that help deep understanding of reality to grow.

These are:

Being with people who are very good and behave well and follow the eightfold path; listen to teachings on the eightfold Path, Dharma; think about and meditate on the teachings; practice following the teachings.

These four will help deep understanding of reality to grow and they will really help the person.'

A Student's Powers

*'There are five powers of a student who follows deeply the eightfold Path. These five are: **knowledge, shame, fear of doing something bad, strength, deep understanding.***

The power of knowledge: Here a good student knows that the Tathagata (a person who understands clearly how things exist in this world) has awakened to clear and deep understanding, that he is an Arahant (a person who has deep understanding and

has deep happiness and peace), that he really understands completely what is true reality and what is beneficial to do, that he is one who stays peacefully and patiently understanding the world, a person who is above all others in controlling his mind, a teacher of angels, gods and men, an Awakened One, a great person above all others.

Power of Shame: *Here a good student is ashamed to do anything bad with his body, speech or thoughts. He is ashamed of anything that is bad and not good.*

Power of fear of doing wrong: *Here a student is afraid of doing something bad with his body, speech or thinking. He is fearful of doing anything that is bad or not good.*

Power of strength: *Here a good student stays with the strength of getting rid of all unbeneficial behaviour and doing only beneficial types of behaviour. He remains strong all the time and does not stop trying to improve himself.*

Power of deep understanding: Here a student understands clearly how things arise and change, and finishes all worries and unhappiness.

These five powers arise in a student who practices hard and well following the eightfold Path.

So you should all say to yourselves: ‘We must achieve the power of understanding, shame, fear of doing wrong, strength, and deep understanding of a person who really tries had to follow and practice this Path. You must instruct yourselves like this!’

Things that result in the good and the bad

‘If a person has an understanding about beneficial behaviour, then harmful behaviour will not arise. But if this understanding is not there, then harmful will arise.

If a person has shame of doing something bad, then bad behaviour will not arise. But when there is no shame, and there is not great shame of doing bad

things, then all types of bad behaviours will arise.

If a person is afraid of doing wrong, then bad behaviour will not arise. But if there is no fear of doing wrong things and there is not restraint on doing wrong, all type of bad behaviour will arise.

If a person has strength in doing good things, then bad things will not arise. But if there is not the strength and a person is lazy, bad things will arise.

If understanding about doing beneficial things is present, bad thoughts will not arise. But if there is not this understanding and destructive thoughts prevail, then bad things will arise.

How to grow good thoughts

‘A carpenter sees that marks on his hand of the tools he works with, but does not know how much skin he lost today and yesterday when working with his tools, he just knows that the marks on his hands are getting bigger.

In a similar way a person who tries hard at practicing meditation to make his thoughts clean, clear and good, does not know how many bad or destructive ways of thinking he has removed yesterday or today, but he realises that they are lessening.

When a big canoe with a deck on it, is left in the sun on the beach for six months, it must become damaged and the cane ropes inside it become weakened and broken.

Similarly, when someone tries hard at meditation to make his thinking clean, clear and good, he breaks up and destroys destructive thoughts, and stupid thoughts and ideas that obstruct his progress are destroyed.

See the change

'If a person practices to see the change in everything all of the time, his destructive desires and craving and attachments will lessen, as will his desire

to get things and status, and his thinking will become clearer, and beliefs that he has a separate self, independent of others, will finish.

Just like a farmer when he cuts the roots of a bush with his spade, when a person practices to watch the change in everything all of the time, all his desires and associated excitements will lessen, his craving to get things or status will lessen, and his thinking will become clearer, and beliefs that he has a separate self, independent of others, will finish.'

Some ways to slow anger and hatred

There are some ways to help you slow anger and hatred. These are some:

If you have anger and hatred towards another, you should send out love and compassion to that person, remember that he is just like others and give similar thoughts to him as you give to others.

Or you can avoid this person and not see him

again while you are angry with him.

Or you can think about karma for he is the father of all he does and whatever he does, whether good or no good, he will receive similarly, and has no way to avoid this.

There are some ways to help you slow anger and hatred.

Good things that will arise when a person follows the Path

There are six good things that occur when a person starts to follow the eightfold Path—when he understands the four truths, he no longer has a belief in a self that is unchanging and not affected by others, he understands that what the Buddha teaches is true, he does not believe that by doing or saying a particular thing that clear understanding will just arise without effort.

These six are:

The person stays practicing strong the eightfold Path–Dharma.

He does not give up and go back to bad ways.

He can see the ending of unhappiness and worries.

He gains a lot of good ideas and wisdom.

*He understands why things occur and arise,
and that things always have a particular cause.*

Four types of behaviour

There are four types of behaviour: being angry, being patient and peaceful, controlling thoughts and behaviour, slowing thoughts and actions.

Now being angry is when a person tells another off, or shouts and speaks badly to him. This makes the other person reply with anger and bad speech.

Now being patient and peaceful is when a person

tells another off, or shouts and speaks badly to him. The other person does not reply with anger or bad speech.

Now controlling thoughts and behaviour is when a person sees something, or hears something, or smells something, tastes something, or touches something, or dreams of a thing, he does not try to hold onto it or part of it. He is aware and controls this kind of thinking, not wanting any destructive or stupid thoughts to arise and take him over.

Now slowing thoughts and actions is when a person does not let any thought of wanting or craving for a person or something, anger or hatred, or thoughts of fighting, or other stupid or bad thoughts, arise. He lets go of any of these types of thoughts and does not hold them any more, and finishes them completely.

Wanting and feeling excited

It is something to be afraid of, that is another

*name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person; **pain** that is another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person; **sickness** that is another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person; **cancer** that is another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person; **a thing that ties us up** that is another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person; **a swamp** that is another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person.*

Now why is something to be afraid of another name for the feeling of wanting and being excited over a thing or a person? When a person is all heated up and caught and locked up by these feelings, he is no longer free from things to be frightened of in this and future worlds.

When a person is all heated up and caught and locked up by these feelings, he is no longer free from pain, sickness, cancer, being tied up, being stuck in a

swamp, in this world or another in the future.

The eight things that occupy our minds in this world

*‘There are eight things that make this world go around and around, and people follow these things. There are: **Winning and losing, having a good name or having a bad name, hearing sweet and complementary stories or being blamed or taken to court, getting happiness or getting pain.***

These things come to those who follow the eightfold Path and those who do not. And what is the difference between these two types of people?

When someone who is not following the Path achieves or wins something, he does not think: ‘The thing that I have achieved or won will not stay a long time, it will cause some unhappiness by changing, but it must change.’ He is not able to see the situation clearly. The same arises when he loses something or a position, or if he gains a good name or a bad name,

or hears sweet and complementary stories or is blamed or taken to court, he does not think: 'The thing that I have achieved or won will not stay a long time, it will cause some unhappiness by changing, but it must change.' He is not able to see the situation clearly.

When these things come to him his mind gets attached to them. When he wins, he feels happy, when he loses, he is unhappy. When he gets a good name he is happy, if he get a bad name he is unhappy. When he hears sweet or complementary stories he feels happy, when he blamed or taken to court, he is unhappy. When gets something he likes, he feels happy, when he gets something he does not want or like, or has pain, he is unhappy. When he continually has happiness and then unhappiness, he cannot leave the round of birth, aging and death, 'Samsara', he is not able to let go of unhappiness, pain, tears and problems. He is not able to become free from worries and suffering.

However, when someone following the Path

achieves or wins something, he thinks: 'The thing that I have achieved or won will not stay a long time, it will cause some unhappiness by changing, but it must change.' He is able to see the situation clearly, and his mind does not get a fixation on it. He does not feel happy every time he wins something or worries when he loses something; he is not happy every time he has a good name or unhappy when he has a bad name; he is not happy every time he hears sweet or complementary stories, or unhappy when he is blamed or taken to court; he does not feel happy every time he gets what he likes, and unhappy every time he has pain or does not get what he wants. When he no longer has these feelings of liking and no liking, he becomes free from the round of being born, becoming old and dying; he is free from unhappiness, pain, tears and problems. He is free from suffering and unhappiness.

This is the difference between a person who follows the eightfold Path and a person who has not learned and practiced it.'

**‘Where we are now,
busy with all sorts of things,
People are rushing around dying
for the eight things
that occupy their minds.**

**It is here that
you will find the grave yard that
will make you really frightened.**

**And it is here that
you students must go and help
all those who are dying.’**

Getting a lot of things and a good name

If a person works to get a lot of things and become important, and his name become recognised, this can cause him big problems, and he must look out and be fearful, for it may delude him and prevent him from becoming free.

So you must teach yourselves: When we get a lot of things and become important and want to be recognised, we must let go of these types of thoughts and not let them control our mind.

To help us grow and strengthen our wish for a good life and happiness, we can do some things.

We can do and think of some prayers and promises we can make to ourselves, and follow some practices.

The Paramis or good behaviours, are things we can try to do to help us open our minds to deep understanding and freedom. It is useful to think of them every day and try to follow them.

Dana–parami: I will try hard to help others and give them what they need.

Sila–parami: I will try hard to follow good behaviour and keep the precepts of the Path

Nekkhamma–parami: I will try hard to let go of strong desires and dislikes for things and put others first.

Panna–parami: I will try hard to gain deep understanding of reality and help others do likewise.

Viriya–parami: I will try hard to follow the eightfold Path-Dharma-of the Buddha.

Khanti–parami: I will try hard to be patient and have good relationships with other people and things.

Sacca–parami: I will try hard to be good and always speak the truth.

Adhitthana–parami: I will try hard to practice well and not forget to practice.

Metta–parami: I will try hard to grow compassion and good behaviour to all others.

Upekkha–parami: I will try hard to be strong,

think of all living beings, and not follow thoughts of liking or not liking, and have no fear.

We can put a picture in our heads of becoming like the sun in the sky and give light, strength, and happiness, by way of growing compassion, to every living being.

Words of Wisdom:

A piece of wood drifting

At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambi next to the Ganges River, when he saw a log drifting down with the current and he asked his students who were nearby if they noticed the log drifting along.

‘We noticed it, teacher.’

‘If the log does not get stuck on one side of the river nearby or far away, or sink down in the middle, or get stuck on a sand bar in the middle of the river,

or some men or something else comes and collects it, or it gets stuck in a whirl pool, or becomes rotten and breaks up, it will drift on down until it comes up to the sea.

‘It is the same if you do not get stuck on one side, or sink down in the middle, or get stuck on a sand bar in the middle, or some men or something else comes and collects you, or you get stuck in a whirl pool, or become rotten and break up, you will drift on down until you come to Nirvana.

‘How is this? Having good and clean thoughts will lead a person to Nirvana.’

One student asked the Buddha:

‘What are the near and far banks of the river? What is it that sinks in the middle and gets stuck on a sand bar? What is it that men hold, and what gets caught in a whirl pool? What is it that goes rotten?’

‘The near bank of the river represents the six conscious states—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting,

touching and dreaming or thinking. The far bank represents the six receptors—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Sinking down in the middle represents being happy with being excited and holding onto things. Being stuck on a sand bar represents the conceit of holding onto the ego or ‘me’. Men holding onto represents being close to others and attached to their lives with their worries, happiness and unhappiness and holding onto parts of their lives.

Something else comes and collects you is when a person follows the example of a student of the Path, as he wants to be born as an angel or in heaven. He wants to become like them and follows good behaviour.

Stuck in a whirl pool represents seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching things.

And becoming rotten and breaking up is when a bad person does bad and harmful things—a lying person who pretends to follow the Path, but is full of craving, desires and hatreds, and is rotten inside.’

Now, at this time, a man named Nanda who was a herdsman of cows, was nearby and heard what the Buddha was saying. And he spoke out:

‘Teacher, I am not stuck on one side of the river, or sinking in the middle, or stuck on a sand bar, or let men or other things hold onto me.

I am not stuck in a whirl pool or rotten! I would like to become one of your students in front of you now!’

‘Nanda, you should bring back all the cows to the owner first.’

‘They are able to go back by themselves, teacher, as they want to go back and see their young.’

‘But you should really bring them back first!’

Nanda brought the cows back to their owner and then returned and asked the Buddha again to become a student of the Path.

The Buddha accepted him as a student. Nanda

tried hard and practiced well by himself and it was not long before he gained deep understanding which comes when a person follows the Path well, and he became an Arahant and gained the great happiness and peace of Nirvana.

Practice love and compassion

‘Like a family that has a lot of women and not many men, bad people are able to come and steal from them, a person who does not practice well meditation on love and compassion can be attacked by living things that are not human.

Like a family that does not have many women but has plenty of men, bad people are not able to come and steal from them, a person who practices well meditation on love and compassion will not be attacked by living things that are not human.

You must teach yourselves: “We will practice meditation on love and compassion a lot of times, and

every day. We will try hard to do this so it comes up part of our everyday life.”

We are what we think,

All that we are arises with our thoughts.

With our thoughts we make the world.

Speak or act with an impure mind

And trouble will follow you.

As the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart.

Speak or act with a pure mind

And happiness will follow you

As your shadow, unshakeable.

The thought manifests as the word.

The word manifests as the deed.

The deed develops into habit.

The habit hardens into character.

*So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings.*



Prayer to develop Compassion by Shantideva

May I be a protector to those without protection,

*A leader for those who journey,
And a boat, a bridge, a passage,
For those desiring the further shore.
May the pain of every living creature
Be completely cleared away.
May I be the doctor and the medicines;
And may I be the nurse
For all sick beings in the world
Until everyone is healed.
Just like the sun
And the great elements such as earth,
May I always support the life
Of all the boundless creatures;
And until they pass away from pain
May I also be the source of life
For all the realms of varied beings*

That reach unto the ends of space.

The Prayer of a Bodhisattva

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not look to allies in life's battlefields, but to my own strength.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved, but work for patience to win my freedom.

Sakka's Promise

Before, when Sakka, chairman of the gods, was a man, he practiced keeping seven promises. Because of this he became chairman of the gods later.

These seven promises were:

While I am alive I will always look after my

mother and father.

While I am alive I will always respect the leaders in my family.

While I am alive I will always make wholesome and quiet speech.

While I am alive I will not say bad things or swear or criticise others unjustly.

While I am alive and at home, I will remember others and not just think of myself, and will give help and be happy to give my things to others, answer their requests, and be happy to share and give.

While I am alive I will always speak the truth.

While I am alive I will control my anger and irritability and if they arise, I will get rid of them quickly.

Vows of the Bodhisattva

However innumerable sentient beings are, we

vow to help them all.

However inexhaustible our defilements and thought habits are,

we vow to let them go.

However immeasurable the Dharma teachings are,

we vow to come to understand them.

However difficult the Buddha's path is, we vow to follow it fully.

The Eightfold Path is as given in the following eight steps
2. Right Intentions





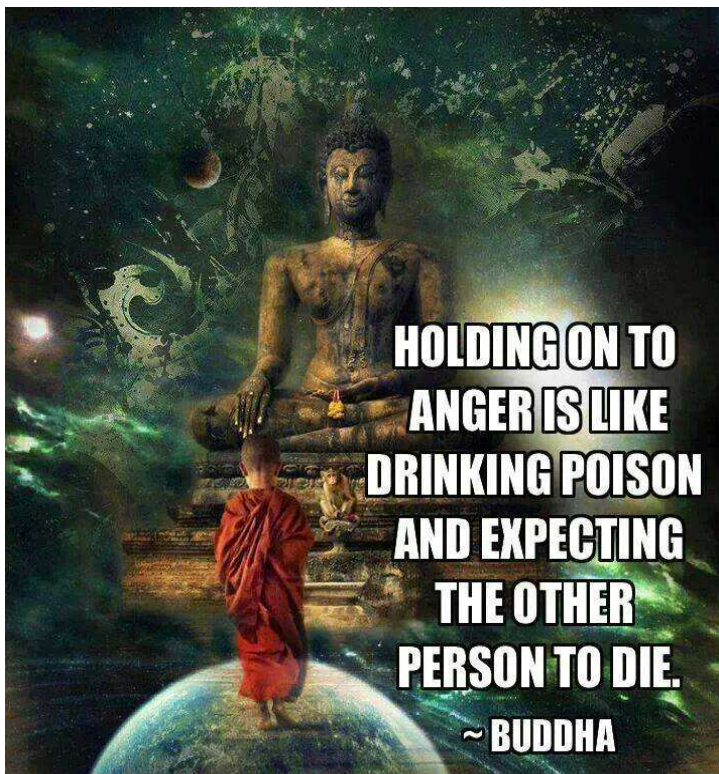
3. Right Speech

If you want to develop happiness, you should always speak well and honestly. The basis for right speech is respect for others. Whatever speech leaves our mouths follow on from what we have been thinking. So we must always watch our thinking closely! Others can find out what our thoughts are by listening to our speech. So do not lie, speak with anger or say bad, or dirty things. This kind of speech will make others unhappy and this unhappiness will come back to ourselves.

When we are cross, it causes some changes inside our body, such as head, stomach, and abdominal aches and pains. Anger and being cross affects the well being of both our body and mind.

If you speak badly of people behind their backs, this will destroy your reputation as a decent person, and make the person you are talking against get angry when he finds out what you have been saying.

When a person is jealous it can cause him to become sick in both his body and mind, and causes hatred and anger to arise in another.



Words of Wisdom:

The signs of a good person

There are four things that distinguish a man who is not very good. These are:

Even if they do not ask him, he goes ahead and

says bad things about the behaviour of another. And when they ask him, he goes further and says more bad things about the person and he does not hold back on anything.

He also does not speak out on the good characteristics of another person, if he is asked, and never if he is not asked! However if they continue to ask, he will say a few good things, but not in detail or strongly. Such a person also will hide his own bad characteristics even when asked. But if asked persistently, he will not say them in detail, or all of them, or loudly.

Such a person will broadcast his good side, even when not asked, and will go more and more if asked! And when asked he will not forget one thing about his good characteristics!

This type of person we can call no good.

There are four things that distinguish a man who is very good. These are:

If he is asked, he will not speak out about the bad characteristics of another. And is asked persistently, he will only say a little and quietly and not going into detail.

He will also speak out about the good characteristics of another when he is not asked, and will explain further in detail if asked. He will tell of all the good things in a strong voice and not hide anything.

Also, he will speak out about his own bad characteristics even if not asked. And if asked, will go into detail, not forgetting anything, and explain clearly to all. He will also not talk about his good characteristics to others if they do not ask him, or even if they ask him. However if they are persistent, then he will quietly tell of a few, and not all of his good qualities.

This type of person we can call one who is really good.

Speak the truth and do not lie—we all should be clear: whatever we do or say will cause effects that come back to us.

If we do or say good and honest things, good will come back. If we do or say stupid, and bad, dishonest things, then you will badly affect your life.

Words of Wisdom:

The results of lying

Buddha taught his son Rahula about what happens when a person lies and is untruthful one morning after eating and washing his food bowl.

There was a little water left in the bowl and Buddha said:

‘Rahula, do you see that there is a little water left in the bowl?’

‘Yes I do. Teacher.’

‘So you must see that a good life for a person

who is not ashamed of lying is very small, like this water.'

The Buddha threw away the small amount of water in the bowl and said:

'Rahula, did you see the water I threw away?'

'Yes I saw it.'

'So, recognise that a person who is not ashamed of lying throws away a good life.'

Then the Buddha turned the bowl upside down and said: 'Rahula, did you note that I turned the bowl upside down?'

'Yes, I noted.'

So, Rahula, you must realise that a person who is not ashamed of lying, turns his life upside down.'

Then the Buddha set down the bowl straight and said:

'Rahula, do you see the bowl now, empty with nothing inside of it?'

'Yes I do.'

'So you must realize, Rahula, the life of a person who is not ashamed of lying is empty of good things.'

To help you remember the importance of good speech, you can regularly make this promise, and try hard to follow it:

I understand the problems that arise after bad speech and when a person misunderstands another.

I promise to grow loving speech and the practice of listening carefully when others talk, so I can make others happy and finish their worries.

I understand that speech can create happiness or unhappiness, and I promise to only speak the truth to give strength, happiness and create good thoughts in others.

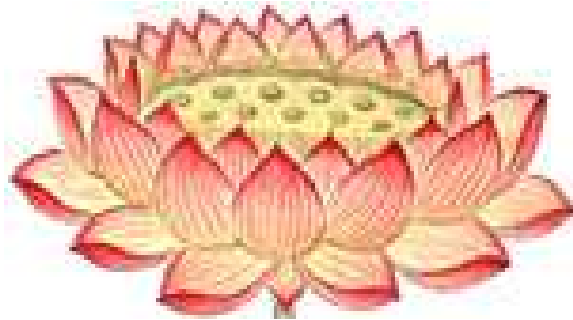
I promise that I will not tell stories about others if I am not sure if such stories are true, and I will not say bad things about another person or thing if I am not

sure whether they are true.

I promise that I will not say things that will cause divisions among people, or say things that will destroy relationships in their community or family.

I will try hard to fix up relationships between people, whether there are small or big divisions.

If I am feeling like getting angry, I will control myself and instead develop good thoughts of understanding and patience.





4. Right Behaviour

We must do good things and behave in a good way if we want ourselves and others to be happy. Our minds must be peaceful and clean if we want to be able to practice meditation well and gain deep understanding of reality. So we have to show respect to ourselves and to others.

- We should not kill anything without good reason, nor should we harm another person.
- We should not take anything belonging to another unless the owner has said we can.

- We must not have sexual relations with a person married to another person, or with a young person or a relative close to us. We must show proper respect to others.
- We should not take strong drinks or drugs as they affect our thinking so that it does not run clearly or normally and can damage us. These things are poisons and damage our body and make changes in how our body and mind function. When a person is drunk, it is easy to do stupid things and damage their own and other people's happiness and well being. The strength of what you do when you are drunk, or under the influence of drugs, results in just as strong results coming back to you as when you are not drunk for what you give you receive. You are responsible for what happens to you and your life. So you must develop respect and compassion for yourself and not do things that are going to badly affect or damage you.
- In the same way that we should show respect to ourselves, we should show respect to others. We

should not make poisons, such as home brew, and give them to others, or make money by selling drugs, or alcohol, or other poisons, to others.

If we go ahead and kill, steal, have sexual relations with others when we are married, take strong drink and drugs, we must appreciate that our minds will not be able to stay clear and quiet so that we can practice meditation well and develop deep understanding of reality, for our minds will be restless and unsettled, and we will have problems arising both in our body and our mind.

To help you remember this you can make, and try your best to follow, these promises:

First promise

I understand the problems that arise when a person harms another, and I promise to grow compassion and look after people, animals, plants, trees and the earth. I will not kill without good reason, or let another kill without good reason, and I will not

agree with killing amongst humans, inside my thoughts or in my behaviour.

Second Promise

I understand the unhappiness that arises when a person takes advantage of another and does not respect the other person, and when one person steals from and does bad things to another. I promise to grow love and compassion and good behaviour towards others and find ways to help people, animals, plants and trees, and the earth. I promise to help and be generous to those in need. I will respect things that belong to others, and will not allow people to harm others and cause suffering to people and animals.

Third Promise

I understand the problems that arise when a person is promiscuous and does not respect others with whom they have sex, and promise to behave well and assist the lives of others, those married, families,

and the community. To strengthen wellbeing in myself and others, I will follow strongly the promises I make, and those others make, with others. I will be strong in assisting children to ensure no one harms them, and strong to help families so that their wellbeing is not damaged because of irresponsible or bad behaviour.

Fourth Promise

I understand the problems that arise when a person does not control things he takes in, and promise to grow good health in my body and mind, and also those of my family and community, by taking only beneficial things in what I drink, eat, see, and listen to.

I promise to only take in things that will produce peace and happiness in my body and mind, and those of my family and community. I will not use strong drink, drugs, or things that will poison my body and mind, like some pictures, movies, TV programs, and

gossip. I understand that taking poison into my body or mind is not showing respect to my ancestors, parents, the members of my family and community, and to those in the future. I will work to remove bad behaviour, such as getting angry and fighting, and all fear and stupid thoughts, from my mind and my community, by taking into my body and mind only good and beneficial things. I realize that I must only take in only good things into my mouth, eye, and ears, for good changes to come up in myself and my community.

Words of Wisdom:

One thing arises from another

If a person does not control what he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or dreams of, there is not the basis for good behaviour to arise.

If a person does not have good behaviour, there is not the basis for being able to strengthen

beneficial thinking.

If a person is not able to strengthen beneficial thinking, then he has not got the basis for developing deep understanding of reality.

If a person does not have a deep understanding of reality, he does not have the basis for letting go of, and not trying to control, things.

If a person does not want to let go of things, then he does not have the basis for realizing clearly the path to freedom.

This is the same as a tree that does not have branches and leaves: Fruit will not grow and neither will the bark or trunk grow properly. It is the same if the basis of things is not there, then things will not be able to arise.

However, if a person does control what he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or dreams of, there is the basis for good behaviour to arise.

If a person does have good behaviour, there is the basis for being able to strengthen beneficial thinking.

If a person is able to strengthen beneficial thinking, then he has got the basis for developing deep understanding of reality.

If a person does have a deep understanding of reality, he does have the basis for letting go of, and not trying to control, things.

If a person does want to let go of things, then he does have the basis for realizing clearly the path to freedom.

This is the same as a tree that does have branches and leaves: Fruit will grow and so will the bark and trunk grow properly. It is the same if the basis of things is there, then things will be able to arise.

So it is the same in ourselves, if the basis for the thing is there, then it can arise.

How to use money well

At one time Anathapindika was with the Buddha who taught him this:

‘There are four things that many people want, but that are hard to get in this world, and these are:

‘He thinks: I want to get money following proper ways only. This is the first thing.

‘Then if he gets money he thinks: I want my name and that of my family and teacher to become good and famous. This is the second thing.

Then if he gets money and a good name he thinks: I want to stay well off for a long time. This is the third thing.

The when he has money, a good name and a long life, he thinks: I would like to be born again in a good place such as in heaven. This is the fourth thing that many people want but is hard to get.

But Anathapindika, there are four other things, if

a person follows them, make these four things arise, and these are: proper belief and understanding, good behaviour, compassion, and deep understanding of reality.

And proper belief is: the person has belief that the Tathagata has true understanding and wisdom, that Buddha is an arahant, a teacher of gods and men, a person who has awoken to, and seen clearly things as they really are, a very wise man.

And good behaviour is: a person does not kill, steal, or is promiscuous, tell lies or take strong drink or drugs which make his thinking confused and unclear.

And compassion is: A person staying in his house does not think of holding onto things for himself, but is happy to give, is not worried about losing things, helps others and shares all his things.

And a deep understanding of reality is: If a person has thoughts of greed and getting things,

hatred and anger, being lazy and not trying, worry and stress, is unsure and has baseless fears, he does not stay peacefully and happy as these disturb his thinking, and his good name and happiness cease. But when he is clear about the things that confuse and block good thinking, he lets them go completely. When he does this, he gets deep understanding, and he can see things as they really are, and he gets deep wisdom.

These four things help people get the four things they want, but that are hard to get in this world.

When money is got from hard work and strength, and following proper ways, a good person will use it for four things, and these are:

He will look after his mother and father and ensure they are well looked after and happy. He makes sure his wife and children, and employees, are happy and well looked after. He makes his friends and relatives happy, and looks after them all well. This is the first thing.

He will put some money away in case there is a future need, such as an emergency, or fire or thieves, or some jealous person tries to cause problems. This is the second thing.

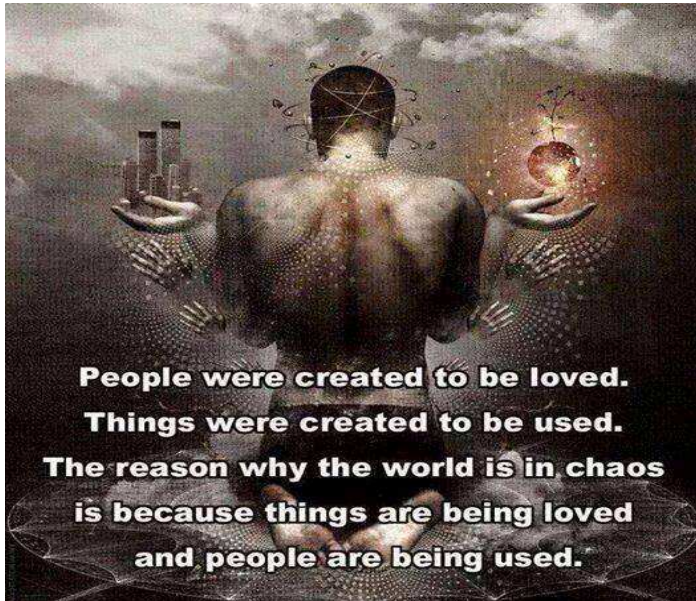
He will get some presents for his family, those who are staying with him, his relatives and leaders and those who give help to others. This is the third thing.

He will give help to good students of the Path and also religious people who do good things and are not proud, and who behave well and quietly, and who try to achieve Nirvana. This is the fourth thing.

These are the four things a good person uses the money he has obtained through his hard work and strength, following proper and good ways.

If a person puts his money into other things, we can say he is wasting his money. But if a person puts his money into these four things, we can say he is putting it into good things, and that it is not wasted,

and that he is doing good with his money.



The teaching (Sutta) on good things

Thus I, Ananda, have heard:

Before the Buddha was staying close to Savatthi in the Jetta grove, in the school that Anathapindika had built.

In the middle of the night a deva, or angel,

appeared and lit up the whole area.

He came up to the Buddha, showed respect, and then stood to one side and asked:

‘Many devas and men think a lot about the good things that will help them in their lives so they will avoid problems and unhappiness. I want to ask you to speak about this.’

‘Do not stay with stupid people, but stay with good, wise people and respect their good behaviour; this is one of the good things you should do.

Stay in a good place, have been doing good things previously in your life, and do good things, behave well and follow the eightfold Path now; this is one of the good things you should do.

Understand the teachings from your school and your community, practice good behaviour and right speech; this is one of the good things you should do.

Look after your mother and father, wife and

children, and work happily without anger or getting cross; this is one of the good things you should do.

Be compassionate and follow the good behaviour as recommended in the eightfold Path and help your relatives and friends, and make good karma; this is one of the good things you should do.

Stay away from wrong doing and do not do bad things, do not get drunk or take strong drink, watch what you do and follow the teachings in the eightfold path; this is one of the good things you should do.

Show respect and do not be proud, but be happy and peaceful, listen to and read the Dharma teachings; this is one of the good things you should do.

Stay quiet and peaceful if another gives you some good advice to help you, look after students and teachers of the eightfold Path, and discuss Dharma with others; this is one of the good things you should do.

Try hard and be strong to follow the eightfold Path and a good life, understand the four truths and have a clear understanding of Nirvana; this is one of the good things you should do.

Do not let things that come up in life disturb your mind, do not have worries or sadness, and make a good life; this is one of the good things you should do.

If people follow these things, then they will have a good life and will not cause problems for themselves; these are the good things you should do.'



5. Right Livelihood

What type of work you do in your life can affect whether you gain happiness or unhappiness. For example, if as part of your daily work you help others, this will result in your gaining happiness. However if in your work you do things that affect badly or damages others, then this will have the effect of bringing you problems and unhappiness. Such work as the selling of guns or things to kill or hurt others will bring problems and suffering to those who do this. Likewise if a person sells drugs or alcohol, home

brew, or other things that damage another's thinking or body, problems and unhappiness will come to the seller over time. These types of work will not help you attain deep happiness.

Similarly killing animals and destroying forests, reefs and bushland result in problems for those doing these things. Instead we should grow deep respect for all life.

In our own families we should respect each other, look after our old people well, and plan well for the future by ensuring enough food, a good house, a good way for obtaining money, which will determine how many children we can look after properly with good nutrition and education.

Always speaking honestly and well, behaving well, showing respect, and having good thoughts, will help you have a good life.

When we grow and strengthen our thoughts in one direction, we start thinking in a particular way. When we follow the path to a good livelihood, and we

think in this way, it becomes our custom to do so, and this helps us and those with us to have a good life. The basis for this custom is the way we watch and select our thoughts, speech and behaviour, following what we are taught in the eightfold Path, and letting go all destructive thoughts and growing those that will help ourselves and others: love, compassion, joy with others, peace, contentment and strength.

In this way we help ourselves and others have well being and a good life.

So we should follow the Buddha's teachings to make ourselves and our community become happy and peaceful, with the practice of growing love, compassion, joy with others, peace, contentment and strength.

Words of Wisdom:

Being carried down a river

'Now if a beautiful small river carried a man

down it, and another man with good eyesight who was standing on the river bank, sang out to the man drifting down: 'Now you are drifting along happily, but if you go down a little further you will find a lake with waves and a fast whirl pool, also there are dangerous animals and all kinds of spirits. When you get down to that area you will die or be badly hurt.' When the man drifting along heard this, he tried hard to swim with his hands and legs to go back where he had come from and not drift down further to the dangerous part of the river.

This story has the following meaning: The river running down represents craving and desire. The good part of the river is when you look, hear, smell, taste, touch and dream. The lake is the five things that obstruct us: belief in a self, or ego, that is completely separate from others; not believing in the Buddha or his teachings; belief that if you only do a particular action, or say a particular thing, you will gain freedom; having cravings and desires; and getting angry and cross. The waves are anger and worry. The

whirl pool is all the things you can see, hear, smell, taste, touch and dream. The spirits represent men and women who look very smart. Swimming back to safety represents letting go of things. Trying hard to swim with hands and legs represents trying hard all the time to lead a good life. The man on the river bank with the good eyesight represents the Buddha who has deep understanding of reality.

Kinds of Marriage

Once the Buddha was walking along the main road from Madhura to Venaja and met up some married people who were also walking along the road. When the Buddha rested under a tree on the side of the road, some of these married people came up to him, and after showing respect, sat down with him and he said:

‘There are four kinds of marriage and these are: one stupid person stays with another stupid person, one stupid man stays with an angel of a wife, one

stupid woman stays with an angel of a husband, and one angel of a wife stays with an angel of a husband.

‘Now what happens when a stupid person stays with another stupid person? The man kills a lot of things, takes things that do not belong to him, is promiscuous and has sex with others, lies, gets drunk, does not do good things and is no good. When he stays at home, he does not like giving things to others, he says bad things to good students of the Path and to religious people. His wife similarly does bad things. This is what happens when one stupid person stays with another.

‘Now what happens when a stupid man stays with an angelic wife? The man kills a lot of things, takes things that do not belong to him, is promiscuous and has sex with others, lies, gets drunk, does not do good things and is no good. When he stays at home, he does not like giving things to others, he says bad things to good students of the Path and to religious people. However his wife is not like this. She does not

kill a lot of things, or take things that do not belong to her, is not promiscuous, does not lie or get drunk, but she does good things and is good. She stays home and helps others. She does not say bad things to good students of the Path or religious people. That what happens when a stupid man stays with an angelic woman.

And what happens when a stupid woman stays with an angelic man? He does not kill a lot of things, or take things that do not belong to him, is not promiscuous, does not lie or get drunk, but he does good things and is good. He stays home and helps others. He does not say bad things to good students of the Path or religious people. However his wife is different and does a lot of bad things. This is what happens when a stupid woman stays with an angelic man.

And what happens when an angelic woman stays with an angelic man? Both of them do not kill a lot of things or take things that do not belong to them, are

not promiscuous, do not lie or get drunk, but they do good things and are good. They stay home and help others. They do not say bad things to good students of the Path and religious people. This is what happens when an angelic man stays with an angelic woman.

‘These are the four kinds of marriage.’

Going from darkness to light

‘There are four types of people, students, on earth. There are those that who are in darkness and want to stay in darkness; those who are in the darkness and want to go to light, those who are in the light and want to go into darkness, and those who are in light and want to stay in the light.

‘Now a person who is in the dark and wants to stay in the dark is one who was born into a family that has problems, a family that people do not like, that does not have many things and are hungry and do not have good clothes. He does not look smart and does not walk straight and is often sick. He is a person who

does not work hard to get food and good things, or build a good house with good things inside it. He does bad and stupid things with his body and thinking. When he dies he is born again in a place where there are problems and suffering, like hell.

‘Now a person who is in the dark and wants to go into the light is one who was born into a family that has problems, a family that people do not like, that does not have many things and are hungry and do not have good clothes. He does not look smart and does not walk straight and is often sick. However, he does good things with his body, speech, and thinking, and when he dies he is reborn in a good place, like heaven.

‘Now a person who is in the light and wants to go into darkness is one who was born into a good family with plenty of money and land and a lot of things. He looks smart and does all smart types of things. He gets good food, drink, clothes, a car, a house and all sorts of things. However he does bad and stupid things with his body, speech and thinking

and when he dies is born again in a place where there is suffering, like hell.

‘Now a person who is in the light and wants to stay in the light is one who was born into a good family with plenty of money and land and a lot of things. He looks smart and does all smart types of things. He gets good food, drink, clothers, a car, a house and all sorts of things. He does good things with his body, speech and mind, and when he dies is born again in a good place, like heaven.

‘These are the four types of people.

Make a good life

‘There are four types of people: those who think of their well being only, and are not concerned about others; those who are concerned about others, and do not worry about their own well being; those who are not concerned about their own well being nor that of others; those who think of both their own well being and that of others.

‘Now the person who thinks of his own well being only, and is not concerned about others: he practices to remove greed, hatred and confused thinking from himself, but does not help others do likewise. He does not kill, steal, be promiscuous, lie or get drunk, but he does not help others not to do these things.

‘Now the person who is concerned about the well being of others, but not of his own: he tells others to practice to remove greed, hatred and confused thinking from themselves, but does not do likewise himself. He tells other not to kill, steal, be promiscuous, lie or get drunk, but he does not stop doing these things himself.

‘Now a person who is not concerned about the well being of himself, nor of others: he does not practice to remove greed, hatred and confused thinking from himself, nor does he help others to do so. He does not follow good behaviour by trying not to kill, steal, be promiscuous, lie or get drunk, and he does not help others not to do these things also.

‘Now a person who is concerned about his own well being and also that of others: He practices to remove greed, hatred and confused thinking from himself, and he helps others to do likewise. He does not kill, steal, be promiscuous, lie or get drunk, and he helps others not to do these things.’

A good life for a family man

Once the Buddha was in the Koliya area in the town of Kakkarapatta. One family man came and after showing respect sat down and asked him:

Teacher, we family men get happiness from all kinds of things, and live at home with lots of kids, and enjoy all sort of things and money. I would like you to teach us Dharma so that we can be happy in this and future lives.’

‘Byagghapajja, there are four things that a family man can do to have happiness. These are: do things well all the time, look after your things well, have good friends, assess what you do in life.

Now doing things well all the time is: whatever the way the family gets its income, such as from farming, working in a business or with the government or what ever, the person must try hard, follow the proper way with good behaviour, and do the job well.

Now looking after your things well is: he puts his money he has earned in a good way in a safe place (such as a bank) where people cannot steal it, and cannot be lost in a fire or flood, and where relatives who do not have respect can get their hands on it.

Now having good friends is: He is friends with men and women where he lives, young and old, who follow a good life and good behaviour, and who have good beliefs and have compassion and clear thinking. He stories, and has good conversations, with them all. He follows good behaviour with them all and shows compassion and helps them all.

Now assessing what you do in life is: he knows how much money he gets and how much he spends, he

assesses expenditure properly so that the family can live well and he does not spend more than he earns. He does this in the same way a person buying gold weighs the gold properly before purchasing.

There are four ways in which a person can lose money quickly. These are: playing around with women, drinking, gambling, and being friends with bad people. It is just like if a water tank has four taps letting water in and four taps letting water out. If there is not rain, and if the four taps letting water out are all opened, then the tank will become empty.

Now there are also four ways to increase the money you have earned. These are: Not playing around with women, not drinking, not gambling, and not being friends with bad people. It is just like if a water tank has four taps letting water in and four taps letting water out. If there is enough rain and all the taps letting water out are closed, the water inside the tank will fill the tank more and more.

These four things, Byagghapajja, bring

happiness to a family person in this lifetime. Now there are four things that will bring happiness and well being to a family person in future lives. These are: Good beliefs, good behaviour, good compassion, and good clear understanding.

Now good belief is: He believes that the Tathagata is an arahant, a person who has achieved deep understanding, that he follows only good behaviour, that he understands all the different worlds, the leader among men who want to control their thoughts, teacher of men and devas, the Awakened One, Buddha.

Now good behaviour is: he does not kill living beings, steal, be promiscuous in sex, lie or tell untruths, get drunk or take drugs or things that will confuse his thinking.

Now good compassion is: he is happy to give, and happy to let things go to another; he helps others and is happy to share his things with others.

Now good understanding is: He is able to see

clearly the arising and change in everything, and can see this deeply, and following this understanding he becomes free from all problems and unhappiness.

There four things carry a person with a family to a good life and happiness in future lifetimes.



Some relics today—parts of bones and things—that were left when they cremated the Buddha’s body 2,600 years ago.



6. Right Effort

A good life and happiness will not arise if you do not try hard to get it. So we must all show our strength and enthusiasm for this good work.

We must try hard to practice all the time to see how, and what, thoughts are running. Similarly we must try hard all of the time to watch what speech and behavior we are doing. We should never do anything without thinking first what its effects will be!

If there is a thought in our heads that will cause

problems or unhappiness for ourselves or another, we should quickly let it go and not let it stay and grow.

If there is a good thought that can bring happiness to ourselves or others in our heads, then we should let it grow and strengthen it.

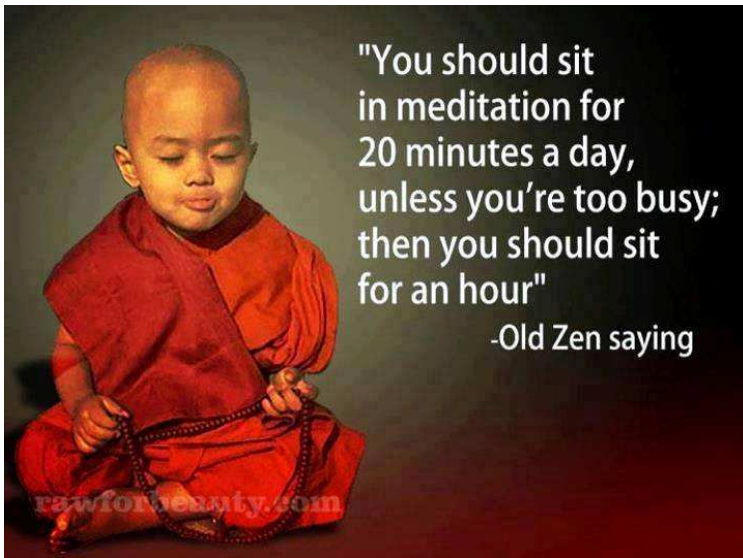
If a thought that can cause problems and unhappiness to ourselves or others is developing or is about to start, do not let it progress and grow.

If a thought that can cause happiness to ourselves and others is developing or about to grow, let it progress and develop strong.

It is the same when you speak or do something, or about to speak, or about to do something. If it can cause unhappiness or harm to yourself or to another, do not proceed with it. If it can help or make happy, then let it go ahead.

If you had some bad or harmful thoughts, or said or did something harmful or bad, you must recognize this and make a promise to yourself that you will not

do this type of thing more. If you go ahead and do it anymore, you could well produce a lot of unhappiness for yourself!



Words of Wisdom:

Buddha spoke to his son, Rahula:

'Rahula, what do we use a mirror for?'

'To see a reflection clearly, teacher.'

‘So, Rahula, If you see something clearly, then you can do an action; If you see something clearly, then you can speak; If you see something clearly you can let your thoughts develop. Do not do something without thinking clearly.’

‘If you want to take some action, Rahula, you must think first: “The thing I am about to do, could it cause problems or unhappiness to myself, or another or myself and another?” If it could, the action you were thinking of doing is not smart, and it will develop unhappiness and problems.

‘If, Rahula, when you are about to do something this thought arises: “The thing I’m about to do will badly affect me, or another, me and another, so it is not smart and will cause pain and unhappiness.” This thing you must not do!

‘But, Rahula, when you about to do something this thought arises: “The thing I’m about to do will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to do and will produce happiness.” This

thing you can proceed with.

‘If, Rahula, when you doing something this thought arises: “The thing I’m doing now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” If it can harm, then it is not smart, and can cause pain and suffering.

‘If, Rahula, when you realize that: “The thing I’m doing now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” Then you must stop doing it!

‘But, Rahula, when you are doing something this thought arises: “The thing I’m doing will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to do and will produce happiness.” This thing you can proceed with and do it again and again.

‘If you have done some action with your body, Rahula, you should ask yourself: “The action I have done, is it able to cause harm or unhappiness to

myself, or to another, or to myself and another?” If it can, then the action you have taken is not smart, and will produce pain and unhappiness.

‘If, Rahula, when you recognise that: “The action I have done will badly affect me, or another, or both myself and another, so it is not smart and will create pain and unhappiness.” This thing you should tell a teacher of the eightfold Path, or a person who has deep understanding of reality. After you have told him, you must not do it again.

‘But, Rahula, if you recognise that: “The action I have taken with this body will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, but it is smart and creates happiness.” In this case you should remain happy and teach yourself the good Path for doing good things.

‘If you want to speak, Rahula, you must think first: “The speech I am about to do, could it cause problems or unhappiness to myself, or another or myself and another?” If it could, the speech you were

thinking of doing is not smart, and it will develop unhappiness and problems.

‘If, Rahula, when you are about to say something this thought arises: “The speech I’m about to make will badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and will cause pain and unhappiness.” Then you must not say it!

‘But, Rahula, when you are about to say something this thought arises: “The thing I’m about to say will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to do and will produce happiness.” This speech you can proceed with.

‘If, Rahula, when you are saying something this thought arises: “The things I’m saying now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” If it can harm, then it is not smart, and can cause pain and suffering.

‘If, Rahula, when you realize that: “The thing

I'm saying now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” "Then you must stop saying it!

'But, Rahula, when you are saying something this thought arises: "The thing I'm saying will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to do and will produce happiness." This thing you can proceed with and do it again and again.

'If you have said some things, Rahula, you should ask yourself: "The things I have said, is it able to cause harm or unhappiness to myself, or to another, or to myself and another?" If it can, then the speech you have made is not smart, and will produce pain and unhappiness.

'If, Rahula, when you recognise that: "The things I have said will badly affect me, or another, or both myself and another, so it is not smart and will create pain and unhappiness." This thing you should tell a teacher of the eightfold Path, or a person who has deep understanding of reality. After you have told

him, you must not say it again.

‘But, Rahula, if you recognise that: “The things I have said will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, but it is smart and creates happiness.” In this case you should remain happy and teach yourself the good Path for doing good things.

‘If you are developing some thoughts, Rahula, you must think first: “The thoughts I am about to have, could it cause problems or unhappiness to myself, or another or myself and another?” If it could, the thoughts you were thinking of having are not smart, and will develop unhappiness and problems.

‘If, Rahula, when you are about to have ideas, this thought arises: “The ideas I’m about to make will badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and will cause pain and unhappiness.” This you must not proceed with!

‘But, Rahula, when you are about to have ideas develop, this thought arises: “The ideas I’m about to

develop will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to think and will produce happiness.” These ideas you can proceed with.

‘If, Rahula, when you thinking something, this thought arises: “The things I’m thinking now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” If it can harm, then it is not smart, and can cause pain and suffering.

‘If, Rahula, when you realize that: “The things I’m thinking now could badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is not smart and is causing pain and unhappiness.” Then you must stop thinking it!

‘But, Rahula, when you are thinking something this thought arises: “The ideas I’m thinking will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, so it is smart to do and will produce happiness.” These ideas you can proceed with and do it again and again.

‘If you have thought some things, Rahula, you

should ask yourself: “The ideas I have thought, are they able to cause harm or unhappiness to myself, or to another, or to myself and another?” If they can, then the ideas you have had are not smart, and will produce pain and unhappiness.

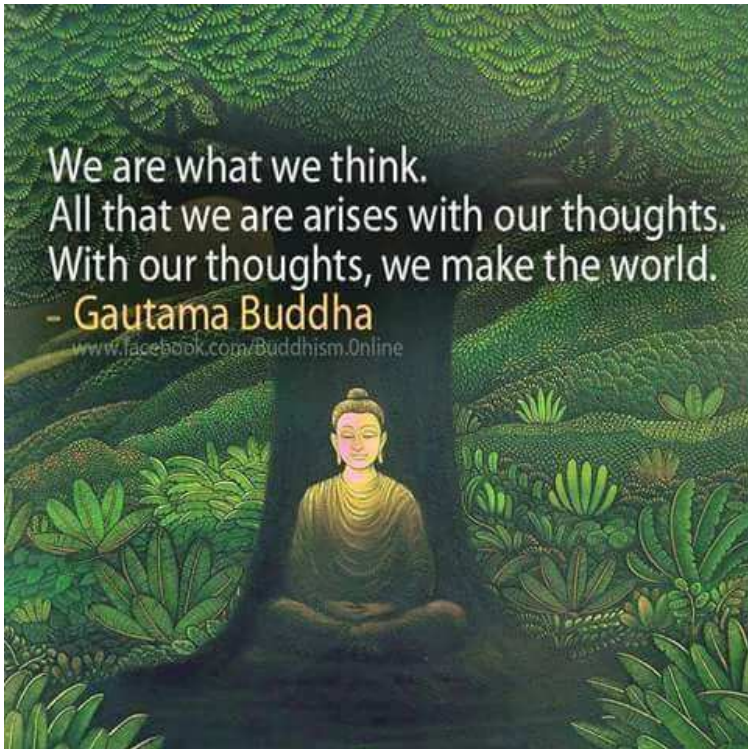
‘If, Rahula, when you recognise that: “The ideas I have had will badly affect me, or another, or both myself and another, so it is not smart and will create pain and unhappiness.” These ideas you should come to dislike and hate and not allow to arise again!

‘But, Rahula, if you recognise that: “The ideas I have had will not badly affect me, or another, or me and another, but are smart and create happiness.” In this case you should remain happy and teach yourself the good Path for doing good things.

So, Rahula, whoever from a long time ago until now, has become clean and good in body, speech and mind, all followed this path to be aware of and watch their thinking all of the time. And also Rahula, whoever in the future wants to make their body,

speech and mind clean and good, will all follow this way of being aware of and watching their thoughts all of the time. And also Rahula, in the present time, whoever wants their body, speech and mind to be clean and good, must follow this path, to be aware and watch their thoughts all of the time.

So Rahula, you must teach yourself: “By being aware of, and watching our thoughts, we will make all the actions we do with our body clean and pure. By being aware of, and watching, our thoughts, we will make all our speech clean and pure. By being aware of, and watching, our thoughts, we will make all our thinking clean and pure.”



Buddha gave some metaphors to help us understand the teachings:

One is the picture of the sun in the sky with its energy giving light and heat. This is the picture he gives to explain Nirvana, and we can become like the sun and give help to others all of the time.

Another is the picture of a river running down a mountain becoming larger with more and more water, being like the Path or practice we should follow and grow in. The person who follows this Path and practices well is one who grows and develops his life to become more and more happy and peaceful. Others following the Path can help him, but he himself must practice hard and well to succeed.

Our lives are in our own hands. It is our choice what happens to us!

All types of destructive thoughts come into our minds all the time but we all must practice hard to let them all go, and not let them grow and develop and make problems.

We should become like the light of the sun above us to help others, and flow strong with good thoughts and behaviour in our lives, like the river flowing down the mountain side!

Words of Wisdom:

Five things that help develop good thoughts

Good thoughts, if five things help develop them, will help the mind become free and deep understanding develop. These five things are: good behaviour, good teachings on the Path and practice, discussing teachings with others, patience and peace, and developing deep understanding of seeing things as they really are.

Clean your mind

*A person who wants to develop his mind must remember three things: **He must practice to make his thinking sharp and clear; He must let his thoughts remain quiet and not chase after likes and dislikes; He must develop good thoughts equally to all without favouritism.***

If a person wants to develop his mind, and he tries to practice making his thinking sharp and clear,

there is a chance that he will lose enthusiasm to practice hard. If he only thinks of trying hard, there is a chance that his thoughts will not be able to stay peaceful. If he practices staying peaceful and not following his likes and dislikes without favouritism, there is a chance that he will not be able to strengthen his thinking to remove all destructive thoughts.

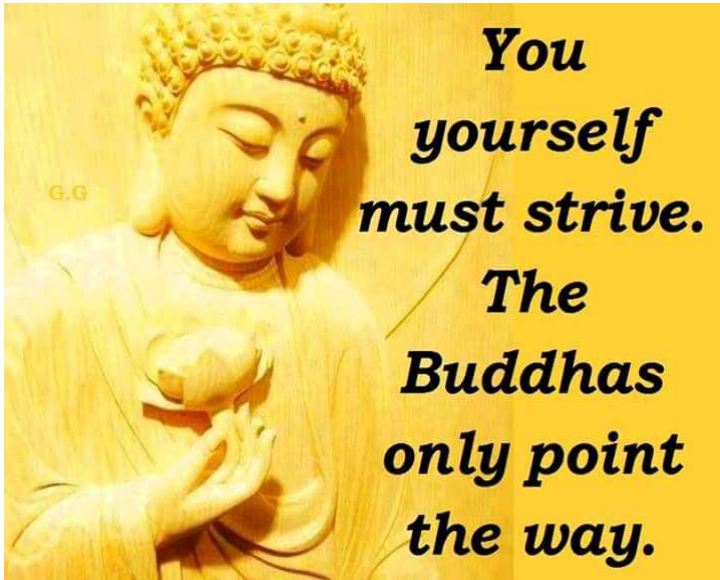
However, when he remembers and does the three practices together, he will be able to make his mind become clear, focused and concentrated and so finish all destructive thinking.

If a person refining gold makes a fire inside a kiln or oven for refining gold, and puts a piece of gold into it, he can blow onto the fire to make more heat, or put a small amount of water onto it if it gets too hot, so he can adjust the temperature of the gold well. If he blows too much, the gold might become too hot. If he puts on too much water, he may make the gold too cold. If he just stands by and does nothing, the gold will not be refined well. If he controls the heat well,

then the gold will become smart and bright, and he will be able to make a smart thing out of it, depending on what type of jewellery he wants to make.

*It is the same if a person wants to develop his mind to become pure he must remember three things: **He must practice to make his thinking sharp and clear; He must let his thoughts remain quiet and not chase after likes and dislikes; He must develop good thoughts equally to all without favouritism.** If he does the three practices, sometimes one and sometimes another, he will develop his mind to become pure and strong and finish all destructive thoughts.*

Whatever mental state he has, his mind is able to recognise it, and he can concentrate on it, and he can make it good and clean, and he can do this for he can watch his mind well following these three practices.



Four powers that will help

There are four powers that will help: belief in what is true; trying hard, watching your thoughts closely; making your mind concentrated, clear and sharp; and growing deep understanding.

*Now **belief in what is true** is: a person believes that the Tathagata is an arahant, a person who has achieved deep understanding, that he follows only good behaviour, that he understands all the different*

worlds, the leader among men who want to control their thoughts, teacher of men, gods, and devas, the Awakened One, Buddha.

Trying hard is: a person practices hard to remove all destructive and stupid thoughts, and strengthen beneficial and good thoughts; and tries hard all of the time and does not stop trying to become good and pure.

Watching your thoughts closely is: a person watches his thoughts all of the time with pure awareness, and remembers clearly.

Making your mind concentrated, clear and sharp, and growing deep understanding is: a person does not hold onto thoughts, but concentrates and makes his thoughts become sharp and clear and focused.

Growing deep understanding is: a person examines clearly the arising and change of everything, and achieves the path of finishing all unhappiness.



Really try hard

There are two things I realized as important: Do not be satisfied with good states of mind you have already achieved, but try all of the time to develop deeper understanding. I really tried hard with the thoughts: 'Let the skin, tendons and bones remain; let the muscles and blood become dry; I will not be lazy or slack, and I will achieve that which a person can achieve by being strong, trying hard and working hard.'

***By trying hard I achieved deep understanding.
By trying hard I became free of the things that hold people back and cause suffering.***

You all should also try hard all of the time and have the same thinking: 'Let the skin, tendons and bones remain; let the muscles and blood become dry; I will not be lazy or slack, and I will achieve that

which a person can achieve by being strong, trying hard and working hard.’ If you can do this it will not be long before you become awakened even in this lifetime, the aim of a good holy life, which people of good families leave their homes for, and when you achieve this aim you will stay enlightened.

So all you students should teach yourselves like this: ‘We will try hard all of the time and have this thought in our heads: ‘Let the skin, tendons and bones remain; let the muscles and blood become dry; I will not be lazy or slack, and I will achieve that which a person can achieve by being strong, trying hard and working hard.’

Who is really strong

‘Do not let your thoughts run back to what happened before,

Or worry about what may come up in the future.

What happened before is gone

And we have not come to the future yet.

But you must stay in, and watch carefully the present,

With your clear mind, when things occur.

Stay strong and peaceful, and do not worry, shake or become excited.

If you can remain like this, then deep understanding will grow.

You must try hard today,

We cannot know if we will die tomorrow—who can know this?

We are not able to discuss with death the time of our dying.

But whoever tries hard like this,

Day and night and does not become slack or give up,

That person, I call,

A person who is really strong, himself.



7. Right Mindfulness

We have to watch carefully our thinking all the time, otherwise if destructive and stupid thoughts come inside they could cause us problems and unhappiness. Meditation practice, is a method we can use to watch what is happening in our minds, and can help us.

We should practice by sitting down quietly and watch our thinking, and letting our thinking slow down, and see what is going on in our heads. We should stay quiet, relax and concentrate so we can start to see clearly what is happening in our mind. If

we can slow our rapidly changing and scattered thoughts, we can start to see each thought when it arises. It is the same if you are walking about in the bush on a path with a lot of leaves on it. There are many leaves on the path and we do not notice individual ones clearly. However if someone had broomed the path or the wind had swept the leaves away, and a leaf fell down after this cleaning, we would notice this leaf clearly when we walked along, as it would seem to stand out. It is the same if you slow your thoughts down, we can start to notice individual thoughts when they arise.

It is very easy for one stupid thought to come into our head, grow stronger and go around and around and cause some harmful or bad talk or action to occur. Before we say or do something we should look deeply and see what is the basis of what we are about to do—is there any dangerous thought hiding in the background? If you see what you intended to do is beneficial and will cause happiness, then do or say as you were going to do. If not, do not go ahead and get

rid of the thoughts!

To help you do this we have to practice meditation and grow good thoughts. We should sit quietly and let our thinking slow down and concentrate and look clearly at things. If we watch our breath going in and out, or its touching the inside of our nose, this can help slow down our thinking, and our breath can become the anchor point to help us stay concentrated on our thoughts, instead of going off and following individual ones, and letting them grow and produce others and dreams. Our dreams are just dreams, they are not what is really happening in this moment!

We should practice to let our thoughts stay in this present moment, **now**, and not let them go round in dreams of what happened before or what could arise in the future. Only **now** is real, our thoughts of what happened before or what might happen in the future are only dreams! When your thinking is in the present moment, stay quietly and do not follow a particular

thought or thing. Let your thoughts become clear and light, and stay quietly and watch your thinking carefully

You should practice to watch your feelings when they arise, and how you assess them with your memories of previous similar feelings, and beliefs and concepts, and what kinds of thoughts and mental states arise from this.

We should practice the four foundations of mindfulness in our meditation—observing the body, feelings, mental states, and our thinking, and how they develop, grow and change. We should see clearly the change in all things all the time, and see that there is not one thing inside of anything that remains the same and does not change. There is not anything that we can try and hold onto that does not change.

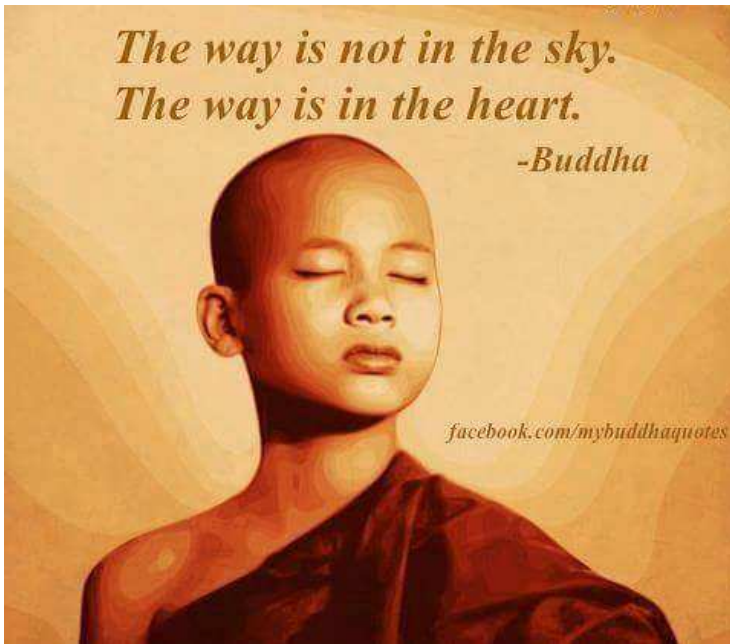
We can come to see clearly what type of thoughts and behavior causes us problems and unhappiness, and learn to avoid them by letting them go and not allowing them to grow inside our minds.

We can come to see clearly what beliefs we follow, and see if any obstruct us for seeing some things clearly. The major belief that obstructs us from seeing things clearly, is the belief that we are separate from others and do not change. This makes us think that we are always right and others wrong, and results in problems and arguments arising. This belief makes us conceited and think we are better than others, and makes us greedy and get things for ourselves only. However when we look deeply we can see that this belief is not true, and it makes a lot of problems for us.

We should change stupid and destructive thoughts and beliefs with good ones that will help ourselves and others not to have problems and unhappiness, but to become peaceful and happy. To do this we should grow thoughts of love, compassion, being happy with the successes of others, becoming peaceful, contented and strong.

We can grow our understanding of ourselves when we watch the changes in the body, feelings,

memories, beliefs and concepts, and our mental states and states of consciousness that arise after seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or dreaming of something. We should see clearly how one thing arises after another and how they change and finish. We should see how one thing is interconnected with another. One thing is not isolated from others.



Words of Wisdom:

Make your thinking clear and sharp

In order to strengthen your thinking so understanding grows of how things are and work: A person watches the light of understanding when he is quiet, he starts to get this understanding in the day when the sun is above: the same as during the day, so it is during the night, the same as it is during the night, so it is during the day. When his thinking is pure and clear, he makes his whole mind light and pure.

This is how to strengthen your thinking so understanding grows of how things are and work.

Now to improve watching thoughts and deepen understanding: A person recognises feelings when they arise, when they are present, and when they finish. He is aware of his assessment of them with memories, beliefs and concepts, when they arise, when they are present, and when they finish; he is clear of his thought reactions and mental states that

subsequently arise, when they are present and when they finish.

This is the way to improve watching thoughts and deepen understanding.

Now to strengthen your mind so that thoughts become sharp and clear and destructive and stupid thoughts cease: *A person watches how the body and mind changes constantly: the body and its parts are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; feelings are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish ; beliefs, concepts and memories are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; assessments and discriminations are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; mental reactions and mental states are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; conscious states following looking, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish.*

This is how to strengthen your mind so that

thoughts become sharp and clear and destructive and stupid thoughts cease.

Five things that disturb and upset thinking

If there is desire and associated excitement, know that you have desire and excitement in you. If there is no desire and excitement, then know that there is not desire and excitement in you. Understand how this desire and excitement arose, and when it arises know how to let it go, and understand how in the future you can prevent this type of desire and associated excitement arising again.

If there is anger and hatred, know that you have anger and hatred in you. If there is no anger and hatred, then know that there is not anger and hatred in you. Understand how this anger and hatred arises, and when it arises know how to let it go, and understand how in the future you can prevent anger and hatred arising again.

If there is lethargy and laziness, know that you have lethargy and laziness in you. If there is no lethargy and laziness, then know that there is not lethargy and laziness in you. Understand how this lethargy and laziness arose, and when it arises know how to let it go, and understand how in the future you can prevent lethargy and laziness arising again.

If there is stress and worry, know that you have stress and worry in you. If there is no stress and worry, then know that there is not stress and worry in you. Understand how stress and worry arose, and when it arises know how to let it go, and understand how in the future you can prevent stress and worry arising again.

If there is doubt and confusion, know that you have doubt and confusion in you. If there is no doubt and confusion, then know that there is not doubt and confusion in you. Understand how this doubt and confusion arose, and when it arises know how to let it go, and understand how in the future you can prevent

doubt and confusion arising again.

Watch how thoughts are running in your mind, or the mind of another, or both your mind and that of another. Watch how these thoughts arise, or watch how they change and finish, or watch how they arise and finish. Or watch with this thought in mind: 'thoughts just flow like this', until you can see this clearly, then let go of the desire to hold such things that change all of the time, and let go of the desire to hold onto anything in this world.

The teachings are clear to see

Once a religious man, Moliya Sivaka, said to the Buddha:

'People say that the Dharma teachings are clear to see. Now in what way are they good and clear to see, and wise people are able to see them clearly.'

The Buddha replied: I will answer you by way of asking you a question: Sivaka, if you feel greedy, do

you know if that feeling is in you or not? And when there is no greed in you, do you know that there is no greed?’

‘I know, teacher.’

‘If you know whether there is greed present when it is, or not present when it is not, this is the way to see the Dharma teaching clearly.

‘If you feel anger and hatred, do you know that there is anger and hatred in you? And when there is not anger or hatred, do you know there is not anger and hatred?’

‘I know, teacher.’

‘If you know whether there is anger and hatred present when it is, or not present when it is not, this is the way to see the Dharma teaching clearly.

‘This is the way to see the Dharma teaching well and clearly, now, and wise people can see them clearly.’

Four foundations of mindfulness

Shortly after his awakening, the Buddha was sitting along side the Nerarjara River, underneath a banyan tree, and these thought arose in his mind:

This Path is the way everyone can become clean and completely pure, to finish all worries and problems, to finish pain and sorrow, to achieve the straight path, to achieve Nirvana, this Path of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

So a person should watch carefully the body, feelings, mental states, and the flow of thoughts, and be purely aware, when there is no desire or concern about anything in the world. This is the only Path, to watch carefully the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

A person must know when a feeling arises, when it is present, and when it finishes. A person must know when a mental state arises, when it is present, and when it finishes. A person must know when thinking arises, when it continues, and when it finishes.

If a person follows this Path and does not have the desire to hold onto things that arise, he will start to see things clearly and be able to win freedom.

So practice to watch how the body and things in it are changing, or the body of another, or both your body and that of another. Watch how these arise, or watch how they change and finish, or watch how they arise and finish. Or watch with this thought in mind: ‘the body just flows like this’, until you can see this clearly, then let go of the desire to hold things such things that change all of the time, and let go of the desire to hold onto anything in this world.

Watch how a feeling is changing amongst your feelings, or how your thoughts are running in your mind, or in another’s, or in both your’s and another’s. Watch how these arise, or watch how they change and finish, or watch how they arise and finish. Or watch with this thought in mind: ‘feelings and thoughts just flow like this’, until you can see

this clearly, then let go of the desire to hold such things that change all of the time, and let go of the desire to hold onto anything in this world.

Understand how things really are

‘My students, if a person is not clear how everything arises and changes: happiness, unhappiness, suffering and freedom, in contact with six senses, he is not following the holy life and is far away from understanding Dharma and the Path for well being and becoming good.’

After he said this, one student said:

‘I am not clear on how everything changes, happiness, suffering and freedom, in contact with the six senses.’

‘When you see something with your eye, do you think “this is mine”, “I am this”, “this is my ego unrelated to other things”?’

‘No I do not, teacher.’

‘That is good. If you see them as: “not mine”, “I am not this”, “this is not my self or ego”, you will see it clearly, how it really is, with deep understanding. This will finish unhappiness.

‘When you hear, smell, taste, touch, or dream of something with your ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, do you think “this is mine”, “I am this”, “this is my ego unrelated to other things”?’

‘No I do not, teacher.’

‘That is good. If you look at everything as: “It is not mine”, “I am not this”, “this is not my self or ego”, then you will see them clearly, how they really are, with deep understanding. This will finish all unhappiness.’

The way to gain deep understanding

‘All students, when you want to try and hold the body, feelings, memories, discriminations, beliefs and concepts, mental reactions and mental states, and

conscious states following contact with the senses, this corrupts the mind.

‘But when a person lets go of the corrupt mind, he will want to let go of these things. And a mind that wants to let go like this is ready see how this will help him gain deep understanding.’

Understanding from holding onto things that change

‘I will teach you so you can understand what happens when you try to hold strongly onto something that is changing all the time.’

‘The conscious state of seeing can arise if the eye and the thing to see are present together. Contact occurs when the three are present together. Feelings follow on from contact and feelings can generate desires, hatred, excitement, which cause problems and unhappiness. So, a person who follows the eightfold Path, loses interest in the eye and things to see, in the conscious state that arises following seeing, and

contact and feeling. When he loses interest, he stops trying to hold strongly onto things that change, so they will not change, and when he stops trying to hold them, he becomes free, and when he is free he knows that his desire to hold onto things has finished.

'It is the same when conscious states arise with the ear and things to hear, the nose and things to smell, the tongue and things to taste, the body and things to touch, the mind and dreams and thoughts. Contact is when three occur together. Feelings arise following contact and feelings can generate desires, hatred, excitement, which cause problems and unhappiness.' So, a person who follows the eightfold Path, loses interest in the ear and things to hear, the nose and things to smell, the tongue and things to taste, the body and things to touch, the mind and dreams and thoughts, and in the conscious state that arises following these, and contact and feelings. When he loses interest, he stops trying to hold strongly onto things that change, so they will not change, and when he stops trying to hold them, he becomes free, and

when he is free he knows that his desire to hold onto things has finished.

‘This is the teaching on how to get deep understanding from the way of trying to hold strongly onto things.’

How should you look at things?

You should look at things with thoughts that are not assessing or discriminating or biased, or excited, and with deep understanding that things are just as they are. In the Diamond Sutra it is written:

Everything is just like a dream,

Like a trick or something that is not true,

Like a star at sunrise,

Like lightning in a thunder cloud,

Like a dew drop on a leaf as the sun rises,

Like a bubble in a stream.

You should practice meditation looking at things like this.

You should think of them like this.

How to finish sleepiness.

Once the Buddha saw that his student, Moggallana, was getting sleepy when he was practicing meditation, so he asked him: ‘Moggallana, are you feeling sleepy?’

‘Yes, teacher.’

‘Moggallana, if your eyes are feeling sleepy, you should not think about your eyes feeling sleepy, and if you can do this there is a chance the sleepiness in your eyes will cease.

‘But if it does not, you must think of the Dharma teachings you have learned, and assess them, and if you do this there is a chance your sleepiness will finish.

‘But if it does not, you must pull down on your ears and rub your hands and legs. If you do this there is a chance your sleepiness will finish.

‘But if it does not, you must get up and wash your eyes and look around, and up into the sky and stars. If you do this there is a chance your sleepiness will finish.

‘But if it does not, make a meditation practice on light, watching your thoughts clearly but not holding onto one. Do in the night as you would do in the day, making your mind light, and if you do this there is a chance your sleepiness will finish.

‘But if it does not, then practice walking meditation, and put your concentration inwards, and do not think of things around you. If you do this there is a chance your sleepiness will finish.

‘But if it does not, you should lie down and sleep on your right side, with one leg on top of the other, stay quietly and watch your thoughts, and put your

thinking on getting up soon. And when you wake up, you should get up quickly and think: 'I should not be happy just to rest and sleep'.

'Moggallana you should teach yourself like this.'

'You should also teach yourself: If I go around to some families and ask for food, I should not be proud. Sometimes they will be busy with work and will not see that a student has arrived. If that student is proud, he might start to feel cross or have bad thoughts. And when he does not get food he worries, and thoughts run wild, and he does not control his thoughts well, and his mind does not remain clear and sharp.

'You should also teach yourself, Moggallana: 'I should not say anything that will excite another's desires. That kind of talk causes earthly thoughts to arise and run wild, and the person may not be able to control these and keep his mind sharp and clear and pure. I am not saying that all friends are good or bad, but I am not happy to see students being friends with stupid people. I am happy seeing students being

friends with quiet places, away from noise, away from busy people, with fresh air.'

After this, Moggallana asked: 'Teacher, please tell me how a student can become free if he finishes strong desires?'

'If, Moggallana, a student learns that there is not one thing that it is good to try and hold onto, because everything is changing all the time. If he is clear about this, he is clear about all things. If he is clear about all things, he understands all things. And if he understands all things, he knows that if he has a feeling, of happiness or pain, or neither happiness or pain, he can stay at peace and watch it change and finish, and he does not want to try and hold onto it, and he stops trying to hold onto things. When he does this, he no longer tries to hold onto things in this world. When he does not hold onto things, his thoughts no longer run wild and become excited, and he is able to achieve Nirvana. Then he knows: "There are not more births, I have lived the holy life, what I

should have done I have done, there is not more to do in this world.”

‘So, Moggallana, that is a few words about how a person can become free if he finishes strong desire – a person who has come to the end, free from being stuck, the last holy life, the last achievement, the first amongst all gods and men.’

Growing the mind

*‘If a person does not practice meditation, but thinks: “I want my mind to be free of all rubbish by not holding onto anything!” The mind is not able to become clean like that! Why! Because that person did not grow his mind using the **four foundations of mindfulness** – watching the body, feelings, mental states, and the flow of thinking and objects of thoughts. He did not follow **the four tasks** – not letting any bad thoughts arise, but strengthen good thoughts, if bad and destructive thoughts want to arise, stop them immediately, if good and beneficial thoughts want to*

*arise, strengthen them. He did not practice **the four bases of success**—wanting, strength and power, pure awareness, understanding how things work. He did not practice **the five powers**—belief in the school, developing strength, practicing pure awareness, making thinking clear and concentrated, developing deep understanding. He did not develop **the seven things that help the mind become completely clear**—practicing pure awareness of thoughts, understanding how thoughts flow, right effort, happiness, peace, sharp and concentrated thinking, not following likes and dislikes and no favouritism. He did not follow **the Eightfold Path**—right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.*

‘If a hen lays ten or twelve eggs, but does not sit down on top of them for a long time, and they do not keep warm, the chickens inside of the eggs will not grow properly, and there is no use in the mother hen thinking: “I want my children to grow well and be strong to break the egg shell with their hands and

come up well.” But they cannot do this, for she did not sit down on the eggs. This is the same for a person who does not try hard to grow his mind with meditation.

‘But if a person tries hard to grow his mind with meditation, but does not have the thought: “I want my mind to be free from all dirty and destructive thoughts by not holding onto them anymore.” He must still achieve freedom, because he grows his mind with the four foundations of mindfulness, the four tasks, the bases of success, the five powers, the seven things that help the mind become completely clear, and the eightfold Path.

‘If a hen lays ten or twelve eggs, and sits down on top of them for a long time, and they keep warm, the chickens inside of the eggs will grow properly, and even if the mother hen does not think: “I want my children to grow well and be strong to break the egg shell with their hands and come up well.” But they must come up well for she sat for a long time on the

eggs. This is the same for a person who does try hard to grow his mind with meditation.

‘If the handle of the axe of a carpenter shows the mark of his hand, he does not know how much the mark increased yesterday, or the day before, or today, but he knows the mark is getting bigger. It is the same with a person who tries hard to practice meditation and grows his mind, he does not know how much dirt he removed yesterday, or the day before, or today, but he knows that it is decreasing.

*‘If a large canoe is left in the sun and water for 6 months, and they pull it up onto the beach and leave it, the cane holding the parts together which had been in the sun and rain would become loose and easy to break up. It is the same **if a person practices meditation strongly and grows his mind: all dirty and destructive thoughts will break up and become nothing.***



8. Right Concentration

We should know how, and practice, to concentrate our thoughts and make them clear and sharp and able to focus on one thing deeply, and not lose this focus and fly around following dreams and likes. We should sit quietly and watch our breath running inside our body, or focus on one point that where you can feel the breath touching, such as the inside of our nose or upper lip. We should try hard to focus and concentrate deeply on this point, and keep focused and not allow our attention to stray onto other things. In this way our breath can become our anchor

point we can come back to, and hold onto when emotions and thoughts start taking control of our mind. If we practice well like this, our thinking will be strong and stable and not just fly around from one thing to another.

Often our thoughts are not on what we are doing. We dream too much—sometimes over 80% of our time! But the only real thing is what is happening now! Dreams about the past and the future are only dreams. So we have to practice in keeping our attention on what is happening in the present moment, now, and the practice of concentrating our thoughts on one point helps us do this.

If you can keep your attention on what you are doing, and not dream about other things, you will do the thing you are doing much better.

If you practice to concentrate hard on holding your thoughts on one point, and hold it on this point without another thought arising, such as a dream or something you hear that enters your head at this time,

your thoughts can slow right down, and you will start to feel happiness and your head will become clear and bright, and this is called Jhana. If any visions or lights arise, just let them go like everything else and concentrate on the one point.

These Jhana states come when we concentrate deeply, and only occur when we are practicing.

When we practice the seventh step in this path, and are watching the flow of our thoughts, letting go of destructive ones and not holding onto them, and developing deep understanding of reality, we start to gain deep peace and happiness called Nirvana, and this can remain a long time and change our life for the better.

So we should use the practice in this eighth step to assist us in practicing the seventh step in this Path.

The Jhana—the states of mind that arise when our thinking becomes deeply concentrated, and sharp.

1. Concentrate your mind onto one point and let go of any input from your senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and dreaming, and go into the first Jhana which arises when we let go of everything and our thoughts slow, and we feel happiness with our mind continually focused on one point only.
2. Completely slow all the flow of your thoughts, and keeping your concentration, enter the second Jhana, where there is no flow of thoughts, but only deep concentration on one point and more intense happiness.
3. Let your happiness lessen and become peaceful, so there is not thoughts of liking or not liking, and keeping your thoughts focused, and let happiness arise in your whole body, as the Buddha has said “He is happy who stays quietly and does not let his thoughts run around but watches his thoughts well”, and enter the third Jhana.
4. Let go of all happiness and pain and worry, and of

the intense happiness you had, and enter the fourth Jhana, which is beyond happiness and pain, and is clear with attention to thoughts which are peaceful, and not following likes and dislikes, and have good thinking to all without favouritism.

5. Let go of all feelings and thoughts of the body, so that no more feelings or thoughts arise following seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, dreaming or other kinds of thinking, and think of the vastness of space, without end, and go inside this vast space.
6. Achieve this vastness of space, then look at the vastness of consciousness, and enter and remain in the vastness of consciousness.
7. Achieve the vastness of consciousness and then enter where there is no thing present.
8. Achieve the state where there is no thing present and enter the state where there are thoughts and no thoughts.

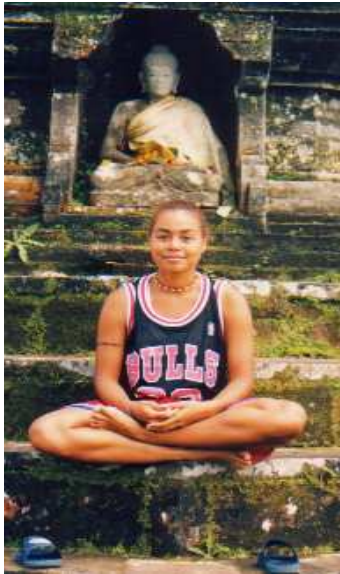
Words of Wisdom:

The good happiness that arises in Jhana

When a person achieves the happiness that arises from concentrating thinking in Jhana, five things arise:

- 1) Whatever feeling of wanting and desiring excitement and things will no longer be present.*
- 2) Whatever happiness arising from excitement and things will not be present.*
- 3) Whatever suffering or worries that arise with destructive and stupid thoughts will not be present.*
- 4) Whatever happiness that arises with destructive and stupid thoughts will not be present.*
- 5) Whatever suffering and pain that follow good thoughts will not be present.*

When a person concentrates and enters the happiness of Jhana, these five things will come to him.



What is Meditation?

If we can slow the flow of our thoughts, we can start to see more clearly the more important thoughts when they are in our head. It is the same if you are walking in the bush on a small path with a lot of leaves on it. There are a lot of different kinds of leaves on this path, but we do not see them clearly individually, but as just part of the mass of leaves. However if a person has broomed the path before we

came along and a leaf falls onto it after he has finished brooming, you will see this leaf more clearly when you walk along. It is the same when we slow down our thinking, we can see more clearly thoughts when they arise. Meditation practice helps you to slow your thinking, and helps you see each thought more clearly.

Watching and knowing what you are thinking.

What is the use of watching and knowing what you are thinking? It is really of great use! Our thoughts determine what we say and what we do. If your thoughts are not good and beneficial, then what you say and do will not be good and beneficial and your life will be badly affected with problems and unhappiness. If your thoughts are good and beneficial, then your life will be good with fewer problems and more happiness. What you think and do today determines what your life will be like in the future. What you thought and did before, determined how your life is today.

The mind and body work together. If you can slow and strengthen your thoughts, you can help your body stay well. If you can watch your thoughts well when you slow your thinking, then you can see how your breathing and heart rate slows down and your whole body relaxes.

Many sicknesses in the stomach and other parts of the body follow on from destructive thoughts, such as being angry and jealous.

When you want to practice watching your thoughts you should put your body in such a position that you will not feel like moving around for a long time. It is good to sit on a cushion or pillow, then cross your legs in front, one under the other and keep your back straight so you can take good breaths.

If you find it difficult to sit like this, then you can sit on a chair with your back up straight.

When you sit like this you are no longer concerned about your body, and this can help you

keep your focus on your thoughts.

You can also practice watching your thoughts when you are walking and about to sleep. If you practice well you can start to watch your thinking all of the time, which will really help you in your life.

When your mind is concentrated, clear and sharp, you can see what thoughts are arising now, at this time, and let go of the ones that are destructive and will badly affect you.

This is what is called Meditation Practice, or the way to watch your thoughts clearly and grow good thoughts that will develop your well being and happiness. You should have this type of strength and control of your thinking to do everything you want to do well and follow the eightfold Path, that will help you in this and awaken your mind to reality.

It is good to try and follow the teachings of the eightfold Path all of the time. If you follow this Path well, then you will understand that you will gain deep

understanding, happiness and well being, and your unhappiness and problems will lessen as the strength of the bad things you have done in the past decreases.

Words of Wisdom:

What kind of meditation to do—the advice the Buddha gave to his son Rahula:

‘Do meditation on love-if you do meditation on love you will lessen your anger and bad thoughts towards others.

‘Do meditation on compassion-if you do meditation on compassion you will lessen your desires to make others feel pain or hurt others.

‘Do meditation on being happy with others on their success-if you do meditation on being happy together with others you will lessen being jealous or cross.

‘Do meditation on being peaceful and not

letting your thoughts follow your desires or dislikes or favouritism-if you do meditation on being peaceful and not letting your thoughts follow your likes and dislikes and favouritism, then you will lessen your bad thoughts about others, and dislike and hate towards others.

‘Do meditation to observe that the body is not clean-if you do meditation to observe the body is not clean you will lessen your desire and excitement for the body.

‘Do meditation on how everything changes and nothing stays the same-if you do meditation on how things always change and do not stay the same you will lessen your pride and arrogance about yourself.

‘Concentrate on your breath-if you concentrate on your breathing in and out, this will help you with many things. And how will watching your breath help you with many things?

Like this: you go to the bush and sit down at the

bottom of a tree, or go to a place where there are not people and sit down properly, with your legs crossed and back straight, and concentrate on your breath.

‘Watch your breath coming in, and watch it going out. When you are breathing in deeply, know that you are breathing in deeply. If you are breathing out deeply, know you are breathing out deeply. If you are breathing in shallowly, know you are breathing in shallowly. If you are breathing out shallowly, know you are breathing out shallowly.

“When I am watching my whole breath, I will breathe in,” When I am watching the whole of my breath, I will breathe out, he teaches himself.”

“When I am slowing my breathing, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am slowing my breathing, I will breathe out, he teaches himself.”

“When I am feeling happy, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am feeling happy, I will breathe out, he teaches himself.”

“When I am watching the flow of my thoughts I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am watching the flow of my thoughts, I will breathe out, he teaches himself.”

“When I am slowing the flow of my thoughts I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am slowing the flow of my thoughts I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When my mind is clear, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When my mind is clear, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When my mind has deep happiness, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When my mind has deep happiness, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When my mind is completely peaceful, I will breathe in.” he teaches himself. “When my mind is completely peaceful, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When my mind is free, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When my mind is free, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When I am thinking how everything must change, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am thinking how everything must change, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When I am seeing that I am free of excitement for desires, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I am seeing that I am free of excitement for desires, I will breathe out, he teaches himself.”

“When I contemplate the end of things, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When I contemplate the end of things, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

“When my mind becomes completely free, I will breathe in,” he teaches himself. “When my mind becomes completely free, I will breathe out,” he teaches himself.

Four things to strengthen to make the mind become sharp and clear.

There are four things to strengthen to make thinking become sharp and clear. These are:

Things that develop happiness in this life; things that generate deep understanding about how things are and exist; things that develop awareness of thoughts and understanding; things that finish stupid and harmful thinking.

Things that develop happiness in this life

This is when a student leaves all stupid and destructive thoughts and excitement, and concentrates and focuses his mind and enters the first Jhana, that has some flow of thoughts and great happiness.

When thinking and awareness of the flow of thoughts lessen, he enters the second Jhana, where there is strong focus of the mind, and no more thoughts or awareness of them, and great happiness

following from this concentration.

When the happiness lessens, and there are no thoughts of liking or disliking or favouritism, and he has clear awareness, he feels happiness in his body and goes into the third Jhana, which wise people say has not flowing of likes and dislikes or favouritism, awareness and happiness.

When he leaves happiness and pain, and the great happiness and any worry is gone, he enters the fourth Jhana, where there is no happiness or pain, and awareness becomes completely clear as he no longer has any likes or dislikes.

This is called strengthening the mind to achieve good happiness in this life.

Things that generate deep understanding about how things are and exist:

A person watches the light of understanding when he is quiet, he starts to get this understanding in

the day when the sun is above: the same as during the day, so it is during the night, the same as it is during the night, so it is during the day. When his thinking is pure and clear, he makes his whole mind light and pure.

This is how to strengthen your thinking so understanding grows of how things are and work.

Things that develop awareness of thoughts and understanding:

A person recognises feelings when they arise, when they are present, and when they finish. He is aware of his assessment of them with memories, beliefs and concepts, when they arise, when they are present, and when they finish; he is clear of his thought reactions and mental states that subsequently arise, when they are present and when they finish.

This is the way to improve awareness of thoughts and deepen understanding.

Things that finish stupid and harmful thinking:

A person watches how the body and mind changes constantly: the body and its parts are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; feelings are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish ; beliefs, concepts and memories are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; assessments and discriminations are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; mental reactions and mental states are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish; conscious states following looking, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming are like this, they arise, and then change, and then finish.

This is how to strengthen your mind so that thoughts become sharp and clear, and stupid and harmful thoughts cease.

These are four things to strengthen to make thinking become sharp and clear.



*Bodhgaya today—where Buddha tried hard
and became enlightened*

Work hard to help yourself

Our life is in our own hands. Whatever kind of life we want to have, it is up to ourselves to work hard to achieve it.

A person is not able to achieve well being and happiness if he does not work hard to follow these teachings.

It is really important to **follow good behaviour, practice meditation, and open your mind by deepening your understanding of reality.**

It is not a small task but its rewards are very great!

The Four Noble Truths and Path to well being and happiness.

Our life is not long and time passes quickly and it is not long before it finishes, but often we do not think of this.

Occasionally something difficult comes up that affects our life and well being and this stimulates our thoughts. If our thoughts flow clearly at this time and we are not just feeling sorry for ourselves, we can get more insight and understanding about our lives. If we start to look clearly at our lives we can see that often we have all kinds of problems, such as something comes up that we do not like, or we are separated from our friends or family, or we get sick, or we have aches and pains, or bad feelings or fears arise. Often to reduce these worries and problems we do things to make us feel happy for a while which hides or reduces

these problems. We can distract ourselves by gossiping with others, watching movies or TV to help us feel happy for a while. If these worries and problems are big, some people get depressed, others start drinking and taking drugs and strong drink. They think that by taking drugs and alcohol that they can get rid of these problems, but these things only slow the brain from working properly and reduce thoughts about the problems for a short time while their effect lasts in the body.

We also get larger problems, such as a big illness or accident, become aged or be about to die.

We must practice to see clearly that everything changes and finishes—all our problems and worries, and things we like too! If one big problem or worry affects our thinking, and really upsets us, then we must meditate clearly and understand that **everything changes and finishes.**

This truth that we have all types of problems and suffering is called the **First Noble Truth**, and we

should be clear about this fact of life.

If we examine clearly we can find out how these problems or worries arose. A lot of problems and worries arise because we do not get what we want. We want things to run following our desires, but in reality things run following various causes and effects. We tend to not look clearly that everything is in a state of change and that nothing stays the same. However many times we want things to stay the same or for good, or if we do not like them, we want them to finish quickly.

Also we tend to think of, and put ourselves first much of the time. We do not see clearly that we exist with other things and people. We do not exist in isolation from others. We trick ourselves that we can do what we like and others will like to follow us and do what we are thinking of. But it is not like this! These types of thoughts produce irritation, unhappiness, anger, worry, greed and all types of bad thoughts, which in turn create unhappiness in

ourselves.

We tend to follow all kinds of thoughts and beliefs to make our name important, and bring things to us, but what sort of name and what things will you carry with you when you die? The only thing you will carry with you when you die is the result of the things and behavior you have done during your life.

So, if we examine closely we can see that many of the problems and unhappiness we experience has arisen following our own desires to get, or not to get things, or desire that things, people, or ourselves, must stay the same or must change, or finish quickly. This is called the **Second Noble Truth**, and we should be clear about this fact of life.

If we stop doing this type of behavior following our desires for things, people and position, we can start to get rid of our unhappiness and problems. If we are able to meditate and look clearly at our thoughts and get rid of all our desires and stupid and destructive thoughts, and stop trying to hold onto

things that constantly change, we can gain peace and happiness. This peace and happiness is deep within our minds, but we cover it over with our desires and destructive and stupid thoughts, so it cannot come through. This great peace and happiness we can attain when we get rid of our strong desire for getting and holding onto things is called **Nirvana**. This is called the **Third Noble Truth**, and we should be clear about this fact of life.

The eightfold Path is the way we can follow to finish our worries, unhappiness and problems, and achieve peace and happiness. This is called the **Fourth Noble Truth** and we should be clear about this fact of life too and follow the Path's recommendations and put them into effect in our lives.

Help and guidance

Some times we need help to stay on the right path and follow good behaviour and practice meditation to awaken. A lot of disturbing thoughts

arise in our minds and it is easy to think that other things are more important than our practice. This results in problems when we just follow our desires with excitement, or dislikes with anger, thinking that these thoughts and actions will bring us lasting happiness. This kind of thinking can make us stop from practicing and gaining deep lasting peace and happiness. We have to watch out for these stupid types of thoughts and let them go!

There are three things that can help us stay on the Path and they are:

1. Gaining help by looking at the example of the Buddha
2. Gaining help by studying and following his teachings—Dharma
3. Gaining help from those who are also following the Path—Sangha

We can gain help from the Buddha by following

his example of trying really hard to become awakened like him and grow deep understanding by following the eightfold Path he set down.

We can gain help from his teachings as he left many teachings for us to read and hear. He helped a lot of people, and many memorised what he said and later others wrote what he said down. There are three ‘baskets’ of his teachings called the ‘Tripitaka’. Today there are lot of books in English and some in Tok Pisin—seven printed by the Buddhist Education Foundation in Taiwan, and three by the University of Papua New Guinea in Waigani. There are also many teachings and talks in English on YouTube on the internet. There are great teachers who give talks you can find on YouTube and the Internet: Thich Nhat Hanh of Plum Village, Ajahn Brahm of the West Australian Buddhist Society, The Dalai Lama of Tibet, Allan Wallace of the United States of America. There are also some on YouTube in Tok Pisin on the ‘Quentin Genshu’ page.

We can gain help from others following the Path when we become friends with such people. The Buddha said that the way to follow the eightfold Path was to be with friends and others who follow the Path and his teachings. This is called a ‘Sangha’. When we are with members of a Sangha it gives us more strength to practice, and practice well and often.

In our lives we often go to find help. Some people find help to slow worries and problems by drinking and taking drugs, or finding sexual partners. These types of activity close our eyes to following good behaviour, practicing meditation and deepening our understanding of reality. So when we just follow these activities we are headed for problems and unhappiness.

So it is good to remind ourselves of these three ways of gaining help each day. So each morning it is good to put into your thoughts:

I get help and strength from the Buddha’s

example.

I get help and strength from his teachings and the Path.

I get help from those who follow his teachings and the Path.

After thinking about these you can think of the promise to help you come up strong to follow the Path in the section of this book on Right Intention.

A person who follows the Path and develops great compassion to help all living beings is called a **Bodhisattva**.

Words of Wisdom:

Four really good things

When there is a Tahtagata, a person who has deep understanding about the way things are, four good things arise, and these are:

*People often are happy with small things and hold onto many things. But when a Tathagata teaches them Dharma about **not trying to hold onto things that change all of the time**, a lot of people become interested and try hard to gain deep understanding of reality. This is the first good thing that arises when a Tathagata comes, a person who has deep understanding of reality.*

*People a lot of the time feel happy when they are proud and like being proud of themselves. But when a Tahtagata teaches them Dharma about **not being proud**, they are interested and try hard to grow deep understanding about it. This is the second good thing that arises when a Tathagata comes, a person who has deep understanding of reality.*

*People, a lot the time, are happy to feel excited about their desires and find things that will stimulate their excitement and desires. But when a Tathatgata comes and teaches them Dharma about **being peaceful and staying quietly**, they are interested and*

try hard to grow deep understanding about it. This is the third good thing that arises when a Tathagata comes, a person who has deep understanding of reality.

*People, all a lot of time, have confused thoughts and cannot see things as they are because of this unclear thinking. But when a Tahtagata comes and teaches them about Dharma to **get rid of confused and unclear thinking**, they are interested and try hard to grow deep understanding about it. This is the fourth good thing that arises when a Tathagata comes, a person who has deep understanding of reality.*

So, when there is a Tahtagata, a person who has deep understanding about the way things are, four good things arise.

The great light in the world

If the sun and the moon both do not come up then it would become really dark. There would not be day

and night, or seasons or months and years. But when the sun and moon both do come up, there is a lot of light. The earth is not in the dark all the time. There is day and night, seasons, and months, and years.

It is the same when a Tathagata, a person with deep understanding of reality, a Buddha, does not appear in the world, there is not a great light, and people remain in complete darkness. There is no eightfold Path for people to follow, and there is no setting out or explanation of the Four Truths and way to become enlightened.

But if a Tathagata, a person with deep understanding of reality, a Buddha, appears in the world, there is a great light, and people are not stuck completely in the dark. There would be teachings on the eightfold Path, and setting out and explanations of the Four Truths and the way to become enlightened.

So: to become aware of unhappiness and problems, a person must try hard. To come to understand the causes of unhappiness and problems,

a person must try hard. To understand how to overcome and finish unhappiness and problems, a person must try hard. To understand and follow the Path to finish unhappiness and problems, a person must try hard.



Help others

For whoever you have compassion, for those you would like to gain deep happiness, friends, family or relations or someone you have just met, it is good to help them all, and show them, and strengthen their

understanding of four things that will lead them to the good Path.

And these four things are:

Help them to understand who the Buddha was.

Help them to understand his teachings—the Dharma.

Help them to get to know those who follow his teachings—the Sangha.

Help them to follow the kind of beneficial behaviour that pleases good wise people, and helps their thinking to become clear, sharp and concentrated.

Flee from poisonous things

Once the Buddha was staying close to Savatthi and gave this teaching to his students:

'If there were four poisonous snakes, able to kill

a person, at one place. And there was a man who had no wish to die, but wanted to enjoy life and stay well, who came to this place and the people there told him: 'You must look after these four poisonous snakes. You must wake them up, wash them and give them food, and make them sleep. But if you make one cross and it bites you, you will get great pain as if you will die.' The man got frightened and ran away, but the people sang out: 'there are five men who are murderers following you and want to kill you!'

'The man then became completely frightened, but the people sang out again: 'There is another man with an big knife who wants to cut off your head!' So the man ran as fast as he could away from the poisonous snakes, the five murderers, and the sixth man who wanted to cut off his head. Now he came to a place where there were not any people, and when he entered a house he found it empty and all the good things were gone. Then he met some men who told him, *'Gangsters came and looted our place and stole everything, so you must be on your watch for them'.*

The poor man was confused and took off running again. He came to a big river, where on the other bank there was not anything to be frightened of, and a person could be happy staying there, but on the side he was on there were many things to hurt and frighten him. But there was no bridge or boat to take him across to the good side. He did not know what to do, but then saw some pieces of wood lying around and he was able to build a small raft to take him across the river to the other side.

The man paddled hard with his hands and sticks for a long time and eventually came to the other side. He then got off his raft and stood up on the bank of the good side of the river.

‘So this is a story which has an important meaning:

‘The four poisonous snakes represent the four elements that make up our bodies—water, air, earth (food) and the sun (energy).

'The five murderers are the five things that we call ourselves—body, feelings, discriminations and memories and beliefs, mental reactions and mental states, and the states of consciousness that follow on from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and dreaming.

'The sixth man who wanted to cut his head off is the picture of desires, excitement, craving, and holding onto things.

'The village where there were no people represents the six senses, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and mind. If a man with deep understanding analyses these senses, he would find that there is nothing remaining constant in them, there is nothing there that does not change all of the time.

'The gangsters that came and stole everything represent what is seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, and dreamt. For things that are good and not good to see come into the eye, things that are good and not good to hear come into the ear, things that are good

and not good to smell come into the nose, things that are good and not good to taste come onto the tongue, things that are good and not good to touch come onto the skin, things that are good and not good to dream of come into the mind.

‘And the big river represents the strong tide of craving, desire, wanting to become and remain, stupid and wrong beliefs, and unclear thinking.

‘The side of the river where there were harmful things, represent life on earth.

‘The other side of the river with peace and happiness, represents Nirvana.

‘The raft represents the eightfold Path–Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

‘Paddling hard represents trying hard to follow the Path well.

‘And the person who crossed over and stands up on the good side of the river represents a Buddha—a person who has achieved deep understanding.

Student Punna

Once a student named Punna came up to the Buddha and after showing respect, sat down to one side and asked him:

‘Teacher, please can you teach me some dharma so I can go away by myself and practice hard?’

*‘Punna, there are things to see, things to hear, things to smell, things to taste, things to touch and things to dream, which can make us feel happy, to attract us, to make us want them and feel excited about them. If you are happy with them, happy to see them, open to them, wanting to hold onto them, then you feel happiness. However, Punna, **this basis for happiness is the basis for unhappiness too!***

‘However, if you are not happy with them, not

happy to see them, not open to them, not wanting to hold onto them, this basis for happiness finishes, and so does the basis for unhappiness.

‘That is what I want to teach you, Punna. Now where are you thinking of going?’

‘I am thinking of going to Sunaparanta, Teacher.’

‘But the people there are not very good, and like to get cross, fight and hurt others. If they say bad things to you, what will you do?’

‘Teacher, if they say bad things to me I will think like this: “These people are good as they do not fight me!” I will have this thinking.’

‘And if they fight you?’

‘I will think like this: “These people are good, as they do not throw stones at me!”’

‘And if they throw stones at you?’

‘I will think like this: “these people are good, as they do not hit me with sticks”.

‘And if they hit you with sticks?’

‘I will think like this: “ These people are good as they do not attack me with knives”.

‘And if they kill you?’

‘I will think like this: “There are some people who have listened to the teachings on the eightfold Path, but are not very clear about them, and they are ashamed of and really dislike their dirty bodies, and think about getting a knife to kill themselves, but I would die by a knife that I did not want or like.” I would think like that. Teacher.’

‘It looks like you are strong and able to control yourself, if you decide to go with the people of Sunaparanta, Punna. So go and look after yourself, Punna and do what you think is good for you.’

After Punna left the Buddha, he packed his things,

carried his bowl and clothes and walked all the way to Sunaparanta, and stayed there.

He taught the people there, and around five hundred began to follow the eightfold Path. He also got deeper understanding and attained the power of remembering his previous lives, and the birth and deaths of all types of people with differing characters, who followed different types of behaviour. He removed all destructive and dirty thoughts from his mind and attained freedom so as not to be born again.

Later, when he died, some students came and asked the Buddha where Punna was reborn, and Buddha replied:

‘Punna was a very good man who developed deep understanding. He practiced well following the Dharma teachings, and did not come a lot to me asking all types of questions. He won freedom from being born again.’

We should not waste our lives doing all types of little things. Our lives are not long and we cannot tell when we are going to die. Maybe we will be suddenly surprised when our life just finishes!

If we work hard to help ourselves, our family and others to follow this eightfold Path, we will attain a good life and happiness, and our family and community will become places of peace and happiness.

Words of Wisdom:

A short life

A long time ago, there was an important religious man named Araka, who had got rid of desires and excitements. He had many followers and his teachings were:

Our lives are short and we have many worries and unhappiness. We should do good things and make a good life, for there is no one who can hide from

death.

Just like the drops of dew on the leaves of grass disappear when the sun rises, our lives finish quickly, and inside this short time plenty of problems and worries arise. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just like when a heavy rain falls down on a river, all small bubbles arise on top of the water and disappear quickly, human life is just like these bubbles. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just as if a person wants to draw a picture with a stick on top of water, the picture is not able to stay long at all, our lives are just like this and cannot stay a long time. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just like a creek near the top of a mountain, when it comes down the side of the mountain, runs very quickly and carries a lot of sticks and things in it, our lives go very quickly and carry all types of problems. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just like it is not difficult for a man to spit out some sputum from his mouth, our lives are like the spit. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just as if a person throws a piece of meat on top of a very hot fire, it will burn quickly and disappear quickly, our lives are like this. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

Just as when a person brings a cow to be killed and cut up for meat, each time the cow lifts its leg it comes closer and closer to death, our lives are just the

same. There are a lot of worries and unhappiness. You all should be clear about this and do good things and be good, for there is no one who can hide from death.

But, at this time before, people lived a life of some 600 years, and were married for 500 years! Also previously there were only six kinds of problems causing unhappiness and these were: hot and cold, hunger, thirst, passing urine and faeces. However, Araka gave this teaching to his students—that people do not live a long time!

Today we can really say that our lives are short, for anyone reaching 100 years, we say has lived a really long time. If a person lives 100 years, that is 36,000 days only, 12,000 cool, and 12,000 hot, and 12,000 rainy. And the person eats some 72,000 times, 24,000 times in cool weather and 24,000 times in the hot, and 24,000 times in the rainy—sometimes from his mother's breast milk when he was small, and sometimes there was no food too. This is if a person

lives for 100 years.

What a teacher does out of compassion for his students, I have done for you all. There are places underneath trees, empty huts in the bush...practice meditation and do not be lazy! Otherwise you will be worried when it is too late!

I give you this teaching now!

How to decrease the power of Karma

'The power of what a person does will continue until the effects come back to that person, and the energy finishes, in this life or a future life. So if the results of a person's actions have not yet come, there will not be an ending to problems and unhappiness.

'However, if a person follows the eightfold Path, and has no greed, jealousy or hatred, or confused thinking, and that person's thoughts are clean and clear with deep understanding, and he watches his thoughts well and practices meditation on love, to all

living beings in front of him, behind and to both sides, above and below, continuously and fills the whole world with love beyond measure, and there is not one angry or stupid thought in his mind, then he can realize: 'Before my mind was shrunken and not developed, but now my mind has grown and developed well. There will be no more karma made.'

'What do you think if a young person, when still a child, practices meditation on love to make his mind free, will he be able to do bad things?'

'No, Teacher.'

'And if he does not do anything bad, will he have problems and unhappiness arising?'

'No, Teacher. If he was like that, and did not do anything bad or stupid, how will he get unhappiness and problems?'

'So you all make your minds free by practicing meditation on love. A man or a woman is not able to take their body with them when they die. Karma, the

power of thinking, is the rope connecting one life to another.

‘However, a person who truly follows the eightfold Path knows: “the results of all the bad things I have done previously, will come in this lifetime, and will not follow me into another life.”’

‘This is because, if a person grows the meditation practice on love, he will become one who is not born again into this world, if he has gained enough deep understanding from these teachings.

‘If a person follows the eightfold Path well and has no greed, hatred, jealousy or bad or confused thoughts and he watches his thoughts and grows deep understanding, and he practices compassion meditation, and meditation on being happy with the success of others, and meditation of not attaching to things with desire, or dislike, or favouritism, to all in front of him, to his sides, behind him, above and below, continuing until he fills the whole world with compassion, happiness and good thoughts to all,

without discrimination, without any anger, or stupid or bad thoughts at all, he will realize:

“Before my mind was shrunken and had not grown, but now my mind is completely open and has grown to be good. There will not be any more Karma grown in it.

‘What do you think if a young person, when still a child, practices this type of meditation to make his mind free, will he be able to do bad things?’

‘No, Teacher!’

‘And if he does not do anything bad, will he receive unhappiness and problems?’

‘No, Teacher. How could a person like that, who never does anything bad, receive unhappiness and problems?’

‘So you must practice compassion meditation, and meditation on being happy with the success of others, and meditation of not attaching to things with

desire, or dislike, or favouritism, to all in front of you, to your sides, behind you, above and below, continuing until you fill the whole world with compassion, happiness and good thoughts to all, without discrimination, without any anger, or stupid or bad thoughts at all.

‘A man or a woman is not able to take their body with them when they die. Karma, the power of thinking, is the rope connecting one life to another.

‘But a person who truly follows the eightfold Path well knows: “all the bad things I did before, the results of these will take effect in this life only, and will not follow into future lives.”

‘This is because, a person who develops meditation practice like this, will not be born again into this world, if he gains deep understanding by following the teachings of this school.’

It is good to grow compassion to help our family

and children and all others so that they can have good and happy lives and well being.

It is really good to help them develop deep understanding, good behaviour, and meditation practice following this eightfold Path to peace and deep happiness.

Words of Wisdom:

The Metta Sutta, or teaching, on Compassion and Love

“This is what should be done, by those who are skilled in goodness,

And who know the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright, straightforward and gentle in speech.

Humble and not conceited, contented and easily satisfied.

Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.

Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful, not proud and demanding in nature.

Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove.

Wishing:

In gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease.

*Whatever living beings there may be,
whether they be weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
the seen and the unseen,*

*Those living near and far away, those born and
to-be-born –*

*May all beings be at ease! Let none deceive
another,*

*Or despise any being in any state. Let none
through anger or ill-will*

Wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life

*Her child, her only child, so with a boundless
heart*

Should one cherish all living beings;

Radiating kindness over the entire world:

*Spreading upwards to the skies, and downwards
to the depths;*

*Outward and unbounded, freed from hatred and
ill-will.*

*Whether standing or walking, seated or lying
down,*

*Free from drowsiness, one should sustain this
recollection.*

This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views, the pure-hearted one,

having clarity of vision, being freed from all sense desires,

Will transcend birth and death.”

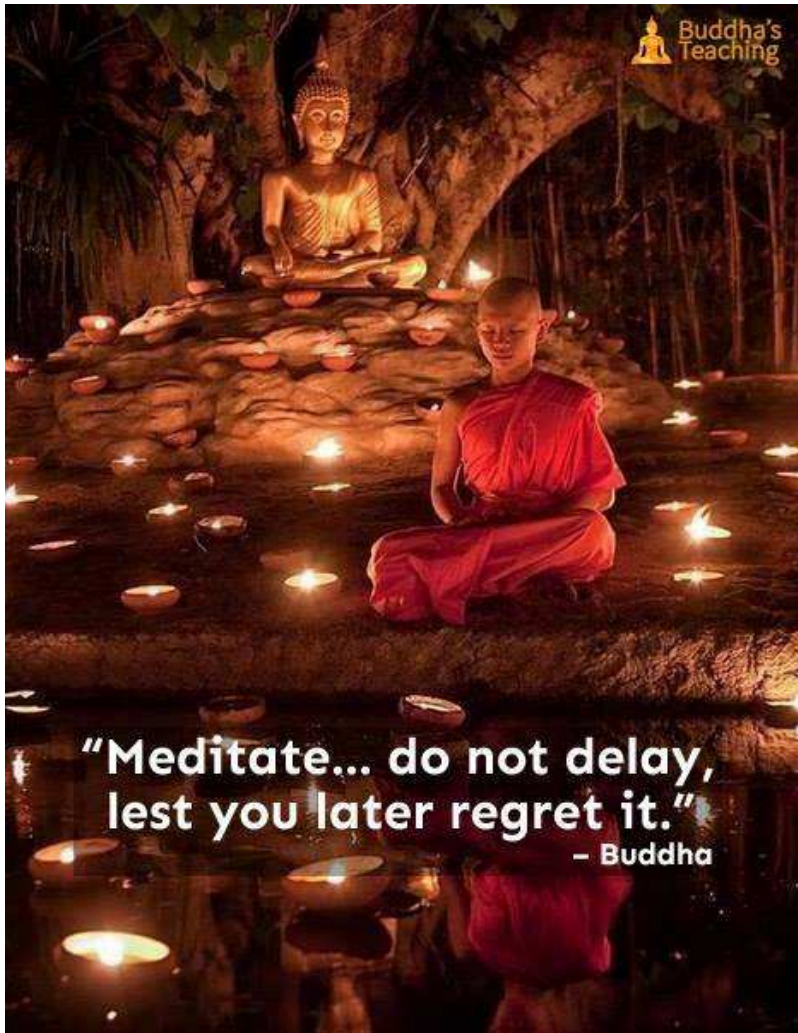


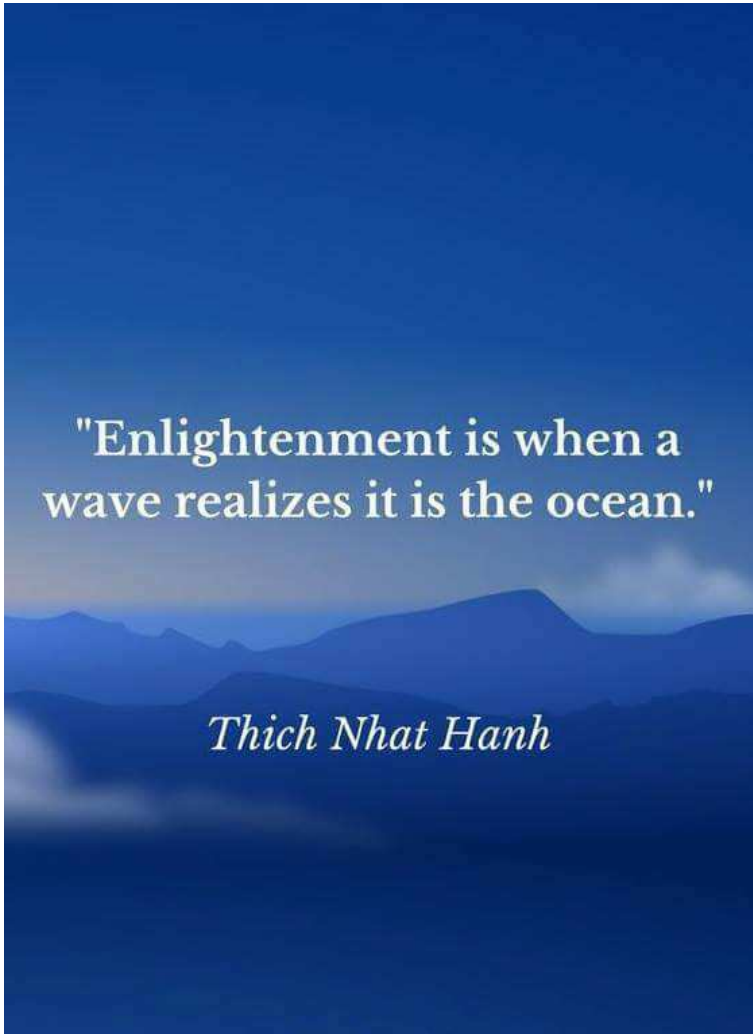
The last words spoken by the Buddha:

*‘Listen now all students,
I have told you clearly that:*

Everything changes.

Practice hard and well!’





DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

財團法人佛陀教育基金會 印贈

台北市杭州南路一段五十五號十一樓

Printed for free distribution by

The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation

11F., 55 Hang Chow South Road Sec 1, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel: 886-2-23951198 , Fax: 886-2-23913415

Email: overseas@budaedu.org

Website: <http://www.budaedu.org>

Mobile Web: m.budaedu.org

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Printed in Taiwan

4,000 copies; February 2018

EN396-15659



