

A Guide to Good Conduct for Youths
Sukumāra Magga Dīpanī

Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

Aggamahāpaṇḍita, DLitt.



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Edited by
Bhikkhu Pesala

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October 2021
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Ledi Sayādaw

U Ñāṇadhaja
1846-1923

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Editor's Preface

This book was given to me over thirty years ago by James Patrick Stuart Ross, an American who travelled to Burma several times to engage the help of able translators to make the works by Ledi Sayādaw available to Buddhists outside of Burma who were unable to read them in Burmese.

The [Siṅgāla Sutta](#) is the thirty-first discourse of the Dīghanikāya and is also known as the Siṅgālovāda Sutta, or an Exhortation to Siṅgāla. He was a young man. The Sayādaw taught this discourse as an exhortation to young people about their social responsibilities and duties. In his translation of the Sutta, Maurice Walshe, calls it “Advice to Lay People.” The translator of the Sayādaw’s work is unknown, as is the date that the work was published. Some parts of the translation were either entirely missing or arranged in a confusing order. I have endeavoured to fill in the gaps and correct this by relying on the Visuddhimagga.

Sukumāra means a good boy or youth. The Ledi Sayādaw wrote this as advice for youths, and for parents to teach their children the fundamentals of paying respect to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. As it says in the conclusion: “It is written especially for the benefit of the Buddhist youths who are under twenty years of age.”

There was also an appendix including the protection discourses and verses, but I have not included these. The main [protection discourses](#) are available online, and others such as the **Sambuddhe Gāthā**, the prayer beginning, *‘Sirasmiṃ me Buddha seṭṭho*, the **Dharaṇa Paritta**, and the **Chadisāpāla Sutta**, are exclusively used in Burma.

Traditions vary from one Buddhist country to the next, but the section on Paying Homage is widely used and authoritative, being based on passages from the Pāli texts. The proper way of paying homage to the Three Gems, undertaking the three refuges and five or eight precepts, knowledge of the ten demeritorious deeds by body, speech, or thought, the ten meritorious deeds that should be cultivated, and the ten perfections that should be practised, ought to be memorised by all children growing up in Buddhist families. They should also know how to meditate on the four Brahmavihāra, and memorise both the Pāli text and meaning of the attributes of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

Buddhists should also commit to memory at least one of the three main protection discourses — the Metta Sutta, Maṅgala Sutta, and the Ratana Sutta — and then study the meaning in detail. My personal favourite of these is the [Maṅgala Sutta](#) as it encompasses thirty-eight wholesome practices, beginning with the fundamentals of avoiding fools, and associating with

the wise, leading on to the observance of morality and the social duties detailed in this *Siṅgāla Sutta*, and then proceeds to cultivating the higher spiritual faculties of reverence, humility, contentment, and gratitude, listening to and discussing the Dhamma, culminating in the noblest virtues of chastity, insight meditation, and the realisation of *nibbāna*.

If Buddhist householders can learn by heart a few more original protection discourses or key passages taught by the Buddha, it will be much more useful to them, in my opinion, than learning traditional verses for offering lights, incense, and food to shrines. People in the time of the Venerable Ledi Sayādaw often needed protection from snakes, spiders, and wild animals, and seldom had recourse to modern medicine. Nowadays, the greatest danger that people face is misinformation that can undermine their faith in the Buddha's teaching if their knowledge of it is superficial. To protect themselves from these dangers they should read, study, question, investigate the teachings, and practise meditation seriously under the guidance of a learned teacher or an experienced meditation master.

I hope that this first edition will help to make the late Sayādaw's writings more accessible. I realise that it still has many defects, but I will endeavour to fix those in future editions as time permits.

Please let me know about any errors. I cannot fix what I don't know about, but fixing typos and other errors usually takes only a few minutes.

Bhikkhu Pesala
October 2021

A Guide to Good Conduct for Youths

Sukumāra Magga Dīpanī

Singālovāda Sutta

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One

Introduction

At one time, the Fully Enlightened Buddha, who understood all things by direct knowledge and insight, the teacher of gods and men, was residing in the Bamboo Grove monastery near Rājagaha.

At that time, a householder's son named Siṅgāla rose early in the morning and went out from Rājagaha. In wet clothes and with wet hair, he raised his palms together to pay homage to the six directions (the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir and the Zenith).

When entering Rājagaha for alms in the morning, on seeing the householder's son worshipping the six directions, the Buddha said to him: "Siṅgāla, why are you, in wet clothes and with wet hair, paying homage to the six directions with joined palms?" Siṅgāla respectfully replied: "Venerable sir, on his death-bed my father called me and said, "My dear son, always worship the six directions with reverence." To honour and respect my father's last words, I pay homage to the six directions with joined palms."

At this reply, the Buddha said: "Siṅgāla, the six directions your father told you to worship do not refer to the cardinal directions."

Then, Siṅgāla asked the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, then to what do the six directions refer? How should the six directions be worshipped with reverence? May the Buddha please have sympathy on me and teach me how to worship the six directions correctly."

At this request of the householder's son, the Buddha taught the fourteen evil ways to be avoided for householders to become persons of virtue.

In brief, the six directions mean parents, teachers, wife and children, friends and associates, servants and employees,¹ and recluses and priests. While worshipping the six directions is discharging the obligations owed to these six groups.

¹ **Dāsa-kammakarā:** The PTS dictionary translates *dāsa* as "slave," but in reality they seem to be a bonded worker. They provide service to the household. The discourse makes it clear that their employer/owner should provide accommodation, food, and wages, time off, and medical care when they are sick. Employees have their own accommodation (ed.)

Eleven Lines on Householders' Duties

The duties of householders that the Buddha taught to the householder's son Siṅgāla in the Siṅgālovāda Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya will be given here:–

1. Destroying life, stealing, adultery, telling lies,
2. Abstain from these four defilements.
3. By lust, hatred, fear, and ignorance, evil is committed.
4. Freed from these four instigating factors, one's acts are righteous.
5. Indulgence in intoxicants, frequenting shows and entertainments, addiction to gambling, sauntering in streets at night.
6. Bad company and habitual laziness are six causes.
7. For dissipation of wealth to be avoided.
8. Parents are to be taken as the East, teachers as the South.
9. Wife and children as the West, friends and associates as the North.
10. Slaves and servants as the Nadir, and monks and priests as the Zenith.
11. Make these six directions safe and secure.

Twenty-eight Explanatory Paragraphs

1. Loss of wealth, involvement in quarrels, contracting diseases, earning a bad name, loss of sense of shame, and weakening of intelligence are six evil consequences of indulgence in intoxicants.
2. He himself, his wife, children, and property are unprotected. He is suspected of committing crimes and evil deeds. He is subjected to false accusations and will have to face many troubles. These are the six evil consequences of sauntering in streets at night.
3. Neglecting responsibilities by going to dancing, singing, music, narrations of tales and stories, playing cymbals and beating drums are the six evil consequences of frequenting shows and entertainments.
4. When a gambler wins he begets enmity, when he loses he grieves. His wealth dwindles rapidly. His word has no weight in a court of law. He is not sought after as a partner in marriage. He is looked down upon by relatives and friends. These are the six evil consequences of one addicted to gambling.
5. Gamblers, libertines, drunkards, swindlers, cheats, aggressive and violent persons are the six kinds of evil companions.
6. There are six types of persons who indulge in habitual laziness making the excuses that it is too cold, too hot, too late, too early, and that they are too hungry or too full.

7. Those who only take, who makes empty promises, who are insincere, and who encourage one to do evil deeds, are four kinds of false and evil friends to be shunned.
8. Helpful, unchanging in attitude in prosperity and adversity; he gives good advice, and is understanding and compassionate. These are four kinds of true friends one should cherish and associate with.
9. Supporting the parents in return, managing their affairs, maintaining family honour and tradition, striving to be worthy of one's inheritance and giving alms on behalf of departed parents. These are the five obligations of children towards parents.
10. Preventing from evil, instructing to do good, giving education and vocational training, arranging suitable marriages and handing over their inheritance. These are the five duties of parents with regard to their children.
11. Getting up from one's seat to greet the teacher, attending upon, listening to and obeying, offering personal services, and learning well what was taught. These are the five duties of pupils to their teacher.
12. Teaching their pupils for all round development, imparting knowledge at every opportunity, not keeping back anything, recommending the pupils to their friends and associates, and protecting them from dangers. These are the five duties of a teacher to their pupils.
13. Addressing in endearing terms, not disparaging, being faithful, giving authority over property and domestic affairs, and providing clothing and ornaments are the five duties of a husband to his wife.
14. Efficient performance of household duties, treating relatives and servants well, being faithful, good management of property, and being skilful and industrious in the discharge of her work are the five duties of a wife to her husband.
15. Generosity, being polite, being understanding and helpful, treating as an equal to oneself, and being true to one's word are the five duties of a householder to friends.
16. Protecting the life of an intoxicated friend, protecting the property of an intoxicated friend, being a refuge when he is in danger, not deserting him in adversity, and helping and honouring his descendants are the five duties of friends to a householder.
17. Allotting work according to ability and strength, feeding and remunerating reasonably, looking after in sickness, sharing choice food, and granting leave are the five duties of a master to servants and employees.

18. Rising before the master, going to bed after him, taking only what is given, doing allotted tasks well, and upholding the master's fame and honour are the five duties of servants and employees to the master.
19. Doing deeds, speaking words, and thinking thoughts with loving-kindness, inviting them to their homes, and supplying them with material requisites are the five duties of the householders to recluses and priests.
20. Preventing lay supporters from evil, exhorting them to do good, having compassion for them, teaching Dhamma not learnt before, explaining the Dhamma already learnt and showing them the path to higher realms are the six duties of recluses and priests to lay supporters.
21. Only taking (and not giving in return), taking much in return for giving only a little, giving service only when it is unavoidable and maintaining friendship only for his own advantage are the four characteristics of a false friend who only takes.
22. He talks of what he could have done, what he will do, he placates with empty promises, and when his help is needed, he gives excuses. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who only gives lip-service.
23. He approves of the evil actions as well as the good actions of his friend, he praises him in his presence and speaks ill of him in his absence. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who flatters.
24. He accompanies him when indulging in intoxicants, sauntering in streets at night, frequenting shows and entertainments, and when gambling. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who associates with evil.
25. Protecting life and property of the friend, coming to his rescue when in trouble or danger, rendering double the assistance requested, are the four characteristics of a true friend who is helpful.
26. Confiding his own secrets, keeping his friend's secrets, not deserting his friend in times of trouble, and risking his life for his friend are the four characteristics of a true friend who is loyal.
27. Restraining his friend from evil, exhorting him to do good, imparting Dhamma unheard before and showing the path to celestial realms are the four characteristics of a true friend who gives good counsel.
28. Not rejoicing in misfortune, rejoicing over prosperity, stopping others from speaking ill of him, and praising those who speak well of his friend are the four characteristics of a true friend who is sympathetic.

Explanation of Lines One and Two

Four Defilements

The meanings of the summary verses will now be explained.

1. **Pāṇātipāta** means taking or destroying the life of a living thing, *i.e.*, from human beings and animals, even down to louse and bug eggs.
2. **Adinnādāna** means taking things belonging to others by force, intimidation, persecution, or other evil ways, by stealth or plunder like robbers and thieves, by various ways of swindling and cheating.
3. **Kāmesumicchācāra** means, for men — sexual misconduct with twenty classes of women who should not be violated; for women, having sex with any man other than her husband.
4. **Musāvāda** means telling lies.

These four kinds of acts which evil and immoral persons commit are called the four defilements. The Buddha teaches that a man should abstain from these four evils for the whole of his life so that he does not become an evil and immoral person.

With this in view, the two verse lines state:—

“Destroying life, stealing, adultery, telling lies,
abstain from these four defilements.”

Explanation of Lines Three and Four

Four Factors That Bring About Evil

1. **Chandāgatiṃ** means committing evil due to favouritism or in consideration of a bribe;
2. **Dosāgatiṃ** means committing evil due to hatred or anger;
3. **Mohāgatiṃ** means committing evil due to ignorance.
4. **Bhayāgatiṃ** means committing evil due to fear;

These four evil acts, which are wrong and improper and are indulged in by ignoble and inferior persons who do not care for morality, are called four factors that bring about evil acts. The Buddha teaches that a being born as man should abstain from these four acts for life so that he may not become an ignoble and inferior man.

With this in view, the verse states:—

“By love, hatred, fear and ignorance, evil is committed. Free from these four instigating factors, one’s acts are righteous.”

Explanation of Lines Five to Seven

Six Practices Causing Dissipation of Wealth

1. **Surāmerayamajjappamādaṭṭhānānuयोग** means indulgence in intoxicants;
2. **Vikālavisikhācariyānuयोग** means sauntering in streets at unseemly hours;
3. **Samajjābhicaraṇaṃ** means frequenting shows and entertainments;
4. **Jūtappamādaṭṭhānānuयोग** means addiction to gambling which causes negligence in doing meritorious deeds, and seeking knowledge about the dissipation of wealth.
5. **Pāpamittānuयोग** means keeping bad company.¹
6. **Ālasayyānuयोग** means habitual laziness, not wanting to work.

A person who is guilty of any one of these six evil practices has no chance to acquire wealth and honour that he has not acquired before, and has no chance for the growth of the wealth and honour he already has; they will only dwindle away day by day.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Indulgence in intoxicants, frequenting shows and entertainments, addiction to gambling, sauntering in streets at night, bad company and habitual laziness are six causes for dissipation of wealth to keep away from.”

Exposition of Explanatory Paragraphs

Six Evils of Indulgence in Intoxicants

1. **Sandiṭṭhikā dhanajāni** means dwindling of wealth in this very existence;
2. **Kalahappavaḍḍhunī** means liability to be involved in quarrels and fights;
3. **Rogānaṃ āyatanāṃ** means susceptibility to illness and disease;
4. **Akittisañjanāni** means loss of good name and reputation;
5. **Kopīnaviddhaṃsaṇi** means shame through indecent exposure of the body;
6. **Paññaya dubbalikaraṇi** means impairment of intelligence.

¹ See [Ref].

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Loss of wealth, involvement in quarrels, contracting diseases, earning a bad reputation, loss of modesty, and weakening of intellect are six evil consequences of indulgence in intoxicants.”

Six Evils of Sauntering in Streets at Night

1. **Atta agutta** means he is unprotected and his life is exposed to danger.
2. **Puttadāra agutta** means his sons, daughters, and wife are left unguarded and they are given a chance to commit evil;
3. **Sāpateyya agutta** means his wealth and property are unprotected and unguarded;
4. **Sañkiya** means he is liable to be suspected of committing crimes and evil deeds;
5. **Abhūtavacanam ruhati** means he is liable to become the victim of false accusations, may have difficulty in proving his innocence, and is likely to be convicted of the crimes alleged;
6. **Bahū dukkhadhammānaṃ purakkhata** means he will have to face numerous troubles.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“He himself, his wife and children, and his property are unprotected, he is suspected of committing crimes and evil deeds, he is subjected to false accusations, and he will have to face many difficulties. These are the six evil consequences of sauntering in streets at night.”

Six Evils of Frequenting Shows and Entertainments

1. **Kva naccam** means spending day and night at dances and shows, he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge for self-improvement, and seeking wealth.
2. **Kva gītam** means spending day and night at singing and concerts, he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge from self-improvement, and seeking wealth.
3. **Kva vāditaṃ** means spending day and night at musical entertainments, he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge for self-improvement, and seeking wealth.

4. **Kva akkhānaṃ** means spending day and night at recitations and narrations of imaginary and frivolous tales, such as the stories of Rāmāyana, E-naung, Ngwetaung, Bharata, etc., he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge for self-improvement, and seeking wealth.
5. **Kva pāṇissaraṃ** means spending day and night at playing of cymbals and such entertainments, he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge for self-improvement, and seeking wealth.
6. **Kva kumbhathunaṃ** means spending day and night at beating of drums and such entertainments, he neglects doing meritorious deeds, acquiring knowledge for self-improvement, and seeking wealth.

With this in view the verse states:—

“Neglect of responsibilities by going to dancing, singing, music, recitations and narrations of tales and stories, playing cymbals and beating of drums are six evil consequences of frequenting shows and entertainments.”

In the verses, ‘Frequenting’ means one who habitually goes to wherever entertainment is held. In **Kva naccam**, *Kva* = where is, *Naccam* = dancing, etc., indicate that a man spends his whole time inquiring where shows and entertainments are being held and going there and watching them, and thus neglects his responsibilities.

Six Evils of Gambling

1. **Jaya veram pasavati** means the winner begets the enmity of the losers;
2. **Jino vittamanusocati** means the loser grieves over his loss.
3. **Sandiṭṭhikā dhanajāni** means there is actual loss of wealth in this very life.
4. **Vacanaṃ na rūhati** means a gambler’s word is given no weight in a court of law, etc.
5. **Mittāmaccaānaṃ paribhūto** means a gambler is looked down upon by relatives and friends.
6. **Āvāha vivāhakānaṃ apatthito** means a gambler is not sought after as a marriage partner.

With this in view, the verse states:—

“When he wins, he begets enmity; when he loses he is grieved; his wealth dwindles rapidly; his word has no weight in a court

of law; he is not sought after as a partner in marriage; he is looked down upon by relatives and friends.”

Six Kinds of Evil Companions

1. **Dhuttā mitta** means friends who are addicted to gambling.
2. **Soṇḍā mitta** means friends who are libertines;
3. **Pipāsā mitta** means friends who are drunkards;
4. **Nekatikā mitta** means friends who are counterfeiterers; making artificial gold, silver, *etc.*
5. **Vañcanikā mitta** means friends who are swindlers;
6. **Sāhasikā mitta** means friends who are bullies and thugs.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Gamblers, libertines, drunkards, counterfeiterers, swindlers, bullies and thugs are the six kinds of evil companions.”

Four False Friends

1. **Aññadattuharo amitto** means a false friend who only takes and does not give anything in return;
2. **Vaciparamo amitto** means a false friend who only gives lip-service, but never fulfils his promises;
3. **Anuppiyabhāṇī amitto** means a false friend who flatters him;
4. **Apāyasahāya amitto** means who is an associate in doing evil deeds, *e.g.*, a companion in murder, robbery, theft and other crimes.

As these four types of friends are not of any benefit and are really enemies who pose as friends, one should avoid them from afar.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Who only takes from one, who makes empty promises, who pretends to like one and who is an associate in evil deeds are four kinds of false and evil friends to be shunned.”

Four Characteristics of a False Friend Who Only Takes

- i. He only takes from one and never gives in return.
- ii. He takes much in return for giving only a little.
- iii. He does service only when it is unavoidable.
- iv. He maintains friendship only for his own advantage.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Only taking from and not giving in return, taking much in return for giving little, giving service only when it is unavoidable, and maintaining friendship only for his own advantage are the four characteristics of a false friend who only takes.”

Four Characteristics of a Friend Who Give Only Lip-service

- i. He speaks of what he could have done in the past for his friends.
- ii. He speaks of what he will do for his friend in the future.
- iii. He tries to placate his friend with empty promises.
- iv. He gives lame excuses when his help is actually needed.

With this in view, the verse states:

“He talks of what he could have done, what he will do, he tries to please with empty promises and when his help is actually needed, he gives excuses. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who only gives lip-service.

“He speaks of what he could have done in the past,” means that when the friend is in difficulty and comes and asks for a loan or some aid, he does not want to help though he has the means and he replies that had the friend come earlier he could have gladly done it. However, currently no funds are available, it is very unfortunate, and he regrets that he cannot do anything, though he wishes to help very much.

“He speaks of what he will do in the future,” means that though he has the means to help his friend, he does not want to do so. And he replies that it is so very unfortunate that his friend comes at a time when he is out of funds and he is very sorry that he is unable to help. However, he very much hopes that he will be able to help in future.

“He tries to placate his friend with empty promises,” means that when he definitely knows that his friend is well off and is not in need of any financial help, he says, “Friend, I have some funds to spare. Don’t hesitate to ask me for any financial help if you are in need.” When he knows for certain that his

friend has no appetite or is not hungry, he invites him to eat. When the friend is hungry and wants food, he hides his food.

“When the friend is not in need of any service, he comes often and offers his services. When the friend needs his services, he keeps away and comes back only when there is no more need, and says it is most unfortunate that it happened at a time he was away. Such insincere, vain, wily, and empty talk and promises are in vogue in the world. They come from the lips of those who are dishonest and crooked.

“When his help is actually needed, he gives excuses,” means that when the friend comes and asks for his help, he pretends to have a bad headache, stomach pains or to have suffered loss of wealth, *etc.*”

Four Characteristics of a Friend Who Only Flatters

- i. When asked for advice to do an evil deed, he approves of it.
- ii. When asked for advice to do a good deed, he approves of it.
- iii. He speaks well of him in his presence.
- iv. He speaks ill of him in his absence.

With this in view, the verse states:

“He approves of evil actions as well as good actions of his friend, praises him in his presence, and speaks ill of him in his absence. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who flatters.”

Four Characteristics of a Friend Who Associates in Evil

- i. He accompanies him when he indulges in intoxicants.
- ii. He accompanies him when he saunters in streets at night.
- iii. He accompanies him when he frequents shows and entertainments.
- iv. He accompanies him when he indulges in gambling.

With this in view, the verse states:

“He accompanies him when indulging in intoxicants, when sauntering in streets at night, in frequenting shows and entertainments, and in gambling. These are the four characteristics of a false friend who associates with evil.”

End of the exposition of four evil false friends to be avoided.

Four True Friends

1. **Upakāra mitto** = a friend who helps one in every way.
2. **Samānasukhadukka mitto** = a friend who has an unchanging attitude towards in prosperity and adversity.
3. **Atthakkhāyī mitto** = a friend who restrains one from evil and who guides the way to do good.
4. **Anukampako mitto** = a friend who treats one like his own son with understanding and compassion.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“He is helpful, unchanging in attitude in prosperity and adversity, gives good counsel, and is understanding and compassionate. These are the four kinds of true friends one should cherish and associate with.”

The Buddha also teaches the characteristics of these four kinds of good, true friends, in detail, as follows:–

Four Characteristics of a Loyal Friend

- i. He confides his own secrets to his friend.
- ii. He keeps the secrets of his friend.
- iii. He does not desert his friend in times of trouble or danger.
- iv. He even risks his life for the sake of his friend.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Confiding his own secrets, keeping his friend’s secrets, not deserting him in times of trouble, and risking his life for him are the four characteristics of a true friend who is loyal.”

Four Characteristics of a Friend Who Gives Good Counsel

1. He restrains his friend from doing evil.
2. He exhorts his friend to do good.
3. He imparts to his friend the Dhamma (profound truths) that his friend has not heard before.
4. He shows the way to attain rebirth in celestial realms (by giving alms, observing precepts, and so on).

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Restraining him from evil, exhorting him to do good, imparting Dhamma unheard before, and showing the path to celestial realms are the four characteristics of a true friend who give good counsel.”

Four Characteristics of a Sympathetic Friend

- i. He does not rejoice and is worried at the misfortune of his friend.
- ii. He rejoices and is satisfied when his friend prospers.
- iii. He stops others from speaking ill of his friend.
- iv. He praises those who speak well of his friend.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Not rejoicing in his misfortune, rejoicing over his prosperity, stopping others from speaking ill, and praising those who speak well of his friend are the four characteristics of a true friend who is sympathetic.”

Four Characteristics of a Compassionate Friend

- i. He protects the life of his heedless friend.
- ii. He protects the property of his heedless friend.
- iii. He comes to the rescue of his friend when he is in trouble or danger.
- iv. In time of need he renders twice the assistance asked for by his friend.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Protecting the life and property of his friend, coming to his aid when he is in trouble or danger, and rendering twice the assistance requested are the four characteristics of a true friend who is compassionate.”

This concludes the fourteen unwholesome things that householders who wish to become really good should avoid.

End of the exposition of four classes of true friends.

Six Evil Consequences of Habitual Laziness

1. **Ati sitaṃ** means not working with the excuse that it is too cold;¹
2. **Ati uṇhaṃ** means not working with the excuse that it is too hot.
3. **Ati sāyaṃ** means not working with the excuse that it is too late;

¹This section follows in the Pāli text (ed.)

4. **Ati pāto** means not working with the excuse that it is too early;
5. **Ati chāto** means not working with the excuse that he is too hungry;
6. **Ati dhāto** means not working with the excuse that he is too full.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“There are six ways that those who indulge in habitual laziness make excuses: it is too cold, too hot, too late, too early, he is too hungry, or too full.”

The Six Directions

1. The parents are the East.
2. The teachers are the South.
3. Wife and children are the West.
4. Friends and associates are the North.
5. Slaves, servants, and employees are the Nadir.
6. Recluses and priests are the Zenith.

With this in view the verses state:

“Parents are to be understood as the east, teachers as the south; wife and children as the west; friends and associates as the north; servants and employees as the nadir, and recluses and priests as the zenith. Thus, making these six directions safe and secure.”

Worshipping the Six Directions

Five Duties of Children

1. Supporting and looking after parents in return when they are old.
2. Managing the affairs of parents on their behalf.
3. Maintaining the honour and tradition of the family.
4. Striving to be worthy of (material and moral) inheritance.
5. Doing meritorious deeds in memory of departed parents and sharing merits with them.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Supporting his parents in return, managing their affairs, maintaining the family’s honour and tradition, striving to be

worthy of his inheritance, giving alms on behalf of departed parents are the five obligations of children to their parents.”

Five Duties of Parents

1. Restraining the children from doing evil deeds from a young age.
2. Making them well-established in good moral habits, such as respecting parents and elders.
3. Having them educated and giving them vocational training.
4. Arranging suitable marriages for them when they come of age.
5. Handing over property as inheritance.

With this in view, the verses state:

“Restraining the children from doing evil, guiding and encouraging them to do good, giving education and vocational training, arranging suitable marriages and handing over property as inheritance are the five obligations of parents to their children.”

Five Duties of Pupils

1. When the teacher comes, rising up and welcoming him, relieving him of his umbrella, footwear, *etc.*, and preparing and giving him a seat; fanning him when it is hot.
2. Going to the teacher and waiting upon him at least three times a day.
3. Listening to and obeying the words of the teacher.
4. Offering personal service to the teacher both when he is well and when he is ill, *e.g.*, fetching drinking and washing water, *etc.*
5. Striving to learn well what is newly taught and not to forget what has already been learnt.

With this in view, the verse states:

“Getting up and greeting the teacher, waiting upon, listening to and obeying, offering personal service, and learning well what is taught are the five duties of a pupil.”

Five Duties of Teachers

1. Teaching the pupils to be well cultured and disciplined both in mind and body.

2. Imparting to pupils interesting pieces of knowledge whenever they come near him.
3. Not keeping back any knowledge and teaching the pupils everything they should learn.
4. Commending pupils who have completed training to their parents and relatives telling them what the pupils have learnt.
5. Teaching mantras, protection discourses, and Pāli verses on the attributes of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha to the pupils so that they may recite them throughout their lives for warding off misfortune, dangers, and evils.¹

With this in view, the verse states:

“Teaching the pupils for their all round development, imparting knowledge at every opportunity, not keeping back anything, commending the pupils to their parents and relatives and protecting from dangers are the five duties of a teacher.”

Five Duties of Husbands

1. Addressing the wife in endearing terms.
2. Not treating her disparagingly.
3. Being faithful.
4. Giving control and authority over all the property acquired and domestic affairs.
5. Providing clothing and ornaments in keeping with one’s social status.

With this in view, the verse states:

“Addressing in endearing terms, not disparaging, being faithful, according control and authority over property and domestic affairs and providing clothing and ornaments are the five duties of a husband.”

Five Duties of Wives

1. Efficient and diligent performance of her household duties.
2. Treating relatives and domestic staff well.
3. Being faithful.
4. Protecting his property well.
5. Being skilful and industrious in doing her work.

¹ These will be dealt with in the later chapters.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Efficient performance of her duties, treating relatives and domestic staff well, being faithful to her husband, protecting his property, and being skilful and industrious in doing her work are five duties of a wife.”

Five Duties of a Householder to Friends

1. Entertaining and giving gifts from time to time.
2. Politeness in speech.
3. Being sincerely understanding and helpful.
4. Treating his friends as himself.
5. Being true to one’s words and promises.

With this in view, the verse states:

“Generosity, being polite, being understanding and helpful, treating as oneself and being true to one’s words and promises are the five duties of a house-holder to his friends.”

Five Duties of Friends

1. Protecting his friend when he is heedless and in danger.
2. Protecting the property of his friend when he is heedless.
3. Being a refuge to his friend when he is afraid.
4. Not deserting his friend when faced with adversity.
5. Honouring and helping his friend’s descendants.

With this in view, the verse states:

“Protecting his heedless friend, protecting his property when he is heedless, being a refuge when he is afraid, not deserting him in adversity, and helping descendants are the five duties of a friend.”

Five Duties of a Master to His Servants

1. Allotting work according to their ability and physical strength.
2. Feeding and remunerating servants and employees reasonably.
3. Looking after them well when they are ill.
4. Giving them a share of choice or special food.
5. Granting them leave for public holidays and emergencies.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Allotting work according to ability and strength, feeding and remunerating reasonably, looking after them in sickness, sharing choice food, and granting leave are the five duties of a master to his servants and employees.”

Five Duties of Servants

1. Rising early in the morning before the masters.
2. Going to bed after completing their chores, only after the master goes to sleep.
3. Taking only what is given by the master.
4. Doing the allotted tasks well.
5. Upholding the master’s good reputation.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Rising before and going to bed after the master, taking only what is given, doing well the allotted tasks, and upholding master’s good reputation are the five duties of servants and employees to the master.”

Five Duties of Lay Supporters

1. Doing deeds for recluses and priests with loving-kindness.
2. Speaking words to recluses and priests with loving-kindness.
3. Thinking thoughts about recluses and priests with loving-kindness.
4. Inviting recluses and priests to their house saying “You are welcome to my house at any time, and let me know if you are in need of anything.”
5. Supplying them with material requisites.

With this in view, the verse states:–

“Doing deeds, speaking words, and thinking thoughts with loving-kindness, inviting them to their houses and supplying them with material requisites are the five duties of lay supporters to recluses and priests.”

Six Duties of Recluses and Priests

1. Restraining his lay supporters from evil.

2. Exhorting them to do good (such as keeping the precepts).
3. Having compassion for them.
4. Teaching them Dhamma that they have not heard before.
5. Explaining the Dhamma already heard.
6. Showing them the path to rebirth in celestial realms.

With this in view, the verse states:—

“Restraining his lay supporters from evil, exhorting them to do good, having compassion for them, teaching Dhamma not learnt before, explaining Dhamma already learnt, and showing them the path to celestial realms are the six duties of recluses and priests to lay supporters.”

Worshipping the Six Directions means that the householder should discharge well his obligations to the six parties named.

With this in mind, the Brahmin father of Siṅgāla had exhorted his son to worship the six directions with reverence. Discharging well one’s duties to the parties concerned is called worshipping the six directions, or protecting the six directions, and making them safe and secure.”

The verse, therefore, says, “Make these six directions safe and secure.” **Make Safe and Secure** means making secure against self-censure or censure by others. When the children neglect their five duties to the parents, the eastern direction becomes unsafe and insecure and they are subject to censure by themselves or by others. To the children who discharge their duties, that direction is safe and secure. They are free from the two dangers — self-censure and censure by others. So fulfilling these duties makes oneself safe and secure.

Self-censure means the danger of blaming oneself (*attānuvāda*), thinking, “I have failed to fulfil my duty.”

Censure by others means blaming by others (*parānuvāda*), for failing to fulfil their duties, by wise men, recluses and priests, guardian deities of men, homes, towns, or villages, or society in general, for contravening the teaching of the Buddha.

When persons pass away bemoaning their negligence to perform their duties and blaming themselves, they will fall into the lower realms (*apāya*). Those who are blamed by others for their failure to perform their duties are not accepted among virtuous recluses, priests, and deities, so they cannot become Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, or great disciples.

Those who fail in their duties to teachers leave the southern direction unsafe and insecure, so these two dangers arise from that quarter.

Those who fail in their duties to wife and children leave the western direction unsafe and insecure, so two dangers and numerous troubles arise from that quarter.

Those who fail in their duties to friends leave the northern direction unsafe and insecure, so in case of trouble, they can find no refuge.

Those who fail in their duties to servants and employees leave the nadir unsafe and insecure, so their wealth is likely to dissipate.

Those who fail in their duties to recluses and priests leave the zenith unsafe and insecure, so are liable to suffer in the lower realms or in hell.

Those who perform their respective duties make all six directions safe and secure, so dangers cannot arise. They are well received among men and deities. They can aspire to become Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, and great disciples. They have the good prospect of getting out of the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) and are close to the path leading to nibbāna.

Here concludes the worshipping of the six directions.

Ten Kinds of Unwholesome Kamma

1. **Pāṇātipāta** = destroying life, killing.
2. **Adinnādāna** = taking what is not given, stealing.
3. **Kāmesumicchācāra** = sexual misconduct.
4. **Musāvāda** = telling lies.
5. **Pisuṇavācā** = backbiting, slandering.
6. **Pharusavācā** = using unbearable, harsh expressions.
7. **Samphappalāpa** = unbeneficial, frivolous talk.
8. **Abhijjhā** = covetousness, strong desire for something that belongs to another.
9. **Byāpāda** = ill will.
10. **Micchā-diṭṭhi** = wrong-view (not believing in the results of kamma).

With reference to the above, the verses state:

- i. Killing, stealing and adultery are three physical evils.
- ii. Telling lies, backbiting, harsh words, frivolous talk are four verbal evil.
- iii. Covetousness, ill will and wrong belief are three mental evils.

Ten Kinds of Wholesome Kamma

1. **Pāṇātipāta-virati** = abstaining from destroying life.
2. **Adinnādāna-virati** = abstaining from stealing.
3. **Kāmesumicchācāra-virati** = abstaining from sexual misconduct.
4. **Musāvāda-virati** = abstaining from telling lies.
5. **Pisuṇāvācā-virati** = abstaining from backbiting, slandering.
6. **Pharusavācā-virati** = abstaining from using unbearable, harsh expressions.
7. **Samphappalāpa-virati** = abstaining from unbeneficial, frivolous talk.
8. **Anabhijjhā** = abstaining from covetousness, having no desire for what belongs to others.
9. **Abyāpāda** = abstaining from ill will.
10. **Sammā-ditṭhi** = holding right-view, seeing clearly the results of kamma.

With reference to this, the verse states:—

- i. Abstaining from the three physical misdeeds brings about three physical virtues.
- ii. Abstaining from the four verbal misdeeds brings about four verbal virtues.
- iii. Not coveting, generating loving-kindness, and right-view are three mental virtues.

Among the duties of parents to the children are two duties:

1. Restraining their children from doing evil;
2. Guiding and encouraging them to do good.

In this connection “evil” include all kinds of evil, such as destroying life, stealing, adultery, and telling lies, the four biases that lead to evil (desire, ill-will, fear, and ignorance), taking intoxicants, gambling, frequenting shows and entertainments, sauntering in streets at night, four kinds of evil companions, and habitual laziness.

- i. Killing, stealing, and adultery are the three physical misdeeds;
- ii. Telling lies, backbiting, harsh words, frivolous talk are the four verbal misdeeds;
- iii. Covetousness, ill-will, and wrong-view are the three mental misdeeds.

In the above verses, “adultery” means sexual misconduct, “backbiting” means causing discord between friends, “frivolous talk” means fictitious

tales, such as Rāmāyana, Enaung, Ngwetaung legend, Mahābhārata and the like, which are not true.

“Coveting” means wishing to possess what belongs to others.

“Ill will” means wishing others to be in trouble or to die.

Ten kinds of wrong beliefs, such as there is no benefit in giving alms, paying homage, etc., are wrong-view (*micchā-ditṭhi*).

“To do good” refers to keeping company with only four kinds of true friends and discharging the duties to the six directions as explained above.

Okāsa – Paying Homage

To Buddhists from the age of five, six, or seven years, the three refuges, the five precepts, the eight precepts (observed on Uposatha days), the ten kinds of wholesome deeds, the four Brahmavihāra (*mettā, karuṇā, muditā, and upekkhā*) and the ten perfections (*pārami*) are noble things. The facts about them will be given here so that they may be remembered for life.

When making obeisance to the three gems — the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha — one must bow three times placing the knees, hands, and forehead on the floor. Then, sitting up with palms put together and raised, one says: “*Okāsa, okāsa, okāsa!* With great reverence I pay homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha by deeds, speech, and thought.



“For this good deed of paying reverential homage to the three gems, may I, in all existences beginning from the present, be free from the four lower realms (*apāya*), the three great calamities, the eight unfavourable abodes (*duggati*), the five enemies, and the four misfortunes (*vipatti*), and quickly attain nibbāna where the eleven fires — lust (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), rebirth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), death (*maraṇaṃ*), grief (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*dukkhaṃ*), sorrow (*domanassa*), and despair (*upāyāsa*) — are absent. This *Okāsa* should be learnt by heart.

Meaning of Namo Tassa

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Arahato = the Arahant, who is endowed with the great qualities of perfect morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), emancipation

(*vimutti*), and unbounded supernormal vision acquired by attainment of emancipation insight (*vimutti-ñāṇadassana*), and who is thus worthy of special veneration by deities and human-beings; **Sammāsambuddhassa** = who fully comprehends all truths by his own intellect; **Tassa Bhagavato** = to that Blessed One; **Namo** = I pay homage.

This paying homage to the Buddha is called worshipping the Buddha (*mahānamakkara*) in the *Saddanīti*. This has been used in paying homage to the Buddha since the days of the Buddha. Learn it by heart.

Meaning of the Three Refuges

“*Buddhaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi.*
Dhammaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi.
Saṅghaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi.”

1. **Buddhaṃ** = the Buddha; **Saraṇaṃ** = as refuge, shelter, and support for the elimination of suffering, and the gaining of happiness; **Gacchāmi** = I go.
2. **Dhammaṃ** = the ten truths comprising the four paths, the four fruits, nibbāna and the *Tiṭṭhaka*; **Saraṇaṃ** = as refuge, shelter, and support for the elimination of suffering, and the gaining of happiness; **Gacchāmi** = I go.
3. **Saṅghaṃ** = monastics who are endowed with morality and wisdom, and the Noble Ones who have attained the paths; **Saraṇaṃ** = as refuge, shelter and support for the elimination of suffering, and the gaining of happiness; **Gacchāmi** = I go.

Learn these by heart.

Meaning of the Five Precepts

1. *Pāṇātipāta veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
 2. *Adinnādānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
 3. *Kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
 4. *Musāvādā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
 5. *Surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*
1. **Pāṇātipāta** = from taking life; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
 2. **Adinnādānā** = from taking things not given by the owner; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.

3. **Kāmesu** = from sexual acts; **micchācārā** = wrongful conduct; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
4. **Musāvādā** = from telling lies; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
5. **Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā** = from taking distilled or fermented intoxicants that cause heedlessness; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.

Meaning of the Eight Precepts

1. *Pāṇātipāta veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
2. *Adinnādānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
3. *Abrahmacariya veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
4. *Musāvādā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
5. *Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
6. *Vikālabhojanā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
7. *Nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana-mālā-gandha-vilepanadhāraṇa-mañḍana-vibhūsanatṭhānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;*
8. *Uccāsayana-mahāsayanā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

Meaning of Precepts Not Included in the Five Precepts

3. **Abrahmacariya** = from the ignoble practice of sexual intercourse; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
6. **Vikālabhojanā** = from taking food after noon until dawn; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
7. **Nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana-mālā-gandha-vilepanadhāraṇa-mañḍana-vibhūsanatṭhānā** = watching (or performing) dancing, singing, music, and unseemly shows (e.g. boxing, wrestling, elephant fights, horse races, etc.) wearing flowers, using perfumes, cosmetics, and wearing ornaments or finery; **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.
8. **Uccāsayana-mahāsayana** = using high or luxurious couches or beds, bed spreads, or sheets, **veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ** = the precept of abstaining; **samādiyāmi** = I undertake to observe well.¹

¹Lay people live like monastics, observing chastity, eating only in the morning hours, wearing white or plain clothing, using no perfumes, cosmetics, or jewellery, sleeping and sitting on

Abstaining from the Ten Demeritorious Deeds

1. Abstaining from the three misdeeds is three meritorious deeds.
2. Abstaining from the four verbal misdeeds is four meritorious verbal deeds.
3. Abstaining from covetousness, ill-will, and wrong-view is three mental meritorious deeds.

These are called the ten ways of meritorious actions (*dasa-kusala-kamma-pathā*). Not coveting what belongs to others is non-covetousness (*anabhijjhā*). Loving-kindness (*mettā*) is non-ill-will (*abyāpāda*). Ten right-views, such as believing, “Almsgiving brings benefits in the next existence,” are right-view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*).

Ten Meritorious Deeds

1. **Dānaṃ**= almsgiving (generosity)
2. **Silaṃ**= keeping precepts permanently (*nicca sila*), or on the Uposatha.
3. **Bhāvanā** = tranquillity (*samatha bhāvanā*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*).
4. **Apacāyanam**= giving respect to those who deserve respect.
5. **Veyyavaccaṃ** = rendering service to others.
6. **Paṭṭidānaṃ** = sharing the merits of a meritorious deed with others.
7. **Pattanumodanaṃ** = rejoicing in the good deeds of others.
8. **Dhammassavanaṃ** = listening with reverence and respect to the teaching of the Dhamma.
9. **Dhammadesanā** = teaching the Dhamma that one has learnt.
10. **Diṭṭhi-ujukammaṃ** = clarifying right-view (*sammā-diṭṭhi-ñāna*).

Ten Perfections

1. **Dāna** = The perfection of almsgiving or generosity.
2. **Sila** = The perfection of morality.
3. **Nekkhamma** = The perfection of renunciation.
4. **Paññā** = The perfection of wisdom.
5. **Viriya** = The perfection of effort.
6. **Khantī** = The perfection of patience or forbearance.
7. **Sacca** = The perfection of truthfulness.
8. **Adhiṭṭhāna** = The perfection of resolution.
9. **Mettā** = The perfection of loving-kindness.
10. **Upekkhā** = The perfection of equanimity.

Four Brahmavihāra

The four sublime abidings of perfect goodwill to all beings. These are also called the four illimitables (*appamaññā*).

1. **Mettā** = loving-kindness.
2. **Karuṇā** = compassion.
3. **Muditā** = sympathetic joy.
4. **Upekkhā** = equanimity.

Three Types of Enlightenment

1. **Sāvaka Bodhi** = the enlightenment of a disciple of the Buddha.
2. **Paccekabodhi** = the enlightenment of a Solitary Buddha.
3. **Sammāsambodhi** = the perfect enlightenment of a Buddha.

Infusing the foregoing teachings — from the Three Refuges to the Three Types of Enlightenment — into the minds of the young so that they may have a good knowledge of them and faith in them is one of the duties of parents.

Nine Attributes of the Buddha

“Itipi so bhagavā araham, sammāsambuddho, vijjācaraṇa sampanno, sugato, lokavidū, anuttaro purisadhammasārathi, sattā devamanussānaṃ, buddho, bhagavā.”

Itipi = thus indeed; **so Bhagavā** = the Blessed One who is our teacher.

1. **Araham** = Possessing the qualities of perfect morality, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge of liberation, he is worthy of special veneration by celestial and human beings, thus he is called “The Worthy One.”¹
2. **Sammāsambuddho** = Comprehending all truths by his own intellect and insight, he is called the “Fully Enlightened One.”
3. **Vijjā-caraṇa sampanno** = Endowed with all knowledge and fifteen kinds of perfect morality, he is known as “Endowed with Knowledge and Conduct.”
4. **Sugato** = Having gone to a good destination, he is called “The Fortunate One.” Also, he speaks well, avoiding speech that is harmful to others, so he is “Well Spoken.”

¹I have filled in details missing from this section, using the Visuddhimagga as my source (ed.)

5. **Lokavidū** = Having fully understood the world of formations, the world of living-beings, and the world of location, he is “The Knower of Worlds.”
6. **Anuttaro purisadamma sārathi** = the incomparable guide (charioteer) of trainable persons.
7. **Satthā devamanussānaṃ** = Being the respected and revered teacher of celestial and human beings in the ten thousand world-systems, he is called “The Teacher of Gods and Men.”
8. **Buddho** = Knowing by his own intellect the Four Noble Truths and explaining them to celestial and human beings, he is called “The Awakened One.”
9. **Bhagavā** = Being endowed with infinite glory, infinite meritorious deeds, infinite wisdom, infinite powers, and receiving the respect, reverence, and homage of beings in the three planes of existence, he is called “The Blessed One.”

Taṃ = To that Buddha who possesses the nine attributes beginning with **Araham** and ending with **Bhagavā**; **Ahaṃ** = I, **Vandāmi** = pay homage.

Six Attributes of the Dhamma

“Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko, opaneyyiko, paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi”ti.”

1. **Svākkhato** = Expounded well is the teaching (**Dhammo**) — which is excellent in the beginning, the middle, and the end — by the Blessed One (**Bhagavatā**).
2. **Sandiṭṭhiko** = the benefits are personally experienced and enjoyed in this very existence by those who practise it.
3. **Akāliko** = the benefits are reaped without any delay by those who practise it.
4. **Ehipassiko** = it stands up to scrutiny and invites investigation.
5. **Opaneyyiko** = it is worthy of being perpetually cultivated and practised to experience its benefits personally.
6. **Paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi** = the benefits are personally realised by those wise, noble ones who practise it.

Taṃ = To that Buddha who possesses the nine attributes beginning with **Araham** and ending with **Bhagavā**; **Ahaṃ** = I, **Vandāmi** = pay homage.

Nine Attributes of the Saṅgha

“*Suppaṭiṭṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho, ujuppaṭiṭṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho, ñāyappaṭiṭṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho, sāmiciṭṭipapaṭiṭṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho, yādidamaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisaṭṭipuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho, āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo, dakkhineyyo, añjalikaraṇiyo, anuttaramaṃ puñña-kkhettaṃ lokassa’ti.*”

1. **Suppaṭiṭṭipanno** = endowed with the noble practices of higher morality, higher mental development, and higher wisdom, **sāvaka-saṅgho** = the disciples of the Blessed One (**Bhagavato**) comprising ordinary persons who possess the qualities of morality and wisdom (*sammuti Saṅgha*), and the eight grades of Noble Ones (*Paramattha Saṅgha*).
2. **Ujuppaṭiṭṭipanno** = endowed with the straightforward practice of higher morality, higher mental development, and higher wisdom.
3. **Ñāyappaṭiṭṭipanno** = endowed with the appropriate right conduct of higher morality, higher mind and higher wisdom.
4. **Sāmiciṭṭipapaṭiṭṭipanno** = endowed with the proper practice of higher morality, higher mind and higher wisdom.
5. **Yādidamaṃ cattāri purisayugāni, esa bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho** = four pairs of noble disciples:¹ **Āhuneyyo** = are worthy of receiving gifts brought from afar, because they possess the excellent virtues of morality and wisdom.
6. **Pāhuneyyo** = worthy of hospitality, because they possess the excellent virtues of morality and wisdom.
7. **Dakkhineyyo** = worthy of receiving offerings donated wishing for future benefits, because they possess the excellent virtues of morality and wisdom.
8. **Añjalikaraṇiyo** = worthy of receiving reverential salutation by living-beings, because they possess the virtues of excellent morality and wisdom.
9. **Anuttaramaṃ puñña-kkhettaṃ lokassa** = an incomparably (*anuttaramaṃ*) field (*kkhettaṃ*) for sowing the seeds of merit (*puñña*) for the world (*lokassa*).

Tam = To that Buddha who possesses the nine attributes beginning with **Araham** and ending with **Bhagavā**; **Aham** = I, **Vandāmi** = pay homage.

¹ Those who have attained the four paths, and the four fruitions (ed.)

If one does not know by heart the nine attributes of the Buddha, the six attributes of the Dhamma, and the nine attributes of the Saṅgha, together with their meanings, one cannot be said to understand how the reverend the Three Gems. It is therefore incumbent on a true Buddhist to memorise the attributes of the Three Gems (*tiratana*).

The Buddha taught many times in the Suttanta Piṭaka — one of the three collections of texts — about the importance of reciting these attributes in paying homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. The Arahants did the same on many occasions. There is no other form of paying homage superior to this. On paying homage, first recite “*Namo Tassa...*” with its meaning, followed by the Pāḷi and meaning of the Three Gems, and the Pāḷi and meaning of the attributes of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

Prayer for Boys

“By this meritorious deed may I be long-lived in this very life, may I be free from diseases and ailments, may I be free from enemies and dangers, may I be free from blame, may I be one whose wishes and plans succeed in all worldly affairs. In my future existences may I be reborn in upper-class families of men or deities, may I be reborn having the three roots of greed, anger, and delusion present only to a lesser degree so that I may be amenable to the higher attainments, and endowed with great wisdom. May I be of immense wealth and great influence. May I be endowed with faith, the virtues of shame and dread of wrong-doing. May I be of great learning. May I be one who delights in giving alms, observing morality, and practising meditation. In my final existence, may I achieve the four analytical knowledges, the four supernormal powers, the absorptions; and the path and fruition of Arahantship.”¹

Iminā Puñña = By this deed of merit; **Diṭṭha Dhamme** = in this very life; **Dighāyuko** = long lived; **Bhavāmi** = May I be.

Arogo = free from disease and ailments; **Bhavāmi** = may I become.

Avero = free from all enemies and dangers; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Anavajjesu = free blame; **Ṭhānesu** = in all worldly affairs; **Cinta siddho** = one whose wishes and plans succeed; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

¹ The summaries of the aspiration are not found in the original translation. I have distilled them from the following explanatory (*nissaya*) text (ed.)

Samparāye = in my future existences; **Uccakulesu** = of upper-class families of men or deities; **Tihetuko** = reborn having the three roots of greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) present only to a lesser degree so that I am amenable to the higher attainments of the Dhamma; and is endowed with great wisdom; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Mahaddhano = of immense wealth; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Mahiddhiko = of great influence; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Saddhā sampanno = endowed with faith; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Sukkadhammo = endowed with the virtues of shame and dread of evil; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Bahussuto = of great learning; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Dānābhirato = one who delights in giving alms; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Silābhirato = one who delights in observing morality; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Bhāvanābhirato = one who delights in practising meditation; **Bhavāmi** = may I be.

Antimabhava = in my final existence; **Guṇagaṇaparivāraṃ** = may I have the accessories of the four analytical knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*), the four supernormal powers (*abhiññā*), the absorptions (*jhāna*); **Arahatta magga-phala** = and the path and fruition of Arahantship; **Labhāmi** = may I achieve.

Prayer for Girls

“By this meritorious deed of making obeisance with palms joined in veneration to the Three Gems, may I be free from all dangers and evils in this very existence, may I be able to practise the Dhamma daily for the fulfilment of the ten perfections, and for carrying out the ten kinds of meritorious deeds. May I have a long life. In my future existences, may I not be reborn in the four lower realms, nor the eight unfavourable abodes, may I be reborn during the flourishing of the Buddha’s teaching, in upper-class families of men or deities, endowed with the three roots of non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion, may my fame and honour shine forth like the moon. May I have wisdom, faith, morality, and learning, and be known for these qualities. May I be able to follow the practice of the virtuous, be of right and pure conduct; be generous at all times, be able to keep the eight precepts on Sabbath days and able to practise the four illimitables of

loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy, and equanimity. May I be able to set my eyes with great reverence on the Buddha Metteyya, the teacher of deities and men, and take refuge in him when he conquers the five Māras (Khandha, Kilesa, Maccu, Abhisāṅkhāra, and Devaputta), and gains the jewelled throne under the Bodhi Tree, and may I then attain the path and its fruition.”

I pay homage with great reverence to the teacher of deities and men — the Buddha — the Dhamma, and the Noble Saṅgha by reciting their attributes with joy. I share the merits earned by this virtuous deed with my mother, father, teacher, relatives, and friends, all other beings and all deities. May they get their share and call out *Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!* (well done).

According to the injunction: “Restraining the children from doing evil deeds from a young age...” things that a Buddhist should be taught by their parents from childhood have been expounded.

Points to Note

The duties of the teacher include, among other things, the teaching especially of sound methods, which are practised in this world and which are in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings, to live a long life, to prevent diseases and ailments, to be free from enemies and dangers, are for children to follow throughout their lives. It is the custom of the Burmese people to also learn by heart the protection discourses (*paritta*) to ward off evils and misfortunes in accordance with this duty.

Teachers should pay particular attention to this duty as all kinds of pestilence are prevalent nowadays. To memorise all of the protection discourses may be too much of a burden for some, but for one who chants them daily to cultivate the habit, one single Sutta, such as the Ratana Sutta, Metta Sutta, or Khandha Sutta, will be sufficient. Only by reciting them regularly and by getting the habit well-established, can their power be efficacious when they are chanted in times of danger. If the danger is great, chant them repeatedly. It is alright to chant them by reading the text if one cannot memorise the discourses by heart. When they have learnt them by heart, they will be able to articulate the words with greater precision.

Three catastrophes — famine, evil spirits, and pestilence — broke out in the city of Vesāli, but these were eradicated when the Venerable Ānanda chanted the Ratana Sutta throughout the three watches of the night. This Sutta was taught by the Buddha solely for the purpose of eliminating such

catastrophes. So when catastrophes break out in villages and towns, this Sutta should be chanted by both the Saṅgha and laymen as a resolution by the Saṅgha (*kammavācā*).

When the protection discourses are recited by a group in towns or villages, one of the group should chant by reading out from the text and twenty to thirty others should recite in unison. The group should chant, walking along lanes and streets from one section to the next until it has covered every area. It should continue chanting every night until the catastrophe passes away. In houses, too all members of the families should join in the recitation of the protection discourses at sundown.

The Āṭānāṭiya Sutta of the Dīghanikāya was taught for warding off dangers from demons and other evil spirits. The Mahāsamaya Sutta is another discourse for warding off dangers.

When pestilence broke out in Thaton (of Burma), the Venerables Soṇa and Uttara, who were both Arahants, chanted the Brahmajāla Sutta and a pestilence was checked. This is recorded in the Buddhist books.

Uppātasanti Gāthā is also for the eradication of pestilences. When once an epidemic disease broke out in Chengmai (Indo-China), this Gāthā was chanted all over the place and the epidemic was brought under control.

The reciting of Paṭṭhāna Pāli texts can also check epidemic diseases. When they are chanted for towns and villages, a group of men and women should be formed for each section. The number in each group should not be too large because when there are many in a group the recitation gets jumbled up and becomes indistinct. If the recitation is distinct and clear, it is much better. Groups of 20, 25, or 35 should start reciting simultaneously at the signal given by the firing of guns or canons, or by the beating of gongs or drums. The recitation should also stop at the same time at the given signal. Continue in this way until the epidemic has passed.

The paths and lanes along which the reciters are to walk should be swept thoroughly. Pots filled with water should be kept at the junctions. The whole town or village should be illuminated with lights as soon as it is dark. Follow the procedure outlined in my formal act of expulsion (*pabbājaniya-kammavācā*).

There are many major and minor discourses of the Buddha as well as short and long verses in the Tipiṭaka for warding off or dispelling catastrophes. Most people cannot commit them to memory. As the tradition is to chant them from memory, they cannot be used in time of need. Most men and women can, however, pronounce Pāli words and chant by looking at the text.

This is a much better way than reciting from memory as the text can be articulated with greater clarity and precision.

In a Buddhist country, the aforementioned discourses and verses should be extracted from the Tipiṭaka and printed in a book to be kept handy in every household to ward off calamities and misfortunes. The wise should take note of this suggestion.

Daily Practice for Warding off Danger

1. Reciting the “*Namo Tassa ...*” prayer can ward off danger from demons and other evil spirits.¹
2. Reciting of the Three Gems (*Buddhaṃ Saraṇaṃ Gacchāmi...*) can ward-off or free one from dangers and misfortunes.
3. Reciting the nine attributes of the Buddha is also good for protection against dangers and misfortunes.
4. Reciting the *Sambuddhe Gāthā* also can ward off dangers and misfortunes.²
5. The prayer called ‘*Sirasmiṃ me Buddha seṭṭho*’ or ‘*Ratanā Shwechaik*’ in Burmese is a special prayer for keeping away dangers. (In this prayer the Buddha is likened to a golden cage in which beings take refuge to keep away dangers and misfortunes).
6. The prayer extolling the eight great victories of the Buddha is also a special prayer for protection against dangers.³

¹ The word ‘prayer’ is used here to mean offering of devout praise in homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. It is not a petition or entreaty to, or a spiritual communion with, the object of worship.

² This prayer, it is said, has come into use since the time of the kings of Pagan. It is originally a prayer in which homage is paid to 512,028 Buddhas who arose and passed away in twenty incalculable aeons (*asaṅkheyya*) counting from the present fortunate aeon (*bhadda kappa*). Since the time of Buddha Brahmādeva who arose twenty aeons ago, the Bodhisatta had mentally made the wish for seven aeons to become a Buddha. Then he made the wish verbally for nine aeons. The Buddhas who arose in these two periods (sixteen aeons) numbered 512,000 — 500,000 in the former period and 12,000 in the latter period.

Then in the time of Buddha Dipaṅkara, the Bodhisatta received a sure prediction that he would become a Buddha in the Bhaddakappa, four aeons and 100,000 world cycles from that time. In that period, 28 Buddhas arose. So the total is 512,028. Then the incalculable number of Buddhas, which is more than the number of grains of sand along the banks of the River Ganges, was added to the prayer.

This is what the translator has learnt and is giving here for the information of the readers.

³ The eight victories were gained over: (1) Mara and his fierce elephant Girimekhalā when he came to oust the Buddha from the seat of enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi tree soon after the Buddha attained supreme enlightenment; (2) The ogre Āḷāvaka; (3) The fierce elephant Nāḷāgiri; (4) The robber Aṅgulimāla who killed all those he came across and cut a

7. The exceptional (*āveṇika*) attributes of the Buddha, also known as the Dhāraṇa Paritta, are also very powerful and effective in warding off the dangers of demons and evil spirits.
8. The Chadisāpāla Sutta¹ is a traditional prayer for protection against dangers.²

How to Recite the Protection Discourses

When the protection discourses or verses are recited just to earn merit, this should be done with reverence in a melodious and leisurely voice. When they are chanted to ward off dangers or misfortunes, they should be done in a commanding and forceful voice. If the danger is great, more power should be put into the voice according to the seriousness of the danger and the recitation should be done repeatedly.

Conclusion

Here concludes the Sukumāra Magga Dīpanī which is written especially for the benefit of the Buddhist youths who are under twenty years of age. This book is called Sukumāra Magga Dīpanī because it gives guidance to good and noble youths, the perfect disciples of the Buddha, who aspire to gain the perfection of knowledge (Bodhi).

After studying this book, those who wish to learn Pāli Grammar and the Dhamma Saṅgaha Treatise in an easy way, may study the Concise Pāli Grammar and Concise Paramattha written by me.

End of the Sukumāra Magga Dīpanī.

finger from each; (5) The evil woman Ciñcamāṇa who posed as one with child and accused the Buddha of being the father; (6) The ascetic Saccaka who was very proud of his learning and who challenged all the learned men he met to a debate and set their doctrines at naught; (7) The dragon Nandopananda, and (8) Brahmā Baka, the longest living being in the Brahmā realms who wrongly believed that he would live forever. See the [Jayamaṅgala Gāthā](#) (ed.)

¹ Like the Dhāraṇa Paritta, this seems to be an extract from the Aṭṭanāṭiya Sutta (ed.)

² From the above list it will be seen that there are many protection discourses, and attributes of the Three Gems to be chanted for warding off dangers and misfortunes. if they are recited repeatedly before going to bed every night, they gain greater power as time goes by (tr.)