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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

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May You Be Well And Happy

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Summary

In 1991 Sri Lankan Buddhist Monk Bhante Kassapa spent the Annual Monks Rains Retreat at the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia in Melbourne Australia.

Venerable often gave Dhamma talks to the students who attended each day to offer him dana. Bhante wrote a short article about his first week of the retreat and including summaries of some of the Dhamma talks he gave to students which are the contents of this article.

VASSANA RETREAT OF BHANTE KASSAPA IN 1991

Sunday 25th Aug 1991

After I had finished my dana, I gave a Dhamma Talk. A summary of my Dhamma Talk is:

Dear Spiritual brothers and sisters. This morning in this cold weather you woke up very early in the morning with the good intention to exercise your generosity. With the thought of Buddha Dhamma and Sangha, you woke up. It was such a pleasant morning for you. The best thought that we can ever have in the world is the thought of Buddha, the thought of Dhamma and the thought of Sangha.

They are our refuges. There is no other shelter for the mind which brings us security and protection and the path to liberation - perfect freedom. Buddha lives in our hearts, Dhamma lives in our hearts, Sangha lives in our hearts. We do not have any external refuges. We take refuge in ourselves.

When we have confidence in this manner our mind becomes clearer and clearer as the mud goes to the bottom of the water. The mind becomes bright and luminous and it becomes so pure and happy. This pure mind can be the source for all other good thoughts. You have done well today. I am very happy for what you have done. May you be always happy in this way.

You have taken the journey to reach your hearts. You have taken the journey to observe yourselves. To observe your responsibility for your actions and reactions, cause and results, conditions and effects - law of nature. When you do good things happiness can be experienced. When you do bad things suffering can be experienced as a result.

You have a lot of things in this material world. How many things can be used by Monks. The major things that Monks need are robes to wear, food to eat, shelter to stay, medicine for sickness. That's all. See very simple. You can offer any other things to Monks which are suitable for Monks but those are all external things.

Monks' lives are so light and simple. They have less work to do and much

Practice on the Path to be done until they gain their final goal - Enlightenment: until they become a Perfect One, an Arahant - a Saint. Let this merit accrue to our dead relative and may they be happy.

May beings inhabiting space and earth - Devas and Nagas of mighty power share this merit. May they long protect the dispensation, my Teachers, me and others. May you be well and happy. May all beings be well and happy.

sadhu - sadhu - sadhu

Noon dana. Monday, 26 August, 1991

In my Dhamma Talk, I explained about the Five Precepts.

Buddhism is a path of wisdom not blind faith, not superstition. Wisdom is not knowledge, and also it is not intellect. It is an appreciation of the way things are. Wisdom is to realize the true nature of things and to cut off ignorance which is the root of all evil.

1. To become a true Buddhist one has to go for Refuge to the Buddha, The Dhamma and the Sangha.

2. Taking the Precepts: To abstain from taking life, to abstain from stealing, to abstain from sexual misconduct, to abstain from false speech and to abstain from taking intoxicants that cloud the mind. If one wants to observe additional precepts there are Eight Precepts for laypersons. There are Ten Precepts for laypersons and Novices - (first ordination of a Monk as a trainee to become a full Monk).

Every moment of our existence we create a life. Therefore it is very important to make a contribution to this life in a constructive way. The way we live, our volitional actions of body, speech and mind help to shape our life and this world.

We have to train our mind in three ways, it is called threefold training:

1. State of transgression: controlled by moral discipline
2. Stage of manifestation: suppressed by concentration
3. Stage of latent tendency: eradicated by wisdom.

We have to train this body, speech and mind in order to realize peace and happiness. We have the ability to choose the wise body, speech and mind actions, we are not powerless, we just have to develop the wisdom to choose these right actions. When one speaks or acts with an impure mind suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught ox.

When one speaks or acts with a pure mind happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves – Dhammapada.

To become a true Buddhist

The whole Teaching of Lord Buddha is based on compassion and wisdom.

Buddhist life cannot disturb another life or hurt any living being. It respects all the lives.

Buddha discovered a good method to bring about harmony in the community, the society and in the whole world.

The Buddha laid down five precepts which can be observed by lay people, in all walks of life. One has to consider that five precepts are not an order but observed of the good results of wise moral action towards other persons.

Everybody must respect the rights of others, if they want to become a true Buddhist.

1. Everyone has the right to live.
2. Everyone has the right to keep their belongings and property.
3. Everyone has the right to moral sexuality.
4. Everyone has the right to hear the truth
5. Everyone has the right not be intoxicated.

First Precept - To abstain from negative energy - I undertake to observe the Precept to abstain from harming or killing any living being. This Precept is taken to discipline the mind to abstain from wrong actions. It also can be a reminder to guard against wrong action. It can be used as a boundary to protect you from doing wrong action.

First Precept - Cultivation of positive energy - one can also develop positive energy by cultivating a good thought of loving kindness. When one has no thought of loving kindness to persons, one may act in callous way. If one can develop the thought of loving kindness then this is the antidote to hate.

Second Precept - To abstain from negative energy - I undertake to preserve the Precept to abstain from stealing.

Second Precept - Cultivation of positive energy - One can share one's things with others - one can practise generosity.

Third Precept - To abstain from negative energy - I undertake to observe the Precept to abstain from sexual misconduct.

Third Precept - Cultivation of positive energy - One can be content with what one has.

Fourth Precept - To abstain from negative energy - I undertake to observe the Precept to abstain from telling lies.

Fourth Precept - Cultivation of positive energy - One can be honest to oneself.

Fifth Precept - To abstain from negative energy - I undertake to observe the Precept to abstain from taking intoxicants.

Fifth Precept - Cultivation of positive energy - One can develop mindfulness/ethical conduct.

Morality (Sila) is built on the vast concept of universal love and compassion for all living beings.

May you all be well and happy. May all beings be well and happy.

Sadhu

Sadhu

Sadhu

My third day, Tuesday the 27 August, passed quickly. It was a pleasant day. The sun was shining and the birds were happy. They were flying here and there over the trees toward the blue sky looking for some food and shelter. A gentle breeze was blowing, blossom of various colours filled the trees and delighted the mind. The natural fragrance that came from the flower was taken by the wind in all direction as an offering to all Teachers. The dew over the leaves on the ground was shining like crystals.

I gave a Dhamma talk on Wednesday the 28th August.

We live in a peaceful environment. The Buddha said when one is free, one should retreat to a forest or sit under a tree or go to a suitable hall and practise Meditation intensively. Practise mindfulness of the breath. This practice is so peaceful and sublime.

This Centre is situated in a natural environment which is congenial for the development of the good minds. All the facilities have been provided for the Meditators' needs.

The Buddha's dispensation is threefold:

1. Learning
2. Reflection or practice
3. Attainment of four stages of enlightenment.

One has to listen to Dhamma very carefully and attentively. If you do not know how to listen then you will miss the point and meaning of the Dhamma. Therefore, you should know the art of listening.

SRAVAKA - means male disciple of Buddha

SRAVIKA - means female disciple of Buddha

SRAVAKA - literal meaning is listener

SO we should know the art of listening.

When you listen to Dhamma, you have to live in the present moment. You have to listen to yourself.

The dana or meal that you have offered to the Sangha today all of it is material things.

They are impermanent. They are conditioned things. They are subject to decay - to change. By offering dana you practise detachment. You practise to give away. Share your things with other people. It shows your generous heart. In this way you are developing your perfections.

You practice letting go. Why should we practice letting go? Because all the troubles in the world are based on attachment or craving. So you should practice to give away things from gross or coarse level.

Then you will be able to practice letting go of everything which in the subtlest level is attachment to your body and mind.

When you do a good action as offering dana it will be meritorious action. You acquire a great merit. It is called good karma. It also has a result. The result you gain by doing good karma can be happiness, peace, health, strength, knowledge in this life time or next. Though you have offered this material thing as a meal you have offered a life for a Monk to live seven days. That's why you will gain long life as a result in return.

If you have matured in these qualities in your mind you will be born with mind of non-attachment, non-aversion and non-delusion. These are the qualities of a mind that can gain the enlightenment.

May you all be well and happy.

Sadhu

Sadhu

Sadhu

The fourth day, Thursday the 29 August, 1991. After my midday meal, I gave my usual Dhamma Talk.

Namo Buddhaya, Namō Dhammāya, Namō Saṅghaya.

I started my Dhamma Talk. We are able to think. This ability that we are able to think is marvellous, but we have to be very careful what we think about. Because the way in which we think can generate a positive energy or negative energy in the mind and the body.

If we think of sensual pleasures we are attached to sensual objects and provide things for the satisfaction of the mind without knowing the reality of these objects. Because of this attachment it will bring suffering. This is all because of wrong thinking and attachment to sensuality. Another wrong way of thinking is thoughts of anger, and thoughts of cruelty. We should learn to think wisely. When a person does a good action the mind becomes wholesome and skilful. The mind becomes so peaceful and happy. This positive energy pervades all the physical body. One can experience a feeling of bliss in the body.

This is the immediate result of wholesome actions. Some people in this world live a long life. They are beautiful people. They are very healthy and wise. One can see these people experience a good life due to their result of good kamma - good action or dana. So you are provided with all the facilities for you to accumulate meritorious actions by being born as a human being in

this world. Be happy.

You are in the company of spiritual friends. May you all attain everlasting happiness. May you all be well and happy.

My Dhamma Talk on Friday evening, 30 August 1991.

We have volitional action in the mind - (willpower) and, because of this, it arises all other actions in the mind physically and verbally and therefore you have to have the right intention to put actions towards a profitable way.

Because skilful and unskilful may arise, we have to check the mind and to be aware of what sort of volition motivation we have in the mind.

Look at what is behind your thoughts - mindfulness is the factor you need, then it (mindfulness) knows what kind of volitional motivation is there. If it is wrong action you can see, the mindfulness can see the intentions. Negative energy to positive energy - there is no time for bad action. Right Thought, Right Path- develop mindfulness - it will show you the Right Action. Tomorrow is a new day, accept this moment - it conditions the future. Make a good plan for the future life. Plan will naturally come to you, reveal your mind to that, unfold naturally and guard yourself. Practice mindfulness - it will give you a good plan for your life.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu

On Saturday 31 August, it was the last day of August and it seemed Spring had been invited by Winter with the buds of flower over trees. Some trees were in blossom like white cloth covered them and flowers of many different colours could be seen in the garden. It was magnificent to look at. The leaves of some trees were taking their birth - in different colours. Wind was embracing the perfume of the flowers and carrying that fragrance in all directions across the sky, valley, mountains and parks. It was a new transformation of the environment to welcome Spring. It was so beautiful indeed, as all the environment was starting to celebrate Spring.

After I finished my morning dana (meal), I explained to students the importance of offering dana on behalf of the Buddha and also I explained to them how the dana should be offered to the Sangha to maximise the merit.

The first part of the food you have prepared this morning or before midday you can offer to the Buddha. You can serve a little from each different bowl and place it into a small bowl on a tray with a cup of water and with a very devoted mind you can offer this food on behalf of the Buddha to an Image of the Buddha. You can gain tremendous positive energy and great merit from this action and you will be able to experience happiness and peace as a result. When you offer the dana you have to think:

The Blessed One, The Worthy, The Enlightened One:
This food I worshipfully offer.
I offer this food to:
The Buddhas of the past

The Buddhas that are yet to come
The Buddhas of the present age

Lowly, I, each day offer.

Offering of food to the Sangha is common everywhere in the Buddhist World. When you offer something to Monks, you should always bear in your mind that you are offering this food to the whole Community of the Sangha. Use broad view mind when offering dana to the Sangha and then you will know that you are offering dana to the whole Community of the Sangha in the past, present and future.