

Happiness of the Household Life in Buddhism

By Ven. Ry Phum

Introduction

Happiness (*sukha*) is a basic need of all sentient beings in *saṃsāra*. “*Sukhakāmā hi satta dukkhapaṭikulā, jīvitukāma amaritukāma*” (certainly, beings desire to be happy; they dislike suffering, they want to live, they do not want to die). The objective of this study is to look at happiness from the point of view of the Buddhist tradition. We can correctly say that happiness is truly universal; it is a universal goal, at the same time a universal mystery. We talk a lot about happiness, and yet our definitions of happiness are many and varied. It is a subject that fuels religion, philosophy, economics, even sports and recreation. Finally, happiness boils down to how each of us as an individual perceives it. Interestingly enough, the Buddha’s first teaching was the fact that woven into the fabric of life is something called suffering (*dukkha*). The Buddha went on to say that we cause our own suffering, and he also said that we can get away from this unhappiness, transcend our own mistakes made over many lifetimes, and then ultimately experience true happiness, the transcendental state of *Nibbāna*.

Buddhist Definition of Happiness

Now let us look at what true happiness is and what it is not from a Buddhist standpoint. A famous Buddhist saying goes, “Happiness (*sukka*) can be borne with ease; suffering (*dukkha*) cannot be borne with ease.”¹ This is as simple and direct definition of happiness as we can come up with. Buddhist teaching says that what is not happiness, false happiness, is the gratification of desires, because for one thing, desire is rooted in the delusion of the discrete self, and for another, this kind of gratification only leads to more desire. The more one wants, the more one gets, and the more one gets, the better one gets at wanting, and so we become stuck in a seemingly never-ending circle of want-it, get-it, want-some-more, get-some-more, and so forth.

True happiness can be broadly defined as a state of mind. The characteristics of this state of mind include a sense of universality, continuity and patience. The state of mind we call true

¹ *A Buddhist View of Happiness*, <<http://www.cloudwater.org/uploads/textfiles/A Buddhist View of Happiness.pdf>>, Web: 19 October, 2015.

happiness is not temporary, it is not grounded in purely sensual gratification, and it does not deal in extremes. It is constant and all pervasive, and above all, it is that which can be borne with ease. The Buddha said, “Happiness is in the mind which is released from worldly bondage. The happiness of sensual lust and the happiness of heavenly bliss are not equal to a sixteenth part of the happiness of craving’s end.”² With that quote from the Buddha we can now investigate a little deeper into how the Buddhist traditional views on happiness and the path to achieve that happiness.

One of the chapters of the *Dhammapada* is titled, “Happiness” (*Sukha Vagga*) in which some of the Buddha’s teachings about happiness are listed. In this chapter the Buddha described elements of the happy life³: (i) Living without hate among the hateful. (ii) Living without domination of the passions among those who are dominated by the passions. (iii) Living without yearning for sensual pleasures among those who yearn for sensual pleasures. (iv) Living without being impeded by the three poisons of craving, anger and ignorance which are seen as hindrances to spiritual progress. (v) Giving up thoughts of winning or losing. (vi) Overcoming the five aggregates (vii) Subjugating the passions. (viii) Not being in the company of the foolish but being with the wise. (ix) Attaining the final happiness which is *Nibbāna* or Ultimate Bliss.

Obviously, householders face both physical and mental suffering such as poverty and hunger, family and social crises, and domestic violence and so forth. These problems lead to individual unhappiness, social degeneration, criminality, and war which lead to the destruction of millions of human lives.

The Management of Social Problems

In respond to the aforementioned problems, the Buddha presented many valuable teachings to guide lay people in their everyday lives in raising their families, running their businesses and interacting with society in various discourses as follows:

² *A Buddhist View of Happiness*, Web:19 October, 2015.

³ K. Sri Dhammananda, *The Dhammapada* (Kuala Lumpur: Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society Buddhist Vihara, 1988), P. 399.

The Buddha states that poverty involves suffering, “*daliddiyaṃ dukkhaṃ loke*”, poverty is the suffering of the world.⁴ The *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* clearly states that poverty is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty in the society and so on.⁵ Kings in ancient times, like governments today, tried to suppress crime through punishment. The *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of *Dīghanikāya* explains how futile this is. It says that this method can never stop our social problems. Instead the Buddha suggests that, in order to eradicate crime, the economic condition of the people should be improved; grain and other facilities for agriculture should be provided for farmers and cultivators; capital should be provided for traders and those engaged in business; adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed. When people are thus provided with opportunities for earning a sufficient income; they will be contented and no fear or anxiety; consequently the country will be peaceful and free from crime.⁶

The Buddha says that hunger is the greatest disease (*Jighacchāparamā rogā*).⁷ What Buddhism maintains is that there is a reciprocal relationship between the two kinds of poverties, material and spiritual. When any section of society is deprived of the basic material needs due to an unjust economic order, there is a natural tendency towards moral degeneration in that society. This is clearly illustrated in the *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* and the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*. Social turmoil and moral degeneration in a society are indications of the growth of poverty.⁸ The *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* shows how when people in authority neglect certain sections of the community and let poverty increase, there occurs a gradual and systematic deterioration of morality in that society until the society is totally brutalized. The culmination of such deterioration is said to be a terrible war which leads to the destruction of many lives.⁹

The elimination of poverty needs to be demonstrated by the establishment of a society free of crime, social tensions, wars, and conflicts where people can live in harmony, friendship,

⁴ Heng Monychenda, *Preahbat Dhammik* (Phnom Penh: A Publication of Buddhism for Development, 1999), P. 181.

⁵ Maurice Walshe, Trans., *DN* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987), P. 399.

⁶ Maurice Walshe, P.135.

⁷ K. Sri Dhammanada, *The Dhammapada* (Kuala Lumpur: Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society Buddhist Vihara, 1988), P. 404.

⁸ See footnote 5 and 6.

⁹ *Dīghanikāya* Vol. III, (London: The Pāli Text Society), P. 65-74.

and peace. For the lavishness of material things does not necessarily correspond to the richness of human happiness.

The Management of the Household

In addition, certain *Suttas* such as the *Sigālovāda Sutta* (Code of Ethics for Lay People), *Vyagghapajja Sutta* (Conditions of Welfare), *Parābhava Sutta* (Causes of Downfall), and the *Maṅgala Sutta* (Discourse on Blessings) provide systematic and comprehensive sets of guidelines which apply to daily life, social relationships, and even economics and politics, that lead gradually to the deeper aspects of the teachings of the Buddha.¹⁰ The Buddha's main guide to peace and happiness for the householder is based on the *Sigālovāda Sutta*. It deals with basic morality; building and preserving wealth, friendships, reciprocal responsibilities in social relationships, and the qualities of successful people. This teaching benefits both individuals and society as a whole.¹¹

The *Sigālovāda Sutta* shows how the Buddha advised a young man named Sigāla who used to worship the six cardinal points – east, south, west, north, nadir, and zenith blindly obeying the last advice given by his dying father. The Buddha then told the young man that in the 'noble discipline' (*ariyassa vinaya*) of his teaching, the six directions are to be worshipped differently.¹² According to his 'noble discipline' the six directions were: the east represents parents; the south – teachers; the west – wife and children; the north – friends and companions; the nadir – servants, workers and helpers; and the zenith – ascetics and Brahmins.¹³ "One should worship these six directions with wholesome intention," said the Buddha. Here, the word 'worship' (*namasseya*) has great significance, as one worships something sacred, something worthy of honor and respect. These six family and social groups mentioned above are treated in Buddhism as sacred, worthy of respect, and worship. The Buddha says that one could worship them only by performing one's duties towards them as follows:

Children should look after their parents in their old age; should do whatever they have to do on their behalf; should maintain the honor of the family and continue the family tradition;

¹⁰ T Y Lee, *A Life of Blessings* (Kuala Lumpur: Sukhi Hotu Sdn Bhd, 2010), sP.12.

¹¹ Maurice Walshe, Trans., *DN*(Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987), P 461.

¹² Maurice Walshe, P. 461.

¹³ Maurice Walshe, P. 466.

should protect the wealth earned by their parents; and perform their funeral rites after their death.¹⁴ Parents, in their turn, have certain responsibilities towards their children: they should keep their children away from evil deeds; should engage them in good and profitable activities; should give them a good education; should marry them into good families; and should hand over the property to them in due course.¹⁵

Pupils should minister to their teacher; by rising to greet them, by waiting on them, by being attentive, by serving them, and by studying earnestly.¹⁶ Teachers should train and shape their pupils properly; should teach them well, should introduce them to their friends, and should try to procure them security or employment when their education is over.

Husband should always honor his wife; he should love her and be faithful to her, should secure her position and comfort, and should please her by presenting her with clothing and jewelry. In return, wife should supervise and look after household affair; should entertain guests, visitors, friends, relatives, and employees, should love and be faithful to her husband, should protect his earnings, and should be clever and energetic in all activities.¹⁷

Friends, relatives, and neighbors should be hospitable and charitable to one another; should speak pleasantly and agreeably, should work for each other's welfare, should be on equal terms with one another, should not quarrel among themselves, should help each other in need, and should not forsake each other in difficulty.

The master or employer also has a special role to play towards his servant or his employee; work should be assigned according to their ability and capacity, adequate wages should be paid, medical needs should be provided, and occasional bonuses should be granted. The servant or employee, in his turn, should be diligent and not lazy; honest and obedient, and not cheat his master, should be earnest in his work, and should honor his master's reputation and good fame.¹⁸

¹⁴ DN, P.467.

¹⁵ Rahula, P. 79.

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005), P. 117.

¹⁷ DN, P. 467.

¹⁸ Kandarapanguwe Dhammasiri, *the Sigālovāda in Pictures* (Buddha Dharma Education Inc., 1995), P. 46.

Lay people are supposed to be kind in body, speech and thought towards the religious men, keep open house for them, and supply their physical needs. The ascetics and *Brahmins*, thus treated by the laity, will reciprocate in six ways: they will restrain him from doing evil, encourage him to do good, be benevolently compassionate towards him, teach him what he has not heard, and point out to him the way to heaven. In this way the zenith is covered, making it at peace and free from fear.¹⁹

Thus, we see that the lay life, with its family and social relationships, is included in the noble discipline, and is within the framework of the Buddhist way of life as the Buddha envisaged it.

Besides the teachings guiding people to peace, happiness, harmony, morality and generosity, the Buddha also taught the causes of social downfall, and how to avoid them in the *Parābhava Sutta* (Causes of Downfall). This is a short teaching outlining the pitfalls to avoid in order for one to make progress along the material, moral, and spiritual paths. In this *Sutta*, the Buddha presented twelve causes of downfall which is divided into three categories; comprising of material downfall, moral downfall, and spiritual downfall.²⁰ These causes of individual and social downfall should be avoided because they shut a person off from the path of material and spiritual progress, and will eventually lead to unhappiness and suffering.

In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* the Buddha mentioned thirteen pairs of happiness, out of which the first pair is as follows: “*Bhikkhus*, there are two kinds of happiness. The happiness of a layperson and the happiness of one who has gone forth into homelessness. Of these, the happiness of one who has gone forth is the foremost.”²¹ Thus in the *Dhammapada* is recorded:

Once, a group of *bhikkhus* was discussing the question, “what constitutes happiness?” Those *bhikkhus* realized that happiness meant different things to different people. Thus, they said, “to some people to have riches and glory like that of a king is happiness. To some people sensual pleasure is happiness, but to others to have delicious food is happiness.” While they were talking, the Buddha came in. After learning the subject of their talk, the Buddha said, “*Bhikkhus*, all the pleasures you have mentioned cannot get you out of suffering. In this world, these

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words*, P. 118.

²⁰ Parābhava Sutta: Discourse on Downfall, Trans., Piyadassi Thera (accesstoinight, 1999), Web: 15, 10, 2015.

²¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, Trans., *AN* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), P.170.

constitute happiness: the arising of a Buddha, the opportunity to hear the teaching of the sublime truth, and the harmony amongst *bhikkhus*.²²

Although there are so many types of happiness mentioned in the texts, here let us focus our attention on ordinary happiness. To understand its sources, we first need to be clear about what is meant by “happiness.” What is the happiness that we all want? According to the Buddhist analysis, happiness is a mental aspect, and it is a type of mental activity as we are aware of an object in a certain way. It is one section of a broader mental factor called “feeling”, which covers a wide spectrum that spans from being totally happy to being totally unhappy.²³

In the *Pattakammavagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha preached a *sutta* to Anāthapiṇḍika on the fourfold happiness of a layman. This *sutta* offers adequate insight to meet the demands of the present-day problems. The four types of happiness listed there are: the happiness of ownership acquired by just and righteous means (*atthi sukha*); the happiness of enjoying material wealth, spending on himself, his family, his friends, relatives, and on meritorious deeds (*bhoga sukha*); the happiness of being debtless (*anaṇa sukha*); and the happiness of being blameless and a pure life without committing any kinds of evils in body, word, or thought. (*anavajja sukha*).²⁴

The Present Welfare (*Diṭṭha Dhammikattha*)

The word “*diṭṭhadhammikattha*” means gain for this life, present benefit, temporal welfare, and sources of happiness in the present life.²⁵ On one occasion the young Koliyan Dīghajānu asked the Buddha:

“Bhante, we are laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, living at home in a house full of children. We use sandalwood from *Kasi*; we wear garlands, scents, and unguents; we receive gold and silver. Let the Blessed One teach us the *Dhamma* in a way that will lead to our welfare and happiness in this present life and in future lives.”²⁶

²² K. Sri Dhammanada, *The Dhammapada*, P. 394.

²³ Alexander Berzin, *The Sources of Happiness According to Buddhism*, (Berne: Berner Universitätsschriften, Band 56, 2010), P. 2.

²⁴ *AN II*, 69.

²⁵ Phrah Thepvādī (Parayuddha Payutto) *Dictionary of Buddhism*, P. 16.

²⁶ *AN*, P. 1194.

The Blessed One replied: there are, Byagghapajja, these four things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in this present life. What four? Accomplishment in initiative (*uṭṭhāna saṃpadā*), accomplishment in protection (*āraṅkha saṃpadā*), good friendship (*kalyāṇa mittatā*), and balanced living (*sama jīvitā*).

Uṭṭhāna saṃpadā: whatever may be the means by which a clansman earns his living whether by farming, trade, raising cattle, archery, government service, or some other craft he is skillful and diligent; he possesses thorough judgment about it in order to carry out and arrange it properly. This is called accomplishment in initiative.

Āraṅkha saṃpadā: a clansman sets up protection and guard over the wealth he has acquired by initiative and energy, amassed by the strength of his arms, earned by the sweat of his brow, righteous wealth righteously gained, thinking: ‘How can I prevent kings and thieves from taking it, fire from burning it, floods from sweeping it off, and displeasing heirs from taking it?’ This is called accomplishment in protection.

Kalyāṇa mittatā: in whatever village or town a clansman lives, he associates with householders or their sons, whether young or old, who are of mature virtue, accomplished in faith, virtuous behavior, generosity, and wisdom; he converses with them and engages in discussions with them. He emulates them in regard to their accomplishment in faith, moral discipline, generosity, and wisdom. This is called good friendship.²⁷

Sama jīvitā: a clansman knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life, neither too extravagant nor too economical, so that his income will exceed his expenditures rather than the reverse. Just as a goldsmith or his apprentice, holding up a scale, knows, ‘by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has gone up, ‘so a clansman knows his income and expenditures and leads a balanced life.²⁸

The wealth thus accumulated has four sources of accretion: one avoids womanizing, drunkenness, gambling, and cultivates good friendship. Just as if there were a large reservoir with four inlets and four outlets, and a man would open the inlets and close the outlets, and sufficient rain falls; one could expect the water in the reservoir to increase rather than decrease.

²⁷ AN, P. 1194.

²⁸ AN, P. 1195.

These are the four things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in this very life.

The Future Welfare (*Samparāyikattha*)

The word “*saṃparāyikattha*” means gain for the hereafter, future benefit, spiritual welfare, sources of happiness in the future life.²⁹ In *Byagghapajja Sutta* the Buddha said, “There are, Byagghapajja, these four other things that lead to a clansman’s welfare and happiness in future lives. What four? Accomplishment in faith (*saddhā saṃpadā*), accomplishment in virtuous behavior (*sīla saṃpadā*), accomplishment in generosity (*cāga saṃpadā*), and accomplishment in wisdom (*paññā saṃpadā*).³⁰

Saddhāsaṃpadā: a clansman is endowed with faith. He places faith in the enlightenment of the *Tathāgata* thus: “the Blessed One is an *arahant*, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, teacher of devas and humans, he believes in *kamma* and *kamma-vipāka*.” This is called accomplishment in faith.

Sīlasaṃpadā: a clansman abstains from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from liquor, wine, and intoxicants which are the basis for heedlessness. This is called accomplishment in virtuous behavior.

Cāgasamṃpadā: a clansman dwells at home with a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called accomplishment in generosity.

Paññā saṃpadā: a clansman is wise; he possesses the wisdom that discerns arising and passing away of phenomena, which is noble and penetrative, and leads to the complete destruction of suffering. This is called accomplishment in wisdom.

These are the four other things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in future lives.³¹

²⁹ Phrah Thepvādī, *Dictionary of Buddhism*, P. 50.

³⁰ AN, P. 1196.

³¹ AN, P. 1195-6.

Building a Harmonious Society

Buddhists are interested in creating or maintaining harmonious societies, as it is a natural function of their social-guidance system, rooted in teachings from discourses and aspects of discipline. How moral integrity and moral dread serve as a guide for greater social interactions, the role of lay people in a cohesive Buddhist society, the origin of ethics and harmony in society, and how the perfections and the mind have the ability to protect oneself and play a role in justice; are just some of the doctrinal aspects from Buddhism that serve as a catalyst for improving society, harmoniously – a great necessity in our globalized world which is full of diversity and strife.³²

In the *Maṅgala Sutta* (Discourse on Blessings), the Buddha was asked “what is the best auspicious omen that can be encountered by someone at the start of the day”. Omens in ancient India were believed to foretell good luck and fortune for the coming day. These omens included seeing certain sights, hearing certain names mentioned, and encountering certain smell or tastes. The Buddha did not reply directly to the question, but used it to deliver one of his most exquisite and comprehensive teachings. In his answer, he did not say what the best omens are, but instead explained what the true blessings in life are, and how we can obtain these blessings for ourselves.³³

The Buddha said that we create our own good fortune or blessings. It clear that we each can choose the direction in life we wish to take, and control our own destinies. We can thus obtain all the blessings we want to receive through our own efforts and without depending on any external factors such as omens, gods, prayers, or rituals. The Buddha said that there are thirty-eight highest blessings in life.³⁴ The reason why there are so many different ‘highest blessings’ is because what may be the ‘highest blessing’ for one, may not be so for another.³⁵

³² Dion Oliver Peoples, “8th UNDV Introduction of Article Summarizations,” *Buddhist Virtues in Socio-Economic Development: ICDV Conference Volume* (The 8th International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations 12-14 May 2554/2011, Thailand), P. (16).

³³ Lee, P. 55.

³⁴ *Mahā-maṅgala Sutta: Blessings*, Trans., Narada Thera (accesstoinight, 1994), Web: 3, 11, 2015.

³⁵ Lee, P. 56.

The Four Divine Abodes (*Cattāro Brahmavihāra*)

The “*Brahma-vihāra*”, four sublime abodes are the ideal way of conduct towards living beings. These are sublime states of mind. They are the removers of tension, the peacemakers in social conflict, the healers of wounds suffered in the struggle for existence; the levelers of social barriers, the builders of harmonious communities, the awakeners of slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, the revivers of joy and hope, and the long abandoned promoters of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.³⁶

Mettā: loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill, contrary to hatred or violence which is the enmity of loving-kindness. Most western *Pāli* scholars translated the term (*mettā*) as universal love, while the Buddha called it “*appamaññā*” meaning limitless or boundless. Those who have loving-kindness (*mettā*) always love all sentient beings without exception whether human beings, deities, animals, lower realms beings, and even the surrounding nature.³⁷

Karuṇā: compassion is loving-kindness which one has towards others’ suffering by helping them to remove their suffering.³⁸ It is compassion that removes the heavy burden, opens the door to freedom, and makes the narrow heart as wide as the world.

Muditā: sympathetic joy, gladness, or altruistic joy when other people are happy or achieve success in their work. It means sharing joy with others, opening your heart, or to share happiness and joy allotted to other beings. Moreover, it also means no jealousy, no covetousness towards others’ happiness, but always altruistic joy when seeing or hearing others getting success or happiness in their day to day lives.

Upekkhā: means equanimity, even-mindedness, neutrality, neutral feeling; neither pleasurable nor painful feeling. It refers to unshakable balance of mind which is rooted in insight. Looking at the world around us, and looking into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain and maintain balance of mind. The kind of equanimity required has to be based on vigilant presence of mind, and not on indifferent dullness.

³⁶ Nyanaponika Thera, *The Four Sublime States* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994), P. 1.

³⁷ Monychenda, P. 179.

³⁸ Monychenda, P. 180.

The Buddha rejected ritual worship of the *Brahma* which is useless, but he encouraged human beings to create *Brahma* within themselves. By practicing these four *Brahma-vihāras*, human beings will become *Brahmas* in this very life.³⁹

The Four Bases of Hospitality (*Catu Saṅgahavatthu*)

The word *saṅgaha* literally means “inclusion, bringing together, holding together,” from prefix *saṃ* + *gaha*, “hold, grasp.” Therefore, *saṅgaha-vatthu* means qualities that bond people in unity or principles for helpful integration. The four *saṅgaha-vatthu* in *Pāli* are *dāna*, *peyyavajja*, *atthacariyā*, *samānattatā*.⁴⁰ According to *Buddhist Dictionary* “*saṅgaha*” means to treat kindly, give, help, and aid, while “*saṅgahavatthu*” means objects of sympathy, objects of favor, principles of kindly treatment, and principles of services, and social integration.⁴¹

Dāna: is rendered to English in different ways such as generosity, charity, liberality, donation, gift, sacrificing, sharing his own things with others; not being stingy and selfish. This principle helps people to be free from selfishness. Generosity (*dāna*) in the Buddhist context encompasses a very vast dimension. It extends from helping others who are deserving with material requisites, up to the sharing of knowledge that leads to material and spiritual achievements.

Piyavācā: amicable speech, polite words, sincere, abstaining from harsh speech, speaking words that are useful. The Buddha gives much importance to speech because speech is the first step for producing harmony and friendship. It is the nature of the man that he delights with pleasant speech and gets angry with unpleasant speech. Buddhism recommends pleasant speech to be cultivated under the fourth of the five precepts which are considered to be the foundation practice of lay people. As unpleasant speech arouses anger of the listeners, it is certainly harmful to harmony and peace among people. On the contrary, pleasant speech is conducive to harmony and peace which are basic characteristics of social integrity.

Attha Cariyā: helpful action, performing actions that are useful to other people. This means the rendering of beneficial service for the common good. In other words, this is called

³⁹ Heng Monychenda, *Preahbat Dhammik* (Phnom Penh: A Publication of Buddhism for Development, 1999), P. 174.

⁴⁰ *AN*, P. 1684.

⁴¹ Phrah Thepvādī, P. 47.

altruism in Buddhism. In the modern sense it is social service. Buddhism recommends not only one's own wellbeing (*attadattha*), but also the wellbeing of others (*paradattha*). Both receive almost equal emphasis in Buddhism.

Samānattatā: participation, behaving consistently, impartially, and equitably towards all people. This principle helps us to have a firm mind; and in addition, it produces admirableness and truthfulness. The Buddhist concept of equality can be considered as the basis of progress of a society, both spiritually as well as materially for it is really the principle of unifying mankind as a human society. So long as one does not consider one's feelings as those of others, there is no possibility to have unity and peace amongst human beings, the most necessary driving forces of the progress of our society. If one practices this mentality, he does not do anything that brings suffering to others. Consequently, one refrains from doing harm to others and cultivates what is wholesome. Then people can look mutually at others with friendly eyes (*Aññamaññaṃ piyacakkhūhi sampassamānā*).⁴² That is the reason why equality can be considered as the principle of unifying people into one integrated community.

The Buddha taught in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that “*dāna, peyyavacca, atthacariyā* and *samānattatā*” are the four ways of treating the world (*saṅgahavatthu*). These bases of hospitality are comparable to the linchpin of wheels in a moving vehicle.”⁴³

Conclusion

The Buddha's teachings regarding the happiness of household life is really useful for the present and future welfare, harmony, peace, and happiness. Through practicing these teachings, one will achieve the individual and social happiness, and peace in this very life and the next life as well. The Buddha recognized that not everyone is ready, or even suited for a life centered on intensive spiritual practice. Most people are contented with their household life, running their business, taking part in social activities and having a good time. He said that there is nothing wrong with people enjoying their families, their material possessions, and taking pleasure in life. However, he stressed that the pursuit of happiness should not be at the expense of others. Such happiness will be short-lived and lead ultimately to our own suffering.

⁴² Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, Trans., *MN* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), P. 503.

⁴³ *AN*, P. 1685.

The teachings here point out and remind us on how we should lead our lives, for our own welfare, and also for the welfare of society. Carefully considering and following these teachings virtually guarantee peace and happiness for ourselves, our family, and our community. This creates the conditions for peace and happiness in this present life and for many future lives to come. And for those who sincerely and diligently practice these teachings, attaining the ultimate blessing of *Nibbāna*, is only a matter of time.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Bhikkhu Bodhi. Trans., *Āṅguttara Nikāya: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
- Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Trans., *Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995.
- Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Hymn of Universal Love*, Trans., Acharya Buddharakkhita, (accessstoinight, 1995), Web: 1 November, 2015.
- Mahā-maṅgala Sutta: Blessings*, Trans., Narada Thera (accessstoinight, 1994), Web: 3 November, 2015.
- Parābhava Sutta: Downfall*, Trans., Narada Thera (accessstoinight, 1997), Web: 25 October, 2015.
- Walshe, Maurice. Trans., *DN*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987.

Secondary Sources

- Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Trans., *Visuddhimagga*. Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1956.
- Bhikkhu Bodhi. *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005.
- Berzin, Alexander. *The Sources of Happiness According to Buddhism*. Berne: Berner Universitätsschriften, Band 56, 2010.
- Dauids, T.W. Rhys and Stede, William. *Pāli-English Dictionary*. London: the Pāli Text Society, 1921.
- Dhammasiri, Kandarapanguwe. *The Sigālovada in Pictures*. Buddha Dharma Education Inc., 1995.
- Dhammanada, K. Sri. *The Dhammapada*. Kuala Lumpur: Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society Buddhist Vihara, 1988.
- Lee, T Y. *A Life of Blessings*. Kuala Lumpur: Sukhi Hotu Sdn Bhd, 2010.
- Monychenda, Heng. *Preahbat Dhammik*. Phnom Penh: A publication of Buddhism for Development, 1999.
- Nyanaponika Thera. *The Four Sublime States*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994.
- Peoples, Dion Oliver. "8th UNDV Introduction of Article Summarizations," *Buddhist Virtues in Socio-Economic Development: ICDV Conference Volume*. The 8th International Buddhist

Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations 12-14 May 2554/2011, Thailand.

Phrah Thepvādī, Parayuddha Payutto. *Dictionary of Buddhism*.

Premasiri, P.D. *Religious Values and the Measurement of Poverty*. Kandy: University of Peradeniya, 1999.

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, 1995.

Silva, Lily de. *One Foot in the World: Buddhist Approaches to Present-day Problems*. 1994.

Weber, Max. *Religions of India*. New York: 1958.

Electronic Resources

A Buddhist View of Happiness, <[http://www.cloudwater.org/uploads/textfiles/A Buddhist View of Happiness. pdf](http://www.cloudwater.org/uploads/textfiles/A_Buddhist_View_of_Happiness.pdf)> Web, 19 October, 2015.