

A DISCOURSE ON LOKADHAMMA

Lokadhan Taya



Beings living in this world are all subject to the natural law – *lokadhamma*, or *lawgadan taya* in Burmese. There are altogether eight natural laws that follow a being, like you and me and including arahat, just like a shadow, all the time.

The Eight Natural Laws o

1. *Laba* and *Alaba* – wealth and poverty
2. *Lyaso* and *Ayaso* - having a large retinue, and lack of a single helpers or servants,
3. *pasamsa* and *ninda*, - receiving praise, and subject to abusive gossip
4. *sukha* and *dukha* – happiness and misery

Laba – Alaba - One gets elated when wealth is accrued; disappointed and depressed when one lose his wealth.

Lyasa - Alyasa – One gets elated when served by plenty of friends, servants and retinues; and gets disappointed when deprived of these favours.

Pasamsa - ninda -one gets elated when receiving praise, and disappointed when being criticized in abusive gossip.

Sukha and dukha – one is happy living in luxury, and feels miserable when living in destitute.

All beings are subject to Loakadhamma

The eight natural laws govern over both ordinary and arahats. The laws are common experience to ordinary people causing them: both elation and disappointment; however, to an arahat when faced with such circumstances, they can receive both the good and bad circumstances with **equanimity**. So in the *Mangala Sutta*, the Buddha said:

Phutthassa likadhammehi cittam yassana kampati, asokam virajam khemam etam mangalamuttamam.

The mind of the Arahats who is attacked by the eight manifestations of Lokadham is not ruffled. For him there is no anxiety or dejection. In him, there is not a speck of defiling kilesa. There are no dangers for him. This is indeed the highest blessing. The Buddha said all the *Arahats* are clear of all defilements but as they are still in this world, they are also unavoidably subjected to the laws of *Lokadham*. They will be so subjected until they pass into the state of *Nibbana*.

As for *sotapan* and *sakadagam*, they are affected to some extent because they have not yet fully rid themselves of **sensual pleasures** (*kama raga*) or anxiety (*byapada*) and anger (*dosa*). That was why the rich man *Anathapindika* wept when he lost his young daughter, Sumana Devi. So did *Visakha* when she lost one of her young grand daughters. Yet, they know the dhamma, and were capable of resisting the onslaught of fate to a certain extent.

There is no other way to protect oneself from the ill effects of *Lokadham* than pondering upon the dhamma in which we all must take refuge. One should, of course, try one's very best to fight the onslaught of *Lokadham* by all the available practical means but if these fail, **one should take refuge in the dhamma**.

One should take them as a matter of course with patience and forbearance. We must think of the obvious fact that the manifestations of *Lokadham* have to be met and accepted even by such Noble Ones as the Buddha and the *Arahats*. These noble ones accepted the attacks with patience and endurance, and we must follow in their steps. It is really important to cultivate this attitude.

The *Arahats* who are under attack by *Lokadham* are not purified in mind, but as they have been clear of all the defilements and are not afraid of the

dangers and disasters, they accept the onslaught with great equanimity. That is the best or noblest of the *mangalas* (blessings).

Of course, all mangalas are the best, as they are all blessings. But this particular mangala is of the highest order because this is the one fully possessed by *Arahats*. These Noble Ones are never affected by the attacks of *Lokadham*. They remain calm and stable in mind; for them there is always the mental stability, which spells happiness. The Buddha placed this as the last of all the mangalas in His sermon on *Mangala Sutta* because it is the highest of all.

The yogis who are now practicing meditation should strive for attainment of this mangala.. This mangala is closely associated with the meditation practice because as the yogi makes a note of the constant happenings and destructions of the phenomena and ponders upon the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* and as the yogis come to realize that there is after all no such things as a living being or a dead one because both the living and dead are compositions of elements and under the governance of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the yogi is capable of patiently accepting the onslaughts of *Lokadham*.

Explanation

The buddha said that *puthuj jana*, the uninformed worldling, does not receive the gift of prosperity with the consciousness that it will undergo changes in accordance with the natural laws of *anicca* causing *dukkha* and that it does not belong to oneself, there being no such thing as self, *anatta*. He receives the gift with joy, thinking it is "mine", it belongs to "me". He does not know the realities.

In the case of loss of wealth and property, one who is not well informed is incapable of pondering upon impermanence of things and for that reason suffers from misery. Those who are incapable of realizing the truth about the gift of wealth and prosperity as impermanent feel joy when the gift is in their possession. But this sense of possession does not make for meritorious mental state, nor for a chance to listen to a religious sermon or do meditation practice because they are too busy making money. Such persons cannot tolerate the loss of their wealth nor can they remain without trying to get

some more. If they cannot get wealth, they will be disappointed, and if they lose what they have already had they will feel dejected.

Such *puthujjana*, the one who rejoices the gain and mourns for the loss, will not be free from getting new existences, and thus, he will not be free from the misery of old age and death, of anxiety, sorrow, mourning and all kinds of unhappiness. This is quite plain. Rejoicing the gain and mourning for the loss, a person does not have time for good deeds and a meritorious state of mind because he is all the time serving *lobha* (greed) and *dosa*. He does not have time for effort to get out of *samsara* and so he is not free from misery of rebirth, old age and death. Anxiety, sorrow and dejection are common occurrences, and it is the loser who gets them. Then there is the trouble of keeping the possessions intact, guarding them against enemies and thus losing sleep and appetite for food.

YASA AND AYASA

Puthujjanas like to be surrounded by companions and aides. When one gets children after marriage, and also servants and disciples, one feels gratified. One would think that having such a full complement is a permanent state of affairs forgetting that such things, as all things, are impermanent. The sense of permanence or pleasure is after all an illusion. One often fails to realize that. There are cases of separation or death of husbands and wives and children, and people are plunged into misery sometimes so great that it culminates in death. There is no chance for meritorious mental state because when one gains one has greed in mind and when one loses one has anger and sorrow, and these states of mind occur often, one after another, and there is no chance for gaining merit. Therefore, there occur rebirth, old age, death and anxieties and, sorrows for them.

PASANSA AND NINDA

When one receives praises one is overjoyed. When one is subjected to criticism and slander one feels utterly dejected. It is because one does not realize that praises and criticisms are just for a while, not at all permanent. When one is joyful from praise one is overwhelmed with *lobha*, and when one is distressed from criticism one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. There is no chance for meritorious state of mind to occur. As *kusala* (merit) is lacking, one is not free from rebirth, old age and death and all the attendant troubles and misery.

Sukha and Dukha

When one gets what one wants and can use it, one is gratified and happy. One often fails to see that this state of happiness is impermanent and is conducive to misery. In fact, *sukha* or pleasures in secular affairs satisfy people because people have been moving about and doing things and making efforts simply to gain this kind of *sukha*. That is why a certain *deva* once said while enjoying the pleasures of celestial festival in the celestial garden of *Nandawun* that one would not know the meaning of *sukha* before one got to the *Nandawun* garden. He said that this celestial garden was the place of real pleasures. The one who thinks too much of such pleasures will surely come to grief when one is faced with *dukkha*. One would not then be able to observe that all things are impermanent and conducive to misery. Such person usually feels " I am suffering " when he is suffering and " I am enjoying " when he is enjoying. So, when one has *sukha*, one is overwhelmed with *lobha* and when faced with *dukkha*, one is overwhelmed with *dosa*. Such persons will not be free from rebirth and they will not get out of *samsara*.

How does Ariya face the Lokadhamma?

For those who are informed and wise, the *Ariyas*, if gifts and gains come to them, they ponder upon the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of changing and destructive and are unmoved. They have right thinking. This is the difference in reaction between a *puthujjana* and an *Ariya*. The *Ariya* is fully furnished with informational knowledge (*agama suta*), and at the same time, he has realized for himself through meditation the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of the entire phenomena.

PONDERING UPON GAIN AND LOSS

So, the Buddha's disciple should ponder upon the impermanence of the gifts and gains when they come; and also upon the troubles that are attending upon wealth and prosperity. Here, troubles do not relate to physical discomforts and ills; they relate to the illusions resulting from enjoyment of the pleasures and the pains and sorrows caused respectively by the gain and the loss.

So the one who gains should ponder upon the impermanence of the things so gained, and also upon the impermanence of him That is right thinking.

If one can take things as they happen, with a sense of acceptance and accommodation, one will not suffer so much from losses. For an ordinary person, *puthujjana*, the suffering diminishes; for *Sotapan* and *sakadagam* this suffering is much less, and for *Arahat* there is no suffering at all. The person who can control his mind over the gain and the loss of wealth will have ample time to obtain a meritorious mental state.

HAVING OR NOT HAVING COMPANY

When the informed disciple of the Buddha has a full complement of companions and servants, he ponders upon that situation with a noting of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature. He knows that he will not always be so furnished, and also that there are troubles over the affairs of family, servants and the retinue. They can be separated from him for one reason or another, and if he ponders upon that impermanent nature of the situation, he will not suffer from *dukkha* when actual separation happens.

COMMENDATION AND CONDEMNATION

Also, when one is showered with praises, one must ponder upon the impermanent state of the acclamation. One must consider the fact that praises are given to "me" who is after all an aggregate of *rupa* and *nama*, for there is no "I", and that soon enough that "I" will be spat with condemnation and contempt. One must remain unmoved, and thus find peace of mind. One must think of living a sinless life and thus acquire real benefit so that one will not lose anything from others' criticism or condemnation. If one can do that, one will not be affected too much by other people's opinions and will have time to do meditation practice and meritorious deeds.

I would like to present Dhammapada verse .36 story to illustrate by controlling one's mind, one could attain happiness, instead of depression.

Verse 36

The Story of a Certain Disgruntled Bhikkhu

While residing at the Jetavana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verse (36) of this book, with reference to a young disgruntled bhikkhu who was the son of a banker.

Once, there lived a young man in Savatthi, This young man asked the bhikkhu, who used to come to his house for alms, what he should do to be liberated from the ills of life. The bhikkhu instructed him to divide his property into three parts; one part to do business with, one part to support the family and one part to give in charity. He did as he was told and again asked what else should be done next. **So he was further instructed; first to take refuge in the Three Gems* and to observe the five precepts; secondly, to observe the ten precepts; and thirdly, to renounce the world and enter the Buddhist religious Order. The young man complied with all these instructions and became a bhikkhu.**

As a bhikkhu, he was taught the Abhidhamma** by one teacher and the Vinaya by another. Being taught in this way, he felt that there was too much to be learnt, that the disciplinary rules were too strict and too many, so much so that there was not enough freedom even to stretch out one's hands. He thought that it might be better to return to the life of a householder. As a result of doubt and discontent, he became unhappy and neglected his duties; he also became thin and emaciated. When the Buddha came to know about this, he said to the young bhikkhu, **"if you can only control your mind, you will have nothing more to control; so guard your own mind."**

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 36. The mind is very difficult to see, very delicate and subtle; it moves and lands wherever it pleases. The wise one should guard his mind, for a guarded mind brings happiness.

***=Three Gems: The Three Gems are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha, (i.e., the Buddha, the Teaching of the Buddha, and the Buddhist religious Order).**

****=Abhidhamma: the third great division of the Pitaka comprising the Buddha's philosophical exposition of ultimate realities,**

At the end of the discourse, the young bhikkhu and many others attained arahatship.

Source - <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/buddhism/lokadm2b.htm>

Source - <http://161.246.10.21/~klsomcha/wdc/mongkol/U35.html>



Ananta Metta

Maung Paw