

PHRA DHAMMA DEVATHIRAJ

(The Dhamma Protecting Deity)

With the compliments of
The Foundation for the Promotion
of
Buddhist Meditation

PHRA DHAMMA DEVATHIRAJ

A Dhamma-Teaching delivered by

The Most Venerable

SOMDET PHRA NYANASAMVARA

at Wat Bovoranives-vihara

on Sunday, 27th July 1975

With The compliments of
The Foundation for the Promotion of
Buddhist Meditation

OUR DEEP REVERENCE
TO
THE MOST VENERABLE
SOMDET PHRA NYANASAMVARA

Chairman of the Foundation for the
Promotion of Buddhist Meditation

On the occasion of the birthday anniversary of the Most Venerable Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Foundation for the Promotion of Buddhist Meditation begs to pay its deep reverence to his wisdom, his purity and his benevolence by the propagation of the teaching of the Lord Buddha in publishing for presentation a sermon delivered by him, entitled “ Phra Dhamma Devathiraj ”.

In selecting this sermon, the Foundation finds it timely and believes that it will serve as a means of bringing about harmony among our people, especially in the unity of mind and action which will together work towards the well-being and prosperity of our nation, religion and monarchy along the path of Buddha-Dhamma.

The Foundation wishes to express its grateful appreciation to the Bangkok Bank Ltd. for having arranged to print this booklet for the Foundation and for all the many kindnesses in the past.

Foundation for the Promotion
of Buddhist Meditation

Wat Bovoranives-vihara

October 3, B.E. 2518

PHRA DHAMMA DEVATHIRAJ

A Dhamma-Teaching
delivered by
The Most Venerable Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara
at
Wat Bovoranives - vihara
on
Sunday, 27th July 1975

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa**

**Buddho so bhagavā bodhaya dhammāṃ deseti.
The Blessed One, the Knower, the Awakened One
taught Dhamma for knowledge, for awakening.**

Now I am going to deliver a Dhamma-teaching in response to the wishes of those virtuous people who have assembled here to listen to the teachings of the Lord Buddha and to practice Buddhist meditation.

It is a common practice of many virtuous people to come here on Sundays to listen to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Today, however, many have come with the special intention to practice Buddhist meditation in order to dedicate the merit thereof to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince on the occasion of his birthday which falls on tomorrow, 28th July. Since tomorrow is a work day, they have come to meditate today, Sunday, instead and thus they have the opportunity to listen to the regular Sunday teaching as well. Those who wish may remain here to practice meditation after the teaching has ended.

Firstly, we should feel grateful to those who have worked to keep our country well and peaceful. While neighboring countries are suffering from chaotic dissension and misery, our country is still peaceful and happy. All of us, laymen and monks alike, enjoy happiness and full freedom to act, carry out our business and spend our leisure time in any way we wish. In religious matters we have the freedom to enter the monkhood and to perform religious acts as you are doing today in assembling here to practice mind-development. In secular matters this is also true. Everyone enjoys the freedom to choose his own vocation and mode of recreation. This freedom is not restricted only to normal, routine activities. Certain other activities, including verbal attacks at different gatherings, even attacks on monks, are also permissible. To find another country in which the citizens enjoy as much happiness and freedom as our country is really not easy and is virtually impossible.

Despite this, our country is still stable. There were times in the past when it appeared that we might lose this stability, but after a while it was restored and normal, peaceful conditions returned. This is a characteristic of our country which has been evident for many decades. In crisis after crisis, we have been able to weather the storm, to pull ourselves up very quickly and to survive. This was possible because at critical times the right people appeared to tackle the problems or certain events took place and the solution was found. This happened several times in the past. According to the Royal Chronicle, King Rāma IV also commented on this special characteristic, namely the appearance of certain persons or the occurrence of certain events at times of crisis, which helped to re-establish calm and stability in our country. The King's explanation was that Thailand must have the benefit of being protected by some kind of guardian. Consequently, he called that guardian 'Phra Siam Devathiraj' which means 'The Supreme

Protecting Deity of Siam', who protects Thailand against all catastrophes, and named it as a symbol of worship. Ever since that time, all the Thai Monarchs and the Thai people have worshipped this supreme protecting deity.

It can therefore be said that as far as the affairs of state are concerned, the Supreme Protecting Deity of Siam has been our guardian. With regards to religious matters, the Thai people have subscribed to Buddhism for more than one thousand years. The Triratana or the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, are held as the three true refuges of all those who suffer. The teaching of the Lord Buddha, which has influenced the Thai people over a period of more than a thousand years, has become part of ourselves or our heritage. This heritage, which should more properly be called religious heritage, includes a deep appreciation of the Triple Gem of the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha; gratitude and respect for parents, teachers and benefactors; kindness towards those who suffer and the poor; and loyalty to the King. This loyalty especially comes from the realization that our country has been governed by the King as Chief of State for thousands of years. The King has led the people in defending the country against invaders, has tended to the welfare of the people and has inspired unity among them within the nation. That is to say, the King has always been with the people both in times of trouble and happiness and has devoted himself to the well-being of his people and his country from time immemorial up to the present.

Before Buddhism had become the national religion of Thailand, it was the King who first became a Buddhist and persuaded the people to follow his example. Buddhism has played such a great role in the King's administration that it was expected that a good king should govern the country through the practice of ten rules, the details of which are as follows:

1. **dāna** — alms-giving. The King should give help, material and spiritual, to his subjects when needed.
2. **sīla** — morality. The King should keep the code of morality, abstaining from unwholesome deeds.
3. **pariccāga** — giving for a greater cause. The King should forego his own interest for the common interest. Our Kings in the past, like King Naresuan, led the army, thus showing their willingness to give their lives to save those of their subjects.
4. **ajjava** — uprightness. The King should not betray his country or his people.
5. **maddava** — gentleness. The King should not be rough, rude, or insulting.
6. **tapa** — perseverance. The King should pursue his duties in spite of discouragement.
7. **akodha** — non-anger. The King should not yield to anger which could sway his judgment and cause injustice.
8. **avihiṇṇisa** — non-hurtfulness. The King should not unjustly burden his subjects, but should, on the contrary, alleviate all their troubles and sufferings and be ever-present with his help when troubles begin, even in the most inaccessible areas of his realm.
9. **khanti** — forbearance. The King should resist all temptation, anger and greed. He should endure all hardships and malicious criticism.
10. **avirothana** — prudence. The King should take action only after careful consideration, thus avoiding undesirable consequences.

These ten rules are not applicable to the King only, but are rules for anyone in the government as well as for the

people. For instance, dāna should be practiced both by the government and the people. The government provides public services and the people in turn help the government in terms of taxation and labor. The same can be said for the other nine rules.

Thus, we can see that Dhamma is not the sole possession of any one group. All decadence and catastrophes in the past have evidently been caused by a failure to uphold these rules. It is not enough to expect the King and some members of the Royal Family, as at present Her Majesty the Queen and Her Royal Highness the Princess Mother, to follow these rules while other people do not co-operate. Whenever these rules are practiced by the King, the government and the people, happiness and prosperity prevail. In Thailand we are all trying to follow Dhamma, our Lord Buddha's teaching, as for example, these ten rules. According to Buddhist principles, it can be concluded that the Supreme Protecting Deity is in fact this body of ten rules which has been practiced since days of old but which has been diversified for temporal purposes. Thus the so-called Phra Siam Devathiraj can be proclaimed as the Phra Dhamma Devathiraj or the Dhamma Protecting Deity. Phra Siam Devathiraj or Phra Dhamma Devathiraj has no other existence but in the minds and actions of everyone. It is manifest in alms-giving or generosity, morality, liberality, uprightness or straightness, gentleness, perseverance, non-anger, non-hurtfulness, forbearance and non-offensiveness.

As indicated before, Phra Siam Devathiraj or Phra Dhamma Devathiraj exists in the minds and conduct of our people. These Dhamma rules are innate in the minds and blood of the Thai people and have become our Dhamma Heritage since days of old up to the present time. They should be regularly practiced by those who rule and by those who are ruled and must not be overlooked or forgotten on any occasion. These ten rules are protection against violent and

disastrous events. They are the central core that strongly holds the Thai people together and creates unity and freedom. We should therefore study and keep in mind these ten Dhamma rules.

Today we will practice mind-development to control the mind, to make it concentrated, firm, single-minded by means of *buddhānusati*—taking as the object of meditation the virtues of the Buddha. We will also speak about the practice of mind-development using other objects, as, for example, *ānāpānasati*—mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out, *dhātukammattana*—contemplating this physical body by breaking it up into its component parts until it is just different elements, not a self, not a person. In brief, the practice of gathering the mind is to make it concentrated, firm in tranquillity, to make the mind peaceful. The peaceful mind is one which is quieted from the hindrances (*nivāraṇa*) which include passion (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*) ignorance (*moha*), etc.

When the mind (*citta*) is peaceful, tranquillized from the defilements (*kilesa*) and hindrances (*nivāraṇa*) as mentioned here, the mind will remain concentrated and it will remain within- it will be confined to this body, this feeling, this mind, or this mental phenomena (*dhamma*), each of which is one subject. In the present time, the following example is of the phenomena within the mind that we are speaking or thinking about. If we are listening to the Dhamma, then this Dhamma itself is the object of the mind.

As has already been explained, Phra Siam Devathiraj or Phra Dhamma Devathiraj as well as the ten Dhamma rules, are in themselves the Dhamma. When this Dhamma is present within the mind, it should be aware of and the condition of the mind should also be known. If the mind wanders, one should also be aware of. If the mind is quiet, peaceful, one should also know. One's feeling should be

known to oneself in listening whether there is happiness or unpleasantness in the mind. One should be aware of both the pleasantness and unpleasantness. Our physical condition should also be observed. When one sits one should have the feeling what it is like and in what position one sits. The body which experiences painful feelings is a body which is ill-at-ease. The body which experiences pleasant sensations is a peaceful body. To be aware of our physical conditions, of our feelings, of our mind, of our mental phenomena (dhamma) is the concern of the mind in the present situation.

In practicing meditation by means of repeating *Buddho*, it is also practicable to choose *ānāpānasati* that is the breathing in and breathing out. In breathing in one mentally repeats 'BUD' and in breathing out one mentally repeats 'DHO'. In common language, the essence of BUDDHO is the One Who Knows. Therefore in breathing in, one is to know the breath, to know the means for reaching BUDDHO. In breathing out to know the breath and also to know the means for reaching BUDDHO. The Buddha himself, the One Who Knows, knew much more. He explained that he had attained to the knowledge of the arising and passing, to the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths- suffering (*dukkha*), the arising of suffering (*samudaya*), the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*), and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*magga*). He had attained to *vijjavimutti* (freedom through knowledge).

Therefore, if one studies and contemplates in this manner, one is defining dhamma within. When one has confined dhamma internally in this manner, the mind is centered in peacefulness and the knowledge of peacefulness is always retained within one's mind. In being so, one will find that the one who knows should be able to realize that he is BUDDHO. The unknowing person is *satto*-one who doubts and hesitates is not BUDDHO. One who knows reality from

knowing breathing in and breathing out until he attains to vijjavimutti is One Who Knows, is BUDDHO. Practicing in concentrating the mind in this manner is one kind of mind-development using Buddho (citta-bhāvanā-buddho).

From now on, I would advise those virtuous people to listen to the chanting of monks on meditation practice. After that those who wish may remain and practice mind-development using the method given above.

The sermon has included all the essentials on this matter.

