

Radio Thailand Special Report  
Promotion of Buddhism Week on Magha Puja Day  
10 February 2017

As a part of celebrating this year's Magha Puja week yesterday I have presented the first stanza of the principal instruction of the Buddha which was delivered by the Buddha on the Magha Puja Full-moon Day. The first stanza was about four visions of Buddhism. They are learning to have patience, aim for nirvana, not harming others, and living equality.

Today, let me explain about the second stanza which makes up of three missions of Buddhism. They are:

*Avoid all evil, do all good, purify your consciousness, this is the Buddhas' teaching.*

In the second stanza, the Buddha proclaimed the principles of his teachings which is universally recognized as the heart of Buddhist teachings. In other words, to achieve the above vision, the Buddha recommends us to act according to three missions. They are not to do evil, to do good, and to purify the mind. Thus, while violent and unkind acts are forbidden on the one hand, giving help and promoting happiness in whatever way possible are recommended on the other. Purification of the heart, mind and behavior is both the means to promote happiness and the goal of absolute happiness in Buddhism.

The principal practice in this Ovada-patimokkha is divided into three steps as found in the first three lines of the verse, with one leading to another step until the attainment of the highest goal, Nirvana. They are :

a) The Giving up of All Evil : It means to follow Morality that require one to abstain from doing evil through physical action such as killing beings as well as through speech such as telling lie.

b) The Cultivation of the Good : It means MEDITATION practice as well as the practice to enhance wholesome qualities for one's own and others' welfare and well-beings.

c) The Cleansing of One's Mind : It means Mental Development that arises from MEDITATION practice aimed at purifying the mind from being defiled by Greed, Anger and Delusion.

These three-step principles represent the three-fold training, namely Morality (SILA), Meditation (SAMADHI) and Mental Development (PANNYA). Very interestingly, this very teaching is also presented as a development model by His Majesty Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej under his unique legacy of Sufficiency Economy. Under his theory of sufficiency economy, the late King presented the same Buddha's teaching of morality, meditation, and mental development in a secular language as moderation, self-immunity and

reasonableness. They are the Heart of the Dhamma Practice that leads us step by step to liberation (Nirvana), as the Buddha said in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta:

“Such is morality, such is meditation, such is mental development. Once morality is well established, it is directly fruitful and beneficial to meditation. A well-established meditation is directly fruitful and beneficial to mental development. Once mental development is well-developed, the mind is free from all fermented negatives of the mind, that is to say : the canker of sense-desire (*Kamasava*); of desiring eternal existence (*bhavasava*); of wrong views (*ditthasava*); and of ignorance (*avijjasava*).”

The inter-connectedness of the three principles is evident in all aspects of the dhamma practice. When these three principles are separated from one another, the practice of the dhamma will be less fruitful and beneficial. Here the first stage “The Giving up of All Evil” is comparable to one taking a bath to clean the body. The second stage “The Cultivation of the Good” is likened to dressing up appropriately. The third stage “The Cleansing of One’s Mind” can be compared to taking good care of one’s health so that one remains healthy and strong. All these three activities have to have connection with each other. For example, in observing the first precept of refraining from killing, one should develop all the three aspects : (i) to refrain from killing beings; (ii) to promote welfare and well-beings of all beings; and (iii) to purify the mind from hatred, and to instead of cultivate harmony and conciliation.

Therefore, let us today recollect Buddha’s missions emphasizing on abstaining from all evil, cultivating what is wholesome, and purifying one's mind which is the very Message of the Buddhas.