

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST EDITION
(EXTRACTS)

The original Burmese version of this book of Dhamma was written by the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw of Burma. This has been painstakingly translated into English as is presented now, by a well-known and prominent writer U Htin Fatt (Pen-name Maung Htin), who is one of the members of the Mahāsī Translation Committee of this Sāsana Yeiktha. The book is intended for foreign yogis in particular for this benefit. It is hoped that they will find the text of this translation with its original style of expression and essence truly preserved, really enlightening.

***** "Sāraṇīya Dhamma" teaches both monks and laymen alike the way to live in mental peace, to respect and love each other. Buddha's exhortation in this Sutta is to practise and strictly observe morality,

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and to generate the feeling of loving-kindness in thought, word and deeds. Emphasis has been made on the paramount importance of the cardinal values of *Mettā*, Universal Benevolence and Compassion to acquire merit and to bring about peace and harmony among nations and for all mankind. It also enjoins us to subdue anger, and avoid hatred and jealousy and to share among ourselves, as far as possible, when occasion arises what we own and possess so that love is reciprocated and harmonious relationship established. The Buddhist way of life is an intense process of cleansing one's speech, action and thought. It is self-development and self-purification.

The Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw, in amplification of this noble dhamma, expresses in detail that inasmuch as people have insatiable desires, they are apt to pursue their blind career of whirling round the wheel of existence, and are twisted and torn between the spokes of trouble, misery and suffering. Sensual pleasures and happiness derived sporadically in this worldly life is

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ephemeral or to put it in another way, occasional flashes in darkness. The fundamental point also stressed therein is to seek for true happiness and gain complete freedom from all sufferings. The method of Dhamma revealed to us by the Buddha is, in essence, to follow the true Path through the practice of insight meditation which will eventually lead to cessation of *dukkha*.

The last exposition of Dhamma incorporated in this book relates to *Mahā Paccavekkhaṇā dhamma* originally set forth in the *Kosambiya Sutta* of *Mūlapaṇṇāsa*. It is an elaboration of *ariya-magga paññā*. "It seeks to explain the seven principles relating to the examination of oneself in the application of the noble knowledge to salvation from suffering." In particular, a *Sotāpanna* (Stream-winner) may reflect upon himself and make his own self-analysis possibly in a quiet place best suited for him to enhance his *samādhi*. The mental attitude and behaviour borne by a *Sotāpanna* is candidly explained. Never will he submerge his own good conscience in anything he does,

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and being more or less constantly aware of the true nature of things, he will exercise his mindfulness to the exclusion of detrimental thoughts and action. For a yogi who makes a determined effort to narrow down the range of thoughts of his fleeting mind, he can gain mindfulness which in turn will help to bring the mind by Right Concentration to a state of one-pointedness, *samādhi*. This, when achieved, the mind becomes free from Hindrances, which are five in number, called in Pāli as "*Nivaraṇas*". A *yogi* may therefore conduct his own self-appraisal and find out the answers whether his state of mental and physical behaviour does fall in line with the qualifications of a *Sotāpanna*.

As Buddhists, we all are aware that, in all living beings, the craving for life results in three manifestations which are evil. The root causes of evil are greed, hatred, and delusion or ignorance (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*) that, constantly assail the human mind. This dhamma being highly profound, an ordinary layman, if lacking in practical *vipassanā* meditation, may find it difficult to

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grasp well. But the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw, being endowed with an adequate knowledge of the dhamma, is able to explain it with clarity thereby bringing to light the essence of dhamma that would ordinarily have remained in obscurity. This dhamma should therefore prove to be of immense value to *Yogis* and those taking keen interest in deeper aspects of the Buddhist philosophy.

May all beings be happy.

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