

# Dhamma Desanā Bāhusaccādīkathā\*

by

Somdej Phra Nānasamvara (Suvaḍhano)\*\*

**Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa**

**Bahussutaṃ Dammadharaṃ**

**Sapannaṃ Buddhasāvakaṃ**

**Nekkhaṃ Jambonadasseva**

**Ko Taṃ Ninditumarahatīti**

I will now offer to Your Majesty a discourse on *Bāhusaccādīkathā*, in order to further adorn Your Majesty's quality of Wisdom, on this solemn occasion when Your Majesty graciously performs the Buddhist Service of Charity in front of the Royal Urn, which contains the body of His Highness Kromamun Bidyalabh, late President of the Privy Council, on this seventh day since his passing away.

His Highness Prince Bidyalabh, Member of the Order of the Royal House of Chakri and a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Chulachomklao and late President of the Privy Council, passed away as a result of a heart failure on Sunday September 8th 1974. Accordingly, Your Majesty ordered Court mourning for 15 days, royally sponsored the bathing ceremony with lustral water, and ordered that the Royal Tong Noi Urn appropriate for a Prince Regent be used to contain his body together with all his royal insignias and that the urn be placed at the Royal Pavillion for listening to Dhamma at Wat Pencamapavitra near Dusit Palace. Your Majesty also ordered the Royal Household to carry out all the official and religious ceremonies befitting his princely rank in every respect.

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\* This sermon was delivered by His Eminence Somdej Phra Nānasamvara (Suvaḍhano) Lord Abbot of Wat Payaranivesa, before Her Majesty Queen Rambai Barni representing His Majesty the King at the royal merit making ceremony at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14th, 1974, commemorating the seventh day rite after the passing away of His Highness Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabh Brdihyakorn, at the Royal Pavillion for Dhamma, Wat Pencamapavitra, Bangkok.

\*\* Translated by S. Sivarakṣa.

His Highness, the late President of the Privy Council, was possessed of all three distinctions (*vuddhi*): noble birth, virtue and long life. He started his official career during the Fifth Reign, holding various positions and undertaking duties and responsibilities, all of which were beneficial to the nation and the people, in accordance with the wishes of Your Majesty's royal predecessors. His last post was President of the Privy Council, which he held until the end of his life. He could carry out his responsibilities and his good deeds for so many years because he was a learned man, who had much experience and ability, and he always behaved in accordance with the Buddha's teachings. His knowledge was deep, detailed and subtle and yet he was careful in all he did. He never did anything which would be harmful to anyone. He was highly regarded for his intellectual and moral worth by all, whether they were inside or outside this realm.

His upbringing and his career have been clearly stated in his own *Memoirs* and in the Royal Proclamations promoting him to higher ranks. One learns that Her late Majesty Queen Saovabha, the Queen Mother of Kings Rama VI & VII allowed him to enter the Raja Kumara School in the Grand Palace at an early age. Then His late Majesty King Chulalongkorn sent him abroad to be educated in England. He was successfully admitted into Rugby School and later Oxford University. He chose to read Oriental Studies in which Sanskrit language and literature were the major subjects, together with Pali and Eastern History. He also knew some German. His B.A. was in Oriental Studies, which was also known as Archaeology. He explained his studies in this way: "To study ancient literature and culture did not mean to read and understand all the texts fully in every respect, because there were so many books, all of which could not be perused. The usefulness in learning classical languages was to get to know sources of ancient culture, which were the foundations of our modern culture. It also taught us to understand causes and effects on the development of literature and culture, and to see also the trends started from ancient time and the way which they were gradually developed into new forms that form the basis of our modern culture. This means that, although the modern period was not in our curriculum, we had to learn about it too."

After his graduation from abroad, the Prince returned to start his official career during the Fifth Reign, first as an assistant head of a division in the Ministry of the Interior. He was later sent out to serve as the Ministry's representative in the Ayudhya Circle. During the Sixth Reign, he became Private Secretary to the Queen Mother, and later became assistant to the King's Secretary General, Secretary to the Cabinet and Secretary to the Privy Council. In addition he was Foreign Secretary to King Rama VI. When the King raised him from a Serene Highness to a Highness Prince, the royal proclamation read: "All the positions which *Mom Chao* Dhaninivat served His Majesty were of great importance, which required absolute integrity and ability, and he had to be fully trusted by the King." During the Seventh Reign, he became Acting Minister and then Minister of Public Instruction. In addition to that, he was also a member of the Royal Institute of Arts and Letters and Vice President of the Central Committee of the Boy Scout Association of Siam. During the present reign, he was appointed a Supreme Counsellor, who acted as Regent, President of the Privy Council, Privy Councilor and National Chairman of the International Committee on Museums. Later he became for a period the sole Regent and afterward he became President of the Privy Council—a position he held to the end of his life. When he was raised to a *Krom*, the royal proclamation stated: "It is widely known that His Highness Prince Dhaninivat is a well read and learned man in many academic subjects; his knowledge of language is profound as are his researches in the arts and archaeological field. His name is highly respected among the academic communities, both at home and abroad. Whoever has had the occasion to meet him, would appreciate his advice and counsel on various subjects, which proved beneficial to all concerned."

Regarding his association with clubs and societies, while a student in England, he served the Samaggi Samagom as Honorary Secretary for two years and Honorary Treasurer for one year. He was a life member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain. In Thailand, he was member of the Siam Society, was elected a Council Member and eventually became Vice President and President for 23 years. As a Rotarian, he

was elected President of Rotary Bangkok and was once Governor of the whole District. In these capacities, he did much useful work in a spirit of service and sacrifice, especially in spreading knowledge and understanding of the concept "service above self".

As a Buddhist, he was ordained a *samanera* and studied under the tutelage of His late Holiness Prince Vajirañānavarorasa, at Wat Pavaranivesa. This was before going to England for his education. He recollected that during his noviciate, he studied Siamese at the *wat* school together with other *samaneras* and temple boys. He stayed in the Holy Order for several months more than the usual Rain's Retreat. After his return from abroad, before starting his public career, again, he took Higher Ordination as a *bhikku* and studied under the supervision of his Royal Uncle at the same monastery.

Due to his good upbringing and continuous studies both inside and outside the country—as well as in the monastery—it is no wonder that the Prince had only good qualities, among them a thirst for knowledge.

The Buddha's saying quoted at the beginning of the sermon *Bahusutam Dhammadharam* etc. means one who has listened well, i.e. ably endowed with good knowledge, is righteous, wise, and a disciple of enlightened teachers, could be regarded as pure gold, beyond reproach.

The saying in this stanza praises a learned man, who is righteous, wise, and who is a disciple of enlightened teachers. Such a person is beyond reproach, since he has nothing for which to be blamed. One could of course criticize him unjustly. Purity, however much people may criticize it as impurity, such criticism does not lessen the essence of the purity.

*Bahūsūta* or *Bahussuta* or *Bahulaśruta* means one has much *suta*. The state of one who has much *suta* is technically known as *Bāhusacca*. *Suta* literally means "listening" and is regarded as the main source of learning. It refers to all kinds of education, and all model of transferring knowledge in various fields into wise action. In olden days listening was the chief mode of gaining knowledge; hence *suta*. Apart from listening with one's ears, one must also use the eyes, nose, tongue, body and mind,

in order to acquire knowledge in all subjects. In the way of the world, one depends on one's education to achieve worldly knowledge, so that one can utilize such knowledge in one's profession, and lead one's life wisely in the world. This is known as the worldly *suta*. But in reality, one needs *suta* in Dhamma, that is, not only to live well in the world at present and in the future, but one ought to be able to find real and true happiness too. Those who have much *sutas* are those who are learned in the sciences and arts. A *Bahūsūta* is a well educated man. He is able to speak and instruct in the subjects he knows very well. He is able to use his knowledge to effectively and efficiently implement his work. But he must be righteous.

*Dhammadhara*, righteousness *i.e.* doing what is good and right, which is beneficial and brings happiness to all concerned *e.g.* to be honest, just and kind. There are many sayings of the Buddha which praise honesty, such as :

*Dhammañcare sucaritaṃ*

Let a man do good for the sake of goodness.

*Na tam duccharitaṃ care*

Let no one do bad for the sake of badness.

*Dhammacāri sukhaṃ seti*

Those who follow Righteousness live a happy life.

*asmim loke paramhi ca*

both in this world and in the next.

One could be just, by not committing any of the four prejudices, due to love (*chandāgati*), hatred (*dosāgati*) delusion (*mohāgati*) and fear (*bhayāgati*). On the contrary, one should be impartial. Kindness could be carried out by following the four Qualities making for amicable association, which would help men to support each other, love and respect one another, *viz.* : *dāna* giving and sharing one's own things with other people with whom it is proper that one should share things; *piyavācā* talking together and discussing things with pleasant and mild speech; *atthacariyā* doing things which are useful to other; and *samānattaṭṭhā* being even minded and without pride. Apart from these, one should be humane, *i.e.* one should behave according to the dignity of a human being. If one

can practise thus, one could be regarded as a righteous man, but one should also be wise.

*Sappāñña*, being wise, means that one knows causes and effects according to their real nature, or knows the root of reality. One who is wise (*paññā*) is on a higher plane than the one who is learned (having *suta*). *Suta* only means to be learned by rote, or to understand things which are engraved in one's memory. But if one possesses knowledge through wisdom (*paññā*), one's knowledge could penetrate right to the essence of things and could grasp reality, and thus be able to determine whether such learning is proper or not. There is a saying of the Buddha confirming this: *Paññā Sutavinicchayī*: "Wisdom passes judgement on Learning".

A way to acquire wisdom is to act as a worthy man or a calm man, in accordance with seven guidelines, namely: 1. *Dhammaññutā* knowing causes or Dhamma; 2. *Atthaññutā* knowing effects or the meaning of Dhamma; 3. *Attaññutā* knowing oneself, e.g. knowing that the so-called ego or self is merely composed of faith, moral conduct, learning, charity, wisdom and intelligence; 4. *Mattaññutā* knowing moderation e.g. what is judged to be sufficient; 5. *Kalaññutā* knowing the proper time, e.g. this is the time for study, this is the time to earn a living, this is the time to be in solitude etc; 6. *Parisaññutā* knowing the proper assembly or company e.g. this group of people are such and such, to get to know them, one should behave in such and such manner; 7. *Puggalaparoparaññutā* knowing that each individual is different, in such and such a way.

To summarise all these, wisdom means knowing in three ways, namely, 1. knowing the way to prosperity (*āyākosalla*); 2. knowing the way to ruin (*apāyākosalla*); and 3. knowing how to find and follow the prosperous path (*upāyākosalla*).

Buddhist wisdom starts by pointing out what is good, what is bad, what is useful, what is useless. Gradually it leads one to understand the Four Noble Truths: that there is suffering; this is the cause of suffering; the cessation of suffering; and the practical path leads to the cessation of suffering. The one with wisdom could see the light leading him to walk on the right path, extricating himself from all the snares that

entangle him causing suffering. He would eventually free himself. He could do this, if he is a disciple of the Enlightened Teacher.

*Sāvaka* means one who listens, or is a disciple; *buddha sāvaka* is therefore a disciple of those who know. The word, *buddha* often refers to those with knowledge, who need not be the Buddha Himself. But ordinarily, people use this word to refer solely to our Great Teacher as we usually refer to Him by the word Lord Buddha. In any event, such a meaning should be confined among Buddhists only. If one makes use of the word generally, it may refer to the one with knowledge. Whoever has knowledge, could be regarded as a *buddha*. Whoever is a disciple of those teachers who know the truth could be regarded as having learnt from excellent teachers. And one who is learned, righteous and wise, must obviously have wise teachers, *i.e.* teachers who know the truth and who have qualities benefiting good teachers. The Buddhists regard the Lord Buddha as their Great Teacher because He was truly enlightened. His qualities can be summarised into 3 categories, namely : His *Paññāguṇa*, which means that He truly knows, His *Visuddhiguṇa* which means that He is truly pure, and His *Karunāguṇa* which means that he is truly full of compassion. That is why he is the first and foremost of all the Teachers in the world. His three cardinal virtues could be examples for all teachers. Whoever is a disciple of such teachers, having received instruction from such wise ones, who have qualities to some degree like those with which the Blessed Buddha, the greatest of all Teachers was endowed, such a disciple would be prosperous in all other qualities, beginning with being learned.

Who then should reproach the one who is learned, righteous, and wise and who is a disciple of those who know. Such a one is indeed comparable to pure gold.

His late Highness Prince Kromamun Bidyalabh was known to be a learned man, a righteous man and a wise man, who was a disciple of great teachers, famous in the world of learning. And in the sphere of Dhamma, His Highness was also a disciple of the Lord Buddha, the greatest teacher among those who know the truth. It is for this reason

that the late Prince should be praised. Indeed Your Majesty has continuously honoured him, even now after his departure from this world, on this Seventh Day since his passing away.

May all the merit which Your Majesty has performed devolve to the benefit of His late Highness Prince Kromamun Bidyalabh accordingly.

At the end of this sermon, four members of the Holy Order will recite Memorial stanzas in order that Earnestness in the Dhamma would be clearly established among the royal audience.

The discourse which is delivered to adorn Your Majesty's quality of wisdom is thus ended:

May all blessings be accorded Your Majesty.

*Evaṃ* Thus may it be so.