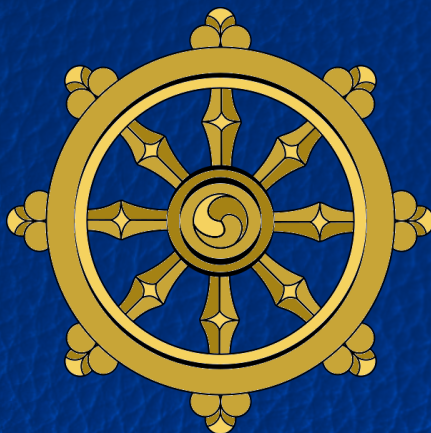


*These five perils have not arisen yet,
but they will arise in the future*

AN 5.79



BHIKKHU BRAHMALI

WISDOM & WONDERS
SUTTA SERIES
VOL. 1, No.2

These five perils have not arisen yet, but they will arise in the future

Wisdom & Wonders

Sutta Series

Volume 1, No.2

Bhikkhu Brahmāli

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This booklet is based on teachings given at the Buddhist Gem Fellowship in 2017.

Parts 1: youtu.be/l-u-tqHoiTs

*The gift of the dhamma excels all gifts;
the taste of the dhamma excels all tastes;
delight in the dhamma excels all delights.
The eradication of craving overcomes all suffering.*

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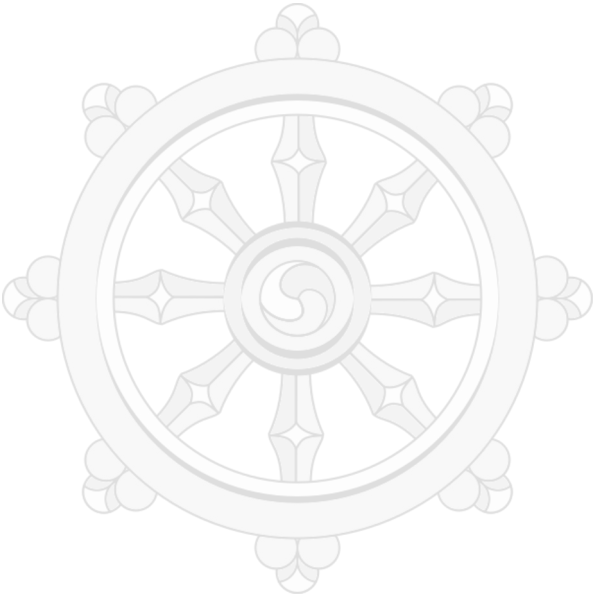
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INTRODUCTION

This booklet offers general aspects of the Buddha's teachings to give some framework to understand the suttas that will be included in this series of the gradual training.

The Tatiyaanāgatabhaya Sutta ([AN 5.79](#)) is one of the four suttas that concerns the 'future perils,' or things that could lead to the decline of Buddhism in the future. The other three are [AN 5.77](#), [AN 5.78](#) and [AN 5.80](#).

FIRST PERIL

“Bhikkhus there are these five future perils as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognize them and make an effort to abandon them.

“What are the five?

“In the future there will be bhikkhus who are undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtuous behavior, undeveloped in mind and undeveloped in wisdom. They will give full ordination to others but will not be able to discipline them in the higher virtuous behavior, in the higher mind and the higher wisdom. These pupils too will be undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtuous behavior, undeveloped in mind and undeveloped in wisdom. They in turn will give full ordination to others but will not be able to discipline them in the higher virtuous behavior, the higher mind and the higher wisdom. These pupils too will be undeveloped in body, virtuous behavior, mind and wisdom. Thus bhikkhus, corruption of the dhamma, through corruption of the dhamma, comes corruption of the discipline, and from corruption of the discipline comes corruption of the dhamma. This is the first future peril as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognize it and make an effort to abandon it.”

Here the Buddha tells us about a problem: if somebody doesn't practice properly or doesn't actually gain the benefits of the practice, then they cannot pass on the correct practice to the next generation. So, once a generation does not understand the teachings well, we can expect that this problem will keep on occurring from one generation to the next.

That's why it starts off with the idea of undeveloped in body, virtuous behavior, mind and wisdom. 'Undeveloped in body' here definitely does not mean that you haven't gone enough to the gym! As the body refers to the five senses, what it actually means is that you have not practiced sense restraint. 'Nor are you developed in virtuous behavior' means that you haven't really practiced properly. Here the meaning of 'virtuous behaviour' is quite high, including the mind not having developed *mettā* or loving kindness, reduced anger and these kinds of things. 'Undeveloped in mind' means that you haven't really practiced your meditation or *samādhī*. And of course, wisdom is the insight that arises naturally from that *samādhī* and meditation practice.

So, these *bhikkhus* have failed pretty much in all areas. They may know some theories about the dhamma from the *suttas*, but they haven't really got the understanding required to be able to pass on the message of the Buddha in the proper way to the next generation. This is why the next generation can't be disciplined or trained. The higher mind usually refers to the *jhāna* states, the deep states of *samādhī*. And the higher wisdom means the ability to see things according to reality.

This message shows you the importance of the *suttas* as well as of those people who realise the dhamma. Having just the *suttas* often turns out not to be enough without those who have realised the dhamma. Also, one can't realise the dhamma without appreciating the *suttas* and the power of the Buddha's teachings.

WHEN ONE LACKS THESE FIVE ABILITIES



STUPIDITY IS PASSED DOWN THE LINE
FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

Realisation, together with *suttas*, is very powerful in the Buddhist teachings. To me, the fact that you have this ancient teaching passed down through over 2,500 years from generation to generation is a great inspiration. In every generation, there are people who realise the dhamma and pass it on. In a sense, this means that

we all have the same teacher. No one can get above themselves by thinking that they are the leader of Buddhism in the present world.

However, it is very difficult just to read the *suttas* and practice. We also need to see a living example — people who practice in the right way and who have real kindness, real peace and real wisdom. When you have a living example and the teachings coming together, then you can feel something very special going on.

When the lack of wisdom gets passed down through generations, it means that corruption is happening and the teachings no longer have the ability to make people realise the dhamma. That's what the Buddha says here: "Through the corruption of the dhamma comes the corruption of the discipline."

Corruption of the dhamma occurs because people haven't really understood the dhamma through their own practice, and so they are not able to pass it on.

Then comes the corruption of the 'discipline' or *vinaya*. I think that *vinaya* is more like training. So, we have the dhamma — the doctrine and the teaching, as well as the *vinaya* — the action based on that teaching. So, it's the theory and the practice.

Since the Dhamma is all about theory and practice, if you have the wrong teaching or don't understand what you're going to do, you're not going to practice properly nor get the results of meditation practice. And if you don't know what you're doing as your training is corrupted, you can't see the dhamma. Your vision of the dhamma is corrupted. So, from the corruption of the training, there is the corruption of the dhamma, the teaching itself.

That is why the realization of the dhamma is very important on the Buddhist path.

'You should recognize it and make an effort to abandon it' means that you should recognise this danger and try to avoid falling into this trap. So, the idea of full ordination - *upasampadā* -

means that there will always be at least one ordaining monastic who will pass on the purpose of the ordination from one generation to the next.

**IF WE HAVEN'T SEEN THE DHAMMA,
WE CAN'T PASS IT ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION.**

SECOND PERIL

The second peril is very similar to the first:

“In the future there will be bhikkhus who are again undeveloped in body, virtuous behavior and mind and wisdom. And they will give dependence to others but will not be able to teach them or train them in the higher virtuous behavior, the higher mind and the higher wisdom.”

The only difference between this peril and the previous one is that here you give dependence rather than full ordination. Giving dependence or support means that you’re somebody’s teacher. In the previous paragraph, you are the *upajaya*, the one who ordains, but here you are the teacher. These are just technical differences in the *vinaya*, but of course the same problem arises:

“These pupils too will be undeveloped in body, virtuous behavior, mind and wisdom. They in turn will give support to others or will be the teachers of others but will not be able to train them in the higher virtuous behavior in the Samādhi states and in penetrative wisdom. These pupils too will be undeveloped in body, virtue, mind and wisdom.

“Thus bhikkhus through the corruption of the teaching, comes the corruption of the training, from the corrup-

tion of the training comes the corruption of the teaching. This is the second future peril as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognize it and make an effort to abandon it.

THIRD PERIL

“Again, in the future there will be bhikkhus who are undeveloped in body, virtue, mind and wisdom. They will engage in talk pertaining to the dhamma, in questions and answers and they will slide down into a dark dhamma but will not recognize it.

“Thus bhikkhus, through the corruption of the teaching comes the corruption of the training, and from the corruption of the training comes the corruption of the teaching. This is the third future peril as yet unarisen that will arise in the future, and you should recognize it and make an effort to abandon it.”

So again, these are the monastics who have not really developed properly on the path and thus haven’t got the insight and the *samā-dhi*. Once you misinterpret the *suttas*, there is a danger that you will never be able to make progress to the end of the path. Why? Because once you misinterpret the *suttas*, it means that your practice may not be quite right, but more importantly, you may misunderstand the goal of the Buddhist practice. Because you misunderstand it, you think you have attained the goal when actually you haven’t.

ONCE WE MISINTERPRET THE SUTTAS



WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO REACH THE END OF THE PATH.

There are other *suttas* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN) that specifically talk about this problem. They say that you're in trouble if you think that you have attained something when you haven't. For instance, if you think you are stream enterer when you are not, or if you think you have got *jhānas* when you have not.

The problem is that once you think you have attained what you haven't, you're actually blocking your ability from attaining those states. Why? Because you think there is no need to go any further, and this is how you fall into a dark teaching with dark results.

FOURTH PERIL

The fourth peril is, in my opinion, the most important:

“There will be bhikkhus who are undeveloped in body, virtuous behavior, mind and wisdom. When those discourses spoken by the Tathagatha are being recited, that are deep, deep in meaning, world transcending, connected with emptiness, they will not want to listen to them, will not lend an ear to them or apply their minds to understand them. They will not think those teachings should be studied and learned.

“But when those discourses are being recited, that are mere poetry, composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by disciples, they will want to listen to them, lend an ear to them and apply their minds to understand them. They will think that those teachings should be studied and learned.

“Thus bhikkhus through the corruption of the dhamma, comes corruption of the training, from the corruption of the training, comes a corruption of the teaching. This is the fourth peril, future peril as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognise it and make an effort to abandon it.”

This is a big problem in Buddhism that has been going on for probably centuries already, and quite likely will become even worse in the future. People listen to words of all kinds of teachers except for discourses spoken by the Buddha. “The *suttas* are too difficult! I don’t understand them... It’s easier to listen to this Ajahn, this Ayya, this Sayadaw, this Lama, etc.”

One of the interesting things I have found is that the more I read the *suttas*, the more I start to understand them. The *suttas* are well-structured and very logical. It may seem hard to break through initially perhaps because the language can be a bit repetitive and stilted as it was passed on in the oral tradition. The words could sound old-fashioned because the translation is not always good. But once you start to get into the *suttas*, they are actually far easier to understand than modern teachers.

On the surface, modern teachers’ discourses seem easy to understand, but when you start to ask deep questions to yourself “What do they mean by *samādhi*? Does it mean *jhāna*?” you find it hard to really understand what many modern teachers are talking about.

I would say that there has been no teacher after the time of the Buddha who has laid down the dhamma in such a clear, consistent, coherent fashion as that which you find in the early Buddhist texts in the *suttas*, the *Āgamas* and suchlike. That is my view, and you have to figure this out for yourself to see if you can enjoy them.

When we listen to teachers other than the Buddha, what do we miss? We miss those *suttas* that are profound in the sense that they lead to very deep realization at the end of the path. The *suttas* are also very comprehensive and complete in the way that they are taught.

When we talk about things like *sīla*, virtuous behavior and character, it may seem like such a simple thing, but when the Buddha talks about virtue, he refers to a very complete under-

standing of the idea of virtue. It has to do with our mind, our perceptions, as well as how we deal with all kinds of situations. It is not just about following certain rules, but it is also about our motivations and our intentions.

SĪLA IS NOT JUST ABOUT FOLLOWING CERTAIN RULES IT'S ALSO ABOUT OUR MOTIVATIONS AND INTENTIONS

Virtue or *sīla* is profound in its own right, and also in the way it explains simple things like generosity. The Buddha gives a lot of advice on how to be generous, including the right way to do this, the right mind state when you are generous, whom you should give it to and where you should give.

But be careful about things that may seem profound on the surface. You may hear fancy and profound-sounding teachings from some people while there isn't any basis for the real practice. This kind of person is clever with their speech, but their words are just 'window dressing'.

When you think the Buddha's teachings are too boring, too difficult, you don't apply your mind to learn and understand. Instead, what you think should be learnt is poetry with its beautiful words. And this is one of the problems in life. We tend to go for things that look beautiful. But please remember that just because something is beautiful, it doesn't mean that it is profound.

The use of poetry in Buddhism is more about inspiring you. But when you read poetry, read the poems of the Buddha or of the *theras* and *theris*. Don't read the poems written by defiled people

because too many of them can come up with nice-sounding verse that has no real meaning at all. I'm not suggesting that you should not see or hear anything beautiful in the world; just remember where the real essence is. And when you keep that in mind, it will support your practice for a long time into the future.

“Poets and poetry, beautiful in words and phrases created by outsiders.”

Outsiders here are those who are not Buddhists. However, sometimes people from other religions may have beautiful things to say about kindness, compassion, and other good qualities. If they do, we can take that on board and use it to inspire ourselves. We shouldn't regard everything that non-Buddhists say as rubbish. If we do, we're also going too far.

What this means here is that we don't emphasise the words of outsiders above the words of the Buddha. When we think that the words of outsiders, but not the word of the Buddha, should be listened to that is where we go wrong. The word of the Buddha is always the final standard for what the real dhamma is.

An example of nice words from outsiders is the French saying, “To understand all is to forgive all”. When you understand other people and what motivates them, you realise that anybody in that situation would have acted the same because they are conditioned to act that way. If this kind of wisdom can sometimes help you on the path, then of course it can be very useful.

“Created by outsiders, spoken by disciples”

This statement means that you listen to the disciples before you listen to the Buddha. I think this is perhaps the most important of all mentioned here. Please remember that every teacher that has existed in the Buddhist history apart from the Buddha himself is a

disciple. The problem is that we tend to listen to and take refuge in these teachers instead of the Buddha.

This is the state of the Buddhist world now. Some people claim that the Abhidhamma is the real dhamma, the ultimate teaching and so are the commentaries. The commentaries were written down long after the Buddha's passing. Some of the Abhidhamma may be useful and some of the commentaries are great, but please be mindful that they are not the ultimate teachings that we should go to.

Sometimes I feel despair when I hear people or even monks say, "The *suttas* are not really complete, so listen to me instead, and I will give you the real teachings." This is actually very dangerous because it leads us away from the real dhamma. There's always a danger that the dhamma will be corrupted when the teaching is corrupted, and then the training will be corrupted as a consequence. This kind of cascading effect that you are seeing here is mentioned in this *sutta*.

IMAGE OF THE CASCADING EFFECT:
 CORRUPTION OF THE TEACHING
 CORRUPTION OF THE DHAMMA
 CORRUPTION OF THE TRAINING

FIFTH PERIL

Now let's look at the last of the five future perils:

“Again in the future there will be bhikkhus who are undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtuous behavior and undeveloped in mind and undeveloped in wisdom. The elder bhikkhus being undeveloped in body, virtue, mind and wisdom will be luxurious and lax, leaders in backsliding, discarding the duty of solitude. They will not arouse energy for the attainment of the as yet unattained, for the achievement of the as yet unachieved for the realization of the as yet unrealized. Those in the next generation will follow their example. They too will be luxurious and lax, leaders in backsliding, discarding....”

*****Ajahn, I checked with the YouTube video, and it seems that the recorded session ends here. Could you please add a comment to complete the explanation?**