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Protection & Blessings

Introduction

Starting from the beginning of the 21st century there were a lot of violence going on in many parts of the world; such as 9/11, wars in the middle east, terrorist activities, etc. These were representing the defilement (kilesa) of dosa - anger, hatred, ill-will, etc. All these are showing the lacking of loving kindness (metta) & compassion, not a good sign. There were also a lot of harms, dangers & destructions going on from the defilement of lobha - greed, craving, lust, etc. Their impacts can be seen in food poisonings, water, air & earth pollutions, deforestations, climate change, etc. It was quite amazing to see human beings, out of greed & lust to enjoy momentary lowly pleasures by harming themselves. They done it by knowing of the results. For examples, cigarettes & alcohols are harmful to oneself & other, but still many using & selling it. Another is the lucrative business of arms. Even can use one sentence to represent their philosophy. For money & sensual pleasures will do everything. They only think about money & sensual pleasures, even can give up their lives for it. Why these unfortunate things & matters happen to us? It's ignorance or delusion, not understanding the nature of the mind. The Buddha said, untrained mind leading to sufferings & a trained mind leading to happiness. To train our mind it need education & practice. Education has a wider sense & meaning & not only making money for a livelihood. There are 2 things all human beings can't never separate ^{themselves} from it. These are education & the law of kamma (action), even they know about it or not. Without ^{a proper} education people don't know what is right or wrong, what should be done & what shouldn't be done, etc. With wholesome education we have knowledge & wise, & without it we are ignorant & deluded. We can change people only in the right education & practice.

Recently a friend found out that he had lung cancer. When the news came in I was listening some Dhamma talks on the parittas. Some translated paritta as auspicious chant & protective charms, it depends on how to use it. The Burmese Buddhist tradition has 11 parittas & most people had learnt them when they were young. Parittas are for the protection of dangers & illnesses. These were some Pali suttas - Discourses of the Buddha. The parittas are not only can protect from the external dangers, but also the internal dangers, such as greed, hatred, delusion, etc. in its practice. For examples the metta Sutta & the mangala Sutta - the sutta on loving kindness & the sutta on blessings. The internal one dangers are more important than the external dangers. External dangers can harm us only for this life. But internal — will follow us to the future & beyond. If we can protect ourselves from the internal dangers of defilements & then everything will finish. External dangers are also depending on them.

The chances of falling into painful births or destinations ^{are} waiting for us at anytime in the future. Nowadays human beings not only don't know how to protect both dangers, but also create more & more dangers for them. Because of man's ignorance & cravings the mother earth is not a safety place anymore. If we are nourishing the internal dangers of greed, hatred & delusion or our real enemies, then the situations will become worse. Human beings are not only harming to each other but also to the earth & its nature. Some years ago a well known Buddhist scholar of Thailand wrote 2 books on science & economics from the Buddhist point of views. These were; "Sustainable Science" & "Buddhist Economics". It's worthwhile to read & give us a lot of food for thought how to use human knowledges properly & wisely (including the natural resources). One of the Buddha's qualities was "Teacher of Gods & Humans" - Satthā deva-manussānam. The Buddha knew the very clearly & completely about the mind & how to handle it. If we study & follow his teachings accordingly will solve many human problems. Some animals & plants ^{are} already extinct because of human actions. What about human race? At least there will be a lot of sufferings & problems & the earth becoming a very unpleasant place to live. (There were evidences in some of the suttas.) This depends on how we behave & utilize the human knowledges properly & wisely in politics, economics, science, technology, medias, etc. Nowadays there are many human & environmental problems from these outcomes. Why these ugly things happen? We are clever in worldly knowledges & only interest in them. Not take moral values & knowledge as very important & fundamental. Nowadays human beings are urgently need moral education. It's quite fundamental for us. It teach us how to become a true human being. Without it & however in material progress we are making can lead to destruction. Moral education is likened to the root of a tree & other knowledges are the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers & fruits. Morality & virtues are very important in societies. It bring happiness & peace among people. It's also the foundation for a higher mind or spiritual development.

In the Cakkavatti Sutta, Digha Nikāya, The Buddha explained as without morality & virtues, human beings committed unwholesome actions & their life span declined & effected nature. All the Buddha's Teachings can be combined into 3 trainings; sīla, samādhi & paññā - morality, concentration & wisdom. In Thai & Burmese the words for education are sueksa (Thai Pali for sikkha) & pyin-nya (Burmese Pali for paññā). Here sikkha is training & paññā is wisdom. Buddhism is more closer to education than a religion. The Buddha taught ^{to} human beings about the mind & how to train it.