

# Love Your Children the Right Way

by Panyananda Bhikkhu



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# LOVE YOUR CHILDREN THE RIGHT WAY

BY

PANYANANDA BHIKKHU

Translated from Thai to English by  
Police Major General Somprasongk Prathnadi

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**PANYANANDA BHIKKHŪ**





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**TRANSLATED BY:**

**POLICE MAJOR GENERAL SOMPRASONGK PRATHNADI**

## Preface

I COMPOSED THIS BOOK when I was in Chiang Mai, where I lived for 10 years. In my work there, I observed many parents who had children but knew nothing about how to raise their beloved children properly so that they would grow to be good citizens of the nation. When I thought about this matter, I started writing an article concerning parents' responsibility in raising their children.

My article was read aloud in broadcasts from the Wor Por Thor radio station in Chiang Mai. The article grew to 30 chapters, each chapter giving specific advice about the parents' duties in raising children.

This article aimed at giving guidance to people on how they should function as parents to their children, how their children are important for the clan and family, so that then they would know how to raise their children properly and have them become virtuous citizens living in society according to religious principles.

When the article had been broadcast over the radio several times, many audiences became interested in the substance of the article so that later on it was published as a Thai language book titled "**Rak Look Hai Thook Tang**," meaning "**Love the Child in the Right Way**." Very soon the book became popular, and it was republished many times. Many parents told me they applied the methods given in the book to teach their children and cultivate them with religious virtues. As a result, their children grew to become good persons and useful members of our society.

There was one man living in Washington, USA, who came to see me and thanked me profusely for writing "**Rak Look Hai Thook Tang**." The book had been sent to him by an unknown person on his birthday. He had read the book many times and had raised all four of his sons by its principles. His sons had all been born in the USA, and those four sons had by then finished their education and already had jobs.

He gave a special thanks to me for being an important part in raising his sons. This is the example I would like to show you of how parents benefit from the book. It seems to be a useful method of raising children.

Later on, *Somprasongk Prathnadi*, a police major general living in the

USA, read the book and was so impressed with it that he translated the book into English. Unfortunately, he passed away before his translation was published. *Dr. Phramaha Chanya Sutdhiyano* had read the translation and was so impressed with it that he then decided to publish the book in an English version. He asked me to write the preface. I myself am very pleased to have the book published in English.

This translation is meant for those Thais who know English very well, but who know only a little bit of the Thai language, to read and get the knowledge of their parents' language as well as the knowledge of how to raise their children in the proper Thai way.

At the present, Thai society has been overwhelmed with many disruptive and tempting new role models which will probably spoil the children if the parents do not keep their respect and remain role models for their own children. The children then will misbehave, as is apparent in many examples in today's society. If the parents are interested in reading the book and applying the methods from the book to raise their children, it will help make the family better and the society stronger.

I am hoping the English version of the book will be helpful for those who have children and for the world as a whole.

I would like to give a very special thanks to the late *Somprasongk Prathnadi*, who translated this book into English. Thanks also should go to *Dr. Phramaha Chanya Sutdhiyano*; it is he who managed to publish the book. *Phramaha Amporn Chutindharo* and *Ralph Eavenson*, Professor of English at *Sierra College, California, USA*, should also be given thanks for their cooperative translation of my Thai preface into the English language.

May all families using the book as a guide in raising their children be healthy and happy.

*Phradhammakosacharn*  
(*Panyananda Bhikkhu*)  
*Wat Cholaprathanrangsarid*  
*Pakkred, Nonthaburi,*  
*Thailand*  
*March 2, 2000*

## *From the Translator*

**C**hao Khun Phra Dhammakosajarn (*Panyananda Bhikkhu*) is one of the most famous monks in Thailand. He lectured extensively in Thailand and abroad. His style of communicating with the audience is unique even in this day and age. When I look back to the time in August 1949 when I first listened to him giving his wonderful sermon on the teachings of the Buddha near *Si Yaek Klang Wiang* in the centre of the City of Chiang Mai, I remember vividly how captivating his talk was. First of all, he was standing in front of a microphone speaking without a note. This was the first time in my life to see a Buddhist monk giving a sermon like that. To me it was so impressive. But what was more significant was that, the subject matter he talked about sounded very interesting in spite of the fact that it was about *Buddha Dhamma*, a boring subject for a boy my age. At seventeen, I had never listened to anyone besides M.R. *Kukrit Pramoj*, a former Prime Minister, and Acharn *Muak Chailangkarn*, my teacher at the Prince Royal's College, who could give a speech so fluently and with every word touching my young heart like that. Through the entire lecture I was so absorbed and could not help thinking Chiang Mai people were meritorious people. That was why *Panyananda Bhikkhu* was there to explain in person the Dhamma to the good people of Chiang Mai.

The year B.E. 2542 (1999 A.D.) has two meaningful events for *Panyananda Bhikkhu*. First and foremost it was the year Thailand celebrated His Majesty the King Sixth Cycle for he would be 72 years old on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1999. Secondly, B.E. 2542 was also the year *Panyananda Bhikkhu* celebrated his Dhamma teaching in Chiang Mai as a part of *Buddhanikhom* for a half century. He started giving his sermon there in the year B.E. 2492, on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1949 to be exact.

I was given an honour to translate one of his most well known works, "Love Your Children The Right Way". I feel humble doing this work. I was told by *Khun PENCHAI Siroros*, the editor of *Chao Buddha Journal*, that she knew that there were other people, who were more knowledgeable than I was. But she had not been able to find any one who was willing to

do the translating as a charity work and this book has been in print for more than forty years in the Thai language. Aside from that, *Than Dr Phramaha Chanya Sutdhiyano*, the Director of Panyananda Institute, was kind enough to encourage me by giving me a copy of this book in Thai. He wrote in the front page of the book that he gave this book to me to translate it into English for the English speaking world to read. I was so touched by his action that I was determined to do the best I could. Panyananda Bhikkhu's teaching should be read not only by the people of Thailand, it should be read by other peoples, who speak and read English as well. The world has the rights to know what he had to say about the world we live in.

I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, *Khun Nai Pradab Prathnadi*, and my wife, *Suree Prathnadi*. Even though they did not have much to say about my work but I know that deep down in their hearts they supported me and wished me success.

Lastly, I would appreciate any suggestions that the readers may have about this work. My only wish was for the readers of the English version to be able to enjoy Panyananda's wit and farsightedness as much as possible. The readers must be aware of course that his original version in Thai was much more intense than I could have accomplished translating it.



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# *Love Your Children The Right Way*

PANYANANDA BHIKKHU

## *Introduction by the Author*

FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE of your loved ones, this book on, children, which you are about to read, was brought about by the pressure of the social phenomena in the present time. As one of those people, who have been working on propagating the *Dhamma* of the *Buddha*, I have travelled all over and have seen so many things. I loved to ponder about those things in order to find their causes and effects. In the case of children in particular, I thought long and hard. Children in this day and age are different from those in the past because of different environments. In the old days, the society evolved slowly as it should have. But nowadays, the society is like a rat race all the time. The citizen of the world live under fierce competition in order to win at all costs. The parents of most children do not have much time to be with their children due to the pressure from making their living thereby creating all sorts of problems. We hear of bad news all the time.

Moreover, most parents have not been taught the *Dhamma*. They have no knowledge to teach or to train their children. They often are too permissive and do not reprimand their children when they made any mistakes. So it is easy for the children to become spoiled. Parents love their children very much. But if that love is excessive it will damage the children. We should start thinking how to love our children just right. This was how this book has come into being.

Some doubt that I am a monk without a family. How could I dare to write about children? Please try to understand that even though I am a monk, who has no family, but I always think about helping other people, so I tried to read books about children. But they were so difficult to find. When I went to a library to look for books on children, I found only one entitled, "*How to Teach Children*" by *Doctor Chamras Sirisamphan, M.D.*, 2nd edition. I read this book over and over and have re-written some of

the contents in that book for use in my radio broadcasting. I would like to thank *Dr. Chamras* for it. And may I ask those who have knowledge about children to write more books on this subject for the parents, who wish to study, to be able to do so. It will help our country in another way as well.

Children are a foundation of our nation. If parents teach their children the right way, they will become good citizens. When they grow up they will be able to work and become useful to our country. Those who want to help the country go forward can do so by helping the children to develop properly and in the right way.

The contents in this book are not really complete because they were compiled in haste and the author had no experience in this particular topic. Any of the readers, who have knowledge and experience and love children and their fellow human beings, please give me some advice. I am still going to write many more parts especially regarding bringing children to the *Dhamma*, which are needed immediately in this day and age.

Lastly, I wish all of you who love your children the right way to be successful in bringing up good wholesome children in your family.

*Bhikkhu Panyanandamunee*

*Wat Cholaprathanrangsarid  
Pakkred, Nonthaburi*

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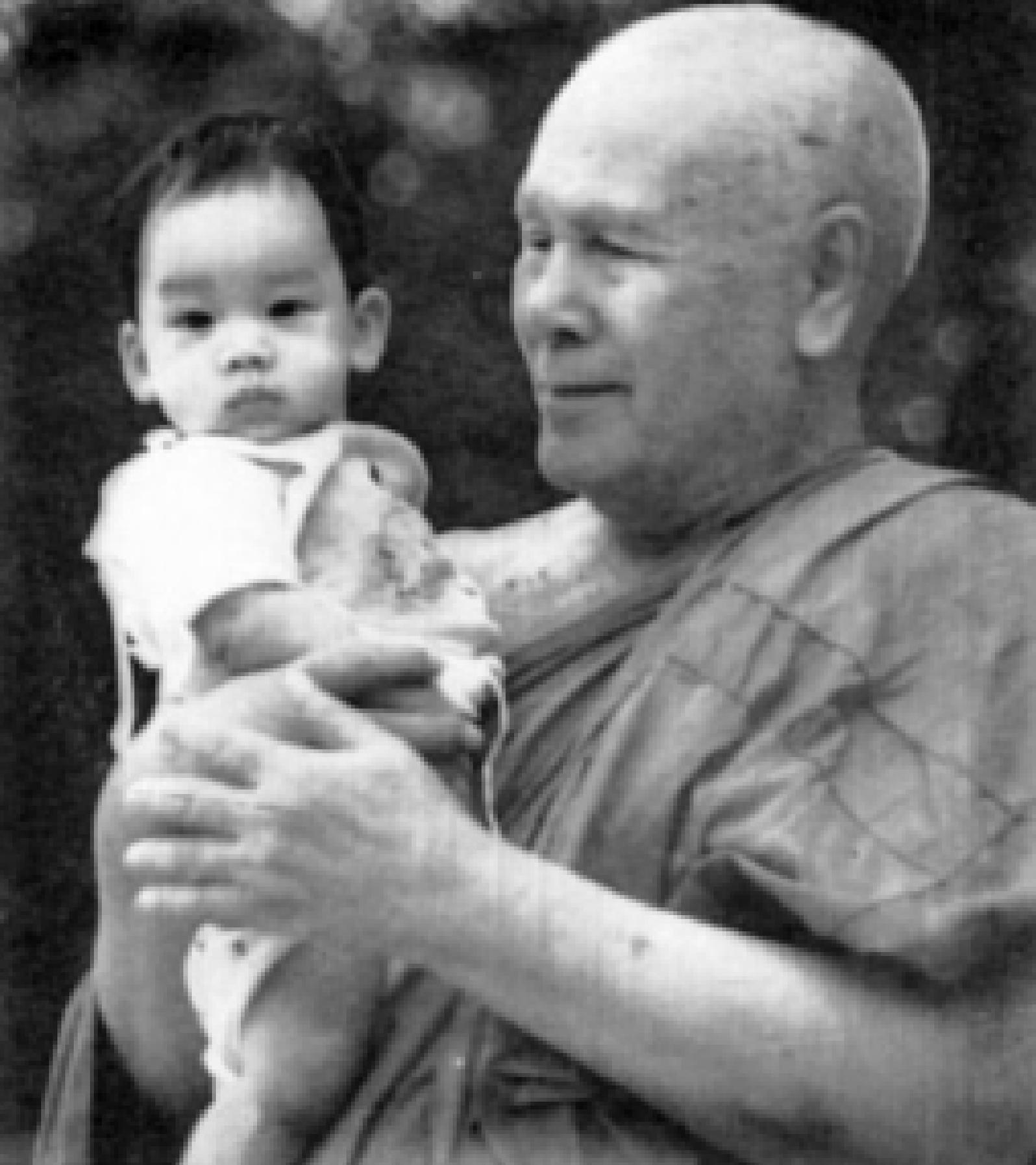
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LOVE YOUR CHILDREN  
THE RIGHT WAY

PART I

# *Love Your Children The Right Way*

## *Part One*

### INTRODUCTION

พรหมมาตี มาตาปิตโร

#### *Parents are Creators of Children*

**I**N THE HEART AND SOUL of every father and mother, there is one thing in common without any exception. That is they have the same wishes. They wish “a bright future for their children.” If there are any signs, even though they are insignificant, showing that, “the future of their children may not be certain”, the father and mother of those children would try to hide the sadness and unhappiness in their hearts during the time, which their children have no clear path.

It is not at all easy nor a minor responsibility to be a **perfect father/mother**. The responsibility does not stop only when a child has been created in this world. The problems and the burdens that you have to support your children in all things, which are ordinary duties of father and mother, are not sufficiently complete. You cannot think only in term of, “to have a house to live in, a bed to sleep on, a pillow to rest their head, a means to support”. It is not totally correct to think that is all that is needed. The most important point depends on whether you have developed a guideline for your children to live their lives in such a way that they ‘have a bright future’. Let us try to explore and study this just a little further.

Over and above the heart and soul of the father/mother there is a wish for a bright future for their children. Some of the fathers and mothers would only think and imagine. They wait for the time, and the opportunity, the fortune and the good luck. Some of you who have no wisdom to support and promote the future of your children in any way, have to

resort to using, “Let fate lead the way of my children” As an old saying ‘Leave them to their fate’. Any work or endeavour if left to fate alone; you know what will happen to the future of your children? For this reason, you have a real need, and it is extremely important, to find a means and a way to direct your children to a bright path at all times. There is an old epithet ‘Loog Keo Loog Kwan’ (meaning, my child, my heart and soul), which indicates the responsibility of the parents. They are the ones who build and support their children for them to meet the high hope in their hearts and as a result making their children “Loog Keo Loog Kwan” in reality.

In regard to the epithet “Leave them to their fate”, it is the thing all parents should recognize. And for that, in order to build and support the children to ensure them having good and prosperous future, the Buddha had provided three principles to follow

1. *Pubbakamma* — Wholesome deeds in the previous existence.
2. *Paccubannakamma* — Wholesome deeds in the present time.
3. *Anagatakamma* — Wholesome deeds in the future time.

Principle of Kamma according to the teaching of the Buddha has a lot more Details. But in order for it just to be a guideline for the parents, I will not discuss them at great length to prevent any confusion.

In regard to *Pubbakamma*, it means karma, or deeds, which have been done not only in the previous existence but also in this existence in this world no matter what kind of deeds they may be. Both good and bad deeds are considered “*Pubbakamma*”. Please take notice that some of the *Pubbakamma* we committed a long time ago may take effect 10-20 years later. Some of them, we have already forgotten because we often say, ‘What did we do to make this happen?’ Some of us when faced with difficulties in our lives of real hardship may even have to hide ourselves and cry alone saying to ourselves, “What bad karma we did that made us to be in this big mess?” All these are due to *Pubbakamma*. Anybody can say that “*Pubbakamma*” has no power to affect his or her lives. Let them say the words. But in reality, the power of *Pubbakamma* actually

controls our lives. No one can tell “*Pubbakamma*” to do anything to us except we do it ourselves. We are the one who did the deeds. We are the one who took action.

*Our deeds now will be Pubbakamma then.*  
*Our deeds today will be Pubbakamma tomorrow.*  
*Our deeds this month will be Pubbakamma next month.*  
*Our deeds this year will be Pubbakamma next year*  
*Our deeds this existence will be Pubbakamma next existence.*

A wholesome *Pubbakamma* will help and support us to prosper. An unwholesome *Pubbakamma* will certainly pull us down to become worse and lower. This is “**Good luck**” we are searching for without realizing correctly that it is the power of *Pubbakamma* and nothing else. For this reason, if you the parents will indicate the right path for your loved ones by telling them to do only “**The good deeds**” consistently in their lives and to stay away from “**The bad deeds**”, “**The wholesome *Pubbakamma***” will become their invaluable inheritance. It will follow them everywhere as a good effect all the time. That is “**The good luck**” due to the secret power of “**Pubbakamma**” for sure.

We will skip *Paccubannakamma* and *Anagatakamma* for now but will come back to talk about them later on. Please wait for the time being. Now please follow the path of “**A bright future for your children**” in Part I of “**LOVE YOUR CHILDREN THE RIGHT WAY**”. Part II and Part III will follow in proper sequence.

## *Your Child's First Teacher*

DEAR PARENTS,

**P**LEASE LEND ME YOUR EARS. Listen to the voice of good wishes from me. Listen and comply; it is the only way. I am going to tell you all I know, now.

I am calling you, fathers and mothers, because you have given birth to boys and girls. You love them and you are proud that you at last have children of your own. All parents love their children. They want their children to become famous. No one would do bad things to his or her children intentionally. It is simply a fact. But the love of a parent is like a double-edged sword. It can be useful or it can be harmful. If the love is right then it is useful to the children. If the love is wrong then it is harmful to them without a doubt. **Many parents have destroyed their children on account of love.** That kind of destruction is done without knowing. Such as in the case of the parents, who love and protect their children too much, giving them too much freedom to the point that they don't know how to look after themselves. Every thing seems to depend on the parents. Whatever the children want; whatever the children do; they are allowed without a word of contradiction. They are afraid to hurt the feelings of their children. When the children are allowed to do anything as they please in this fashion, they become the bosses of the parents. In effect the parents are afraid of their children more than of anything else. They have no courage to contradict their children at all. The children also know that the parents humour them.

In general, children follow their desire when they do anything. They don't stop and think about the consequence. If they want something they think they should get it or they should be allowed to do it. They become compulsive and easily provoked. They express their tantrum by throwing or breaking things. The parents feel compelled to do for them whatever they wish. When they receive a victory using one tactic, they will do it that way again and always getting the same result. Who is actually at fault in such cases? The parents are at fault because they are too per-

missive allowing the children to do too much as they please. This is of course due to love. I am not saying this to forbid you from loving your children but I am saying you must love them the right way.

The people in the old days had a saying, “Love your cattle, tie them; love your children, spank them.” (Spare the rod, spoil the child: translator). It is something we should listen to and think about. A person, who raises cattle, loves them and allows them to roam around. They will certainly eat the vegetables and other stuff in the garden of other people. Then the owner of the cattle has to pay. So the cattle must be tied to the posts to prevent them from going astray. The same is true for our children. We need them but we also need to punish them. It is not that we are going to beat them to death or to harm them but only to make them think twice before committing the same mistake again. A clay pot maker uses a wooden slap to beat on a pot in order to make it look nice. The beating and slapping is done just right and not to break the pot, of course. The same is true when punishing a child.

There are two ways of spanking. The first way is by words or verbally and the second way is by flogging. **Your words should be used to teach your children.** Teach them and teach them again. By nature, the children are active and they always do things. They still don't know whether their action is right or wrong. They only know to do it. Sometimes it is right. Sometimes it is wrong. Whatever they did and suppose it was wrong. If the parents did not forbid them, did not warn them, they would think that it did not matter. If the parents did not scold them for doing it, they would do it again and again until it may become a habit. After a habit is formed, it is very difficult to change. Most parents are wrong in this regard. Because they think it is a small matter so it should not do any harm. These small matters actually create major events. A wise and careful person should always be aware of small matters. If small matters are taken care of then the major events will be taken of as well. This is the truth. **A duty of the parents should include paying attention always to the actions of your children.** When they see that the children are making any mistake, be sure to tell them immediately.

**You should talk to them nicely and with a cool heart. Do not speak**

in anger because teaching some one when you are angry will never produce good result. On the contrary, it will make the children anger-prone. To speak with love and compassion will produce better results. In the beginning, tell them what is bad and what is good. Tell them that father and mother love a good person and do not like a bad person. If they want love from their parents, they must be good persons. Tell them over and over again and don't be laggard about it.

When we talk to some one we must talk until they understand. They must know the reasons. They must understand what is what, to do it correctly. After you have taught them anything you must also follow up. Do not let the children repeat that mistake again. If you see the children make a mistake in the things that they have been told, tell them to be careful about them. Children are not that hard to bend. Except in cases where the adults have already hardened them somehow. To harden a habit is by not saying, not telling. After they have been taught about any subject, if they make the same mistake, then it is the time for spanking. However, remember that; don't use spanking if it is not absolutely necessary. If you have to do that again and again the children will get used to being spanked and they will become thick-skinned for the cane. They will not be afraid of it any more. The parents need to use wisdom in spanking the children. **Never use spanking when you are angry.** Some of the parents use spanking right away while they are angry, and they hit randomly and without reasons. This becomes a cruelty to children.

When spanking is warranted, you must talk to your children. An understanding must be made that their deeds were wrong. They were mistakes, which had been warned by you before several times and the children are still doing them. Talk to them to make them understand that they were wrong and that what they did was not correct. **You must make them realize in their own mind that it was a mistake.** To make the children recognize the fact that they have done wrong is very valuable. When they realize that they were wrong then a reasonable amount of punishment is imposed to make them remember and hopefully will not repeat the same mistake again.

When they don't do bad deeds they in turn will do good, whole-

some deeds. In order to prove to them that, “Do good, make good; do bad, make bad,” when they made a mistake and were punished, they see that, “Do bad, make bad,” is for real. When they did good deeds, the parents should teach them to realize the result of doing that as well by giving them a reward for good deeds. Never be a passive participant to any action of your children. **Good action must be complimented; bad action must be criticized.** This is an important principle. Teach them again and again is the only way to help your children become good persons. I ask that all parents pay attention to this fact.

In teaching your children, only talk is not nearly enough. There must be action on your part to accompany **your talk.** All parents must always realize that they are an example of their children. Every child in a family will assimilate the action of his or her parents. If the children love their father and are close to him, they will emulate all mannerisms of their father. If the children love their mother, they will emulate all mannerisms of their mother. This kind of assimilation, when it happens over and over will form a habit in the mind of the children and they will become just like their parents. For this reason, the parents must be especially careful when they are in front of a camera, meaning their children. Never think, say, or do any unwholesome thoughts or things in the presence of your children. They should see and hear only wholesome things. To accomplish this, **father and mother in any household must train themselves to always have discipline.** Never do anything in accordance with your desire. If the leaders of a family live properly, the children surely will remember the good example. Don't forget that the **examples set by the parents always have an influence upon the mind of the children.**

The examples from those people close to them and from the environment have an influence upon the mind of the children to a certain degree. The parents have to pay careful attention to certain places, certain people, and certain things, which are not wholesome, by not allowing your children to have any contact with them. Do not allow your children to mingle with those unwholesome things.

Because being close to bad things, those bad influences will spread to them. If the children see or encounter anything unwholesome, being

children, they don't know how bad it is. So it is a duty of the parents to explain to them by telling them to observe and by informing them how bad that person, that thing, is. And in so doing what adverse effects will be to the person who does it. Never allow the children to discover anything without knowing what they really are. Even though it concerns something good, you must make them understand the subject thoroughly. The parents not only raise the children; they must also be the teachers to the children. The Buddha said that the parents were a child's first teachers, so you should always do this duty as well.

The children usually will insist on asking for this and that from you. Like when they see the balloons at the market, they want to have a balloon. Should you give it to them? As a matter of fact, you should not because it is useless. You should make them understand that it is useless and it is a waste of money. Do not comply with their wishes in the things that are worthless. One of the reasons the parents are often bothered by the children in this trivial matter is because they have indulged in the past. Walking in the market, the children want to eat peanuts, watermelon seeds, and sugar cane being offered for sale by a roadside. They are dirty and not fit for consumption. We should tell the children to understand the reason that those things are not clean. They contain bacteria. Eat them and they will have a stomachache; the teeth will decay. They will be given a shot, which will hurt. Try to find a way to explain so they understand. And the children will not bother you again. The same is true for other situations. **Try to have an understanding with them always.** You will have less trouble with them. This is one way to treat your children.

Senior members of a family such as grand mother and grand father on both sides often spoil the children more than the parents if those senior persons have a misunderstanding about this. Elder people love children a great deal. I have heard several elder people who said that I love my children but I love my grand children even more.

The grand children are small, so the old people adored them. A lot of love tends to overshadow wisdom. They will not see right from wrong and will humour the children too much. Whatever the grand children do

is lovable and cute. They will give all kinds of excuses to the grand children. They in turn are proud that the grand parents love them. They are not afraid of anybody. Any time they were scolded by the parents, they could just go to an embrace of the grand parents and they are saved. They received compassion and warmth. The grand children become like some who are untouchable. When they were wrong and were scolded by the parents, the grand parents will come in between and said that they were still young. They don't know anything yet. It does not matter. They will be good when they grow up. These old people are the ones who spoil the children. I beg forgiveness to say to you, the grand mother and the grand father, that you surely can love your grand children. Nobody is going to be against that, but you must love them the right way. You must help make them good persons. Never make your grand children bad persons. When the children grow up they will complain that they turn out bad because of their grand father and grand mother. It is also a big sin. It is a sin we commit without knowing it and it really create adverse effects in this day and age.

Remember that good people, bad people that exist in this world of ours nowadays are the results of the parents in most cases, The parents give them life, raise them and they also can make them either good or bad persons. If we met a bad person and try to investigate the background, his or her ascendants must have been bad before. **If we met a good person, it indicates plainly that he or she came from good parents.** The fruits never fall far away from the tree is a good analogy, because a child of a human being is the same. A child of a drunkard stays close to drinking people. A child of a gambler lives near a gambling den. A child of a sex maniac is crazy about sex like his father. All of us harvest our crops from the family, receiving our inheritance from the family. I beg you — all the parents — to please help make your children good persons.

## *Influences of Heredity*

DEAR PARENTS,

**L**AST SATURDAY I reminded you who are the parents of the children to pay more attention to the well being of your children. Because we cannot raise our children only physically, we need to raise them mentally as well.

To raise the children physically is easy. We only give them food in correct proportions. We can also prevent physical danger to them. That would be sufficient. But to raise them mentally, we must give them food for the mind. **Give them the food that does not poison their mind.** Try to prevent sickness of the mind in your children. If you happen to overlook that and the sickness of the mind did occur in your children, what you need to do urgently is to give treatment to the illness before it will spread further. This will help your children avoid the evil deeds to a certain degree.

**When should we begin looking after the mind of the children?**

In regard to this topic, let us talk about the influences of heredity a little first. Heredity is one of the principles of karma in Buddhism. **The Buddha teaches us to believe in karma. We do good deeds, we receive good results; we do bad deeds and we receive bad results. We can never escape from the effects of karma.** This is the part specifically received by the doer. Aside from that, the karma will be transferred through the blood line. **This is because when a person does something often enough, it will become his or her habit.** When a habit is formed, that person will often think about it. His or her flesh and blood receives an influence from this thought and the situation will evolve around that thought reflecting the thing that has been transferred as well. It is the same as a fruit-bearing tree. Whatever taste it has, whether sweet or tangy, the original tree bears fruits of certain taste, that taste will be transferred to the seeds we grow. This is true in most cases. And it is the same for human. If you observe carefully by looking at the real situation and the truth will appear before your eyes.

One day, while I was having a conversation with a senior monk in a southern province, a relative of that monk came to see him saying that her second son in the family, who was a black sheep and most troublesome, had created another problem to the family. Her son wanted money. He wanted a portion of the rice field he was entitled to but the parents did not want to give it to him just yet. He became obnoxious and tried to beat up his parents. The father was able to calm him down by making him think that he might still have a chance. So the situation returned back to normal. It so happened that this boy always created problems to the family. I made an inquiry; after the mother had said good bye, whether the boy when young had been sent to school. The monk told me that he attended a school but he was a bad student and always missed his classes. He also often picked a fight with his fellow students and was unable to finish his study and had to drop out. When he became a young man he began to gamble and drink. These two vices came to him later in his life because of the environment. **But his original sin was stubbornness'** He would not obey anybody or even his own parents. What were the causes of this behaviour? I asked the monk what was the situation in the family when he was born. I was told that the parents always quarrelled and there were a lot of problems. **The trouble in the mind of the parents had influenced the mind of the child.** He became involved in all kinds of troubles himself. This is one example.

Many families, of course, have several children. Most of the children were good people but sometimes one of them happened to be a bad apple. It was discovered that during the time they had that child, either the father or the mother or both did not behave themselves properly. The child who was born from an unwholesome mind became himself or herself an unwholesome person.

I knew this family with ten children. All the children were good and had good behaviour. They were good students at school, had good jobs and led a good wholesome life. They were the children who only brought warm feelings to the family and the parents. No one had ever brought any painful experience to the family. I was close to this family so I asked them for a reason. I was told that both parents were religious. They

observed the Five Precepts regularly. They attended the temple service every religious day since they were both young. The husband and the wife loved each other very much. They never had any problems between them. Because of the fact that the parents were at peace with themselves and they were believers of high moral standard, their children turned out to be good and easy to teach. This shows an influence of the goodness in the parents towards their children.

In another family, the husband and the wife were well behaved when they became old. But when the husband was still young, his conduct was not good. He loved to drink and chase women. He had several mistresses because he always got involved sexually with younger women being a young restless man himself. Even after he got married and had settled down, he was not totally satisfied with what he had at home. He often went out drinking at night. When he got drunk he would look for a woman to satisfy his sexual drive. Due to the fact that he was too attached to flesh and opposite sex, a child born during the time their father was behaving badly like that turned out to be bad like his father, i.e., he was a Casanova having several wives. He did not live in one specific place. He was never satisfied with his sex life. This was because his father was behaving badly when he was born. However, his father was finally able to turn a new leaf by focusing his life to religion. He behaved himself well. The children born during that period were good children with higher moral standard than the other one mentioned before.

Stories like this are true. We can also look for evidence to confirm those stories but the parents would scarcely admit they were like that. Nevertheless we can obtain the information from those who were close to them to know what kind of person they had been and why their children were that way, both good and bad.

Now you know that when you become a parent by giving birth to a baby, you have such great power to make him or her the way you are. No matter what your thoughts or your behaviours tend to be, both good and bad, they will play a role in creating the life and the mind of your children. The future of your children was born out of your actions in the present time to make a better future for your children. This is important

for those of you who are preparing yourselves to become the parents of your children. Never think only that you just get married to become husband and wife; then the children will be born; you raise them until they grow up so you can put them to work. But you should realize that the children would carry on your name in the future. Whether the family will prosper or not depends on the future of your children as well. Your children will be good or bad depends on you, who are the moulds, the examples of your children. The moulds themselves must be good before they should be made to mould something.

A young man and a young woman, who decide to get married, should realize that both of them are going to be like a god, who will create other human beings. The people who want to create anything must think about the usefulness of the thing, which they are going to create. Most husband and wife wish to have children. Some who don't have any children feel that they are not fortunate enough to have one. They think of a hardship when they become old. They think of the property they have acquired and that it will become useless. In Brahmanism, any person who has no children is considered to be in hell. To be in hell in this case means an anxiety about the future. If they have children, they can depend on them. It is a big relief. **But if the parents have bad children, they wind up being in deeper hell.** The reason they have bad children is partly because they themselves have made mistakes. They can correct that by starting to improve themselves. When they themselves become good persons, the children will, in most cases, turn out to be good as well.

**First of all,** after they have become husband and wife, both of them must try to improve their mind. To have happiness in a family and to get along well together, the Dhamma of Buddha teaches husband and wife to conduct themselves according to the following four principles:

1. **To have the same belief in the religion and moral standard:** they must be a good match. They should not contradict each other in their belief. Husband and wife, who do not believe in the same fundamental things, do not stay together very long. They will argue a lot. When the family has arguments all the time, it cannot be at

peace. It is a good idea to adjust their beliefs to match each other to live in harmony.

2. **To have the same behaviour or conduct**, such as the same Sila or standard of conduct: they must have the same set of rules of livings and same customs. It is common knowledge that Caucasian ladies, who married Orientals, such as Thai men, had changed their opinions, beliefs and customs in order to get along well with the husband and their relatives. That is the correct way and it also made the husbands love and respect them more.
3. **To have the same knowledge**: even though it does not reach the level of an academic degree like another person, they should be able to talk to each other. When the husband says something, the wife understands. When the wife says something, the husband also understands. They will be able to travel together in their long journey.
4. **To be a good match in generosity**: this means being agreeable and approving when either one of them wants to make merit or donations to charity. They do not contradict each other to the point of having an argument, which may bring conflicts to the family.

When both sides have the same thoughts and beliefs, it can be called the same mould. The lid and the pot fit well together. They serve the purpose well. The family will live in peace and happiness. There are no conflicts or friction of any kind. The next step is for the husband and the wife to refrain from all vices, which are the causes of countless ruinous lives, such as:

1. *Refrain from consuming alcoholic drinks and all kinds of narcotics and dangerous drugs.*
2. *Never go out at night to places where it can bring unhappiness to yourself and your family.*
3. *Refrain from being indulged in play, which brings too much fun to the point of forgetting who and what you are.*

4. *Never gamble in any kind of games, whether they are legalized or illegal. They are all sins.*
5. *Refrain from associating with bad persons to the point of being friends.*
6. *Refrain from being lazy to perform work because it is not a way to get rich.*

Husband and wife who refrain from entering the cave of ruin as mentioned above have enough reason to believe that they already have a good foundation to become good, wholesome people. It is actually and improvement according to the principle of good household life.

Ordinary people who have defilement and craving in their minds will still be having some problems once in a while for sure.

Especially those with a family will easily have some conflicts. So they must be particularly careful and should have the following four Dhamma as an insurance in their lives. The four Dhamma are called *Gharavasadhamma* (Virtue for a good household life).

1. *Sacca*. Husband and wife must be honest to each other. They must live together openly. Both of them should be open to each other all the way. There should be no secret between them. This point is very important.
2. *Dama*. They both must learn to control their emotion. Never do anything impulsively. Think twice before taking any action or saying anything. When they received any news, they must review the information first. Do not allow yourself to comply with your own wishes and desires too much because they may cause trouble to the family.
3. *Khanti*. They must be tolerant of any situation, which occurred in the family. Your mind must not be weakened by any circumstances. Patience is a virtue and it usually takes a long time to do things. Happiness will come to those with patience always.

4. *Caga.* To be generous in giving away things to the people in need. Do not be narrow-minded. Build a fence around your house with love of your neighbours by always sharing food with them.

Any family with this good behaviour will have a good foundation for having good descendants to carry on the family name.

When both persons have good souls, another good soul will be attracted to come to the womb of the housewife as they wish. You will have good children because you are good. So be good from the day you get married and try to preserve the goodness to the end.

## *Good Children are Needed to Carry On the Family Name*

DEAR PARENTS,

**L**AST SATURDAY, I explained to all of you about **the influences of Heredity**, which is a type of karma, and **how powerful it can be**; how the actions of the parents can affect the children. I wanted to make you understand that both parents are important in creating the body and the mind of your children. If you wish to strengthen the future of your family, you need to support yourself in order to make sure that you are walking in the right direction. Without a doubt, good results will happen to your children.

I was told a story about a young Thai man who went on a trip in Myanmar. He travelled in that country for a long time and was able to speak the language of Myanmar. Finally he married a Myanmar lady. On the night of the wedding, the Thai bridegroom lay in bed waiting in the bridal room for a while. He did not see his bride coming through the door of the bedroom as expected in the Thai customs. He patiently waited for an hour and there was still no sign of his wife-to-be. He became a little anxious. He thought perhaps the Myanmar bride had changed her mind. Finally his patience ran out. He went looking for his bride. He found her sitting with her eyes closed chanting mantra in front of a Buddha image, which was located at a sacred place in the house. It took the bride longer than one hour to finish her chanting and she was allowed to come to her bridegroom. The man went on to say that in the first night of the wedding, the bride chanted in front of the Buddha image for one hour. After they had been together for several years, her conduct regarding her chanting was still the same, never changed. The only difference was that on the first night she was chanting alone. Later on, there were more people chanting with her. But the bridegroom remained the same. He was still too lazy to join in the chanting.

**Chanting before going to bed every night by the Myanmar lady is the right thing to do.** The Thai custom in the old days taught the people that way as well. Even the author of this book was also trained to chant

and pay homage to the Buddha image since he was a little boy. That is why this habit inclined to be that of a monk more than a layman. This kind of action has a great deal of influence, really.

It is natural for the householders by choice, i.e., those, who get married according to our custom and both sides love each other, that after they get married then of course they will want a child to carry on their names. They want a child to be a symbol of their love. They want a child to be a chain of friendship between the father and the mother. Not only the parents who want the children, the people who are waiting to become grand fathers and grand mothers on both sides also want to have them. This is in general a wish of the householders. Only some of them, who do it just for fun, do not want children. They would do it secretly. Both of them could not endure the temptation and the desire for physical pleasure and had no intention of having any children. Those people had low moral value and could be compared to ordinary animals. They take no responsibility for themselves and for the baby who may be coming out. The children who were born who were not wanted by the parents tend to act erratically because the brain is probably not completely normal. This type of baby is sinful, a result of the evil in the father and mother who seek only fun so it is not a child of Dhamma. This is some thing young people should be aware of a little bit more. This is a nuclear age, a satellite age. Human beings in the present time are very fast. And because of being fast, there is an increase in the number of babies without father. It is an increase of evils and bad persons in this world of ours. So please be a little bit more careful. Do not think just to have fun. It will cause unhappiness to you and to the others later on.

It is known that the people in the old days had all kinds of ceremonies. For example, in a wedding, some couples might have only an auspicious time for the marriage itself but it was not good for sleeping together. Even though the bridegroom had already come to the house of the bride and she was legally his wife, he still had to wait. Sometimes as long as three nights before he would be allowed to enter her bedroom. Even just to enter the bedroom, they had several ceremonies, such as paying homage to the Buddha and to chant mantra before sleeping together. This

kind of ceremonies teaches a person not to act on the spur of a moment, to think before taking any action. **Because acting recklessly is not a natural characteristic of a human being,** it is that of animals or uncivilized savages. All ceremonies show that, savages no longer inhabit the society; and the people live together in an orderly fashion.

Any couples, who wish to have good children to carry their names, should follow this guideline. Think of the merit of the Triple Gems by paying homage and chanting mantra; thinking about the good deeds of their parents and the forefathers in the past in order to enliven their minds with wholesome incidents then they can cohabit as man and wife. It is not just for fun. But they must also expect to have children to carry their family name. Make a wish for a wholesome soul to enter the body of the wife. Even the woman should think the same thought. This is to create goodness in their minds and the goodness will hopefully be transferred to the child later on.

Any time you feel sad or have any emotions filled with lust, anger, or delusion, or any defilement, please don't do anything that may give rise to having a child. A sinful mind will always have sinful effects. The people in the old days had several taboos, such as, the birthdays of the man and his wife; the death day of the parents; the Sabbath day their religion; the day the wife had her period or became ill for any reason, all were considered inappropriate days. The husband and the wife should not have a sexual intercourse at all. The reason they were taught to observe those days was because the practice would discourage them from being too preoccupied with sex. To be too preoccupied with sex does never produce any good things. Do not have sex just for fun but only to have good children to carry the good name. And do not enjoy sex so much that you become intoxicated by it. This plan was well thought of by the people in the old days and we at the present time should try to practice it as well. This will also help prevent the society from deteriorating any further and to have a brighter future.

During the time the mother is pregnant, it is an important part of her life. It is the time a very precious act is taking place for her and her family. There must be a routine to follow both physically and mentally. It

is a duty of a medical doctor to give advice in the physical aspect in order for the mother to have good and healthy body. The baby inside her will be healthy as well. The mother must be particularly careful about the food she eats. Because a pregnant woman has a double lives. If she prospers, both lives will prosper. If she decays, both lives will decay.

Mentally speaking, it is very important. **In the old days, a pregnant woman would strictly observe the Five Precepts:**

**Firstly**, she would refrain from killing animals, acting cruelly to animals or watching other people torturing animals. In all case, she would practice being kind-hearted and having compassion to all kinds of animals. This would help beautify her mind in one way.

**Secondly**, she must be content with what she possessed and to have respect for the property of other people and to look at them as if they were pebbles of no value. She must never allow greed to enter her mind.

**Thirdly**, she must keep her mind totally pure so as not to allow her sexual desire to emerge. She must absolutely refrain from having sex until she had given birth to a baby. She would not do anything that would stimulate her sexual desire. It is best that pregnant woman act like a celibate person.

**Fourthly**, only the truth, friendly words, words to promote unity and she spoke useful words. She would refrain from talking about unsuitable subjects. In case she must and should speak, she would do it appropriately and not to overdo it. Don't talk too much, it may create confusion in the mind.

**Fifthly**, pregnant woman would absolutely abstain from consuming all kinds of alcoholic drinks. They have no useful purposes at all. Certain places are also not suitable for her, such as, gambling dens, bullfight rings, racetracks, boxing stadiums and other places which are scary and too exciting. Those are the places that should not be visited by a pregnant woman at all.

One day I met a family of a government official in the South. He worked among our Islamic brothers. Islamic people have a rite, which is called a circumcision ceremony where a foreskin of the penis of a boy is circumcised. The ceremony is important. It is like paying homage to a

Buddha image in Buddhism. The government official was invited to witness the ceremony and he took his wife along with him even though it was considered inappropriate for a pregnant woman to be present. But curiosity made her go and she saw everything in the ceremony. Later she gave birth to a baby boy whose penis had the foreskin that looked like it was clipped exactly the same as in the circumcision rite. This was an example of carrying a baby in the womb to improper places.

A man was very adept in playing cards. When asked he said his mother liked to play cards so much. When she was pregnant of him, she went to play cards regularly so the son loved to play cards just like the mother. A habit of the mother was transferred to him. This is an example which clearly showed how the mother conducted herself could affect the habits and characters of her children. The mother who is pregnant must be very careful for the good effects on the loved one. But the mother alone cannot take care of every situation. She needs help from the father.

During the time of her pregnancy, the husband has to pay special attention to his wife. Do not go out or stay away late to search for fun and game outside his home. Be punctual about coming home from work. Remember that some one at home is waiting for you. She needs to be comforted. She also needs sympathy. Never offend her in any way. The unhappiness of the mother will also affect the baby. The husband has to pay more attention to her and show his love and understanding more than usual. Give her some gifts. Talk to her to cheer her up. Any fun things you used to do before have to stop while the wife is pregnant. Please try to stay home. The thing that hurts the wife the most is when the husband is late coming home at night or when she heard that you went out with another woman. These two things hurt a great deal. You have to be careful.

By nature, women are very sensitive. Especially during her pregnancy, the feelings are stronger than usual. Do not light a fire, i.e., troubles and heartache, in your family. Some women are very jealous when they are pregnant. They are sensitive. A little conflict may cause trouble that is very hard to stop. For this reason, the husband must have patience. Don't be as sensitive as the wife; one side is fire, another side must become

water. Don't burn your own house with your anger. When the time to give birth is coming near, the woman is afraid to a certain degree because delivering a baby is very important. The husband should take his wife to see a doctor once in a while to receive proper medical advice and physical examination to learn about the expecting date in advance. The husband should not travel far and should prepare all necessary items for the little one who is coming out to see the world as well. He must talk to her about good useful news, the news that will ease her mind. Allow her to meet, to see and to hear only good, wholesome things. That will help both the mother and the child to be perfect mentally as expected and wished for.

So I would like to remind those of you who are going to have baby boys and baby girls to conduct themselves according to the moral standard of the religion and the customs practised by the people in the old days. This will help make our children good, wholesome persons, who will be useful to our country. Those of you, who are going to be the fathers and the mothers, should conduct yourselves in this way. You will have a happy and prosperous life as you have wished for.

## *Character Transfer*

DEAR PARENTS,

LAST SATURDAY, I tried to explain for you to understand the meaning of the right way for husband and wife to live together. I talked about the methods used in the old days as to how to conduct themselves. I talked in great length to make sure you understood and if you use it in your daily life, your little family will become a paradise. You yourself will become an angel all of a sudden. It is very easy to make yourself an angel by following Dhamma principle in Buddhism. You might be wondering why I emphasized so much the life of husband and wife. Is it that important? I must say, it is very important.

I have been to several ceremonies casting big Buddha images. On the day they were going to pour liquid gold into the mould that had been sculptured, I looked at the chief engineer and his workers. All of them were dressed in white to pay homage to the Triple Gems. They declared reaffirming their belief in the Five Precepts. The Buddhist monks were also invited to be present as witnesses and to chant mantra. There were ceremonies to pay homage to the angels and the teachers as well. I asked them why they had to do all that. The answer always was for ceremonial purpose only. But I think the real issue of these practices has a lot do to with mental application. During the time those engineers were working on making or giving birth to a Buddha image for the people to pay respect, the workers, who poured the gold must have a purified mind. They must also observe high moral principle themselves to make a beautiful Buddha image without any obstacles. The way they did their work had a lot of good meaning. When you think about it you will realize this fact. In making a Buddha image, which has no soul from which the mind of the workers can be transferred, they still used a procedure whereby the workers had to possess to some degree, a mind of a Buddha to do the right job. They did not just do it unceremoniously and without proper planning.

In creating a human being, it should use the same method. As a

matter of fact, to make a human being or a baby, the ceremony and the mind preparation should be more intense than in making an inanimate object because the habit and character of the creators can be transferred as well. **If the creator is kind and generous, everything will be all right.** If the creator is a bad person, the offspring will also be bad. An offspring or a thief will likely be a thief. An offspring of a learned person, will likely become a learned person. It will not change that much. Actual situations like this can easily be found in present day life, if those people have been taught the right way and in the right environment. The influence of good environment will enable his thought to focus on doing good deeds. As mentioned before, to accomplish this, it must be done in pair. In other words, both sides must be equally good or they will blame each other when the child has gone badly. The mother will say; **the blood of your father is bad.** The father on the other hand will say; **very bad news, your mother's blood is bad.** The fact of the matter is both of them were wrong in that they did not try to encourage the child in the right way. Therefore I would like to give you an advice that the husband and the wife should behave themselves like two people in the same boat. Both of them should possess whatever wholesome attributes together. Then things will go more smoothly. In short, the parents must observe Dhamma of their religion and moral standard. It is analogous to the moulds used for casting, which must fit on both the upper and the lower parts. The two parts will be a good match without any flaws. The image obtained from the casting will be beautiful without a doubt.

At this point, I would like to tell an ancient story for you to give it a little thought. It is not a Thai story. It is about China. Not in the present time but it was an old story. It happened a very long time ago, so long we don't know when.

Once upon a time, there was an emperor of China who was a weakling. The administration of the country was in effect in the hands of the eunuchs, who served the emperor closely. Those eunuchs would say things to the emperor to try to influence the emperor to do things for their own benefits all the time. The situations of the country were not going well but not that badly. It was like this: **the eunuchs who served**

the emperor kept bringing him good looking young girls; they made music and played fiddle all day all night; the emperor only stayed in and had sex. They just had fun and never thought about developing their empire, as they should. Some government officials were corrupted in various ways. There were rumours all over. During that time, there was a big and important temple situated in a very beautiful location. There were several natural caves. When the monks came to build the temple, they made the place more beautiful in many ways. Normally, there were many people visiting this temple during the holidays. The monks would open any places in the temple, which should be admired to allow the people to see as they wished. However, there was one room, the door of which was chained by a big padlock and a seal. It had never been opened for anyone to enter the room. Most people wanted to take a look inside the room but they were never allowed to do so. Naturally any, secret places induce curiosity. If it is opened nobody will pay any attention to it.

One day the big chief of police and his cronies came to this temple. This chief of police was hotheaded and fierce. He loved to use his power. He often said that under the sun there was nothing the police could not do. He had several close associates, who were fierce looking like him, with him. When they arrived at the temple, the abbot of the temple prepared a special reception for them seeing that they were big people and they were important. They were shown all the places that should be seen except that secret room, which the abbot did not open for them to see. The big police chief naturally became interested in that room. He asked what was inside the room. The abbot told him that the room was occupied by something that should not be seen by human being. The chief of police became more curious while the abbot tried very hard to explain in details the reasons not to open that room. The police could not control his curiosity. At long last, when he was asked in such a way as to sound like a command, the abbot reluctantly unlocked the door to let the man see inside the room.

But there was nothing that could be seen by the physical eyes. All the things detained inside were invisible to the naked eyes. Those were the evil spirits, which had been punished and were gathered in that par-

ticular room. As soon as the door was opened, those spirits were set free. They were floating around in the air all over to find places to be reborn. At any rate, those evil spirits were unable to enter the body of wholesome people. They kept wandering to find suitable places.

The evil spirits would enter the households the fathers and the mothers of which were good for nothing. They entered the bodies of the ladies of those households. While a spirit was still in the womb, not much damage was done. But after a baby was born, due to the fact that the origin of the spirit was bad, the place of birth was bad and when the baby came out, it encountered again unwholesome incidents, it received so much negative influences. When the first batch of evil spirits grew up and was able to find the jobs, which were given to them by their influential fathers, they did not have to work because their fathers were important and powerful. They had a lot of influential friends. They took advantage of the other people at the work place. They and their friends went out and did all the bad things. China during that period had all kinds of corruption, which were recorded in the history books. Where did those evils come from? They were the results of stubbornness, selfishness, and numerous nonsensical acts. That was why there was so much trouble and unhappiness.

This story taught us that **the evils in the children occurred because of the parents who created them in the first place.** It should remind all of us to be more careful with ourselves for the future of our families and the future of our country, which we love and treasure so much.

The Buddha said once that, **“Children are the foundation of mankind.”** Whether this world of ours will prosper or not depends on the parents of today. Many parents, who consider themselves modern, often do not pay attention to the children of their own. They will only perform the duty of the creator of a life but do not really try to look after the mind of the children. They leave their children to be brought up by a nanny for the most part. Is that the right thing to do? I don't think it is right and proper because **young children are like vine, they tend to climb and cling to the closest object.** The children who are close to the nanny naturally will transport the habits of the nanny to themselves. If the nanny is a good person, it is not so bad. If the nanny is a bad person, the situa-

tion can turn from bad to worse. Even though we may be able to acquire a good nanny, but the loving kindness of the nanny is different from that of the parents. The nanny will naturally think that she is only a nanny and not the mother. But the mother realizes that she is the baby's mother and she should pay special attention and nurture the baby more. This kind of problem seems to get worse at the time when the mother has to work outside the home because to earn a living in the present time is different from the past. Nevertheless, there should be a time everyday when the parents and the children can be together as long as possible.

How to take care of the baby after birth is also very important. In regard to this subject, the mother should take an interest in learning and making inquiry from those who are experts in this field. There are two kinds of experts, i.e.; the first group is experts in theory such as in the field of social work, who help the mother and the children. Even though they themselves may never have any children of their own, they have acquired much knowledge from studying and can be considered an expert in this field. Another group of people is the real mothers, who have given birth to a baby and have raised several children. They are experts in practical sense. A woman, who is a novice in being the mother of a baby, should approach this kind of people. She can learn from asking about the right way and the wrong way of raising children. Listen carefully to what they have to say and try to adapt the situation to the one in your family. **As a matter of fact, there should be an association of mothers to be a meeting place for the mothers in a community to exchange ideas and knowledge about child rearing.** The members of the association can go out and give advises to those who are new to this kind of role to understand their duty better. I suppose this kind of organization will help our society a great deal. There are all kinds of sciences in this world and the knowledge of how to raise good children should be one of those sciences. If this science is studied widely, it is a way to help this world of ours to be more livable. The world will be more livable if there are more good people. The parents should be the ones who create good people to make the world more livable.

Any couples not suitable to give birth to a baby, not suitable to breed,

should not have a baby, because if they do, the children will be like them. The world will have more brain-deficient people. The people with brain deficiency will create troubles no matter where they are. Nobody wants trouble. When we don't want troubles we have to look at ourselves, "whether I myself am suitable to become a father or a mother of my children." If not you should decide to delay having children, because to do that can also be considered a wholesome act. It is one way to reduce the number of evils in this world. On the other hand, anybody, who is healthy both physically and mentally and wealthy as well, when he or she wants to add his or her children to the population of the world, it is the right thing to do. It will add the strength both numerically and in wholesomeness to this world of ours. It is the right thing to do as a citizen of the world.

Hopefully some of you, who have read this part of the book, will feel something happen in your heart. It should make you be aware of the duty of parenthood, which is a great honour for all human beings and that you will try to perform your duty to perfection in the future.

## *Pure Love*

DEAR PARENTS,

**I**F SOMEONE ASKS YOU whether you love your children, you must think that person has no children. Because anybody who has children must know very well how much they love their children. **The love of a father and a mother is a pure love, one without any defilement or desire to taint such love.** Those who have no children do not know about this kind of love. The children may misunderstand the act when the parents scolded and spanked them. They think the parents do not love them. As a matter of fact the mind and the mouth of the parents are not talking the same language. The mouth is saying that the children are not good but the mind wants them to be good. No parents have bad intention against their children. It is very unusual to find some one like that. Once in a while we run into some one that bad.

*Ajatsatrukumar* was a son of King *Bimpisarn*. He befriended *Devadat*, a wayward monk. So he was taught a lesson, which was totally wrong. It made him extremely angry with his father, the King. He arrested his father and put him in jail. He suffered so much that he died in prison. During the time *Ajatsatru* was detaining his father in the prison, he had no children and did not know how much his father loved him. On the day the King was dying, *Ajatsatru's* wife gave birth to a baby boy. Two courtiers brought to him both the bad news and the good news. Both of them agreed with each other that the birth of the boy should be told first because birth was considered good news while death was naturally bad news in the world even in those ancient days. So they informed him about the birth of his son first. As soon as *Ajatsatru* received the good news, the instinct to protect his flesh and blood, the love of his son, was conceived in his heart. He knew that this love was immeasurable. He also felt in his heart that when he was "a little boy" his father, the king, must have loved him as much as he loved his new son. The feeling of gratitude for his father overwhelmed him. He realized all of a sudden that he had been foolish and was wrong to imprison his father. He thought about

him and wondered what had become of him. He wanted to order his men to release his father from the prison. But at that particular moment another courtier also informed him the king had died. Having received the news, *Ajatsatru* became extremely sorrowful for him being such an ungrateful person, who also committed a very wicked sin. But it was already too late. There was no way to correct the situation. This story shows how strong the love of a parent is. Anybody with children knows it very well. Not only human but also animals, which have their offspring, love them very much as well.

*(A Story about the love of a cat for its offspring.)*

Once I had a cat. In fact I did not intend to keep it but I took a look at it and felt compassion. So I gave it some leftover food. It became attached to me and did not want to leave. It was a female cat. After a while, a male cat came to visit during the night and so she got pregnant. When that time came I was observing where the birth would take place. One day while I was having a meal, she went into the kitchen and lay down by a box, which was left there by some one. She just lay there quietly for a long time but there was no baby cat. It was only because the little kittens in her belly were moving about as if they were saying, "Mommy, mommy, we want to come out and see the world." So the mother cat went looking for a proper place to deliver her babies. It took three more days before the birth actually took place. In the morning a little after nine o'clock, the cat was running around looking for a proper place for the delivery. I had placed a wooden box for her and I cushioned the box with an old piece of cloth. The mother cat went in and lay down inside the box. She began to writhe in pain. She also tried to push by inhaling very hard to force the kittens out. She did not succeed the first time. It looked to me like the cat was getting very tired and in great pain. She started to push for the second time. A little kitten came out but only half way. The mother cat twisted her body around and cried in agony. I saw what was happening and felt how pitiful it looked so I used my hand to pull lightly the body of the kitten out. After that, the cat started to take care of her baby by licking out all the blood on its body making it look nice and clean. As for the kitten, which had not even opened its eyes, it started to meow and

tried to feel for a nipple of its mother right. Having found one, the little kitten sucked it in hunger. It reminded me of a Buddhist proverb; “All animals live on food.” Without food, we all die.

After the delivery, the cat did not go anywhere for twenty-four hours. She did not eat any food or drink any water. She stayed close embracing the kitten with love. When the kitten moved its body, the mother cat would console it by licking with her tongue as if to say, “Oh! My little one, how are you? Do not squirm. I am still here. I will lick your body for you. Go to sleep, darling.” The mother cat loved her kitten very much. The next day, the cat went out a little to find something to eat. But she did not go very far. She seemed to be in a hurry to come back because she was concerned about the kitten. Upon entering the room, she made some noise signalling, “Mother is home and where are you? The little kitten, hearing the voice of the mother cat raised its head and tried to look but the eyes could not see anything yet and it had to use the sense of touch. Having found the mother, it started to suck milk from her immediately. Sometimes during the night and it was late, the cat came back after the door was closed so she could not enter, it made some noise to let me know. I had to open the door for her. She was happy to see me and show her gratitude by using her head to rub on my two legs.

All kinds of animals in general are sincere. They will do as their mind tells them to do without any pretension. On the other hand, human beings pretend too much and very untrustworthy.

Please do not think that the story I just told you is just a cat story without any substance. Consider that cats also have something good to teach human especially in regard to the love of its mother. It is too bad that the kitten had no father. Even though there was a male cat somewhere, he did not pay attention to his mate and his offspring. He only wanted to relieve his sexual need. After the deed was done the male cat was gone and took no interest in anything. The hard work belonged to the mother cat alone. It is pitiful. Men with characteristics like cats are too plentiful in number. They are men with cat's heart. When they have lust in their mind, they go out flirting with the women until their need has been fulfilled and then they are gone. The women get pregnant and had babies.

A man with a cat's mind pays no attention to anything. He is a man who does not fit his human body well at all. He does not perform the duty of a father. He has no conscience in his heart whatsoever. His body is that of a man but his heart is equal to that of a cat. We should not talk about him so much. It is a waste of time, really.

We had better talk more about that cat. The mother cat had only one kind of food for the baby, i.e. her milk. The kitten was healthy and did not get sick at all. It was growing up pretty fast. It did not take long for the little one to start running. The teeth also grew mouthful and they were very well arranged because of proper diet. After the kitten had its mouth full of the teeth, the mother cat took it to the grass lawn. She walked in the front meowing all the time as a signal to the kitten. The mother cat taught the kitten to find food her way. The kitten ran after its mother all the time. One day the cat caught a squirrel. She loved her kitten so she thought of it and brought the squirrel and dropped it at the side of the kitten. The little kitten was scared. It ran to hide near a nook at the wall. The mother cat carried the squirrel in her mouth and went to the kitten and showed it how to slap and how to bite the squirrel as if to say that, "You are growing up. You must learn to catch a mouse, a squirrel. You must depend on yourself. You cannot depend on your mother all the time." In the beginning, the kitten was still afraid. After having smelled blood, it started to lick the squirrel and carried it in its mouth. The mother cat just sat and watched until the kitten had eaten enough. Then she ate the leftover portion. The mother cat loved the kitten and sacrificed for it this much. Our mothers also love us and sacrifice for us a great deal: sometimes a lot more. "Oh! The good deeds that have been done by our mothers can never be described in whole by us or by anyone."

When you are listening to the story of this cat, do not think that it is only a cat story. Consider what you can learn from it. It will be a good lesson for you in taking care of your children in the future. Nature has provided a woman, who is to become the mother of a baby, to have several organs, which are different from those of a man. The most important of which are the two breasts. The breasts are where the food for the newborn baby comes from. If we look at animals you will see that in mam-

mals such as cattle, elephant, horse, dog and cat, when the offspring is still young the only food they have is milk. And the milk really comes from the mother. We human have milk for our babies but we seem to enjoy doing things in contrary to the nature all the time. A little baby does not have the teeth to crush on the food. But the mother is afraid her baby will not have enough food to nourish the body. She grinds rice with sugar or banana for the baby to eat. A way to feed the baby was also very unusual in that the baby was put face up lying supine between the two legs of the mother. The ground rice was stuffed in the baby's mouth looking more like she was trying to hurt and not to feed the baby. The baby has no teeth to grind the solid food. When a lot of rice is eaten the stomach is often upset. Some babies eat so much rice, the belly looks bloated and the body looks like a catfish. I want to emphasize that it is wrong to do that. The mother should not be too concerned about the baby not having enough food. Little baby does not eat that much. Only the mother milk is sufficient for the need of its little body. The cattle cubs do not eat grass when they have no teeth. Human babies should do the same.

Please remember that the mother's milk is the most precious food for a baby. As long as your child has no teeth, do not give it anything but milk except in case the mother is not healthy and does not have enough milk for all the feeding. Then you should use canned milk or fresh milk from cows or goats, for instance. To feed babies with this kind of milk, it has to be done by keeping cleanliness and safety in mind. Fresh milk should be boiled or pasteurized before to kill bacteria. Milk bottles, milk containers, and nipples must be clean and in good condition all the time. Remember also that your baby can get sick when certain diseases enter his or her body. The milk and the nipples may be carriers of the diseases so boiling water should be applied to clean the nipple before use. Beside milk, you can squeeze fruit juice to feed the baby but never too much of it.

In raising children, the mother should consult nurses at a local health office. Do not do anything without having any knowledge about it. The life of your children is priceless. Always treasure them in the right way and safely as well. To follow one another in the wrong way is not good at all. Some people say that I have been brought this way, even you have

been through the same thing. This is an outdated statement. The world has progressed so much. So it is a good idea that the birth and the care of a baby has to be changed also to fit the existing situation.

Feeding time for a baby should be set. Do not let the baby eat whenever it wants. The mother often does not pay attention in this respect. For example, when a baby cries, a nipple will be stuffed in its mouth immediately. This is almost like milk feeding was used to stop the crying; it creates a bad habit. When a baby cries, the mother often says, "Stop crying please, I will give you some milk." Using food as bait all the time will spoil a baby. It is not such a good practice. When a baby cries, we should look for a reason why it cries. It does not mean that it is hungry all the time. Sometimes ant bite makes it cry. The linen may be wet with urine and the baby cries. In short, when a baby cries there is a reason behind it. Without any reason a baby does not cry, it does not bother you and it is not fussy. The person who makes a baby cry is the mother, who has made a mistake. For this reason, when you heard your baby cry, try to look for a reason first. Make a correction at the cause. Do not just give it the milk because the baby will be spoiled by this practice later on.

The time to feed should be set, such as, every two hours, for instance, and only for a reasonable amount. Don't feed the baby until the milk flows over. After feeding, let it sleep to its heart content in its bed. Sometimes, the noise of the baby is unbearable to the mother and makes her pay more attention to it. The baby is spoiled because of this fact as well; i.e. when it wants anything it will throw a tantrum by crying loudly. The mother will run to the rescue. The baby becomes a cry baby. If you really believe that the mattress it sleeps on is perfectly all right; he is well fed; there are no mosquitoes to bother it; just let it cry. The crying of a baby is a good way to expand its lungs and is an exercise in itself. Do not bother the baby, when it is not the time. Before long, the baby will realize that crying does not do any good and it is tiring for nothing. The baby will be more tolerant and will not be a cry baby any longer.

Time is important. To do things in an orderly fashion will instill discipline in your children. I would like to present this idea to you to raise your children the right way.

## *An Example of Your Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

**P**LEASE LISTEN to the next part of “Love your children the right way.” In the previous part I talked about your love for your children and at the end I talked about what to feed your children and how to do that properly. I did not give that much information because you can get more of that from the literatures of the organizations assisting mothers and their children. Today I am going to talk about other topics which the mothers should know in order for them to understand children and their natural characteristics better.

To bring up the children and to do the job well, we must have proper knowledge about what they are and what they want. It is like some one who wants to do farming, has to learn to understand about the soil, the climate and the plants, which he or she wants to grow. Some one who takes care of a dog, for instance, has to know its natural inclination to be able to train it properly. Nowadays, many people love to raise big and small foreign dogs and sell them at high prices. Some houses have several dogs. They need books telling them how to train dogs of specific breeds. And they can really train those dogs. Some people can never train their own children but they can train dogs to become good dogs. The reason for being able to do that is because they have studied and understood the problems well. If we have skills in what we do we will be able to do it well.

In writing this article about children, I went to the library at the Buddhasathan Auditorium to find books about children. I looked for them for a long time but I found nothing. There were all kinds of books but none on children! It made me think that the Thai people thought so little about this problem. Because of this lack of interest, it has made juvenile problems a big issue now.

Most parents brought up their children the way they had seen other people doing it in the past. They did not follow any principles or guidelines. Anybody whose children did well in their lives, if they were asked

how they brought up their children to be that good; they would be at a loss to give a good answer. Because they had no records whatsoever of what they had done. Some were even worst than that. They paid no attention at all and just left the matters to fate more than anything else. They thought all things often depend on fortune or misfortune. To think like that is wrong. To say that things depend on fortune or misfortune, as a matter of fact, means they depend on the deeds. The life of the children is the result of the deeds of the parents. When the parents are responsible for the birth of the children then it is also considered the most important duty to train them to become good people in the future.

A little baby in a cradle is new to the world. He or she is someone, who increases the number of the members in the family; someone who is like a cute little animal, who should be nurtured; someone who is innocent to the world of deceit and Maya. A baby also brings joy to the parents and all relatives. A baby's eyes are clear without any traces of evil. If you focus your attention to the baby's mannerism, you will feel fun, wonder, interest, and joyful happiness that you forget about your own being. You forget that the little baby is growing up and you are growing older and older. You forget even the hardship you endured in rearing him or her. The parents never thought that the job was tiring and burdensome or it was a bad karma to have a baby born to them. On the other hand those who do not have a baby to admire and to play with are the ones who are lonely and think that they have bad karma not having any children. But in fact, to have or not to have children is dictated by a natural phenomenon, which no one can have any say about. You don't need to worry about having or not having anything. Those who have should try to do their duty as well as they can. And those who don't have should think that it is a good thing as well.

The future of the baby in the cradle depends on the parents who helped create it. There is a saying; **"Nature creates the body of a man while the parents shape the habit and conduct of a child."** The body of a child is a product of all the things given by the parents. As for the mind or habit, it is a product of the training by the parents as well. If the

parents, who reproduced the babies, did not pay attention in bringing them up, the babies would never become good persons. In foreign movies, there was a story about a wolf bringing up a boy since he was a baby until he became a big boy. He could not talk in a human language; he did not act like a human being either. The food he ate was not the kind of food for human. That was because he had been told to behave and act like that. A baby, who was born a hundred percent Thai, but was brought up by a Chinese parent, was growing up in a Chinese environment, would naturally become a Chinese person. So the parents must always give the children the right way both physically and mentally.

The life of a small child is so much different from that of an adult. A child life is the simplest. It has no deceitfulness and complexities but it also has no freedom. That is to say it has to depend on the parents, the nanny and the baby-sitter all of the time. It is that of someone who cannot help one's self. As for the life of an adult, it is much more complex. It has more and more freedom and it does not have to rely on other people all the time. It also has more tricks up its sleeves. But the life of a baby lying on a little mattress is most easily understood. It does not have anything other than being direct and innocent. It has not received the Maya of the world that could have intoxicated it. Its expression is always direct and to the point.

Babies sleep happily and contentedly when there is nothing to disturb them physically and mentally. They just lie there smiling at everybody who comes close naturally lifting their arms and legs with contentment. If there is something wrong they will express their feeling of displeasure immediately by crying with a loud noise to tell everybody. If you observe carefully, you will see that when we smile at a baby, it seems to smile back at us. If we make a sullen face, it will do the same. If we make a funny face by sticking out the tongue, it will stick out its tongue as well. A baby will do everything it has perceived or seen. But it does not understand the meaning why adults did what they did. Being innocent, a baby received both good and bad in its mind. The things we call love, hatred, enjoyment, loneliness and others, a young one cannot interpret those meanings. It can only express what it has seen, which should be actually

called a reflection, and it does not indicate a true feeling. A child's life is therefore still open and easily visible.

An innocent ability of the children is a basis for developing into discreet ability. If an innocent ability is unstable it will affect negatively the discreet ability. And if the parents are not up to the task and do not try to tackle the problem right away, damage will be done in the mind of the children. In order that it will not be too late, the parents who are supposed to look after the children, should be careful not to allow your children to see or know about unsuitable events.

A painter, after he or she has painted on any object and if the paint is still wet, will be especially careful not to allow anything or anybody to touch it because anything sticking to the surface will simply stay there and can never be taken off. The same is true for the children who have innocent ability; they will easily absorb anything. After it was absorbed it would just stay there for a long time and it, may be harmful to the children in the future. If you don't believe in this principle, you can try it yourself by acting something for a baby to see repeatedly. It will not take long for him or her to act the way you did.

Remember that the children are observant and very quick to remember. They normally are curious to know and to see everything that touches their five senses. If they can utter the words, you would never be able to answer all the questions that they have for you. After they have learned and remembered anything, they will remember them the rest of their lives. This fact is known to all of us. Any knowledge we received when young, it may stay in our mind and never to be forgotten. But any knowledge we received at twenty years old is so hard to remember. The brain of a child does not contain anything that is confusing so it is very well receptive of anything. When you have learned about this truth, please always remember that, "My little baby does not freedom in itself. It is totally innocent so I have to be very careful in taking good care of it. I must give it the good things both physically and mentally as much as possible. The future of my baby is in my hands."

If we talk about the environment of the children, the parents are the closest environments for them. They are highly influential with respect

to making the children into anything good or bad. In Buddhism, there is a saying that, "Parents are the first teachers of the children." They are the ones who transmit so much to their children. There is also an old saying, "Look at the tail of an elephant but look at the mother of a woman." This analogy cannot be denied by anybody at all.

Normally, children have not possessed anything that can be called *Maya*, deceits, untruthfulness, fear, or jealousy as most grownups do. They only possess sincerity. So their action is not complex. It is easily readable. But if there is any abnormality in the mind of the children, such as, anger, jealousy, or fear of any kind, it was borne out of having inherited it from the parents, or the nanny, who are the environment which is in close proximity with the children. It is an unintentional transmittal. However, it was received and buried until the end of their lives. If it has not been corrected quickly, the children will adhere to such bad habit. Therefore, the parents are the principals in producing the good and the bad of their children.

To train a mind of the children is not an easy task. To make a baby is not hard. To recite the words of a famous sermon giver, **"To make a person is not hard at all, it only takes a moment. But to make some one a human being is difficult. It takes time to obtain a good effect."** Human being is some one who has high spiritual value, which is above all evil. To train the children is to instill habits in them to make them good according to our standard. It is hard work. It is a duty, which must be performed by the parents. They should never be bored of this task. They must be satisfied and content and they must do it continually and in the right way with good reasons to support them all the time.

It is difficult to set a definite guideline for training the children to be in accordance with the wish of the parents or some one who brings them up, and to say this and that must be done. Only the main principles regarding the child psychological needs can be stated as a general guideline. The rest is up to the wisdom of the parents and how well they have looked after the children. Try to understand the natural inclination of the children and find a way to correct them that will be suitable to the

situation of each child. You may just find a way to train your children to become good persons.

Another point that must be emphasized to you is you, the parents, are the mirror of your children. No matter who the children are, they will be a reflection of their own parents. They received everything from you every second. Do not think that your action, in front of the children, will not create an impression in their mind. You must recognize that the action of the parents has imprinted an image on the mind of the children and always try to be especially careful. Your children should be only your own responsibility. A baby sitter or a nanny is only the helper. But the responsibility rests on the two of you. Do not neglect your direct responsibility because the effect in the future will be on your children and yourself in total, If the children accomplish good things, they will say the parents have given them good training. If the children turn out badly, they will say their parents are not good; that is why their children are like that, Don't make anybody make you feel terrible later on because they curse you for being unwise in bringing up your children.

## *Child Instincts*

DEAR PARENTS,

ON THE OTHER DAY, we talked about what the children tended to do or to be. The contents of that talk indicated to you that children were innocent. They could always accept anything from the adults or the environments. It was necessary for you who worked with children to be a little bit careful and never to do anything, which would allow the children to see or to accept them in a negative way. Today we are going to talk more about the natural tendencies of the children.

Buddhism teaches us to understand that human being consists of two important elements, i.e. *Rupa* and *Nama* or body and mind. The two things combine to make a living person by having a mother and a father as the creators. In effect, the parents are gods, who create children. A body is a mixture of various kinds of material. And it will function normally only when certain other material also comes into play. That is we need food for the well being of the body. As for the children, food is needed for the growth of their bodies and it is the job of rearing them performed by the parents, even though it is not done totally correctly but it is good enough to make the children grow up pretty well. On the contrary, the rearing of the mind of the children leaves much to be desired and has so much flaws. **A human being cannot live with its body alone. It must also have a mind. The mind and the body must live together at all times.** The food must also be for both the body and the mind. The food of the mind is the training and the teaching of the children to have a good mind, a beautiful mind, in accordance with the Dhamma principles. In reality, we must always pay special attention to the matter of the mind because all things come from the mind. The bodily movements and mannerism, which can be observed by other people, reflect the mind inside the body. The words, which were spoken to other people, indicate the state of that mind. The body is at all times the foundation of the mind as well as the one, which expresses its feelings. **The care, the training, and the development of a human being are going to**

succeed or not have a lot to do with the development of the mind.

The movements of the mind, which appear in various forms, consist of those from birth and those acquired afterwards by the media of an environment and the inducement of the persons close to it. The children tend to act like whoever or whatever they are close to. It is therefore necessary to a certain degree to study about the action of the mind to be used as a guideline to understand the children. The first things to study are the instinct, the emotion, the habit and the character. They will be explained as follows:

- i. **Instinct: (*Sanjatanana*)** In Thai, the word was not a commonly used one.

It was a terminology employed mostly in regard to psychological' topics. Listen carefully. *Sanjata* means to be born simultaneously. *Nana* means to know. When combined, the meaning is to know simultaneously at birth as the mind was born. There are certain things,, which can be done without being taught. They come together with; each and everyone of us and they cannot be totally eliminated from us. However they can be controlled so as not to exhibit them so much. Human being, who lacks the training of the mind, often lacks: the control of his or her instincts. He or she becomes vulgar in his orb her behaviour in the society, often does things like wild animal. On the contrary, the people, who have good training and education, will be ashamed to release their basic instincts or tendencies. Those are the gentlemen and ladies of the world who are well liked in our society. For this reason, anybody who wants to be a civilized person, needs learn to control his or her basic instincts. Never let them come out too much for your own good. Some of the newer instincts, which we should also know about, are as follows:

- a. **Survival Instinct:** All living being needs food to stay alive. The need for food was therefore born since birth. Kitten and puppies after birth will try to feel for a nipple of the mother and suck on it right away. But a human baby out of a mother does not eat right away. Its body must be cleaned and then the mother has to be

cleaned as well: Then it can suck on the mother's milk, as it likes to do. Food must be had to the end, until breathing stops. Because we have to eat, we need to have all kinds of food. This is an instinct of all sentient being.

- b. **Reproductive Instinct:** When there is birth, there must be reproduction of lives. Our body and mind will also survive from reproduction. If there was no reproduction, the life will eventually cease to exist. This kind of instinct gives rise to lust, a sexual urge. If it is not contained or controlled, human value will be even lower than common animals, such as dogs. As a matter of fact, dogs and other animals will fulfil this instinctive need only occasionally or seasonally. After that period is over they will no longer feel such desire. But does human being have any season? Do they ever feel they have had enough? Think about it. Sometimes we should be ashamed that we are worse than dogs because there are some people who lack the control over this instinct.
- c. **Self-preservative Instinct:** All sentient beings love life. They fear oppression. In a verse of the Dhamma, the Buddha once said, "All sentient beings are afraid of punishment; they are afraid of death; observe yourself for comparison and harm no one." Because of the fear for sickness and for death, the feeling to preserve one's self arises. Then a decision to fight or to run will follow. Some babies are frightened easily. Having seen anything frightening or heard anything loud, they will be scared to death. The nannies and baby-sitters of the world must be aware of this fact. They should take care not to allow the babies to have fear in their heart needlessly.
- d. **Self-importance Instinct:** This is the reason for human being to be selfish thinking always that one's self is more important and superior to the others. It is a reason for being proud and that he or she is an important person. It also gives rise to some people looking down upon those who are the less fortunate in all respect. People like this when they go anywhere they will always put themselves at the forefront. In the language of the Dhamma it is classi-

fied as being conscious of the fact that he or she is better, or equal, or lower than the others are. All these thoughts are the causes of suffering.

- e. **Social Instinct:** Human being is a social animal, who lives; in a town, i.e. they stay in a group, in a party. They don't like to be left alone. In general, human beings tend to gather together. If we go to visit various places of activities, we will see that the people will gather around in groups. When there are more than one person in a group, then more and more people will follow them to form a bigger group. Grouping like this relies on similarity; such as the same language, the same clothing, and the similar living standard. Then they can stay together. For' this reason, the people of the world have several nations and several languages. Those who are left alone will not be happy. The children, who are by themselves, feel lonely and sluggish. They are not active both physically and mentally. If they have a playmate, then they will suddenly' become joyful. You will observe that when the parents, return home from work, as soon as they are inside the house, the children will immediately jump into their arms. This is easily seen as a sign of having a social instinct.
- f. **Accumulative Instinct:** Before the start of a rainy season, we have seen a great number of ants put away edible food, in their nests. An army of bees flew from flower to flower collecting pollen to make sweet honey for the young ones just born. A black crow finding a piece of food will hide it first and to eat it later on. All those actions are methods used as a result of the accumulative instinct. Accumulation especially in human being is a huge job. We accumulate all sorts of things. This instinct if not well controlled or contained, will make us greedy. We tend to take advantage of one another to a certain degree. Little children will start by collecting little somethings. They keep those things and often say, "Do not touch whatever is mine." Some people are worse than the others to an extent that they take advantage of their friends and foes alike

by all kinds of tricks and deceptions. It becomes a means to accumulate inheritance for their offspring by way of corruption as we see in this day and age.

We have not talked about all those instincts in great details. It is only a guideline for the understanding of the human mind. Then we can train the mind to behave in the right way. We don't want to leave it alone until the mind of a person become bad and suffer the consequence later on. An enormous harm resulting from a misunderstanding, which has not been corrected, has spread widely all over our nation and society. I beg you the parents, to be conscious of this fact.

2. **Emotion:** We hear of this word often. For instance, we say that guy is emotionally stable; meaning, he is cool hearted; that woman is very emotional; it means she is hot headed, argumentative, and always complaining. Emotion means the feelings, which occur in the mind. When the mind is aware of anything through the five senses, something happens in the mind. That something is called an emotion. The emotion always has an instinct as a cause. For example, we see an image of an opposite sex, we feel a pleasure to approach and ask her who she is and where she came from. This is due to the reproductive instinct. It translates into lust, a desire to have that person. Emotion is something that can be prevented from occurring. It can also be destroyed by the practice of meditation.
3. **Habit:** It is something that is a result of doing over and over like a well- trained athlete. For example, a person is diligent because he or she is trained in that way; a person is lazy because he is used to being lazy. Some habits are transferred from the parents; or from those who are close, to the children because children are inclined to accept anything easily. To instill a habit in the children can simply be done by examples from adults. If a father is diligent. He gets up early to go to work on a farm every morning, his son will also get up early to work on a farm just like his father. Habits are also contagious. What are your habits? Good and bad, you must be aware that they will stick to your children as well.

4. **Manner and character** are physical as well as verbal mannerism, which can be readily seen or heard. Manners are always indicative of the habit of that person. For example, those who have a rude habit will use impolite words. Their physical mannerism is also vulgar and not at all likable. Whether they stand, walk, sit, or lie down, it shows no signs of wholesomeness. On the other hand, if they have good habits, the manner will also be wholesome.

In bringing up your children, it is advisable to observe those symptoms and try to correct them one by one. Just remember that, “The instinct ? is the basis of emotion; emotion is the basis of habit and habit is a basis of manner and character which will be perceived by the others.” The mannerism observed by other people is the personality of that person. Whoever will be good or bad is the result of the aforementioned causes. And the most important of them all are the mother and the father. So you, the parents, must be particularly careful in creating any habits in your children.

The above have been stated to give you a guideline and to know something about human beings so that you will be able to understand any kinds of behaviours in your children. If you happen to see that any expressions of your children may become a basis for destructive behaviours and will create a bad habit in them, you must find a way to prevent them from behaving that way. Normally, human being in general will have to express one’s self. It is difficult to conceal anything inside. To keep it inside too much may cause an emotion to overload. Then it becomes a habit. Eventually, that person will be emotionally spoiled. So it is not advisable to just control and emotion. We must find a way to compensate or to release it in one way or another but to do it properly and in the right way.

This is somewhat like the water from a high place. If only a dam was build to counter the force, the water may be so strong as to cause the dam or the bank to tumble down. But if we not only block the water path but also made several drainage for the water to flow through then the water will be more useful to us. The bank will not crumble, and the dam will

not be damaged. It is analogous to the things about children. The parents, who have wisdom, will find a compensation for the children. Do not let them do it on their own. They are not wise enough to know what is right and what is wrong. The adults should really act as their eyes and ears. There must be a way out for them not to express themselves in a bad way. I would like to ask you to think about this as your homework on Sunday. Use this lesson to observe the physical and verbal mannerism of your children at all times. Your children will be good or bad; it is entirely up to you.

## *Don't Use Emotions with Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

ONE DAY while I was walking along a road, I happened to see something, which I never thought I would see. It remained a picture imprinted in my mind for a long time. It made me think hard about that incident on that day. It also made me think of a lot of other things. Why don't you try figuring out what it was? You would not be able to because you did not see it happen. As a matter of fact, this sort of thing happens all the time but you have not paid any attention to them. I will tell you the story. It is a scene that takes place all over.

The scene opened at a small house. It was a little house, which indicated that the owner was not well off. There was nothing much inside the house, which might be called the furniture. The father might be still out working and only the mother was in. She was about seven months pregnant. There was a little boy not quite two years old. He was being threatened by the mother. The little boy was crying in agony being beaten by his mother with a cane all over his little body. She just kept on pounding, as her heart desired. The little boy could only writhe in pain and cried to its heart content. It seemed the mother was hard of hearing or had become totally deaf because she was overwhelmed with anger and could not hear the noise of his crying. She continued to beat him until she became exhausted and the little boy lay still in so much pain that he could no longer cry out except a little whimper. The mother was still complaining, "I told you to stop. Why don't you stop? What kind of a son are you? You don't listen to me. I should beat you to death." While she was talking she made her face which was hard to draw to make it look like a human face. What did the little boy do that was so wrong to deserve that severe punishment? The answer was he was naughty and broke a rice plate. They did not have much to begin with so the mother was mad when the little boy broke one plate and so he was beaten mercilessly. It was pitiful to think about the incident. Was the boy really at fault?

All of you please think about this for a moment. Did the little boy break the plate because he had no love for the plate or he was playing with it and broke it by throwing the plate like a flying saucer? Nothing like that at all. The little boy was finishing his meal. He carried his plate to wash it with water. He wanted to do like grownups did because he had seen them finishing their meal and washing the dishes. He wanted to do it as well but his hands were not strong enough to the plate fell down and broke. He did not break it on purpose. His mother lacked an insight about the habit of her child. She had no restraint. She became emotional and angry. She beat her son's little body without thinking twice.

If we want to analyse the behaviour of the mother, there are several factors. For example, the impoverishment of her family; the husband, who did not stay home a lot; who did not work to earn enough money for the wife and the child, whose meagre income was spent buying whiskey or government lotteries, from which he never won even a satang. All these added to the problem in the family. The woman of the house was feeling insecure. It was obvious that when some one like that, who was feeling badly inside, a little thing happened to her and she became enraged in her own fire storm. The bad consequence fell on the innocent little boy. He might have been sinful in his previous lives. That was probably why he came to the womb of such woman. He must have possessed a bad karma, which gave him the parents who did not pay attention to their family like that. Everyone must face the effect of karma. Having thought of the Dhamma, I was able to come to the realization just a little. But it was useful only to the person who realized but not to the little boy who had to suffer the consequence. A lot of days were still ahead for him, though. At any rate, I would like to talk to you a little about the punishment given to your children.

I want to tell you something about myself. When I was still a young boy, I did not like being scold and spanked. I much preferred politeness and kindness. I would not be able to eat on the day I was scolded. My mother knew about this fact so she never scolded me aggressively. If she were angry she would only use her bare hand to pat on my hips twice or three times. My father never spanked me at all. Whatever I did wrong,

he would teach me at night. Or sometimes he would just say the words indirectly to me that to do such and such was wrong. So I was a happy boy in the arms of my father and mother. But one of my sisters always scolded me. Every time she did that she would be told by our mother to stop scolding me and to talk to me nicely.

Then I was sent to live at a temple with Luang Loong (an uncle who was a Buddhist monk; translator). He was a strict disciplinarian, who did not talk a lot. He always looked solemn. He did not talk to anybody that much. He followed the old way preferring to do things by forcing the others to comply. I did not feel comfortable with him. As a matter of fact, he did the way he did because he loved the children. But we did not know. I became afraid of him and ran away from the temple once every so often. But I was always brought back to the temple, though. I was spanked so much that I ran away, again. It happened so often that I decided to stay away all together. Even though my mother and father wanted to take me back I would not agree to go. I was too fearful of the spanking. So I was moved to a new place, which was a school. Every thing went well in Grade One and Grade Two. In the Third Grade, the teacher was again very strict. He also loved to spank pupils. My old fever came back. I ran away from school again. They caught me and the teacher asked me why I missed coming to my class. I told him I was afraid of the cane he used to beat me often. The teacher laughed and told me he was not going to spank me any more. He asked me to come to school everyday. So I did and the teacher really stopped caning me. I continued my schooling there until I finished my elementary education.

You may be thinking why I am telling you my personal story. I just wanted to show you the danger of being too strict in the punishment. Normally, all of us have an instinct of fear in our mind. If we use fear as a technique, the practice will be too forceful for the children. The children will suffer mentally. They will not want to do anything. They will not want to be at home. They will consider the father, the mother, the guardian, all enemies. They will try to stay away and will be too far away that many of them will be spoiled. The children in front of the movie theatres, many of them came from the families where the father and the

mother used the threatening methods. If we look at the history of those who were hateful and vicious, you will find that they were mostly from the father and mother who were also hateful and vicious. So we need to be a little careful about punishing the children. Some parents seeing the children make mistake will lose all self-control. They could just hit without choosing a spot, just any place on the body. Sometimes, the children would lose a sense of hearing or an eye due to this kind of punishment. Please keep this thought in mind that the children are innocent. They do not know what is right and what is wrong for sure. They will always follow and example of adults. The adults are the ones who should be spanked more than the children because they played their role badly and yet they allowed the children to see them without realizing that they had done wrong. They punished the children out of anger. The action of the adults leaves much to be desired. Remember that **never punish the children while you are angry**. Because to punish the children at such time is when the parents lack reasonableness, as a consequence the penalty will usually be much too severe for that kind of mistake.

I read a newspaper the other day and saw a story about a woman, who tortured children in various ways and all were cruel. Women like that are called demons and not ordinary women. Some of them when angry will say things like, "I want to eat your meat." These are not the words of a human. They are those of a devil, who came to have control over your mind. Please do not let the devil punish your children. Try to drive away the devil out of your mind first. Why do we punish children? This is a question that needs to be answered first. The answer is for the children to be reformed by the punishment and not to repeat that mistake. The goal is to make them realize that they have done wrong so they will not commit that mistake again. I think I have made it clear to you.

Now consider this. Are there no other ways to let your little ones know that doing such and such is a mistake? There are several ways to do it without using the cane. First of all, we should discover the causation. Why do children like to do such a thing? Why do children behave in such a way as to be called by adults as being naughty? And have their naughtiness caused any damage? Please learn to try to find the reasons

for it. In regard to the children having done something wrong, we should think first why did they do such a thing. They must have learned by an example from some one. If we found out what was the bad example, we must cut it out completely. Suppose the nanny was the example. Do not allow her to do such a thing in front of the children again. This is a method used by distancing the bad example away from the children. Then we should talk to the children nicely. Giving them an opportunity to know that doing such a thing was bad and they become bad persons. You don't like them to do that again. Do you want us to love you? If you want our love, please do not do such a thing again. This is a warning for them not to make the same mistake again. Understand also that anyone who did something wrong needed a temptation to entice them to do it. They would not do it without any temptation. Try to look for such temptation and eliminate it from the children. Then they will not make that kind of mistake again. The adults don't have to punish the children and make them feel discouraged. And the children do not have to get hurt because of that mistake either.

It is a fact that the grown-ups are irritated by the naughtiness of the children. They always complain, "This little boy is very naughty. He makes my head swim everyday." We often heard the grand mothers on both sides complaining about that. When another child is quiet like a doll, then the grand mother is happy. In fact, children by nature will not stay put. If they do, they are not children. In general, the children are growing up both physically and mentally. If they stop moving about, the organs in their body will not develop. Naughtiness is therefore an attribute in children. But the nanny and the parents pay too much attention to them. They try to help them too much that the children don't have to do anything by themselves. That is not the right way. The duty of a nanny is only to look after the children and to make sure that they will not be in harm's way. We must give them some freedom. Then we will not have to complain that the children are naughty. But there must be some discipline, of course. There must be some compensation as well. Children starting to walk will naturally like to walk.

Look at those who just learn to ride a bicycle. They would want to

ride on any bicycle they could get their hands on. They do it to gain more experience and to be more skilful. The children just starting to walk would naturally want to walk all the time. Try to provide a place for them to walk in comfort and safety so that nothing can harm them. They would not behave naughtily and walk out of the way. The trouble is we do not have a special room for the children. The adults sit and lie down some place and the children are there as well. If there were a lot of stuff in that room, the little one would want to look and see what they are. They see a clock ticking and they wonder. They want to open and see what is inside that is making the ticking sound. How can we say that they are naughty for doing that? They are doing what come naturally. We adults are wrong to allow the children to be in a room full of the things they don't know about and they don't understand.

I have seen Caucasian children whose parents went out to work. They allowed the little one to be with some toys only. He kept himself busy in that room without going anywhere. At bath time and meal time, an adult came to feed and bathe him. Then he was returned to that room again. He stayed there without creating any scene and never bothered his parents. On the other hand, our children are always carried bodily all the time. They are always given full attention. As a matter of fact, to do that is quite a big mistake. But we do it as a habit and see nothing wrong with it. For this reason, I would like to suggest that do not nurture the children too much. Give them some freedom. Let them alone in their room for some time. The children will learn to depend on themselves step by step. If your children love to be active while you call it being naughty, you can correct that by allowing them to take part in sports. If they have some toys or some exercise equipment, his mind will behave properly as well.

The parents should not worry about children being naughty because naughty children have active brain. But they should be concerned about the silent ones, who will become sluggish in the future. Please do not punish the children who are known to be naughty. Try to turn naughty children to be active in a positive way. This can be done without much difficulty.

For this lesson, please remember that it is not right to punish the

children when you are consumed with anger and hatred. All children do not want to make mistake. They did it because of ignorance. Tell them first what they did that was wrong. Then they will never do that again. Normally, the children want to be loved by the parents. If they know that doing such and such will cause the adults not to love them, they will surely stop by themselves. Love { and kindness among all of us are the right path to follow for an everlasting virtue.

## *Train Children to Eat Only at Meal Times*

DEAR PARENTS,

**T**HE TOPIC I am going to talk about today may hurt your feelings just a little bit. I must apologize to all of you from the beginning. Because I have love and good wishes for all of you that is why I came here to talk to you. I wanted to lead you to take the right path and to correct any flaws in you to make each one of you a better person. When I see any flaws in you or your group of people but I neglected to inform you about them, then my action was not a correct one. I would turn out to be unfaithful to the Dhamma taught by the Buddha and became a traitor to our father, the Buddhabida. I would like to keep this virtue with me at all times by being a critic in the things that should be criticized. The things that supported me to do like that were nothing but my good wishes to all of you. Please listen to me and try to understand. I will begin my story now.

On the full-moon day of the tenth month, the Young Buddhist Association of Thailand invited the parents and guardians of the children to come to a meeting at the Buddhasathan auditorium to listen to a discussion particularly on the children. Because the problems about children are very big and will affect the future of our country so we need cooperation from all sources to help accomplish this goal. The Young Buddhist Association, for this reason, sent out an invitation to the parents of the children to come to Buddhasathan and participate in the discussion. On that particular day, I had to go to Sarapee to give a sermon there so I did not have a chance to say anything on that day at Buddhasathan. Than Chao Khun Vinai Kosol, the provincial governor, and the district chief, were the speakers. I arrived at Buddhasathan but very late. I was happy to see that there were a lot of people in the meeting. It showed that all of you loved light; you loved to learn and to practice what you have learned.

After the meeting was adjourned, the people went their separate ways. I myself stayed overnight at Buddhasathan. The next morning I woke up early. So I went downstairs to the auditorium. I looked under the chairs

and to my dismay, I found so many things the audience had forgotten about or just left them there. I really did not know. The items left behind included peanut shells, sugar cane, water, melon seeds, banana leaves, cigarette butts both big and small, and a lot of ashes. I instructed the workers to clean up the place promptly. That was the end of that story. But in my mind, the story has not ended by any means. There are several things to talk to you as a result of that.

There are rules and regulations for being present at a meeting. But most of us do not follow them in practice. Even in a meeting among the monks, it is not done in orderly manner. They tend to do as they please. **Whenever we do things as we please, the Buddha Dhamma will vanish from our heart at that moment. Buddha Dhamma in this case means the control over our mind to act in accordance with the rules and regulations.** Ordinarily, we can do things as we please if we are alone in private and no one can see what we are doing. But if we were in a group, it does not have to be several people, only two of us together will surely decrease our liberty to a certain degree. Rules and regulations as well as good manner are the things that limit our liberty to do as we please. We saw two gentlemen sitting together. If one of them wanted to smoke a cigarette, he would ask for permission from another person, "Excuse me, do you mind if I smoke?" The other gentleman, even though he might not like the cigarette smoke, he would answer courteously that, "Never mind, please go ahead and do as you like." Then the two of them could sit and talk to each other comfortably. This is an example of a good etiquette in our social encounter.

We Thais are accustomed to doing anything as we please. We will do anything at any place without thinking twice. As a rule, to be present at a meeting, everyone must be restful and quiet. Never talk to one another making noises which disturb other people. Do not smoke because tobacco smoke will irritate other people. Do not pound the betel nuts too loudly. Never spit the betel nut juice on the floor. If the meeting has anything to do with religious rites, particular attention must be observed and strictly so because when performing religious rites at the place of worship, it has a lot to do with self-control and always the cleaning up of one's mind.

The participants of that meeting should not do anything unwholesome. Buddhasathan is a meeting place for religious affairs as well as a place for the promotion of useful knowledge. Its participants should have some control over their action. Do not use the floor of Buddhasathan to be a garbage disposal of all kinds of leftover. Even in the case of a meeting in a *sala* (pavilion), it is the same. We should even observe the rules more strictly. The Thai people will become more a nation of rules and order. With more self-control, the Thai nation will progress in a wholesome way as planned. May I ask you to think about this and be aware of the existing situation?

You people may argue that the peanut shells and sugar cane and banana leaves were the result of the children. They were not committed by the adults. To argue like that is only to survive this time around. If you consider this for a moment, you will have to admit that anything about children come from adults. Adults bring up and lead the children. They teach them to do everything both directly and indirectly. Whatever the children do are the result of the action of the grown-ups. So the grown-ups are at fault and not really the children. Why do grown-ups often make mistakes about children? I can tell you that it was due to ignorance for one thing and to the love you have for them for another thing. But the love is destructive in nature or it is the kind that creates bad habits more than anything else is.

Many times when you wanted to leave the house to go somewhere to do your thing, your little one said, "I want to go with you, Mom." You didn't want him to go with you so you said to him in a harsh voice, "You cannot come with me!" The boy heard the harsh voice and became agitated. He thought that his mother talked to him like she did not love him. So he started to cry. Not only he was crying but he also did several things to try to win his argument. The Buddha once said, "A crying noise of a child is power." When you saw your son crying, you would try to humour him. But the crying did not stop; then you would make promises in various ways. For example, you promised to give the little one some sweets, or to take him to a movie, to give him some toys and many different promises just to make the crying stop. So the boy felt encouraged.

He thought his tactic really worked well and so he used it all the time.

If you would just have a little patience and did not allow your children to win that way and just left them alone until you were not angry any more and talked to them nicely, you would have won by acting reasonably. Your children in turn would not be spoiled. Have you ever made this kind of mistake? If so, please try to change by choosing the right way.

Suppose you were going to *Buddhasathan* and your little boy wanted to go with you. You let him accompany you. As a matter of fact, we should separate the children from adults in some cases. For instance, listening to the sermon at *Buddhasathan* on Sundays was ordinarily for the children. The parents who loved their children and wanted them to attend the sermon should send them over on that day. They would surely hear the topic suitable for children in particular. You could let the older children be in charge of the group. At any meeting, which was meant for adults, you should not bring your children except in cases where the group leader was capable of controlling the children. He or she should make sure the children behave themselves appropriately so that they did not disturb other, people.

While you are walking on a road with your little ones, be aware that there will be several things, which are attractive to them. Children by nature will always want things. Whenever they see things they like, the parents must be prepared to resist the temptation of the children. For example, when you walk past an intersection, you will probably encounter peanut vendors, sugar cane sellers and watermelon seed hawkers. All those things are favourite food for children. It is certain that the children are going to ask you to buy them and then what are you going to do in that situation? My advice is that first of all you know what the children want. So we have to prevent that from happening by not giving them the time to take any interest in those food. For instance, you can walk quickly past the stalls. Or you may talk to the children about something interesting to draw their attention away. That is one way to avoid an unpleasant situation.

If it so happened that you were off guard. You approached the stall and the children asked for it right away. You should try to talk so they

understood that the food on sale were not good. They were not well covered and there were flies all over the food. Those flies had visited cow manure and chicken drops including that of human. Those dirty stuffs stuck to their feet. When they came to the food on sale, those dirty stuffs were transferred to the food. The dirty stuff contained bacteria. If those bacteria got inside the human stomach, you would have a stomach ache like the last time. Talk to them until they understood using your hand movement to emphasize a point to some extent. Then you led them away from those stalls. This is the best way to handle the situation. In case there are some food, which are not bad for the children, you may allow them to buy it. But the food must be eaten at a proper place. Never allow them to eat the food in the meeting room. Train them to know the right time and the right place when they are still young so when they grow up they will behave properly. Thanks to you who always gave them good advice.

At any time your children got sick, you should take that opportunity to talk to them so that they will be able to see the danger of wrong doing, which may bring hardship into their life. The parents should try to find every opportunity to teach their children so they can be correctly called some one who love their children the right way.

Even eating within your own family, you should always train yourself to have a good eating habit. Don't ever do anything according to your desire because it will be damaging to your children in the long run. These little things are the ones, which have brought so much harms to a lot of people. So please be especially careful about them.

Observe that some children are healthy while some are very weak. Who made them that way? The parents are the ones who did that. There are fathers, who behave naughtily. They love to frequent unwholesome places collecting diseases as the gifts for the children. Some children were born with abnormality, i.e. bad eyes, etc. The father who just wants to have fun can bring damages to the children in this way. So he must be careful about it. Some mothers are the same. They spend the time having fun by distributing paper and have no time to take care of their children. They leave the children alone. And at the end the children become

bad due to lack of attention. The duties of the parents are to bring up the children. To guide the children in the right way, the correct way, are the things for them to do while the children are still young. Try to instill good habits and good deeds little by little, then your children will become good persons. When they become adults, they will be good citizens of our country in the future.

In regard to not instilling good habit of controlling one's self, some children when they become adults, are used to eating at odd hours and without choosing. They love to eat anything both edible and inedible. The event becomes a scandal in town. They are the children, who grow up in the family, which do not eat at proper mealtimes and eat anything without discrimination. And that is how they turn out. Any country with a lot of people like that will be ruined without any doubt. All of us are Thais. We love Thailand and love our independence. Please start training your children to know about eating and living first. Don't ever lead them to eat any time they want, any place they want. To have a discipline in eating will create discipline in living. These are the real things that are the foundation in the development of our country.

For this reason, I would like to remind you that your children depend on you to be good or bad. Try to be a good example. Do not humour the children by doing things you know will spoil your children. Do not feel pity on the children that you allow them to do evil things. This kind of pity will be destructive to your loved ones.

## *What Do Children Want, Where & When?*

DEAR PARENTS,

**W**E ARE BUDDHISTS. We worship the Buddha. We live our lives in accordance with his teaching. We are happy to have him as our teacher and our refuge. His life story is interesting. From the time he was born; grew up and married Princess *Pimpa*; became a monk to search for the Truth, which was a path leading to the cessation of suffering. When he had found the truth he announced his findings to the people of the world. The teaching of his religion went on smoothly at all times. Sometimes he met the people who were behaving badly. But after they met with him and listened to his teaching and had seen his serene attitude, they changed from being vicious to becoming cool hearted. They became his disciples and were ordained as Buddhist monks. The propagation of his teachings was useful to all kinds of people. Even though he died more than two thousand five hundred years ago, his Dhamma principles which are the foundation of the right living still win over the hearts of the people. The students, who are supposed to have a good grip of worldly knowledge in accordance with the new education plan, in general, do not believe in theism. But when they found the teaching based on the observance of Dhamma, they succumbed to the truth uttered by the Buddha. It is really an interesting phenomenon in this day and age.

Why has the Buddha won over the hearts and souls of so many people? How can his Dhamma reach the mind and cleanse the soul so very well? What is the secret of this success? The answer is in him being able to study and to understand the thoughts and the feelings of the people and to say things, which were suitable to their knowledge. The listeners, having heard the words, which were appropriate to their habits and characters, could readily accept his teachings and practised them so well. The Buddha was in effect like a physician, who knew the symptoms of his patient and prescribed appropriate medication for him or her. And the patient recovered from the illness as he or she wished.

To learn about each other's needs is a good way to promote unity

among us. To study this topic, we begin by examining our own mind. Try to observe the needs of your own mind when you encounter a situation, then remember the needs and compare them to other people's feelings and you will understand what they need. You will be able to act in such a way as to meet their needs. Those who come near you will love you. The people, who cannot get along with other people, are none other than those who do not try to learn to know about the feelings and the needs of other people. So they are not successful in making friends.

In trying to understand children, it is the easiest thing to do, because a child's life is not complicated. Maya or deceptions like that of a grown-up have not tainted it. There are no tricks up their sleeves. The feeling of a child is most direct. So it should be easy for the nanny and the parents, if they are to observe with interest, to know what the children want. If it is the thing that can be had without giving them a bad habit, please make it easy for them and do not torture them and make them beg for it. This is the best way. In reality, whatever the children want are the needs of nature. They have not wanted anything more than for their physical needs. Except for the ones who were trained unwittingly by the adults to have the needs that are not necessary for them. Babies cannot tell what they need verbally so they will make a sign for us to see. Then they did not get what they wanted they would make a loud cry as if to appeal to those close to them. When babies cry, it means something is wrong with them. Do not always think that the babies only need food. Sometimes it may have been insect bites or something of that nature. The little mattress on which they lie may be wet with the urine or several other things. The parents must remember that when the babies cry there must be a reason for it. Try to find out what it really is.

Several years ago there was a woman who just had her first baby boy. One day the baby started crying. No matter what she did he would not stop. The grand mother was an old-fashioned type person. She thought that the angel mother of the baby came to tease him. She went to see a witch doctor to ask him to make a charm to put around the baby's neck hoping it would stop the crying. The witch doctor made a charm for her. Having received the charm, she made a preparation by carrying the baby

to take a bath and then the charm would be put around his neck. She happened to glance at the lower back of the baby and saw a small wound, which was a result of him lying on the wet mattress. So she knew the real reason why the baby was crying. She powdered the baby's body and his back and changed the linen on the mattress. The little boy went back to sleep without bothering them any more. In Dhamma teaching, there is a saying, **"All things have causes. To stop the effects, get rid of the causes."** This teaching should be very useful to the parents. **Try to study the causes from observing your children. Don't do anything foolishly and without reasons.** Foolishness on your part will penalize the children. When they grow up they may turn out to be bad persons.

Whenever you have anything to do with the children, you should fix the time and try to be always punctual. Don't do anything using your emotions. For example, in feeding, and bathing. But you should allow the babies to sleep as freely as they need. And all these routines must be done in an orderly manner. The babies are not going to be so fussy that you have no time to do other work and have to carry them in your arms all the time. You don't have to do like that and you should not! After bathing and feeding the babies, let them sleep on a mattress or a cot comfortably. Then you don't have to do anything until the scheduled times. They will probably sleep comfortably as is the case of a happy baby. They will be very happy if they are allowed to be their own self. We adults also want to have the time of our own. We want to be left alone in a quiet place as well. Children also have the same need. I want to remind you to be cognizant of this fact. Aside from the parents, the grand parents on both sides often are excited about the grand children. They will pamper them all the time. **They will also keep bothering them by lifting them up and making all kinds of movements.** In doing that, even though they show the love towards the children, they may harm the children as well. The right way is not to bother them so much. **The children will turn out to be weak when they grow up. The weakness in the mind of a person will bring about the decline of that family.** That is why I want to warn you on this.

Another mistake made by the parents is related to not trying to

understand the needs of the children but using their own need instead. Do not use delusional feelings with children. Do not punish the children in the wrong way, for instance, by verbal abuse and caning, in order to frighten the children by the punishment alone until the children become obstinate and totally spoiled. Please use this as a guideline. **Refrain from caning and other foolish cruel treatments. Use your intelligence to reform them instead. This method will not harm the children in any way.** It will not confuse their mind and it will help to make them more thoughtful in the future. This is one thing to remember.

In case your children do something they should not have done while they are still very young and innocent. For example, they cry because they want something like all children do sometimes. But you cannot give that thing to them because it may be harmful. Do not threaten them with a loud voice to scare them or to act in such way as to startle them. Instead try to separate that thing from the children by putting it away somewhere else. Then you come back to comfort them. The words and gestures, which are filled with love and kindness even though they may not understand them but they will understand the meaning of the manner, you have shown them. Give them a kiss. Play with them so that they become amused and forget about that thing all together. In general, children tend to forget quite easily and a lot more quickly than adults. The attachment of emotion is so little. At the end, they will be all right.

When we talk about the punishment by spanking, some parents may think that without it the children will become haughty and will not be afraid of them. In regard to this misconception, I want to make it clear that you can still use spanking when your children have grown up a little bit and can understand some simple things and not totally innocent when you try to explain something to them. But if your children happen to be hard to teach; and if they are not punished to make them remember; and you are afraid that they will not listen; then the punishment must be done at the right time and the right place. It has to be done within reason and you must mean what you say. Don't do it just to "release your anger", because the action may be too severe due to you being angry and cannot see things straight. You must be very careful about this. The words "time

and place” mean that you have to know the right time and place to punish. For example, do not punish the children before meal time or while they are eating. This will confuse the mind of the children so much that they cannot eat their meal. Some people, while the children are eating, scold them using vulgarity. The children have to eat food plus tears while sobbing in anguish. I cannot see how it can be fun. Do not punish them in front of your guests or in front of other children. This will make them too embarrassed. Try to think of yourself. If some one insult you in front of other people, will you like it? I know you don't. Sometimes you will end up fighting with that person who insulted you. Children have a heart as well. So don't punish them at such time and place.

In regard to having good enough reason to punish, it is something like this. Before punishing your children, you must have enough evidence to show what they have actually done wrong. Do not punish them without being sure. Remember an old saying, “**Catch tightly, squeeze deadly**”, because in punishing the children we must let them know that they have actually done wrong and what they did was serious enough and it may be harmful to them in the future. It is something that the parents have forbidden them not to do and they still do it so you have to punish them. The children will not be sad for being punished in the mistake they have made. They know they are also given a chance to be good people in the future.

For your action to have meaning is something like this. Once the temple boys violated an order of the abbot. He called all the wrong doers to come to a meeting to explain to them that those actions were not proper for the temple boys to do. After all of them understood the issue, they were given a probation on a condition that whoever did that again would be caned five times. Every boy was happy that they were not caned that time and tried to behave themselves well all the time. But there was a boy who was reckless and did wrong again. The abbot called him to talk about the mistake. It was to remind him of all the issues involved and he told the boy that this kind of mistake was forbidden in the last time and they were told whoever did that again would be caned five times, “This time I will have to do it. At 8.10 P.M. I will start the caning and let you

go.” He also told the boy, “Come to see me at 8.00 P.M.” That evening the abbot happened to have visitors. They talked until 9.00 P.M. before the guests said goodbye. At 8.00 P.M. the errant boy came to sit not far from where they were talking and waited until the guests left. He then approached the abbot to pay homage to him. The abbot said I was going to come at 8.10 P.M. Now that time has passed. You are free to go and will not be caned. That boy was completely reformed. He realized how fairly the abbot had treated him. He turned out to become more aware of himself and had not done wrong again. The abbot meant I what he said. His words were sacred and the boy could see them. The fairness and the intention, which are so full of compassion, reformed him totally. Please try to remember, **“Love wins over hatred and compassion wins over viciousness, always.”**

## *How to Correct Bullying Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

LAST SATURDAY we talked about learning to know the needs of the children and that when we understood what they needed we would try to give whatever they really needed to them. At the end we talked about the punishment which should be done at the right time and the right place within reasons and to make it meaningful. I also reminded you to use caning only when it was appropriate to do and not to use caning indiscriminately because it might make your children obstinate and they might think that your punishment was nothing to be afraid of. Then the end result would be that you could not control your children with an adverse consequence for your children and yourself later on. I hope that you understood the reasons and use them to your advantage to a certain degree. Today, I would like to remind you a little more on this subject. Please listen carefully and consider what is really going on about you and your children. It is like looking at you in a mirror. When you see any dirty spots, you can make correction right away. Anything about children is interesting and must be handled always in a special way. For instance, if something happened to the children you should know what to do first and then what.

Suppose one of your boys have a bad habit of being a bully, who is some one acting like a thug. You should find a way to transform him by explaining to him that we love ourselves and don't want anyone to hurt us. "Everyone is afraid of being hurt and is afraid to die. Like when your mother came at you with a cane, you are afraid of her. If you are afraid, the other people are afraid just like you. Think about it carefully and don't go around causing trouble to other people. To make trouble for other people is also bringing unhappiness to you." Ask him to use his knuckle to knock on the floor once. He should understand that it is painful and does not want to knock on that floor again. Tell him the people who love to bully other people are called "rascals". Anyone identified, as a rascal usually has no one to associate with. "When you make a habit of

picking on a lot of people, and many people have problems with you, they may just get together and come after you causing injury or even death. Those who cause others to suffer will suffer themselves later on.”

Children who love to pick on other people often started by destroying things, killing small animals. Then they transform themselves to bullying their friends. **So you should be careful no to allow your children to have any opportunity to practice destroying things. It will become their habit.** To talk and counsel like the above is the first priority. If it does not give any result, you have to counsel them again and again by seeing them in person and teaching them nicely. Remember that your children already have viciousness in their mind. Do not try to increase it to them by no showing anger nor punishing them without explaining the reasons. If you do that it will increase viciousness in him. When the fire is raging, do not pour gasoline on it. Give the fire some water and it will be extinguished.

Giving advice in a nice way has many advantages. If the advise does not work then we need to use some strong-arm method just a little. For instance, by saying that if they do that again we will punish them by not allowing them out of the house or by caning how many times as a warning for them to know in advance. After having promised to punish them, you yourself must not fail to remember the promise. Don't ever forget it. If you forget when they make that mistake and you do not punish them as promised, they will not respect you any more. They will think of you as being unreliable. The discipline and order will be ruined. Always do as you have told them. Even though you have to do it several times you still have to do as you said. After you have promised them and afterwards the same mistake happened again, you will have to think it over very carefully. Do not think only that your children were at fault and only they alone. There might be something that irritated them that created an emotion to fight and hit one another. It is the duty of the parents to use their wisdom the best they know how. Look at all the surrounding circumstances to find its cause and then try to eliminate the cause. Remember a Dhamma principle, **“All things have causes. Look for the causes. Once found eliminate them. The effect, which is trouble, will go away.”**

By controlling and looking for the cause, the result will be whole-

some to your children. Grown-ups must not be hot headed. Whatever you see happening, do not panic. Keep calm and look for the reasons, or to grab a hold of the situation firmly. For example, if you have several children in your charge and the money in your purse was missing often without knowing who was the culprit. When you don't know for sure, do not complain or express any reaction. Act like you are not paying any attention as if nothing has happened to your money. But you need to use your wisdom to observe each one of them and take note of how they behave in regard to their spending habit. On one evening you should instruct all the children to be present in front of a Buddha image, for instance, to pay homage together. Then you start talking about the evil of stealing. Perhaps, some of the children do not know that stealing is wrong. They did it because they wanted the money. We cannot blame them too much about that. We adults probably have not told them that it is a sin to steal. If they knew they would not have done it. Normally, children do not want to make mistake or to do things, which the adults do not like. We should tell them the reasons and at the same time observe their reactions. Do not make an accusation by just having a suspicion. There must be concrete evidence to accuse some one. This practice will make the children respect you and be fearful of you. They will also see that you are wiser than they are. They can no longer fool you. At the end they will stop making that kind of mistake for good.

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1967, one day before the Children's Day, *Buddhasathan* arranged a meeting for the children to listen to a sermon as usual because it was also on a Sunday. A man came to me telling me that some one had entered the storage room and took several miniature flags. The children knew that on the Children's Day, any boys and girls, who pinned a miniature flag on the chest would be given a free gift. So they got the flags without telling anybody. At the time of the sermon, it so happened that I was going to talk about the Second Precept, which dealt with an abstinence from stealing. So I explained to the audience step by step and then I asked them question, "When we come to *Buddhasathan*, a place teaching people to do good, we know all the property at *Buddhasathan* belongs to the public. If some one decided to take some property without permis-

sion from the curator, is that a good thing to do?" The children answered in unison that it was not. I asked them further that if some one did because they did not realize that it was wrong, was that the wrong thing to do? They all said it was still wrong. I went on to say that everyone could always make a mistake without knowing. If they knew it was wrong and confessed and returned the things to us, that person who knew they had done wrong and tried to correct the situation were good people. "Who want to be good people?" Everyone raised his or her hand. "When you want to be good people you can do it by returning the flags". The children who took the little flags gave all of them back. They were greeted with a loud applause and were complimented by me, who was, of course, the preacher. This is a good method. And I want to give it as a gift to all the parents to use it as a way to train your children to become good people.

Another issue for consideration is that in punishing the children, it should be done to prevent them from doing the thing that they should not be doing. It is not to force the children to do the thing we want them to do. For example, if we told the children close the gate when they exited and when they entered the house in order to prevent a thief from coming in the house, but there was boy who did not understand the reason why he had to close the gate. He was obstinate and stubborn and did not want to obey the instruction. He just left the gate open. We did not really know what to do with him. If we wanted to punish him while we were angry then the situation would get worse. The boy would become more stubborn. Or if he wanted to comply, it would be out of fear and not because he did it voluntarily. The result was not going to be good for that boy either way. All I can say is to punish the children using the method that does not allow them to understand the reason is not the right thing to do. It is an unreasonable punishment and very harmful. As a rule, there must be an understanding. They must understand the issue clearly. Then they can be punished as stated in the rules. The children who realized they were wrong will not feel badly even though they would be punished. But if they thought they were punished due to a bias they would feel very hurt. Please do not hurt the feelings of our children.

After you have punished them using good enough reasons, forget

about the whole thing. You must try to think as if nothing has happened between you and your children.

To punish some one and talk about it over and over will make you a fussy person. Your children will not respect you and they will say that you are good for nothing.

As a rule, anything creating pain and embarrassment is not desirable. Anything creating happiness will be desirable to everybody. They want to talk about it often. But it must be done at the right time with the right stuff to make people feel comfortable always:

### **Things to Remember**

1. Do not punish the children when the mistake was not made in your presence or there was no evidence proving that it was their fault.
2. Do not punish any children in order to get even with another person such as in a case you are angry with the father but you hurt the son. This is not fair to the latter.
3. Do not postpone the punishment when the mistake was made in your presence or you have enough proof, e.g. to postpone by saying that, "Wait till your father comes home, I will tell him to beat you".
4. Do not use unrelated event to punish the children, e.g. you promised to take them to a play. Then your children made a mistake so you decided to cancel attending the play. To cancel going to the play was intended to punish the children. You should not do that at all.
5. Do not act like a winner after you have punished a child. The child will believe that the punishment was only made to relieve your anger. Or it will indicate to him that you are a weak person. The child will not be afraid of you in the future.
6. Do not punish the children if another kind of punishment has already been inflicted on them. For example, the children were naughty and fell down. You were angry and hit them and also said something vulgar. That is not proper. Because falling has already taught them a lesson how painful it was. Do not add a mental pain to them. If the children are just innocent babies, you yourself have to pay careful attention them.
7. Do not punish the children using your tongue. Scolding and being

fussy are useless for the children. It will only help transfer that bad habit to the children. Anyone with sharp tongue beware.

8. Anything you said was wrong must be wrong all the time e.g. your child slapped you on the face and you spanked him or her for having bad behaviour. Later on the child slapped you again. It happened to be the time when you were in good mood so you laughed and considered it a joke. Your action will confuse the child and he or she will not know for sure when or how it was right or wrong.
9. Do not use different standard between those who have the authority to punish. The father and the mother should use the same kind of punishment for similar kind of mistake.
10. Don't be biased in your punishment, e.g. brothers fighting each other. The older one was punished more than the younger one because he was smaller. The older one was hurt and became jealous of the younger one. He was mad and might inflict injury to his younger brother later on. He may also lose respect for you.
11. Don't punish a child repeatedly but unconvincingly. Do it and mean business.
12. Don't punish a child improperly, e.g. showing anger by not talking to him or her for three days.
13. Do not have an argument about the punishment in front of the children. If you want to argue, do it without being seen by them.
14. Don't do it half-heartedly because you don't want to punish the child yourself but you make a loud angry voice to make other people do the job for you. Your punishment will have no meaning and the child will not be afraid of it.

To punish a child is very important. Do not punish him or her without a principle. The above 14 guidelines of punishment must be remembered and used by you. Your children will turn out to be polite and well behaved and they will respect your authority and listen to you. If you don't act properly using emotion and anger in handling your children, it is your own fault. You cannot blame anybody. Hopefully, you will not have to suffer the consequence by overlooking my advice.

## *Do Not Create the Land of Terror in the Mind of your Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

PLEASE LISTEN to the story about children again. In the last chapter we have talked about how to punish your children. It ended with several reminders for you to remember and to use them as a guideline. Teaching and bring-up your children is an important and delicate job. It always needs knowledge and special skills. You already know about physical punishment. Today I will talk about mental punishment, which means planting some of the bad habits in the children. And after the children have received, those habits will jeopardize their life until they become adults. Some of the habits will stay with them until the day they die. Remember that normal children are like wet clay. It can be moulded or sculpted into anything. Also normally children will easily accept things and those things will be retained in his mind for a long time. Grown-ups must be careful never to impress any harmful pictures in the mind of the children.

One of the damages the parents and the nanny often cause: unintentionally to the children is by using a simple trick. The practice has spoiled countless numbers of children especially in our country of Thailand. When the people in charge of the little children see that they are naughty and out of control, and they are too lazy to look after them, they would use this trick, which is harmful to the children. That is by lying to them, to make them afraid of something. For example, they will say that, "Don't you go into that room because you will be bitten by a stray cat." Or some strange creature inside is very scary. And when they talk about it they make it sound so frightening. This is a technique to scare the children. Any adults who did something like that, even though the intention was to discourage the children from behaving naughtily, but their actions were not proper. The adults themselves were sinful because they did not speak the truth. To fool the children thoughtlessly like that to scare them needlessly and make them act cowardly as well.

Generally in Thailand people often love to tell ghost stories to the children. The stories were full horrible tales. Little children loved to hear stories like that but they were fearful. Nevertheless, they endured and listened because they were curious. When the story began, the children sat apart from one another. After a while they came closer together. Before long one of them jumped into the middle of the circle without realizing what he was doing. This practice instilled a bad habit of being afraid of the ghosts without gaining any useful purposes. Except for a fact that the children turned out to be afraid of the things they should not be afraid of at all.

When I was a little boy, I was fooled by those stories as well. At the age of seven, I went to stay at a temple to learn to read and write. At night the temple compound was very quiet. The smaller children would stay together or close to the monks. The bigger boys would remember ghost stories to tell us all the time. Sometimes, the monks would tell those stories among themselves. The smaller boys would also overhear the stories. All the stories were scary, e.g., a ghost broke a novice's neck or a ghost hanged a man to a tree branch. The little boys heard the stories and their hair stood on end with fear. The fear overwhelmed us. I was so scared. I tried to sleep in between my friends. But my friends also did not want to sleep on the outside. We just fought for the ideal spot in the middle. All of us were not embarrassed to show our fear. My fear for the ghosts or darkness followed me from those days. When I attended a secondary school I was also a boy scout. We had to practice walking long distance and staying over night in different places. Sometimes we had to hold a manoeuvre during the night. The commanding officer ordered me to act as a scout and watched the enemies all alone by myself. The same fear came to my heart. It protested my being in that situation. A mind was scared of the ghost. Another mind was afraid of the officer, who gave the order. It was like being scared of both the sharp and the dull edge of a knife. I did not know what to do. I walked with anxiety and was totally horrified all the time.

Think about it for a minute. Will that person be happy when he is doing something in fear? Will the work be done well? Naturally it is not

going to be good. I was fearful like that until I became monk. After having studied the *Dhamma* more and more, I was able to see the absurdity of these things. I understood finally that, fear was the thought we fabricated ourselves, to fool ourselves. My fear seemed to die down but not all of it, unfortunately. The thought about fear still fools me once in a while. This is the effect of making children afraid of the things they should not be afraid of at all. It brought so much harm to the mind of a young person.

At Wat Umong, there was a full human skeleton on display. Many adults looked at it and their hair stood on end. They were afraid to come near the skeleton because they accepted the fact about the ghosts. The skeleton in their mind meant a ghost. When they saw a coffin, with or without a corpse, they thought of a ghost. Even the paper on the coffin had ghosts in their heart. They had accepted ghosts in various forms and put them in their heart since they were little children. Who put them in their heart? No one but their parents and nannies did. On the other hand, some children went to Suan *Buddhadhamma* garden. They saw the same skeleton and did not even flinch. They came close to the skeleton and used their hands to touch it indifferently. They had no fear at all. Because they had not been taught to imagine a ghost image in their mind, so they were not afraid of the things that scared other people. Those children when they grow up, would become brave persons. Their parents had done the right thing by not implanting in them any unwholesome thoughts. But there are still many parents who misunderstand this issue. They tell scary stories about something that the children should not be afraid of. So I would like to remind all the parents to be a little more careful about this. Don't do anything improperly and unsuitably. Do not bring any stupidity and fear in any shape or form into your home.

If you have a boy who is naughty and he loves to go all over the place. You should find a way to control but not by fooling him. For example, if you don't want him to enter any room you should close its door tightly. Do not allow anything to attract his curiosity. If he is able to enter that room and you are afraid that he may damage something, do not panic and make a loud noise. Acting like that will excite him too much and he

will be scared. If you are going to talk among your people of the same age and it happens to be terrifying or a mystery, don't let your children overhear it. Try to give your children something appropriate to do in other areas of the house. You should explain any items, which may create fear in your children so that they will be accustomed to them. Hopefully, they will consider the things as normal and nothing to be afraid of at all.

At night when the moon is dark, you should train your children to get used to darkness. For example by walking together in the dark with them or sit and talk in darkness. Make them get accustomed to that environment. Do not allow your children to associate themselves with the people, who are so foolish as to be afraid of the things they should not be, because with the association, that fear may spread to your children very easily. Some animals such as worms and centipedes are awfully repulsive and disgusting. Anybody who sees them would want to go away. If you act like that and allow the children to see you, the children will be scared of them as well. I would like to suggest to you not to act scared for your children to see. It will be harmful to their mind. You love your children a lot, don't you? You don't want your children to be cowardly, do you? There is only one way to accomplish that. It is by preventing your children from creating the land of terror in their own mind.

Thailand is in a state of building the nation. Our country needs brave people. She does not need cowardly people because cowardly people are weak, indecisive and they are not progressive. If we have a lot of cowards, the country will move in a bad way. I would like to ask you to help build our nation to become strong. Planting courage to do the right thing in the mind of the children can do this.

There must be the time when your children received knowledge about the ghosts from stupid people, who believed in foolish things. When you know about it, do not sit still. And don't think for a minute that it was a minor detail. Explain to your children and make them understand that the stories they heard were meant just for fun and not true stories. The real ghosts do not exist. They exist only in fiction. If there were ghosts, the father and the mother who have lived so long must have seen a ghost somewhere before. Some of the monks, who used to stay in

cemeteries, they confirmed that they had never seen any of them. Don't believe anything about the ghost. You must try talking to the children about it. Sometimes there was a loud noise in the house. The children did not understand and they were scared that it was a ghost. Tell them that, it might have been a gecko or a rat running back and forth. Some newly built houses have loud noises often. If you don't know you may even think it is a ghost. But in fact, it is the wood expanding due to the heat and it shrinks due to the cold, creating loud noises.

If you stay close to a big steel bridge, like the Rama VI Bridge, you may hear loud noises like an explosion. If you were scared of the ghost, you would think that was it. In fact, it was due to the expansion of the steel making very loud noises. At night there may be strange light in the sky. Explain to your children what it is if they have seen it. But don't say that it was a kind of ghost (called, "phee phung tai" in Thai), or a female ghost (called, "phee krasue" in Thai), because the ghost will be implanted in their mind again. Give them a good reason and your children will have more wisdom, which will eliminate any misunderstanding. Don't make a mistake by thinking that to fool the children is fun. The adults may have fun doing that but the children will surely suffer and they may turn out to become cowardly. To be fearful of the things you should not fear is detrimental to the future of the children. Be very careful about it.

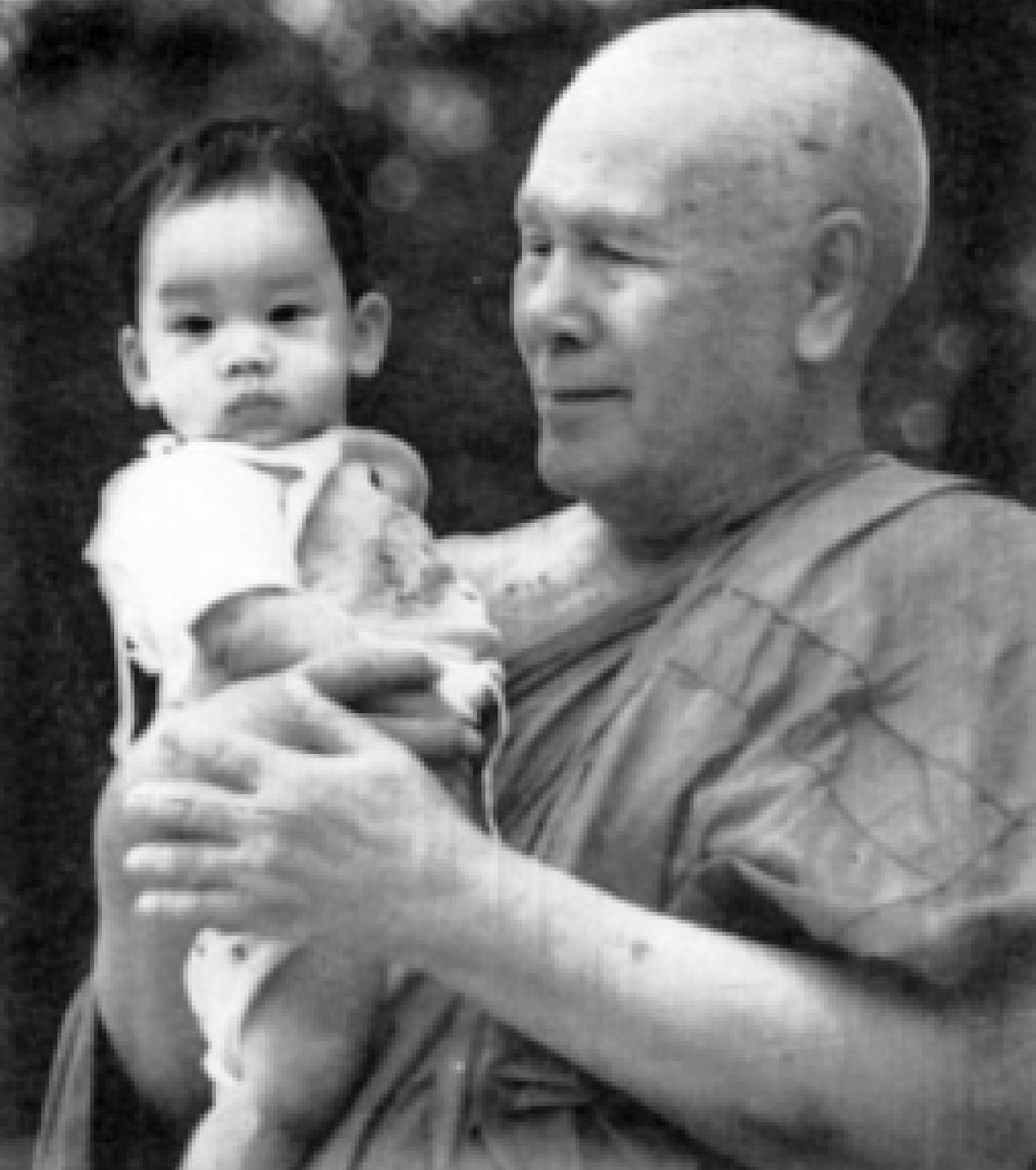
To act cowardly towards the things they should not is bad for the children. You must try to prevent or to eliminate it completely. But to fear and respect some one is a good thing. It is useful to the children. The parents must try to observe the behaviour of the children at all times to know whether they act cowardly or they fear and respect, and try to eliminate the cowardice while promoting fear and respect in them. Fear is definitely a guideline in the development of one's life. For example, if they fear and respect their parent, they will be afraid to do anything in violation of their teaching. They will be obedient and easily trained. They will not be a problem for the family. They will not be a burden to the parents. When they grow up and go to school, they will retain this habit and will respect the teachers making it easy for them to impart their knowledge and wisdom. They will become good pupils. When they become adults,

they will respect the laws of the land. They are good citizens of that country. If they join a religion, they will conform to the teaching of that religion and become good religious followers, who are useful to the nation as a whole. All parents should have some guidelines in your heart. You have children and you want them to be good, to be progressive and to be tough mentally. When they grow up you want them to be able to stand on their own two feet. But whatever will happen to the children, the parents are the ones, who have written the scripts of their future life. If you did it the right way your children will be good and famous. If you did it the wrong way many bad things will happen to them. Do not ever allow any of your children to blame you later on that because their parents did not warn them they turned out the way they did. That should not happen at all to you.

For this chapter, you just have to remember a few simple guidelines.

1. Do not deceive your children in any way, shape or form.
2. Explain the reasons to the children until they clearly understand the issue.
3. Don't ever allow your children to be with stupid people, who tell them foolish stories.
4. If your children received any information, which will make them to act cowardly, try to brainwash them by telling them the truth about it.
5. Never get tired of answering the children, who ask about little things.
6. Don't talk about scary incident in the presence of your children.
7. Try to let them sleep by themselves when they have grown up a bit so they will be far away from adults.
8. You must explain clearly about any object or drawing, which look scary to the children.

END OF PART ONE



LOVE YOUR CHILDREN  
THE RIGHT WAY

PART II

# *Love Your Children The Right Way*

## *Part Two*

### *How to Correct Stubbornness in Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

PLEASE LISTEN to me again about this important matter. Several days ago, a lady came to see me at the temple. She said she had only one son but he was trouble for her. I asked her how. She told me that her son was very stubborn. He did not listen to her at all and always acted as he pleased. Any time she disagreed with him there would be big trouble. When he became angry he would break things, which were close to him at the time. I listened and could not help feel pity on her and on that boy as well.

Mothers always have problems with stubborn children. If the children cannot be cured, the stubbornness will become a bad habit. When they grow up they may become hotheaded and cruel. I knew another boy. When he was young he would always be angry at something. When he became angry he would hit his head against the wall every time. The parents had to help each other hold him and talk to him to calm him down. After a short time, this family moved away. I met this boy again when he grew up to be a nice young man. He seemed to have changed and became a decent cool-headed man and not a quick-tempered one any more. It was probably due to the fact that his parents had corrected his condition in time. Ill-tempered children bring a great deal of heartache into the family. We should look at this issue as well.

One way to correct the stubbornness in children is by improving the behaviour of other people in the family. The fact of the matter is the children will not know anger if we do not teach them to be angry. The children will not know stubbornness if we don't teach them stubbornness. The mistake in cases like this is usually that of the adults more than that of the children. The children are always innocent by nature. They don't know how to do evil things yet. If we want to compare them

to an object then they are like a piece of clean white cloth. It has not been stained by dirt. Nothing has contaminated the white cloth. It is the same for the children. Their minds are still controlled by nature. They have only a few needs. They also act in a direct way without any tricks up their sleeves. We have a duty to bring up our children, but we have not learned to know about their needs. For example, they may be busy doing something on their own and are having fun in their own little way. The adults do not understand what the children are doing and they do something against their wishes because the adults are only thinking about themselves. That makes the children angry but they don't know how to justify their action. They don't know how to tell what is inside their mind so they show their reaction by getting mad. If the adults force them more, they will become angrier and the reaction will be as strong as the action of the parents. You will end up thinking that your children are stubborn and do not want to comply with your command.

Why don't you try thinking about yourself for a minute? Suppose you are enjoying yourself doing something and some one interrupts, you probably will be unhappy too. That kind of interruption is the thing that irritates people. **The irritation, which occurs frequently in the mind of anybody, is a sure way to accumulate anger little by little. Eventually that person will be easily provoked and becomes angry-prone.** Any person in anger does not know one's self, does not know reasons and does not know anybody. Listening to nobody is a sign of stubbornness. So we can conclude that to contradict the children often will turn them to be easily provoked and angry-prone. The grown-ups must be very careful about this. Both children and adults love freedom. Give freedom to the children and don't get involved with them too much. This is when the parents are usually wrong. They try to get involved too much. They lack understanding about their children. We can easily see in the following example.

A little girl is enjoying herself playing with a new toy. She is having fun with it. An adult comes by and picks up the toy to take a look at it without asking. The girl is unhappy because she was enjoying it. We interrupted her enjoyment all of a sudden. The girl is unhappy and shows her resentment. When we see that she is unhappy we want to make her angry

seeing that it is a fun thing to do for the adult. But it is no fun for the little girl. She is angry because she is unfairly treated. The adult actually loves the girl and wanted to play with her. But she does not understand the intention of the adult. The adult does not know the feeling of the girl. So the two don't get along. The little girl is at a disadvantage. Such action by the adult made her angry. When she is angry we punish her and we blame her for being a cry baby. This is actually the fault of the adult.

We adults should remember not to interfere with the children's business before they have agreed to let us get involved. For example, if we want to take a look at their toys. In stead of taking your liberty to look at the toys, you should compliment them first and act like you want to see the toys. "Do you mind letting me see your toy?" They would say, "Of course not." Then you can look at it, as you so desire. This is the right way to do it and it will not hurt their feelings. It will not anger them as well.

When the children are playing with their friends in a make believe situation such as playing at selling goods. You will see that they act as sellers and buyers with all kinds of things for sale. The buyers are buying and bargaining just like the way they have seen and remembered. You see them you may feel the love for them all of a sudden. The love in you makes you do things without any constraint. You go to your child and kiss her with love. You thought that your child would love it but you were wrong. The thought of the children were still with their world of make believe. They are sellers and buyers. How could you embrace a seller? They may feel that they will lose the money from damaged goods. They are not happy and they may be angry and cry. Then you were mistaken again for thinking that your children were too sensitive and they get mad all the time. It was you who were at fault to interfere with their business needlessly. Remember always not to interfere with the children when they are having fun playing. As a matter of fact, you should be thankful that they are not bothering you and leave you to do your work by playing like that.

On some occasions, your children were interested in something. They were paying full attention to that so much that they forgot all other things. They were concentrating on that particular thing and you wanted them to

do something for you or you wanted them to come to you to do an errand. You called them once, you called them twice and they still did not move. You started to feel angry and said, "What kind of a son you are. I called you twice and you did not come to me." If you became angry easily, you might beat your children and they would get hurt in vain because here again the adults were wrong. Please understand that the mind of the children can concentrate more easily than that of the adults. When they are doing something, they cannot hear anybody calling them at all. Don't be angry with them. Be angry with your self for lacking an insight to do the proper thing. If you want to talk to the children, look and see what they are doing first. If there is no real need, do not try to separate them from the interest they have in whatever they are doing. When you need to ask them to do something, approach them and draw their attention from their activity to you. Then you may ask them to do whatever you want them to do. Your children will understand and their feelings will not be hurt as well. The relationship should improve this way.

Some children like to do things as they please. When they do anything like that it does not mean that they are pretending but they have not understood the right and wrong in this world. They just do it because they are naive. The adults may feel frustrated by this kind of behaviour and will be offended by it because they think the children are so naughty. Sometimes you will forbid them to do things by saying, "Stop! Don't! Come here! This boy is so naughty!" To do that is totally wrong. Words like that come from a depressed mind. A depressed person has a sad face and the action is gross due to the depressed mind. You are showing a bad image of yourself to your children. They may remember this image and do the same thing to you later on. Besides, your action like that may provoke the children. It is of no use to you and to the children when you release a poisonous rage in your mind. Please refrain from doing anything like that. If you see your children doing improper or bad things, tell them nicely Show them your love first then talk in a way to make them understand. In general, the children tend to be good to start with. Try to support them. But some parents love to compliment the children and spoil them unwittingly. For example, there are guests in the house.

Because you never taught your children before or because your children stay close to you all the time, and the children can never stay put like puppets, while you are enjoying yourself talking to the guests, the children start doing their own things. You may tell your guests that, “Oh! This little guy is very naughty.” Or you may say, “This boy is very good.” This kind of remarks may anger the children. They may think you want them to be that way. This is a no win situation. So it is better not to say anything at all about them.

There are parents who train their children to receive bribes. For example, when the children are angry and crying, and making all kinds of obnoxious gestures, you are annoyed by the way they cry and do not know what to do to stop it so you give them a bribe. “Be quiet, I will take you to a movie. Be quiet, I will give you some cookies.” The children are happy that they will be going to a movie; they are happy that they will be given a cookie; so they stop crying and get whatever they want. Or some of you may forget the promise you have given to the children. The results are two ways. If the children get as promised, they will have a bad habit or wanting all the time. If they don’t get as promised, they will think that you don’t keep your promise. It is a no win situation as well. So I want to remind you **not to bribe your children — they will be spoiled.** This is just like the situation we have in Thailand with the people taking bribes in this day and age. This is a shameful thing, to say the least.

If your children start being easily provoked. They get angry very often. You have to try to correct the habit. If you leave it like that too long, the anger will stick to the mind of your children and it is hard to get rid of it. To correct this depends on the example in the family, i.e. the parents, the nanny and other people close to the children. Everybody must be careful not to show anger for the children to see. Do not argue in front of the children. This is an improvement on the part of the environment in the family first. Then try to find out the cause of the anger of the children. Hopefully it is something you can discover. Usually it is something inside your own family. Try to learn about the needs of the children as much as possible in order to be able to comply with their wishes. As mentioned before, to contradict the children often will make the children easily provoked. The

**children do not know anger if the grown-ups do not teach them to be angry.** This is a basic principle, which the grown-ups must recognize.

However, you must also be careful not to allow the children to do every thing they want. It may be bad as well. In order to have a happy medium about this, you should allow them to have some freedom in eating and playing to a certain degree. Allow them to be alone or to have fun with their friends. The adults should not be involved with them so much but only to watch what is going on. It is something like some one who keeps a watch on an engine. When the engine is running smoothly, he does not bother it any more except listening to the noise to hear whether it is running properly. It is the same for adults and children. If there are no needs, don't bother. It is the best way. But whenever they want us to get involved, you must do it with a cool head and with loving kindness and compassion just to allow them to see that we are there to help only. When you see that something will bring harm to the children, you should do or say something to make them understand that it is not the right thing for them to do. And you don't like what you see. The children will understand and will behave accordingly. Remember always that:

**Children will do as the examples they see often.** No matter the example is good or bad. **Grown-ups should behave well to set good example for the children.** Whenever you are in a bad mood, don't go near your children. A bad mood can do anything improper to your children. Love and compassion are important tools to help your children become good persons by receiving good example from the parents. You, the parents, should be proud to have a chance to make some one a really good person. Your status and your job are not a limit, which prevent you from doing the right thing for your children. Please turn your attention more to your offspring. They will brighten you up in doing their good deeds. A parent is a big mirror, which gives a reflection for your children to see. Try to clean up the mirror and show a good image for your children to remember it for a long time.

Thailand needs good, wholesome people to help develop our country. All parents have this honour. Uphold this honour of being good parents of your children for their sake and for your beloved country.

## *Stop Jealousy when the Children are still Young*

DEAR PARENTS,

**O**NE OF THE TEACHINGS of the Buddha says อรติ โลกนาสิกา (*arati lokanasika*). **Jealousy destroys the world.** This Buddhist proverb tells us how much damage jealousy can do. When we talk we often misuse these two words, i.e. envy. We say, don't envy him. In fact it should have been, don't be jealous of him but the wrong word was used. Envy implies a desire to possess. For example we say, I am envious of some one. It indicates a desire to possess the things that some one has. It is different from jealousy. Jealousy itself means to be displeased and dissatisfied while seeing the progress of the others. Any time you see some one being successful or moving up, having fame and fortune, you become jealous and unhappy, not wanting him or her to achieve those things. You don't want to hear their names or good things about them. This is called **jealousy**. It is a defilement which if occurs in anyone's mind will burn that person's mind like being in a fire all the time. Jealousy is opposite to (*Mudita*) meaning to be pleased and satisfied in the progress and wholesomeness of the others. *Mudita* is something to firm up a relationship. But jealousy is a destroyer of all things. It is therefore a devil among men.

In regard to an effect of karma committed in the past, those with jealousy in their mind will be low in status. After death they will go to hell because of their jealousy. All kinds of troubles among men in the world are partly due to jealousy to a large degree. Those with jealousy will be very possessive in their mind. They will normally try to retain all possessions that they have to themselves. They don't want to see other people going higher or having better things than they do. They often try to block any advancement of other people. In regard to degrading one's mind, jealousy is very destructive. **The jealous one is always troubled.** But the object of jealousy has nothing happen to him or her. He/she will be able to eat and sleep well and comfortably. Those who are jealous do not have such things because their thoughts are always negative. They are always unhappy about everything concerning the people they don't like.

Jealous persons are pitiful. They should be treated medically to return them to normality as quickly as possible. Leaving them like that, and they will be totally spoiled. When they become older they probably will continue to take advantage of themselves and of the others. They may be put in jail or murdered because of their jealousy. Jealousy is therefore a real danger. Anybody with this kind of psychopathic behaviour must try to destroy it and do not allow it to grow in your mind.

The listeners may be thinking that I am only talking about jealousy and nothing about children. And it is not suitable for this book about **loving your children the right way**, loving your children the moralistic way to talk about jealousy. Don't be too hasty to come to that conclusion. I wanted you to see the harmful effect of jealousy first and how dangerous it could be. After you have seen it then you can prevent it from happening.

There was a Bhramin War story called "*Paratayut*" (Indian War). It was actually a result of jealousy. Jealousy destroyed a huge number of the people and property. If we read the history of the countries of the world we will find that **jealousy was always the devil behind the curtain creating all kinds of havoc**. So I am talking to you about it first to emphasize to you that it is an enemy of peace, tranquillity and progress of a society. It creates competition in an unsavoury manner. Jealousy is a condition we can correct and improve upon. We can also prevent it from happening if we make up our mind to do it. I would like to ask all parents to recognize it because you are an important factor, which contribute to the children being jealous.

While I was a young boy living at a temple as a temple boy, there were about forty of us. We attended a secondary school but we had to stay at the temple. When many people lived together in one place bad things tend to happen. One of the boys, who was weak and had some kind of diseases in his body, could not do any hard work. The monk in charge of the temple boys paid a lot of special attention to him. He saw that the boy was not normal. He did not have to do the same kind of work as the others. But when something were given to the children, he was always given more. So he became a focal point and eventually it turned out to

be a severe case of jealousy. It was so bad that one day the jealous boy used a pretty big piece of fire wood to hit the weak boy and injured him quite seriously. He was of course punished for the mistake. But the story showed how unbalanced love could create jealousy among one another.

The parents must be careful in showing love to their children. Never show any bias in the love for them. The Buddha teaches that there are four kinds of prejudice, i.e., prejudice caused by love; prejudice caused by fear; prejudice caused by hatred; and prejudice caused by delusion. It is the situation where the people in power, who have many subordinates, must be very careful. When the leader has prejudice, the fire of jealousy will burn him alive. The love among those under his leadership will not be smooth any more and damage will be done later on. Why did *Angaliman* have to become a bandit? Because the teacher gave him much more love than to the other disciples. They saw it and they were jealous of him and found a way to destroy him. Eventually, *Angaliman* had to become a bandit because of the teacher's fault. Every adult should maintain a balance in love at all times. No prejudice is the best policy.

I met this gentleman, who conducted himself according to the teachings of the Buddha. He was honest and always acted sensibly. He had several children. He brought up his children the right way. For example, the clothing of his children were made in the same way; the necklaces were the same; and of the same weight. The rings were also of the same style and the same design, which turned out to be the family rings. The pocket money for school was of the same amount. Whatever they want to do with the money, he let them manage themselves. The times to go to bed and to eat were all the same. If they want to go to a movie or to go out, they will go together with him except those who want to stay home. Everyone in the family lived a happy life and loved their parents very much. They lived happily always. This is an example of a family, which does not create any thought of jealousy in the mind of the children. When they never experienced jealousy when they were young, they grew up and have no unwholesome emotions to spoil them. This is another thing that the parents have to be especially careful. Don't ever do anything to create jealousy in the mind of the children.

Some parents want to see the children act in some strange ways. They want to see the children cry because of them. For example, they playfully fool them that, "Mom does not love you. Mom loves your sister. You are not my daughter. Only your sister is my daughter." With these words, she pretends not to pay attention to the big sister. She goes to the little one and kisses her and raises her close to her chest. The big daughter feels hurt and saddened because the mother does not love her, she does not like her. These are reactions in her heart. She thinks that the little one has taken away her mother's love. Then she feels the hatred for her sister and perhaps to the point of wanting to destroy her. It was wrong for the mother to pretend like that. Even though in fact they just wanted to tease her. But she did not understand the meaning of the adults, who wanted to be playful. She thought it was real and got mad and it penalized her mind later on. It was really a bad thing to do.

When the parents have several children, they should pay attention to each of them consistently and in the same manner. Don't do this way to one child and do another way to another child. It is detrimental to the mind of the children and later on it will turn to jealousy. Your action in any shape or form, which will bring resentment and the loss of self-esteem, must not be taken. You must be especially careful because **the loss of self-esteem will bring about jealousy. Don't do anything, which seems like fun but creates resentment in the mind of your children.** The reaction, which is a result of that event, will occur later on. Even though they are still little, they have their little heart that can think as well. They also have feelings about gain and loss in much the same way as adults.

Children who have jealousy in their mind will also be angry and hateful to the people who make them resentful. They may be angry with the father, the mother, and the brothers and sisters, who are involved in creating this emotion in them.

All of you know very well the danger of anger and hatred. There is one more thing about the loss of self-esteem. It is an obstruction to any advancement in their lives. The children become timid and keep to themselves. They don't want to associate with anybody. They don't want to

meet with their friends because they lack will power. They feel nobody loves them; nobody pays attention to them and they cannot compete with anybody. Then they become dissatisfied and may focus their attention to doing bad things in order to draw the attention of other people to them just a little. There were many bad news about children. For example an eight-year-old boy fatally injured his younger brother mainly because of jealousy. For this reason, the parents must consider this issue very important and try to find a solution to prevent this symptom from happening in the mind of the children. They must also find a way to instill mutual admiration, love and kindness towards one another. This can be done by teaching the children to love their friends, to love and have compassion for their younger siblings by teaching them to share the toys and the food with their friends and those younger than they. This will create the feeling of friendship from giving as a teaching of the Buddha, which says, **“Giving promotes friendship.”**

The children who received gift from their friends would love them and be friendly with one another. If your children have younger siblings, you should allow them to help the younger ones, for example, by baby sitting for you. This way they will have a chance to come close and embrace them to show their love. You should explain to them that the young one loves them and they should love him or her too. Older sibling and younger one are like the right arm and the left arm, which helps each other all the time. If you see the older one do something that shows resentment towards the younger one, you should intervene immediately. You must tell them or make them understand that doing such and such is not good. Never look at jealousy among siblings as being cute. For example, if the older one pretended to break a leg of the younger one or he was acting like he was biting the little one because he was childishly jealous, don't ever think that it was amusing or cute. A behaviour like that is a beginning of a bad situation in the future. If your children show any sign of jealousy to any of the siblings you must warn them right away. If they were having fun and you wanted to join in the fun you must be extra careful not to make them jealous. You should not compliment a child when he or she gets mad at something. It will create a negative emotion in the

child who is already jealous to be even more jealous. Damages will be compounded needlessly.

Jealousy if ever developed in the mind of any children, and the parents had no idea to correct the situation. And they could not find a way to get rid of it from the mind of the children, when they become adults, they will have more jealousy in them according to their age and environment. It is difficult to curtail jealousy. A big fire is always harder to be extinguished than a small one. The children who have grown up with jealousy do not usually want to see anybody look better than they do. If they see anybody receive better result, they would try to destroy or to discredit them, or to hurt them some how. The result would be that they could not work well with anybody. They cannot become the big bosses. How can they be good if they never allow anybody to be good? Their work will also not progress because there are always obstacles. Nobody wants to have anything to do with it because they know that they would not get the credit they deserve. Finally, their own people, who never got any credit from the work they performed, would destroy them. They become bad apples among their own group.

**There is no justice in the mind of a jealous person.** They also think that nobody is fair to them. Jealous people do not possess a mind that is clean and they are not satisfied with the good news of the others. There is always trouble for themselves and the others. The future of the jealous people is very obscure indeed. This sin is a result of the parents not paying attention to correct the bad habit of the children or sometimes they even encouraged the children to have such habit. It is very harmful. So you should be extra careful not to allow any action to create jealousy in the mind of your children.

Let it be known that the world needs a virtue in the people, who enjoy seeing goodness of other people and helping each other doing good deeds for the community. Thailand needs a satisfaction in the good deeds of the others and for everybody to help our nation go forward in the same direction as the Buddha Dhamma. This duty is undeniably that of the parents.

## *Why Did Your Child Become a Criminal All of a Sudden?*

DEAR PARENTS,

SO MANY TIMES I have had the opportunities to talk to the inmates in the prisons in several provinces. I was there to try to rehabilitate the inmates. I met and talked to many of them. Those that affected me the most were young boys around 12-15 years old in those prisons. I asked them what they did to get arrested. They said it was something to do with theft or assault and battery committed on their young friends. But more than anything else was theft. I asked them again whether they had any parent. They said they did. Were they poor? I asked and was told that they were not that poor. They lived in a house and ate decent meals every day and never starved. But why did that boy become a criminal? If we don't dig deeply enough to know of the causes we would think it was due to poverty. It is true that poverty was one of the factors making criminals out of people. But we cannot think that there was only one cause. There were many other causes as well.

Some parents are an essential part in training their children to become a thief without realizing it. It is true that every parent loves their children and they want to teach them to become good, famous people. But some of them are mistaken about being good and famous. For example, they believe that if their children are good and not afraid of anybody; they are fighters and can do anything, then that is really good. That is in fact wrong thinking. If it occurs in any parents, the surname of that family will surely going down hill. Please do not be mistaken like that.

We Thais are Buddhists. A fundamental principle of Buddhism is the Five Precepts:

- Teach us not to kill any animals because killing is an act of cruelty and it shows no mercy in our heart.
- Teach us not to steal. It is a sign of some one, who has no respect for the rights in ownership of other people.
- Teach us not to commit adultery, an act which shows no control over one's self.

- Teach us not to use vulgarity, to lie, to say foolish things, and the words that disunite people. All those words indicate unwholesome mind, and
- Lastly, they teach us not to drink, smoke, and take intoxicants, which are the causes of recklessness.

The Five Precepts should be instilled in the mind of the children by the parents. They should follow them since childhood. The Five Precepts will help the children to become good people in the future.

A disciple of mine, a lady, told me that one of her daughters was light with her fingers and her money disappeared often. She got caught and was punished by hitting her at the hand to reform her. But it did not seem to work. When she was not careful the money would be taken again and again. She did not know what to do any more. She came to me to see if I could help her. I asked her about the routine of the girl's daily life, such as, whether she liked to eat all the time; or whether she spent a lot of money and whether she had friends whose family was better off and who received more pocket money from their parents. All of those facts were conducive to bad behaviours in children. And the answers were in the affirmative in all of them. Therefore a solution must be found.

In regard to the bad eating habit, it was that way in this family. The mother was the one who trained the girl that way. The family must improve their eating routine by not allowing the mouth to be in control all the time or there would be trouble ahead. They must tell the children not to eat whenever they pleased because they would have a stomach upset, or bad teeth. Besides it cost money. And most of all the children would be spoiled. They should learn to eat only at meal times and eat together at the same time. Whatever they had they should share among them in small portions. Every time the children had the money to go somewhere, they spent all of it. It showed that the children had no self-control over their spending habit. The mother should train her how to save and not to spend so much.

For example, if she gave her one baht, she should ask her to save at least 25 satang. The amount to be saved should be as much as possible.

There is a proverb, “Have one quarter, make it one baht, But don’t miss whatever you really need; earn little, spend less; spend too much and trouble will come. This should be emphasized to the children time and time again.

To force the children by way of requesting them to learn to save is a good prevention for them not to be broke. And if your children were able to do as requested, compliment them for it. Or you can give them a little money as a reward. It will make them feel that doing good is also beneficial to them. But it so happened that the friends of your children had more money and their parents were extravagant. They teach their children to be extravagant as well. But you should explain to your children so they understand their real situation. Tell them that to spend too much money is never good for the future. A good person must know how to save and not to spend all he or she has. As an example, white ants collect food for their young. White ants build ant hill by collecting earth little by little until it becomes a big ant hill. Bees collect nectar from pollen little by little until it becomes a huge beehive. Everything is from saving or accumulating. Children will understand and see that to be extravagant is not right. This is how to correct on the children’s side. On the adults’ side, we have to correct ourselves as well because adults pay a major role in creating habits both good and bad for the children. Your child had light fingers. He took the money and spent it. In fact he did that because he misunderstood the situation. He thought that the money belonged to his father and mother. So being their son, he should have the right to take it without telling them. But doing so is a beginning of evil things in the future. The adults should not allow it to pass without doing anything. They must tell the boy that a good person would ask for permission from the owner when he or she wanted something. All the things in this house belonged to his parents. He should have been told in advance which stuff can be taken and which cannot be taken, without getting permission first. Normally, children do not want to do bad things.

They don’t want to contradict the parents. They will understand if they hear the words that the parents will not love them if they are bad. So

it is a good idea to tell them clearly. It is a good preventive measure. But children by nature cannot totally control themselves. They may become reckless and make mistake if there are temptation.

For this reason, the parents must find another preventive measure, i.e. do not place things the children want close to their hands. Anything close to one's hands is easy to be taken. The children may decide to take it any time they feel like doing it. To put away the money in a drawer or to put it under a mattress is very risky. The children see the money and may take it any time. Then it is hard to blame the children that they are quick with their hands and have larceny at heart. The fault lies in the adult first, really. And the adults must be particularly careful about this. Your carelessness actually produced a thief in your own house. So you should remember this: **money is a temptation. Do not keep it to be seen by the others. Conceal it really well then there is no danger.**

After you have done all you can to prevent the incident but your children still do the same thing. You must try to look further for an explanation and to find a solution until your children behave properly and do not commit any more stealing. However, there is one more thing that your have to be careful, i.e. in general children will always want to have, want to be, or want to take anything their friends possess. The parents must be watchful of the behaviour of your children. If they seem to change in a bad way, start the counselling right away without any delay. **The evil in one's mind is always growing quickly.** Sometimes the children may want a toy their friends have but they don't have the money to buy it. When the urge is strong enough they may bring that toy home. To prevent this kind of incident, if the parents can afford it, they should give the children some toys. Don't let the emotion of the children go wild. Or they can tell them to let the parents know if they want something. If possible, arrange for them to have the toy. If you think it is not necessary you should explain to them how unnecessary it is. Don't allow the children to think for themselves. They are not old enough to have the ability to know what is right for them.

If your children already go to school, you should spend the time checking their belongings and their toys in order to know what they usu-

ally have and what are the new things. How did they get them? Who gave it to them? Don't ever allow them to bring anything home without an explanation. This is one way to prevent the bad habit.

When your children are at an age old enough to go somewhere by themselves, there is something about stealing that you should be careful. **Children who have not been trained to respect the rights of ownership of the others often bring something home when they feel like doing it.** Suppose your child went out and walked past a vegetable garden. He saw string beans, melons, or pumpkins, which may be made into food. He may pick them and take them home. At home the parents did not take any action. They did not ask where they came from; who gave them to him. They all joined in eating them gladly. The boy must have thought his action was the right thing to do because he did not see any negative reaction from the parents. All seemed to be eating them happily. The boy must have felt good in his action because he thought he was able to make his parents proud and happy. His thought was a result of his love for the parents and a desire to make them happy. But it also had made a person into a thief. So I want to remind you, who are responsible for the life of your children to be aware of this fact and do not be reckless about this small matter. Whenever you see your children do something improperly, e.g. they went out and have something when they come home, you must ask about it right away. But do not shout or threaten them like you are angry. Talk to them nicely showing your love and compassion for them and you will find out the whole truth. After you have found out the truth and if the distance was not so far and your children can walk back, you should go with them to see the owner of that vegetable to confess and to return the vegetable to the owner. If the owner gave it to you then you could accept and should thank him for it. This is the right thing to do. It will also create sympathy between each other.

If the owner of the vegetables lived far away and it was not practical to return them or to have your children apologize to him, tell the children to throw them away completely. Don't ever eat them. You must also make them understand that **anything taken by stealing, are sinful. Any sinful items are not suitable for consumption. Whoever eats sin-**

**ful food will be sinful to the end.** Sinful people are not accepted by anybody. “You are my son so you please do not be a sinner.” After you have talked to your children, throw the items away. This is a reasonable way and it does not promote unwholesome thought in your little ones. You can be considered doing a virtuous act. This virtue will help protect your children from falling victim to sinful temptation in the future.

In the old days, we were accustomed to being close together. We shared what we ate, and whatever we had could be taken without formal permission. But in the present time, we must use our discretion to do it at proper time and proper place and not all the time. The people nowadays don't really know that enough is enough. They tend to overdo things and often times the actions will offend their friends. So you really have to be absolutely sure that you are close to each other and if you take his or her property it will be all right. They will not be angry or offended. If you are not sure, **do not ever take it for granted.** Any items that are public property, e.g. flowers in a public park, a pond or a bridge, are the treasures that must be preserved. The parent must teach their children to help take care of those things. Do not allow them to use their hands picking things randomly or to destroy things carelessly.

Train your children to have a constructive habit; to preserve what should be preserved and to respect the ownership of other people. You will be rightly deserved to be called a creator of good people, and a builder of our nation. And you can certainly be proud of your accomplishment.

## *What are the First Things Parents Should Teach Children?*

DEAR PARENTS,

ALL OF YOU have followed the story of how to LOVE YOUR CHILDREN THE RIGHT WAY on this radio program until now. I You must have heard that I tried to emphasize the duties of the parents] towards their children. I hope you realize the reasons for me to talk about this big topic. I also hope that you will do your best to protect your children. Of course, you know that your children will be the ones who replace you in this world.

Being Thais and mostly Buddhists, we have our hope that the nation and the country of Thailand as well as Buddhism will prosper. This kind of wish is in the heart of every responsible person. But to wish for something is not enough. We must also do certain things to achieve that goal and to succeed. In regard to children, they are most important. The future of the children whether obscured or sorrowful depends mostly on the action of the parents. The most important duty of the parents is to be good parents, who make sure that their children will become good citizens of our country. Good parents should behave themselves for a bright future of their children as follows:

1. Forbid the children from doing bad deeds.
2. Support them to do good deeds.
3. Give them good education.
4. Support them in finding a good partner.
5. Give them your property at the right time.

The above five responsibilities are the duties, which have been bestowed on us by the Buddha, who with his kindness and compassion, had given to all mankind. All of us worship him so we should pay attention to him by following always this fundamental guideline.

In the previous chapters, I have tried to direct you towards the right path so you understand how to prevent your children from committing sinful acts and also given some advise for them to do wholesome things. If you remember them well you will have a pretty good idea to do just that and not going on a wild goose chase. The future of your children will be bright for sure.

To set a foundation for the children to become good, wholesome people in the future may present some problems, such as how to begin and what topic to teach them. When the children have grown enough to understand, in my opinion the first important topic to teach them is:

### Obedience

Obedience is the first virtue the parents should try to teach them. In the Holy Bible of the Christians and the Koran of Islam we will find the teaching on obedience right from the beginning. The story was about the God in heaven, who had created several things and then the two humans in the world to live in a beautiful garden. He also reconfirmed to them that; “You two have absolute rights in this garden except for one particular tree which is forbidden. You must not eat its fruits at all.” But the couple disobeyed Him. They ate the fruits and the God was angry and punished them severely. The essence of the story is about obedience. If we lack obedience things will be in disarray.

Thai people are familiar with ancient folklore, e.g. Chantakhorop, who was a prince, went into a forest to become a disciple of a hermit. Having finished his training, he was on his way back to the palace. The hermit told him. “This is a magic box. Take it with you but you must not open this box during the trip and you must protect it as if it was your life. When you arrive home then you can open the box.” Humans are strange creatures. We are full of curiosity. We love to violate any forbidden rule for a particular place and for whatever reason. The young prince had received the gift. Naturally he wanted to know so much what was inside. One thought in his mind wanted to open and see what was in the box. Another thought protested that he should not violate the instruction of his beloved teacher. He knew his teacher loved him and

wished him well. That was why he gave that instruction to begin with. A good disciple must obey the command of his teacher at all times. The two thoughts fought against each other for a long time. Finally curiosity won the debate. After stopping to take a bath at a stream of cool running water, he sat down and looked at the box. He was very curious and opened the box and found a beautiful girl inside. She came out of the box and could not get back in. So he just had to allow her to stay out and let nature take its course. At the end a bandit killed the prince. All because he did not obey the order of his teacher. This is a very good lesson for everybody.

In a Buddhist teaching, the Buddha had set many rules about obedience. For example, some were called faith and some modesty. When the monks give a blessing to the lay people, they always teach them to be humble and to accept the opinion of other people as this translation: long life, beautiful complexion, happiness and good health will belong to those who are always humble. In *Aparihaniyadhamma*, which provides guidance to prosperity only and never to decline has one part saying, **“Any group of monks who are leaders in an assembly shall be respected by all monks in the assembly by obeying their words.”** This is a lesson in obedience. It is customary among the Thai people in general to teach our people to obey according to seniority. Every child must obey the teaching of the parents. The younger ones must always obey the elder ones. The servants must obey the employers. The juniors must obey the seniors. The people must respect and obey the king: This is a social system, which brings peace and order to the Thai nation. As long as Thailand respects this rule we will always go forward securely.

In the present time, many things happened which destroyed our beautiful heritage. Young people were excited about liberty without any principle. They misunderstood that to be able to do anything, as they pleased were true liberty. If the older people forbade them from doing what they wanted, they often said their freedom was too limited. The young people and the old people did not get along. The order among the people in the Thai society was changing rapidly. The change brought a lot of problems to those who love peace and tranquillity. There were

news about the children who did not listen to the parents; the students who did not listen to the teachers; the temple boys who did not listen to the abbots of the temple. And those incidents happened often and they really needed careful consideration to prevent them from happening in the future.

A teaching of the Buddha tells us, **“All things come from causes; without causes there are no consequences.”** The lack of obedience in children in general was caused not only by the situations outside the home but also by those inside the home as well. **Where there is justice, injustice is not.** Where there is injustice, partiality will prevail. This fact is a truth, which can always be proven.

For this reason, in bringing up the children you need to be unbiased as much as possible. Besides being unbiased, you as the guardian of the children must be just and reasonable. You must never do things emotionally. In order to make your instructions sacred and useful to the children you should abide by a principle taught by the Buddha.

“Whatever you will teach others, you should make it happen in yourself first. Then the teacher will not be confused.”

To do it yourself as an example is a very valuable lesson. If you teach your children to obey you but you and your wife always argue even in minor details; your children see you fight and argue in anger with each other all the time then the children must have received some of that habit in their heart. They will think that it is acceptable to act like that. Your children will be easily spoiled. The parents should be a good example of the children at all times. Not only you want them to obey you but sometimes you should also listen to your children as well especially when they have expressed some opinion and it is reasonable enough to comply with. If we want other people to listen to our words we must ourselves listen to them as well. Naturally it is hard for the people who do not listen to anybody to expect other people to listen to them.

In teaching the children to be obedient, the parents must be very aware of all the things about children. They must be close to them because being close will allow them to know the movement of the children at all times. When you tell your children to do anything you must think ahead

whether your children will be able to do it. Will it be hard for them? **If the children cannot abide by the orders they will easily violate them.** Once they have violated your order, it is likely to happen again. A habit will start to firm up in the mind of the children. The one who gives an order must think first and when giving an order it must be given in a clear voice to allow them to hear and understand you well enough. Sometimes we tell our children to do something; they did not hear and just sit there. You thought they did not obey your order and spanked them. In fact it was the fault of the one who gave the order and not that of the children at all.

A little boy is enjoying himself in his work. He is concentrating in the thing he is paying attention to. He does not hear other people talking. Even adults are the same. While we are busy working we don't know if anything happens. It is even more so for children. They will never know when they are concentrating on something else. Before any punishment is given to them due to being disobedient, think first whether you have made a correct instruction. In order not to allow this to become a problem for the children, before giving an order you should do like in the military. When the commanding officer wants his soldiers to do anything, he will say it loudly, "Company, attention!" to draw their attention. Then an order is given to them.

It should also be that way for the children. You should call them to come near you showing your love and sympathy to them. Then you tell them what you want them to do. Before letting them go you should ask them to repeat the order. When you are sure that the children have understood the assignment then you let them go. Your children should be able to do the job. After they have done the job you should ask them to report the result every time. If there are something wrong you can help to correct them. If it was done right you should reward them, or using verbal compliment. It is better than nothing. Never act like you pay no attention to the work of your children !

One more thing; **do not issue too many trivial instructions for your children. Because the more rules, the more wrong.** More laws mean more prisoners. You should issue an instruction when there was a mis-

take in order to build a fence to prevent the children from making that mistake again. And you yourself must remember all you have forbidden them not to do so you can remind them not to violate that order. Don't think for a minute that it is just a little thing. There have been many children who have been spoiled because of the indifference of the parents. So I would like to ask you to be careful. If you have helped teach your children to have discipline and to be obedient to you then you can be considered a great help to our country and be a keeper of our religion. A good child under a house roof is also a good child at the school; a good child on the street is also a good citizen who obeys the laws of the land.

The citizens of any countries who obey the laws have evidently developed mentally. Mental development will help create material development. If we already have material development but no mental development, the said material will be of no value to the community. We need development both externally and internally. And who can help in this regard?

You, the parents can help. It is by training your children to be obedient to you at all times.

## *Don't Look Bored When Answering Your Children's Questions*

DEAR PARENTS,

ONE DAY I was waiting for a train at Uttaradit railway station. I saw an incident, which was very useful to me. I want to relate it to you. There was a well-dressed man walking into the station with a little boy, who could talk quite well. When the two of them found a place to sit, the little boy began asking questions.

"What is that, daddy?" The man said, "It is a train." "Where is it going?" The little boy asked again. "It is going to the engine workshop." The boy kept on asking, "Why did it have to blow the whistle like that, daddy?" The father answered in angry voice, "I don't know. You ask too many questions. Why do you want to know? Sit still, will you?" After he heard the threatening voice of his father, the little boy was scared. His happy face turned grim. He sat still and asked no more questions.

Was it the right thing for the father to have done that to his son? A wise person would say no to that. Why did he have to show anger like that to his son? It made him stop smiling and he had no courage to ask any more questions. This was one sure way to lessen his potential to learn. It also made him afraid. He was afraid to speak out and to ask any more questions from anybody. It was not really the right thing to do.

Normally when the children grow up their mind is growing up as well. Their body needs food for nourishment. The mind of the children needs the nourishment as well. They begin to be interested and curious about everything they see or encounter. They want to know what they are. At the time they still cannot talk, they will signal to the others that they want to know, to see, to understand what those things are. A baby girl who is sucking on one of the nipples of her mother while her hand is touching another breast has her eyes looking right at the face of her mother to see the image, which is being impressed in her mind. The baby girl knows that mother's milk gives her strength and it makes her body grow. The face of the person giving the milk looks beautiful to her.

That face is something to remember. If she is fearful, when she saw her mother's face she will jump right in between the two breasts. She will be feeling good and secure that she has found a safe place to be. Not only her mother but also other objects she comes into contact will draw her interest. She will hold on to that thing and will not let it be taken away. Sometimes she will put it in her mouth to experience its taste. Whether it is the same as that of the milk she has known before. All those behaviours are the result of the desire to know. When that time has come and she can speak the language of her mother, she will ask the question right away. What is this thing for? And she will continue without stopping until she has no doubt on her mind or until she was scolded and told to stop asking.

The reason why the children ask questions when they don't know the answers is because it is really a human instinct to be curious. The adults need to study about this psychological principle. Please don't obstruct the progress of the children because you are too lazy to answer the questions so you scare them with your threatening voice, because if you do that your children will end up with little or no knowledge at all. Your most important duty is that of creating interest and curiosity in the mind of the children. All of our children should be growing up with wisdom. Education is a necessity in our lives. The conditions of the mind of the children are such that learning will satisfy them. The parents' duty is only to stimulate them to use their energy in getting an education.

If your children start taking an interest in asking questions, you should be proud of their progress. You should help them to progress further by devoting your time to do this useful job of answering the questions from your children as much as possible. Don't be irritated too easily and don't lose your patience. When your children bother you with their questions, answer all of them. Make all your answers clear to them. Suppose your children saw an animal they have never seen before. They ask you what is that. Don't give them only its name. For example, they ask you about a cat, you should explain what kind of animal a cat is, how useful it is to your family. It is the type of answer, which will enlighten the children. If you see that the things, your children see scare them, try to expel their

fear by saying that, there is nothing in them to fear. If you can allow the children to come close and touch them, it is even better. It is a way to train the children to love and be kind to animals as well. Remember this simple rule:

Children love to learn. Do not obstruct their path by scolding. **Never look bored when you talk to your children. They want to ask any questions, always try to answer them.** It is a good way to help develop them intellectually.

Sometimes children may be asking question that should not or cannot be answered, try to make them understand clearly the reasons for that but never show anger to them. The parents are the first teachers of their children so you must always do your duty as a good teacher. Don't ever forget your duty. If the parents perform their duty well, it is really a great service to our country.

Whenever you go out of the house to take a break, for instance, going for a walk by the river, walking in a park, or hiking on a mountain or in a forest, you should take your little ones along. It is not just for sight seeing but also to study and to see the world. There are so many things in the world that are interesting to children. If the trip is by the river, the children will also see the fish, see how they catch a fish in the river. The parents should explain to them what kind of animal a fish is; how useful it is to human. Teach them not to be cruel to the fish by destroying them unnecessarily. Consider that an experience the children have is another lesson they learn.

If you go to the rice field, the children will see several kinds of birds. Tell them how useful they are to human. For example, they help eat insects, which destroy plants. So we have a lot of plants for our consumption. If birds are killed, there will be more insects. The plants will be destroyed then human will be in big trouble.

If you take them to the forest, you should talk about its usefulness. Tell them stories about the forest for their enjoyment. In public parks, they often grow plants for flowers and their leaves. You should tell them that those are public property. The people enjoy going to the parks. We have to take good care of them. Don't ever pick the flowers or the leaves

from the trees for their own use. The children will know right from wrong, what to take care and what to preserve. They will learn to know the things that are really useful and to act appropriately in the environment. It will benefit them as much as their ability will permit.

There is one more thing. In general the people in this world should learn to live with the environment and to live their lives usefully as much as possible, not just to be born to eat and to sleep. Everyone receives a whole lot from the earth and the sky. You should return the favour to those useful things, so nobody can say that it was a waste to be born as a human. It is a duty of the parents to teach them everything they need to know and understand. Children with good upbringing will progress when they grow up to be adults. The parent must be careful about this.

One of the most important mistakes of the parents is to be indifferent to the interests of their children. They don't notice what their children are interested in and what they like and what their inclinations are. They become those who do not know their children correctly. The future of the children is clearly shown by their interests and their expressions. The adults need only to give advice and to encourage them along. They will go forward by themselves little by little.

Another thing is about the people who are close and related to the children. There are several of them, such as, the relatives and siblings. The children need to be told the exact relationship among them so that they will remember. And they should be able to address each one of them properly including the name of every one of them. Also advice the children to treat all of them as cousins and other appropriate relationship. All children will feel close friendship among them and will have love and compassion towards one another. They will enjoy sharing food and other necessities, one way to create unity among the people in a community.

In the evening after dinner time, members of the family often come together somewhere and enjoy themselves talking. For example, they talk about their job at work and other fun stuff. In a time like this let us allow our children to be a part of the group. Especially when the topics do not have anything detrimental to children. This will give an opportunity for the children to see and observe how adults talk and their actions. It is also

a way to transfer the knowledge and personality from adults to the children. During this gathering, the children may not understand something. You should allow them to ask the questions to help expel their doubts. Don't ever scold them for the questioning. It is not a bad idea if the adults will tell a story or two for them to enjoy listening.

For those of us who are Buddhists, we should tell stories about the Buddha. Use appropriate Buddha stories for the children. Remember also that at the end of a story you should indicate what is right and what is wrong in that story. It is a way to show the children the right path and the wrong path at the same time. When the children did something wrong or made any mistakes, tell stories for comparison. Emphasize the good points and the bad points so the children know the difference. It will help them. But one thing you have to be careful, that is not to tell stories which are scary. They will unnecessarily be destructive to the mind of the children. Adults must be aware of this always.

In some situations, the children in your household may be arguing about something they saw. It can be very strong argument with all kinds of supporting reasons. The parents should not get bored of the debate among the children. Don't show your disdain about the situation. Instead you should join in the discussion. You should be listening to see who is right and who is wrong to find a way to improve the situation. After they have stopped arguing explain to them to be good debaters, who use reasons, and not one who wants to win at all cost. If one is wrong or uses improper conduct, you should tell them the reasons amicably. Ask them to set aside wrong opinion and to accept only correct opinion. **Train them to listen to the opinions of the others as well.** If they don't want to believe that opinion then and there ask them to accept it for consideration. Tell them that:

“If we want other people to listen to our opinion, we have to accept other people's opinion first and always. Whatever we show to the others, they will show us the same thing. We smile at them; they will smile back at you. This is a rule of thumb.”

The children who understand this concept will become good democratic people in the future. Thailand is striving for democracy. Even

though in our time we have not arrived at that point, we can set a goal for it. We have to help give this concept to the children so they will have a democratic mind, which listens to the opinion of other people.

The intellectual advancement of the children depends on the adults. If the adults try to learn about the needs of the children and try to support those needs in the right direction, the children will progress in a productive manner. Hopefully the parents, who love and wish the children well, will consider using this guideline at an opportune time.

## *Train Children to be 'Brave' & Not Timid*

DEAR PARENTS,

ON THE CHILDREN'S DAY at Buddhasathan, there were many children who came with their teachers or parents. Some of them came by themselves. They were mostly of the same age. They came together in joyful mood. Everybody was smiling and laughing like ordinary children. I sat and watched the children with pleasure. I thought those children would grow to be adults and would be doing things in our place. If they are good today, they will be good adults in the future.

Whether the children will be good or bad depends on the attention of the parents and the teachers. If those people, who have a direct responsibility to lead the children, turn out to be those who do not lead them in the right direction, the future of the children will be obscure. So it is the duty of us, adults, to do our duty the best we know how to create good people in our country.

The purpose of the celebration of the children's Day was to remind all the adults to think about the children so they will help create the body and the mind of the children to go forward to be something wholesome. They will grow up to be good people of our country. While I was enjoying myself with the thought, which occurred for a moment, there was a cute little boy about three years old, who walked up the stage bravely. He came straight to me, who was sitting on a chair. When he arrived he prostrated himself on my lap. It delighted me to see him do that, so I started a conversation with him. He could speak quite well. He gave good answers to my questions. He never came to me like that but we seemed to hit off nicely. We talked for a long time. I carried him in my arms with love and took him to see different things. He was really enjoying himself. He was interested in some toys and asked for them so I gave some to him. He tried to wave his hand calling his little brother to come up the stage like him. But his brother would not come up; he showed a sign of fear. I was really impressed with the three-year-old. I want to see every Thai child be brave in the right way and to speak loud and clear. But I have not seen

enough of that. We still have so many cowardly children. Who made them that way; no one but their parents.

I have seen often enough when the mother takes her children to the temple. If her children are naughty, she usually tells the children firmly, "That is a monk! Stop that or the monk will spank you." Sometimes she will point her finger at the big Buddha image and says, stop it or I will or something of that nature. It makes a coward out of that child, when he or she is afraid of something like that. Some children are afraid even to see a Buddha image in a big hall. When the monks call them, they jump out of their skin. The reason for that is because the parents used the monk to scare the children. Many of them have become cowardly with no reason at all. This is a big mistake.

There was a complete set of skeleton at Suan Buddhadhamma in Chiang Mai. Many adults were afraid to touch it. They were afraid of the ghost. But innocent children would approach it and used their hands to touch and feel the bones without being afraid. The children could do that because they did not know what it was. How scary it was. As a matter of fact, it was nothing to be afraid of. The children will have fear in their heart because we, the adults, bring the fear and put it in their brain. If the adults did not do that, the children would always be brave. The parents, who love your children, should not do anything to scare the children in any way.

There is one difference between Thai and Caucasian children. Thai children are reserved and scared of unfamiliar things. When a stranger comes to ask about something, they will be afraid to give an answer. They will be scared and run away. Caucasian children are not that way. When they met people of different complexion, if they were approached and asked questions, they would answer them as well as they can. Why is there so much difference? It is the way we raise our children. We emphasize good manner so much that our children look so timid.

The world of children and the world of adults are separated. The adults have one world while the children have another world. They don't cross each other's border. The adults may enter the children's world but the children can never enter the adults' world. Any children who try to

learn anything about the adults will be scolded for being too nosy or acting like an over-mature person. So all the children have to put themselves inside their own territory without any chance to leave the area. Is that a correct way to treat our children? Some will say in their own view it is correct because they themselves were treated that way once before. But if we use a modern approach, it can be shown that the old way is not right. I did not mean to say that ours is totally wrong and only the white man's way is correct.

The Caucasian system in certain aspect is pretty bad too. I have seen a father and teenage girl play together in a front yard. The daughter jumped up on the neck of the father and over his head. In my opinion, that was an improper behaviour. But their custom does not mind the high place and the low place. All organs in the body are equal in status. But the Thais are different. We mind very much the high and the low body parts. Playing like that is not appropriate. We should consider this very carefully and accept only the useful methods to train our children. And that should be enough.

The things we should emulate them are we should not keep our children in their world, which is so small and limited. We should allow them to come out to the world of the adults once in a while. **It is a big mistake for the adults to forbid the children from being in the adults' group.** They think that the children must be with the children and never approach and enter the adults' area. When a child enters, some says he or she is acting cocky, some say he or she is being nosy. They keep him or her under control all the time. When adults act that way, the children will not feel at ease. They will be scared to say anything to some one they feel more senior. They end up having no chance to express themselves into words. So they don't know for sure whether their thinking is right or wrong. They will always be unsure of themselves. "Am I right or what?" They tend to act cowardly and are afraid to talk confidently with the adults.

Several months ago, a boy was accused of violating the Second Precepts. The property owner complained to the father who became angry very easily. As soon as he was told of the incident without know-

ing for sure of the fact, he got mad and looked for a big baton. When that boy came home, he went right at him like a fierce tiger. The boy was so scared. He was stuttering so badly that he could not talk. Instead of being sympathetic with him, the father scolded him in a big way. The result was he did not find out what really happened. To do something like that is too severe a punishment.

Many children turned out being so nervous and they stutter all the time. This was the fault of the parents in most cases. For this reason, the adults should not try to block the thought process of the children. If they want to talk or to show anything, let them do what they want. We should just try to prevent them from talking or doing waywardly. If they are doing something right, don't even bother to interfere with them. The parents should use equanimity or be unattached in certain occasions. In fact, to intervene too much is not good and to lose all control is not good either. **To do just right is the best policy.** What is to do just right? I can tell you that to do just right depends on what is right and what is wrong. If you think it was right, just let it go. If you think it is wrong for the time and the place, then you have to pull them back. This is to do just right.

Some children are by nature not very brave or they are what we call being shy or bashful from childhood. It takes many days for them to start talking and they talk shyly. They were afraid to give any opinions. That was their habit. The parents should not be concerned too much because things like that can be corrected. Mahatma Gandhi when young was very bashful. When he became a young man he was still shy. In defending a client in a court of law as a first time lawyer, he was nervous and did not make a good speech. Later on he became a great orator, who conveyed his message to his audience very well.

As for me (the author), I was very timid when I was young and talked very little. I was shy when I had to talk. But now you see how good a speech maker I am. Anything about children is changeable. It can be improved or it can be worsened. It depends on how we do it. The parents who have children who are timid when they talk must find more opportunity for them to talk in front of their friends and those older than they are. You should compliment them to make them proud that they

can make a good speech and in a nice way. Whenever there are house guests, bring them out to participate in the conversation especially when the topic of the discussion does, not irritate their feeling and it is nothing secretive. If in any part of the discussion they are able to participate let them talk as well. Do not scold or embarrass them. Before long, timid children will become talkative. They will be able to emulate the personality of the adults. I only ask that you try to help giving them the opportunity to improve.

There is one flaw in the adults, which can destroy the progress of the children. That is the lack of consideration on the part of the adults in showing their sense of humour. For example, when the children make mistakes, speak indistinctly, or use the wrong words, the adults often laugh at them heartily. The people who laugh are having fun but the children who were laughed at did not think it was funny at all. They thought they must have done something terribly wrong. That's why they were laughing at them. After that they will be afraid to express themselves. The enjoyment, which the adults received from laughing, brought that much damage to the children. So they should be very careful. When the children say something wrong do not show anything which will indicate the children that they are being ridiculed. The adults should just let the children go on talking without scolding them or telling them to stop in the middle of their talk. If they do that the thought process of the children will be interrupted. It also will spoil the concentration of the children. They should try to remember the mistakes. After the talk has ended and they are alone together then they can tell the children nicely, i.e. tell them that, "You remember this, that so and so word was not correct, it should not be used at that time because it is not appropriate." The children will remember just like that and they have another opportunity to improve their performance the next time. Remember this easy rule: every child loves being flattered and lovely words. We want them to do something we should give them credit. We need to compliment them. Then they will be able to remember whatever we tell them we don't like, it is not a good thing, and the children will most likely do not want to contradict us. If you notice the children while they are doing some thing,

they often look at you. If they observe that your expression indicates your disapproval, they will stop doing that right away. If you tell them in so many words, they will not contradict you for sure. This is one rule you should remember.

In general if the children have been taught the right way, the good way consistently, they will progress in a good direction for sure. The adults should look for an opportunity to train your children often. Every time there are guests in the house you should allow them to become acquainted with the guests and to entertain them. The children will have an opportunity to observe the manner, the speech of the guests and the hosts. It will give them a lesson about being sociable in our society. They will be able to get along easily in this world. They will be brave in the things they should be brave, and to be ashamed of what they should be ashamed of. When you take them out you will not be afraid or ashamed that they will do foolish things. This is one thing you should try to do.

## *Sports are Important to Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

ONE DAY I was taking a walk near this temple and saw two small kittens enjoying themselves playing cat and mouse. They jumped and caught something here and there and everywhere. I enjoyed myself watching them. At the same time another mind could not help wondering what they were really doing. Why were they doing like that? My mind gave an answer that they were playing a sport. They were preparing themselves for their future, because every cat must depend on itself. Anybody who can depend on one's self must have the knowledge and the ability to be able to survive in this world.

The knowledge a cat must possess is to catch small animals for food. The animals, which are to become cat food, also possess agility. So they need to train to be quicker and they did like that. And so that was a kind of sport for the cat.

If we have a chance to talk to the Westerners, they always ask what kind of sports we like and sometimes they will ask what kind of sports we like to play. Only to tell them what kind of sports we play, they can predict our character and habit. Because sport is also a game of life which makes the people want to go forward and to do the best they can in whatever they do. So they always pay special attention to sports. In general, there are sports facilities at the clubs, schools and universities. Everybody takes interest in sports and is happy to play the sports he or she likes. Every kind of sports teaches the participants to know how to lose, how to win, and how to forgive one another. It also makes them to be patient and tolerant. Every country promotes sports in a big way.

In Thailand when we play any kind of sports between schools anywhere, there were often unwholesome incidents. A school may have lost according to the rules but the players did not want to lose. It ended up in a fight among the players. This is a very bad habit. Whoever possesses this habit does not have patience. A little disagreement and something bad happened. He or she cannot become a good adult. Thailand needs

good people who are tolerant and determined to help build our country to prosperity. We need to have those people who are responsible for the families, which are a part of the country to help support and promote sports in the right direction for the progress ahead.

When we observe our children in general, we don't see that they have much to play with for an advancement of their mind. When I was a little boy, I saw my friends playing around. But all those fun things seemed to promote unruliness more than promoting good sportsmanship. For example, one group acted as bandits and another group as the property owners. The bandits came to rob and beat the property owners to death and took the money and valuables. When I thought about it later on, my feeling was that, role playing like that was not such a good idea at all.

In the present time, children see so many movies. They play by acting out a role as the stars in the movies but not a star, who was a good guy. They love to act being a bad guy mostly. And the behaviours of the children really look like the ones on the silver screen. Some of the children really went around with a rubber sling and shot at anything. Several days ago, I was staying at the Buddhasathan auditorium. I heard something hit the wall. So I opened a window and saw two teenagers testing their skill at the wall of the auditorium. I had to call and warn them politely to stop. They went to the wall to pick up the earth, which stuck to the wall and stop their destructive play. Why did they have to do that? They did not know what else to do to amuse themselves.

A normal child cannot sit still in one place. If he or she does not have something good to do, the child will do something bad. Bad things will easily lead the child right into troubles. Some children go out with a small knife or a small axe. They go anywhere and destroy things along the way. In Thailand there are not many trees along the roads, which have not been chopped or cut up by the people both young and old. What we see indicates how undisciplined the people in our society are. It also shows that our people are more destructive than constructive in nature.

In fact, a Dhamma principle in Buddhism teaches us, Buddhists, to have gratitude for all things, which are useful to us and to find the ways to preserve those things. But why do we practice in contrary to

that principle? The answer is because of the fact that we lack proper education. And the ones who commit “ the most wrong are the mother and the father. The parents who do not pay attention to educating their children can be considered committing a great sin. This kind of sin will always be inflicted on the family name. I want to warn the parents to be careful not to neglect to do their duties.

As mentioned before, children by nature do not usually stay put. They must always move about. The boys we called naughty are in fact active and alert. But if they don't have an opportunity to express themselves in a positive way, naturally they will do it in negative and improper manner. Before we will blame them as being naughty please consider this matter clearly whether we, as parents, have done our job properly in setting up a system of good living for them. If not then it is our own fault. You must correct the mistake and try to improve the situation in the future.

I have noticed that in the present time most children love to gamble. For example, playing with rubber bands, marbles and picture cards throwing contest. All the plays mentioned above are a first step for becoming gamblers in the future. Thailand has more and more gamblers each day. If little children at home and at schools gather around gambling more and more like this I am afraid Thailand will be full of gamblers. When that time comes, I think the whole nation of Thailand will have arrived at the rim of a flaming abyss. It will not take long for all to drop in it and disintegrate.

Do you want to see such occurrences? I don't think anyone want to see that. So what do we do to avoid that? There is only one way that is to allow the children to play the right sports and to help build the character and the spirit in this regard at the same time. The parents must pay special attention, such as, helping to find the right kind of toys for their age groups. You should allow them to play with the toys as they please. You will only tell them how to play and to play without damaging the toys. They should know how to use them, how to put them away as needed. If there are several players, try to see who is taking advantage of whom. Any bullying by anybody, any cheating just to win a game? If you see any of those then you must try to intervene and do not allow them to keep on

doing those things. Any little things may be causes for bigger damages. So you must be careful.

When the children play, make sure they don't gamble on anything. Any time they bet on something, there is always a desire to win. If not winning directly then indirectly. These things may get out of control. Parents have to be very careful to prevent the children from going bad. Sometimes the parents may have to join them in order to learn about their behaviour so that they can more easily find a solution. To be together once in a while on a regular basis, is a way to get to know one another better.

As a matter of fact, the parents should find every opportunity to take part in any activities. They should act like a boxing trainer for the children. Tell them when there is a mistake and compliment them when they do the right thing, the good thing, in order to encourage their good behaviour. It is also a way to prevent them from being spoiled. In some families, the relationship among members of the family is too restrictive. The father does not associate with the children and the mother has no interest in spending the time to have some fun with the children at all. The children are restricted to their own world while the grown-ups are in another world. The children feel lonely and sometimes they may become saddened and get totally out of control. This way is a mistake. So I want to warn you not to be like that.

Every child should feel the warmth when he or she comes close to the parents. They should be like a Boh tree of the children under the shadow of which they always feel a fulfilment. For this reason, the parents should spend the time enjoying themselves with the children once in a while. The parents who get along with the children are loved and respected by the children. Some people may think that to allow themselves playing with the children will make them lose their respect. The fact of the matter is that it is not true.; This would depend on the actions of the parents. The ancient people had a saying, "Don't mix play with work, and work with play." But there is nothing wrong with enjoying while you work. You can also, accomplish work by playing. But do not mix work and play together.

Especially in the case of children and adults, for example, when the adults want to teach the children in something, you have to look solemn and businesslike. Do not teach by talking playfully. Then the children will not take it seriously. You have to mean what you said to make them respect you. I think this matter does not receive a serious thought by the Thai people. When we teach some one, we just do it playfully. The result of your teaching does not come out as you wish. I want to remind all of you about this so we can start the remedy.

They said that the customs officers in Japan at the time they were inspecting contraband, they looked solemn and never smiled. They just did their job without hesitation and favouritism. That is a good example of doing a good job. You work while you work; you don't play while you work. If we compare that to the Thais, we are still full of irresponsibility. So our parents have to be trained to do a better job of role-playing. Don't be so weak any more.

In giving warning to the children, you must remember very well what you have already given warning, what those warnings were all about. You must be certain of what you told them the other days so you don't give another version of the warning to the children. To change your instruction back and forth shows the children that you are changeable and cannot be trusted. They will remember your style and will make the same mistake again without showing any respect to you. It is very damaging. What to remember is, you must keep your words at all times.

Another thing is the fact that it is necessary to be a good leader of your children. For example, to have integrity in your work both in front of and behind the children. In case of taking charge of your people, in reprimanding the servants, and in spending money, etc., you must be decisive, fair, and consistent, to yourself, to the children and to other people.

The instruction given to the children must be polite and compromising, showing sympathy and good understanding. After you have given an order, make sure to check whether it has been done and how good the work is. If it was good, you must compliment them, if not you must ask them to do it correctly. This is called a follow-up. The children will

respect you and listen to your instruction always. Happy children, who are good, love to do things. They are also obedient children. To threaten anybody to do something is not a proper thing to do. Use flattering words to make them work is better than using threatening words to force some one. Fear never makes anybody love the job. But respect will make them love the work always. Do not tell them to do several things at one time. They will become confused and don't do the right job. Then how can you say they are stupid?

The two parents should act as having one mind. You teach your children in the same way. Don't use the system where the father said it was good but the mother said it was no good. The children will be confused. They don't know whose instruction to follow. This is the thing you must be careful. May I ask you to think about doing for the good and the progress of your children? Anything, which may be obstructing the progress of your children, even though it is for your happiness, you should not do it. The children are the future of your family.

## *Train Children to Tell the Truth*

DEAR PARENTS,

**T**HE DHAMMA OF THE BUDDHA teaches us two ways to choose from. One way is for the people who want out completely from this world because they see that the world is not a place to bury themselves, to possess, or to become anything. The Buddha taught what to do to rid of all suffering completely. Another way teaches those who want to live in this world for now and are content of the ups and downs in this world so they are satisfied to live in this world on and on. The practical guideline for the people at this level is called Sila Dhamma or moral principle. It is a general guideline for those who are content to live in this world.

There are many rules and regulations to practice according to Sila Dhamma. Each of us may choose to follow either one to suit our needs as a householder or a lay person. There is the Dhamma especially for ordinary people such as those that teach us to have the right belief, reasonable belief, i.e., to be honest, to be tolerant, to have self-control, and to have generosity. The four virtues are needed and they are important for lay people in general because a group of people if they stay together and have no honesty among one another, then they will be suspicious of one another. When they don't trust each other then they will always prepare for a fight. Happiness will not exist in that community. So it is necessary that everybody need to be honest towards one another. To teach people to be honest, it must be done while they are young. We must train them to know the value of being honest and the damage of being deceitful and also to know the difference between them. In teaching these subjects, it is a good idea to tell stories to compare honest people with dishonest people.

As a matter of fact, children are synonymous with being innocent. Normally they accept the knowledge from adults and the environment all the time. Whatever their feelings are, they often express those feelings right out. They don't usually have any tricks up their sleeves. But if the adults or the nannies train them to have a misunderstanding about their

behaviour, they may just lie as a habit without realizing it. For example, some adults may lack an understanding about this. When they ask the children for some information, they shouted threateningly and asked repeatedly. If the children talked to them fearfully and hesitatingly, they often added to their fear by telling them not to lie, and to tell the truth. Even though the children were speaking the truth, they did not believe them and still accused them of telling lies any way. Technique like this creates negative thoughts in the mind of the children. They may think that while they are telling the truth they are being punished. "Next time I'd better not speak the whole truth." Then they start telling lies until it becomes their habit and it is difficult to change. Who is wrong in this regard? The wrong party is the adults, who else?

Teasing children with lies even though playfully may result in planting the seed of deception in the mind of the children to a certain degree. For example, a child may ask you, "Where is mom?" You may want to play game with him or her and want to see the child acting afraid just for the fun of it. So you said, "Your mom was arrested by the police." When in fact she was not. You were just kidding but the child thought that was the truth and started crying loudly. For the adult to do that was not correct and proper. Adults should never do anything like that to the children.

Sometimes children want something but you don't want to give it to them even though you have that thing. You told them that you did not have it and the children believed you the first time. Afterwards they knew that what you said you did not have, as a matter of fact, you had it all the time. When the adults deceived the children like that, they will emulate the adults, a sure way for many children to be spoiled. Please do not lie to the children. Whatever you have, whatever you see, whatever you know, just tell them the way things are. If you need to tell them not to do anything, tell them straight and to the point. Try to understand each other by telling the truth. It is better than telling a lie. It will easily bring damage to the children. Please be aware that, "Every child was born with honesty and innocence. Goodness was with him or her from birth. Don't do anything, which will block the positive expression of the children. Help them to show off the good side in them.

**Don't misunderstand that children have so much deceitful thoughts."**

There is one thing to keep in mind. Even though the children will always speak the truth but it does not follow that they always understand the meaning of each fact of the situation at hand. You must try to give them some advice regarding what the truth is and what is not when your children are wise enough to understand your explanation. Lest they will never understand what the truth is and what is the real meaning of it. **They will get confused over the fact about the truth and the untruth,** and will not be able to differentiate between the two of them. If we will use some observation you will have seen that while little children were playing among friends and they talked to one another they often use the word "suppose". For example, suppose I have a lot of money, or suppose I have a beautiful car, etc. But they don't really understand the difference between the word "suppose" and the reality. You should teach them by taking part in their imaginary world. You should show your appreciation in the imagination of your children. Explain to them how much difference it is between the "suppose" world and the real world. And at the same time show them you are happy with their imaginary world. Tell them you understand clearly what they are trying to do. When the feelings that "you know what they are doing" have been absorbed into the mind of the children, this kind of feeling will stay there. It makes them aware of being true to themselves all the time. And this habit will stay with them the rest of their lives.

To make your talk understandable to the children you must use simple language and make it easy to comprehend. Let them digest the information and try to understand it their own way. For example, when they suppose to be this or to do that, in reality it is not the way it was supposed to be. Like in the case you suppose that you are going to the market. In fact you are not going to the market at all. You are sitting right here and not walking anywhere. Therefore, to suppose is not something we imagine in our mind and just say it. If only this and if only that, but the reality is something else all together.

When your children grow up a little bit more just enough to understand words, you can explain the meaning of true and untrue. "You went

with your friends to Huey Keo (a small waterfall near downtown Chiang Mai city limits) yesterday and you told me you had gone to Huey Keo. This is true, because you had been there. But if you came home and told me you had not gone to Huey Keo with some of your friends, then you did not speak the truth. It was against a good etiquette. The Buddha taught us not to say a lie." When they can understand more you can teach further that to say something untrue is not good. "If you said it on purpose, that is, by saying things against the feeling inside your own mind, i.e., you know it but you said you did not know; you saw it but you said you did not see. Those are the lies on purpose or intentional lies. It is morally wrong and legally wrong. Good people just don't talk like that."

"When you know you have made a mistake, you must admit that you are wrong. Apologize to the person you lied to and try not to let that kind of talk happen." To do like that is a sign of good people. You should also point out further the danger of lying that, "If you lie again and again, you will be accused of having a fouled mouth. Nobody likes a fouled mouth person. Everybody wants to stay away from some one like that. You will be left alone. It is hard to find anybody who will want to play with you. You wind up having no friends. Any person, who is a habitual liar, is not trusted by anyone. You cannot get help when you are in trouble. It is a big problem. Some people lied in a court of law and they are in prison. Some lie all the time and known by all, when they want to speak the truth, when they need any help, everyone thinks that this guy is going to tricks on us again. Nobody wants to help." (Tell story of the shepherd boy who cried wolf as an example).

Any behaviour, which is practiced by adults, will give an opportunity for the children to follow that kind of behaviour. The Buddha once said, "It is a fact that if the head cow walks straight, the whole herd of cattle will walk straight; if the head cow walks crookedly, the whole herd will walk crookedly." His saying is true always. Especially in this day and age it is very true. When a leader walks crookedly, all the followers walk crookedly. The parents are the leaders of a family. The children are the followers. Lead them well; the followers will also do well.

In regard to the speaking way, you must not talk non-sensibly,

unreliably, or untruthfully. To talk in that way will be like a communicable disease to your children. Do not leave a mark of evil in your family name. Normally, children will receive things easily. If you allow them to hear you lie they will accept that and will talk your way. When you forbid them, they will not stop. If you want to punish them they will accuse you of being hypocritical. They will say that you also lied and when other people lie you say it is not good. The respect for you will begin to disintegrate and that is a beginning of the road to disaster. They want to continue to fight with you in the wrong way. The whole thing is the fault of the adults and then they are transported to the children. We have to be very careful. The Buddha once said, "You want to teach anybody anything; make that thing exist in you first. You will not become a confused teacher." So the parents must be especially careful about this problem.

If your children did something wrong and you call them to ask about it. Some of them will not admit they have done wrong. But some will admit that they have actually done wrong. The reason why the children do not admit the fact is mostly due to fear, because some parents are so vicious they will call for the children to come and beat them even without asking for the details. After asking the children and they did not talk, they would beat them even more. The reason the children did not talk was probably due to the fact that they were hurt from being beaten without the parents knowing the facts. When asked they would refuse or would tell an untrue version of the story. This is another way to make the children turn badly as well. You are grown-ups you should not be hotheaded. Do not punish the children without asking for the facts first. The way of questioning must be done gently. Do not question while you are still angry. If the children admitted that they have made a mistake, do not punish them. Those who begin to know they had done wrong are on the road to be good persons. The children who knew they were wrong can be good in the future. Show them that to do good deeds is really good for them. To confess is a good thing. Forgive them as a reward. Explain to them that speaking the truth is a virtue. The children who confessed of their sin are also good people. They will feel that they are rewarded for

doing good deeds, they are punished when they did wrong. So they will pay attention and concentrate on being good in the future.

I beg you, the fathers and the mothers, who love their children and wish them to become good people in the future, to **keep drumming in their ears to know about the truth and about the untruth. Truth, is immortal while lie is mortal.** The one telling the truth is honourable and famous. The one telling lies commits suicide by using the tongue all the time. Keep on teaching the children. Keep directing them on the right path in every opportunity. Do not allow an opening for the devil to enter your children's mind. Then you can be proud that you are the ones bringing up your children both physically and mentally. You have helped build the Thai nation by bringing up your children to be good people as you proudly deserve and you will not be troubled by any unwholesome incident in the future.

## *Train Children to be Punctual & to Know the Value of Time*

DEAR PARENTS,

I TRAVELLED UP COUNTRY to the provinces to talk to the people many times each year. Every time the officials of each province invited me. They would announce the time and the place for the people to come sometimes as a whole sub-district or two sub-districts at one place as convenience. I observed that our Thai people would slowly arrive. If the time was scheduled at 9.00 A.M., when that time arrived there would be very few people at that place. The speech then must always be postponed to 10.00 A.M. The situation was like that because we seemed to appreciate the time very little. Unlike in a developed country, they considered the time most important. If there were an appointment with anybody, anywhere, at any time, they would always be punctual. To miss an appointment time is considered very bad manner.

Buddhism contains some teaching in various places for the people to appreciate the value of time. For example in the Dhamma on the Virtues of a gentleman and a lady, there is Kalannuta, knowing the proper time to perform any work. It considers that the people who appreciate the time are good people. There is also in another place where it teaches the Buddhist people to remind themselves always that, "Days and nights are passing by; what are we doing at the moment?" To teach us to think like that is to remind us to appreciate the value of time, which is passing through our lives. The time that has passed can never be brought back again. A wise man, who knows to make good use of his life, will make every second counts by doing work. Because the important time of our lives is only one second, the golden second for everyone, when it passed, it will not be returned by any means. The Buddha teaches us, "Time chews up its own self, it chews up all sentient beings." Not only the time and the minutes that passed us by but the lives of ours also passed by. One second is gone. It means our youth is one second less. Old age is creeping up on our lives.

Those who don't know the value of time are slow in doing any useful functions. They are not concerned about the duties that need to be performed. They just spend the time walking around, sitting and talking in a bull session or just simply lying down "lazy boy style". There are too many of that kind of people in Thailand. They all don't know about the time. Even though they have on their wrist a beautiful watch. They consider it just a piece of jewellery and never use it to keep the time of their appointment. Those people are pitiful.

When I was travelling in Japan in Tokyo in the morning, I went out to watch the people walking on the roads. The time was around 8.00 A.M. I saw a great number of people, in groups, running along the roads. At first I was frightened for fear that something bad must have happened. The first group ran passed me, then a new group came and gone. I learned later that it was the train from the outskirts of the city, which brought the people from home to work. When the train arrived at the station the passengers came out jumping from the subway station to work. They did not have much time so they had to run again the time to spend every second to good use. That's why their country is rich, stable and progressing.

Thai people do not know the value of time. We still walk leisurely to go anywhere. The good things, the beautiful things, which should belong to us, have gone into the hands of other peoples. In the present time, our country has begun to develop the human resources. We are in the middle of the competitive world. The weaklings will lose for sure. Every one of us must be quick and alert; and must work to compete with the time. For the elder people, who are used to being comfortable, are accustomed to doing as they please, their number is getting fewer and fewer. They are dying and before long they will be all gone. The young ones and the children are growing to be the adults of the future. We can no longer be a slow poke, who does not respect the time. We have to revolutionize our way of living, our way of working and our social life and bring all of them up to the level of the steps taken by those of other countries. Who else can accept this duty except the parents, who have direct responsibility in this regard? You must help to create a habit of punctuality in your children. They must respect the time from very young age. The ques-

tion is how we are going to train the children in regard to the time. May I leave you a word of advice to remember, **“The parents and the nanny can make or break the children.”** Everything depends on the parents so you must study this subject thoroughly to help improve the situation.

To improve the situation about the time, we have to alter the situation in our family to be more orderly. For example, in having your meals, you should do it at regular intervals and not just do it any time as is happening right now. In work, in recreation and in sports, which should bring happiness to your family, you should do it in orderly fashion. Orderly persons will be able to accomplish any work they do. The order in our family depends on us. **Those who respect the time are well organized. And those who are well organized will spend the time appropriate to the work at all times.** When you have improved the situation in your family, when it is time for the pregnancy of the wife, the baby in the tummy of the mother will receive good things from the good heart of the mother.

After birth, you should train the baby to be punctual right away by using regular feeding times. When it is not time for feeding, do not give the baby the milk. Some mothers complain that, “My baby is bothering me so much. I have to take care of him all the time. I have to feed him always.” Who made the baby fussy like that? Who else but the mother of that baby who made him cry? The mother lacks patient and she becomes unreasonable whenever the baby starts crying. When her baby cries, she thinks it was due to hunger and she stuffs the nipple in his mouth almost automatically. The baby always clings to her and is always fussy. The mother should have been more tolerant of the crying noise of the baby. Because baby’s cry is sometimes good for the baby, we only have to find out what is wrong. If we can fix the situation, we just have to do it. If there is nothing wrong and the baby just cries because he wants some one to console him, if you humour him all the time, it is a way to weaken the mind of the baby unnecessarily. So the mother should be careful about this to help build a strong character in the children.

Feeding times should be fixed. It will help the children to know punctuality. The human body can be trained in eating, sleeping, toilet use, etc.

If the training is done according to the timetable, every thing can really be done according to a schedule. The parents should follow the guideline of definite feeding times. If it is not the time, just do not give any milk to the baby. Beside feeding the baby, bathing, sleeping, and bowel movement should always be done punctually in order that the baby will learn to do things at the set times from very young age. These are the training while they are very young. It is to plant the seed of punctuality in the early stage of life. They will understand a little bit about having respect for the time.

The next step is when your children have gone beyond that point. They will naturally have more things to do; they have more to do with their friends. They must behave themselves in such a way as to be suitable to the progress in this world. The parents must act as a guide for them to do things correctly, actively, and alertly. A slow poke will always be in the back of the pack and cannot compete with anybody in term of making a living. The parents must try hard to follow up on the daily activities of your children. For example, to go to bed at the time set for his or her age group. After the time has been set, then the follow-up must be done to control the real situation. Wake up time must be set and they must be reminded to follow the rule by telling them to wake up at that particular time. Tell them that, "The Buddha woke up very early, before all human. And he woke up early until the day he died." The Thai people, who are the disciples of the Buddha, must wake up early always. Teach the children to set the wake-up time before going to bed by telling one self to wake up at such and such time. The body will usually follow the direction of the mind. When the wake-up time arrives, they will awake. After that don't go back to sleep. Try to get completely out of the bedroom. If after waking up you go back to sleep again, you will have a mind that is wandering around and will dream about something very confusing.

Waking up is a way to tell you that your body has rested enough. When you are awake, get up immediately. Wash your face and clean up before getting on with your work at hand. For example, reading a book, writing or doing your lessons until breakfast time arrives. The parents should get up before the children and take care to see them waking up.

Breakfast should also be on time; go to school on time and to come home from school on time as well. If your children come home late, you must pay attention by asking for the reason for being late. You must ask them to give a reason. You must warn them if they did not have good enough reasons and show pleasure when they have good reasons, such as, being late because he was watching soccer, seeing a friend to his house, or going shopping at the market. The parents should not act indifferently regarding the coming and going of your children.

Some parents are very wrong about this issue. They don't pay attention at all about their children going to school. Even coming home in the evening is not any concern to them. The parents acting like that should be considered an accessory to the evil your children are committing. It will destroy your children in the long run. You must avoid doing that as much as possible. Besides eating, sleeping and going to school, even playing sports should have a schedule as well. The parents should not allow the children to play and enjoy it so much that they forget to eat or to bathe. Doing that is creating a bad habit in another way.

Children in general have friends. So they will naturally have a date to go out with one another. Sometimes they go out with the teachers. The parents must pay attention about what is going on with the children. You should be the one to remind them of the appointed time. Don't let them miss the date because to do that is very bad manner. It is a duty of the parents to remind them as appropriate. And the parents themselves should do the same. They should not be forgetful if they have agreed to do anything with the children and at a certain time. You must always be punctual. The grown-ups who are punctual are the ones who lead the children to do things according to a schedule. It is a good way to create wholesome habits in the children.

To do things always punctually is not only a good habit of working in an orderly fashion, but also is an attribute other people admire. Your work will tend to progress. When the people come to your office, they can be certain to see you and the work will be performed in an orderly manner. It is also a powerful way for you to possess an excellent physical and mental health. Civilized people consider the time is important and

they always respect the time, which they have planned ahead.

We Thais who consider ourselves civilized people; please help by making ourselves punctual both in coming and going. Do not be punctual only at quitting time. Come to work on time and go home also on time. You have an appointment with whom, where, and at what time, you must always be punctual. Those who are punctual are likable and should be associated with. On the contrary, those who are not punctual are not to be associated with. In the future, the world needs the people who know the time, respect the time, and those who are punctual. The parents should pay attention in training yourselves and in teaching your children to be truly punctual. It will be an honourable thing to do for your family and also to help in the progress of Thailand in the right direction.

## *Train Your Children to Have Discipline*

DEAR PARENTS,

EVERY ONE, who is a Buddhist, must have been in a temple where Buddha images are on display. You must have seen a big Buddha image, which is supposed to be the principal image in that temple. In front of this big image there is likely to be a group of small tables with beautiful gold decorative patterns. On those table beautiful flowers adorn. They are the kinds that keep relatively fresh for a long time, such as, the amaranths, etc. There are all kinds of flowers in the vests. Expert florists who make us feel wonderful beyond words arranged those flowers so beautifully. All other utensils were also put away in orderly manner. Anything arranged nicely and systematically makes people feel relaxed and comfortable. In case of the flowers, they were collected from several places, such as, the lotus from the big pond, the tuber roses from the garden, the roses from the rose garden and many other flowers. All of them were put together in one place and artistically arranged making them looked so beautiful. Orderly arrangements like those make for beauty, which is good for both the mind and the eyes.

When we entered the gardens, where the owners were good at arranging and planting we felt very happy for they have planned the spaces for growing the plants so well. What really made us happy? It was because we saw beautiful things, which were arranged nicely and systematically.

In general, there were many cars running all over on the streets all the time in most foreign counties. But nobody seemed to have any need for the horn in the car. Why didn't they use the horn? Because the pedestrians knew where they should be walking so they walked in orderly manner without any problems. So the cars did not need to use the horn, which is naturally very noisy. The pedestrians were happy and the drivers were also happy.

The City of Paris in France is considered by the people of the world to be one of the most beautiful cities on earth. And beauty is not about pretty women or strange looking shows but the beauty of Paris is the

elaborate designs of the roads and other gorgeously dignified edifices.

If we have a grass lawn in front of our house and we keep it up and maintain it well, the grass is so green and looks like carpet. Every time we look at it we feel so good. Anything in good order, we would say it is beautiful. Everybody loves beauty. **So everybody should arrange things in orderly fashion all the time to help create an order in our community.**

In the present time, the schools have become stricter in promoting order. For example, they maintain the lawn in front of the school to look really nice. They grow all kinds of plants with beautiful flowers and some with beautiful leaves. Drinking water and non potable water are provided at their proper places. Some schools even have different kinds of orchids as another decorative plant. All kind of tools and equipment are provided and put in their places. This is one way to train the students to be conscious of order and discipline.

**Buddhism has a lot of principles relating to order.** Especially among the monks, the rules are very strict. A monk has to wear his robe well. He must sit, stand and walk properly. The abodes must be kept nice and clean with all the possessions put away in good order. Even the toilets must be clean and nicely arranged at all times. **The people who are orderly will have a beautiful mind but those who are disorderly will have an unwholesome mind, they will be careless as a habit.** We have very few people in our country, who respect order. Most of us love to do things as we please. When we travel anywhere, we eat anything and we throw garbage all over the place. The banana leaves and fruit peelings litter the streets. On the train in Thailand we see so much sugar cane, water melon seed husks all over. Those things are a result of the people's disrespect for rules and order. It is extremely necessary for all of us, who wish to see happiness and prosperity in our country to **pay more attention in training ourselves to observe good order. And the training must be done from childhood.** But in teaching the children, the adults must also be an example because example is the best teacher.

When I was a little boy I went to stay with Luong Loong (uncle) who was a monk at a temple. I learned a lot from him. Even though he did not say much but he showed me a great deal by doing. And he did

like that all the time. All his belongings were put in proper places and orderly arranged. For example, all teacups must be placed to show the handles lining up in the same direction. Books must be arranged by their sizes from big ones to small ones. Nothing in his abode which were not arranged in orderly fashion. He wore his robes nicely. Even though there was no guest, he would sit primly cross-legged on the floor with his back straight always. Sometimes we played around inside the abode while he was away. We picked up his things and did not put them back in the right places and not exactly in the same manner he always did. When he returned he scolded us for coming to play over there and over here. Since we were still little we did not understand his system so we were wondering how he could have known what we did because we thought after we played with his belongings, everything was put back where it was. We did not realize that we did not put them back in the same way they were done by him so we were scolded. Since we all stayed with him for a long time this habit of putting things away in their proper places stay with us. From our observation we knew what it was like to be orderly. But we knew that when we reached our adulthood. At any rate the love for beauty and orderliness happened in our heart from that time on. Every image of orderliness always makes an impression on one's mind.

I have observed that some children loved to do things an easy way, too easy really. In the morning they woke up and got dressed simply by having their shirt outside the pants. The belt was hanging all over. Books and notebooks were carried without any regard for order. The hair was not combed; the teeth were not brushed; the nails were dirty and full of dirt. They went to school looking like a ragged doll. In the afternoon back at home, they took off the clothes and threw them away all over the place. Books were thrown on the floor. They grabbed a toy and jumped out without thinking of taking a bath. When dinner time came, the mother had to shout for them.

They came and ate like pigs without washing the dirt out of the body and the hands. Bedtime came and they slept just like that. If they had homework, they did not do it because they just enjoyed themselves playing. In the morning they did the homework hurriedly. Some of the

answers were wrong, some were correct. Then they left for school. They were late for school very often too.

Some of the children wrote down their notes in a random fashion. They put one subject in different notebooks and several subjects in the same book. Books were also torn and dirty with, as many kinds of drawings as their naughty hands would draw on those pages. When they returned home, the books were discarded all over. When they could not find them, they became irritated and blamed that other people took them. They were wrong but did not know it at all.

Children like that did not have any discipline. They were allowed to have no discipline since they were little. After they grew up, they were real messy. When they worked anywhere they would do the work carelessly. They did their job without expecting any good result. The job never progressed. They did not work the way they were supposed to. Any job which should be done first, would be done last. When they were told to finish, they just did it in a hurry. The job was finished but with so much flaws and deficiencies. When they were scolded, they complained that the boss was too strict and always scolded them without allowing them the time to breathe. They were at fault but never admitted it. Why don't you try thinking about that just a little?

If there were lots of people like that in a big organization with extensive operations, how could any job get done? In a country where there are people, who lack mental discipline but want to be big and important in order to be able to collect in large amount any money for their own benefit, they came in to rule the country. The country will be without any order, it will lack fairness and all the work will be done badly. The progress of the country will never be realized through those people who are not disciplined. When the foreigners come to visit our country, they would look down upon us because they know our nation lacks discipline. It is very embarrassing.

The Thai people in general, pardon me for saying, are very lax. They need more training for both themselves and their children to have a lot more discipline. That is why Thailand is so full of dirtiness of all kinds. Perhaps we have no feelings about this in much the same way

as the worms in a filthy place, which would not feel that the place was filthy at all. But if we travelled in a foreign country where it had discipline and order and then returned to our own country, we would see the lack of discipline and order all too clearly. Our homes are mostly not tidy and totally in disarray. We put our belongings anywhere we want. We eat anywhere we please. We dress the way we feel like. Even in an undershirt or a birthday suit (naked), we still go out on the streets in broad daylight. Some ladies put on matador pants like a bullfighter in Spain and come to the temple. Even big buildings in our country still look disorderly and they lack coordinated planning and designs.

The Thais in general love freedom. We love to do things our way. Everyone loves freedom. And in the training of our children we believe in not blocking the growth of the mind and the brain of the children. We allow them to have freedom to think for themselves all the way. I for one have the same idea about this. But come to think of it, everything must have a limit. Without any limit things will get out of the boundary and it will turn out badly later on. **So we should limit the freedom to some degree and do not allow things to happen as if we had no principle.** Normally human mind is in a state of running all the time. If there is no control at all we will just go all out and lose it. It is necessary to set some guidelines to train our mind to get used to being in a limited space and boundary. Or else we will be in trouble as adults. There must be law and order and certain customs and traditions. Remember that life without discipline is the life of a savage-like animal. Human being is noble minded because we have discipline and order to protect us. All good men have discipline for them, for their family and for their work. In other words, they have discipline all the time. Soldiers who walk in rows in unison look nice and orderly. If some one comes out of a row then they don't look nice any more. Is that right? For this reason, the parents should not neglect to train your children to have discipline. How good the future of your children will be depends on how good you have trained them.

From the day your children came out of their mother, you must begin immediately to train them. For example, to begin feeding them on time. When they grow up enough to be able to play, they must play on a sched-

uled time. In sleeping, we have to train them to have discipline as well, i.e. sleeping on time. To take them out for a walk must be done on time. You must dress them properly and in a clean outfit. Children around 4–5 years old, who have received good upbringing will struggle and cry if you don't change their dresses before taking them out of the house.

After the children can sit, you should teach them to sit straight. You always sit straight yourself to show them a good example. There must be an apron around their neck and a napkin when putting food in their mouth. Also don't make a big mess with the food. If they get dirty, teach them to use the napkin. If they can eat by themselves, teach them to use a fork and a spoon properly and to have proper table manner. If several of them eat together, teach them to share a neutral spoon and to know how to use it correctly. Make sure they understand that a spoon once used to put in one's mouth should not be used to ladle out the soup in the big bowl.

Toilet training is a must and the time should be fixed. When it is time tell them to go and sit. Eating should be on time and so is the bowel movement.

When they go to school, you have to pay special attention to them. Teach them to put away their clothes, stationary, and toys in orderly fashion. They must read and write according to a timetable. Make sure they do their homework. Books, notebooks, pens, and other stuff must be nice and clean always. They must go to school on time, play sports on time. When they return home, they have to see the parents first so they can see whether all the stuffs and the dresses are in good order. Then tell them to put them away in their proper places. Then they can go take a bath and have something to eat before dinner. It is your duty to inspect all the belongings of your children to make sure that they are in good order at all times. When the children have discipline and order, they will have discipline and order as adults also.

Our country of Thailand will become a country of discipline and order because of the parents who help to train the children from the beginning. It is up to you to do the job right for them.

## *Train Children Not to be Greedy & to Respect Other People's Rights*

DEAR PARENTS,

**B**UDDHIST DHAMMA teaches how to rid of suffering and unhappiness as the most important topic because it is the problem confronting all of us. When we are unhappy we want to get over it. But some people cannot find a solution while some people can. To be able to do that or not depends on being knowledgeable or being ignorant. Whoever knows the cause of unhappiness and gets rid of that cause, the unhappiness and suffering will also go away.

What are the causes of suffering in the world? A Dhamma principle states clearly that desire is a cause of suffering in our life. All sentient beings have desire, more or less depending on the circumstances surrounding each one of them.

As soon as the children get out of the mother, they always have a desire. They want milk to nourish their body. They want to hold by a warm embrace of their mother. When they get a little bigger, they want to have some toys. They want clothing to cover their body. Whenever they see something new, sometimes they want to have them. Some children have very strong desire. If they don't get what they want they will become angry and cry loudly. Some are even worse than that. When they are angry for not getting something, they hit their head against the wall. They cry in a big way when they were not allowed to have what they want. When they grow up, their desire are so strong, they become greedy. Whatever they see they want to possess them.

Some adults are old and have a lot of power and influence in their high office but they cannot control themselves to have any restraint over their desire. When they go out they would look for excuses to get things they like to take home for free. For example, they found a beautiful Buddha image in a temple; they would use their power to take them. When they go to a shop at a market place, they would compliment this and that indicating their intention indirectly. The shop owners understood so they

gave it to them with a negative thought. That kind is called greedy people. Some of them smoke but have no lighter. They borrowed it from friends then pretended to forget and put it in their pocket. It is annoying to their friends but sometimes they don't say anything for fear that there might be an argument from this trivial incident.

**Greed is a bad habit in people because they will turn out to become selfish without any generosity towards the others. Before long nobody would want to associate with them.** Then they will have a hard time living their lives. It is the duty of the parents to correct this habit being greedy in their children. You should try to cultivate and nurture a habit of being content with what they have instead of greediness. Why did this bad habit occur in the children? I can say that it just happened. It does not need to be taught at all because there is a seed of avarice in the mind of everybody. Whenever the children are interested in something so much that they like it, a desire is created. There is a saying; "To admire creates desire." Not only the children but also adults have this kind of sickness. Some of the things may not look that good but if we keep looking at it we may end up loving it. Some women are not that good looking, but if the men kept admiring them, they will turn out to look pretty good. This is something to think about.

Most children do not have any idea of reasoning to understand about being considerate of the others. They cannot think in a reasonable way as yet. They only think, "Me first; you after." This is the second reasoning.

Thirdly, most children don't understand the concept of, "theirs and mine." They simply think that this is lovely and they only want to have it. If you observe you will see that when innocent children see something they have never seen before, they will want to touch it. They want to taste it to know what it is like. Normally children can eat even chicken drops because they don't know what it is. The wish to try is stronger than any reasoning. When they see something they like they will fight to get it no matter to whom it belongs. "I only want it. If I don't get it I will cry." The Buddha said, "**Children have their cry as a major power.**" They do that because they do not understand about ownership. Curiosity and interest are more powerful so they will cry just to get it. As for the parents, if

they are the type who think their children are pitiful without considering the fact that their feelings may spoil the children, or they themselves are greedy, they may just hand that thing to the children promptly. To do that will encourage the children to become greedy. And this habit may stay with them until they become adults. So the parents must be very careful and not to do anything to encourage their children to devalue themselves.

The way to correct this is by not being sympathized with the children without any justification. If your children want something but that thing is not supposed to be for them, try to separate it from the children. Even though the children may cry, you must be firm and tolerate the crying of your children. It is better than being softhearted and spoil your children. You need to know also that anything new to your children when they see it they will want to have it. Don't ever allow them to see that thing. The thing, which appeals to their eye, will appeal to the mind as well. The parents must find a way. It is not that difficult. This is for small children who cannot comprehend the spoken words well enough.

If the children can understand when we talk to them, you should explain for them to know what the things are; whether they should play with them or not and whether they will pose any danger to the children and to what extent. Or you can say that the things belong to other people, who had to spend the money to buy them. It is not something free and it takes a lot of sweats and patience to be able to get them. **Who did the work deserve to get the fruit of their labour? You work more you get more. You work less you get less. Those who don't work have no rights to possess that thing.** "You have not done any work, you should not even touch it. To take anything from its owners without any permission is very wrong. You will be called a bad person. Do you want to be a bad person?" The children will probably say they don't. You may explain to them about the ownership of everything we work for. A little boy may have this rubber ball, for instance. Ask him, "Do you like this rubber ball?"

He probably answers in the affirmative. "If some one took it from you, will you be happy?" He would say no and will be angry with that person. "If they come to play with it without telling you, will you like it?"

He probably will say no again. “Whatever you feel, other people will feel the same way.”

Every one of us always loves our belongings and is very possessive of them. “If you take them away, the owners will be angry. If you play with the toy, they will be mad at you because they love their possession. You should always respect their ownership. Before you do anything, ask yourself if they did that to you, will you like it? If you don’t like it, they will not like it either.” If we teach them little by little using simple vocabularies, the children will understand more and more. The greed they have in other people’s belongings would fade away. They will become reasonable persons in a positive way.

One more thing, teach the children for them to understand that **whatever they want they will get and they will have by doing good deeds. The treasures are there ready and waiting for good people, diligent people.** A lazy person will not be able to make money. While they are still young and live with the parents, whatever they want, they can get just by behaving themselves and being obedient to the parents all the time. The parents love good children. Good children will be rewarded in the future. “If you do good deeds like I told you, the reward will appear by itself.” The Buddha said, **a good person will have plenty of fortune.** “So you should be patient and be cool. **Don’t be hotheaded. The hot head burns self and has no progress.** The cool one always wins. If you are calm and cool and you can control yourself to stay in the right path you will be fine.” If you keep on teaching them you can hope for the progress of your children. And I want to remind all of you to do it.

Why do I emphasize a great deal about this issue? **Because I can see so much flaws in our children. Most of our children do not respect in the ownership that much.** They do not quite understand the meaning of mine-yours-public property. They are often careless and greedy. When they go out and find anything that is edible they will just pick and eat it without thinking that the owner is somewhere, and to take it without any permission is wrong. The children did not know that because the parents never taught them about it. This careless habit will be troublesome for them in the future. So I want to remind all of you who love

your children and want to see a bright future for them, to help teach and remind them so they know about it. It will also help reduce the number of criminals in Thailand, which is another great wholesome act the parents should support wholeheartedly.

In regard to the right of ownership, it is not only for the parents to teach the children to respect other people's rights, but also for the adults to respect the children's rights as well. Whatever we taught them we have to practice it well as an example for the children. If you only teach, it is not good enough if you don't also practice. You must be careful about this. For example, whatever you have given them, you must consider it to belong to them and you must respect their ownership. Do not overstep their rights. If you need to use it you must ask for their permission first. To obtain their consent is a good manner. The children will also be proud and will feel that their parents did the right thing as they taught other people. Please do not act like you are the parents and you can pick and use anything as you want because, "This is my house." To abuse the authority like this will confuse the children about the meaning of the words "ours" and "theirs". Eventually they may become those who don't know how to use their rights and who love to violate other people's rights. When they grow up they may turn out to be bandits who rob and kill people. This is the thing that the parents must be especially careful. Also do not forget to teach them to understand the consequences of wrong doing when they have enough knowledge to appreciate it. Do not think that when they grow up they will know everything by themselves. To allow the children to learn things by themselves are always harmful to them.

Besides private property, there is one very important thing, namely, public property. Every country has the properties, which belong to the nation such as national parks, playgrounds, and temples. They are rest and recreation areas. Everybody has the rights to enter the areas and use them for their pleasure. While everybody has the rights to use them, everybody has the duty to keep them the way they were. For example, the flowers in a public park should not be picked by anyone for his or her own use. Whoever did that was selfish. They only think about their pleasure

without thinking about the public interest. When the children go out to the park or the temple, sometimes they were irresponsible and destroyed things. Before taking your children anywhere, the parents must make clear to the children what kind of place it is. How the children are supposed to behave themselves. If they understand they usually do not go against your instruction.

Even the things in the household, you should tell the children what they can handle without telling anybody and how much. Children must always be told. Anything the children should not handle or touch should be told. Not only telling them but also giving them the reasons for not allowing them to touch as well. We want to make sure the children understand everything as needed according to the real circumstances. So the parents must be good teachers of the children. They inform the children everything as appropriate. The children then will understand the meaning of a life in a home, on the street, and in all kinds of places where they must conduct themselves properly as the situation warrant it.

May I beg you all the parents not to over look this work? You not only create a person, but you must also teach those whom you have created to be good and useful to the world. You will be proud to have done your duty both as the creators and the teachers completely and effectively. Your children will also be glad to have good parents.

## *Train Your Children Not to be Selfish & Learn to Sacrifice*

DEAR PARENTS,

**L**AST SATURDAY I talked about the greed of children in several instances. In that chapter I demonstrated the reasons for the children to become greedy and how to correct that behaviour. Hopefully all the parents who love their children have remembered and considered using them.

Today I will talk more about selfishness because it is the cause of many things, which lead the way to evils. Buddhism teaches us to understand that; **“Selfishness is the root of all evils.”** Selfish persons are always harmful to one self and the society. That was one of the reasons why the Buddha taught Anatta, which discusses non-self and did not believe in the attachment to themselves or ourselves. The teachings aim to destroy all opinion about self and not to attach one self to anything too much. All attachments to any and all things are sources of suffering.

Even innocent children are mindful of themselves. They think they have themselves first. And anything close to them such as father, mother, and including food and toys are theirs. They will not allow anybody to take those things away from them no matter what. The accumulative instinct will appear in the form of being possessive of the property they have acquired. When they become more aware of who they are, they will even be more attached to those property. In regard to identification of self, you will see that a little baby will cry as soon as some one takes away his or her belongings. If it is necessary to do that, the parents will have to console them or sometimes they have to threaten them to take away that thing. If the parents are softhearted and do not force themselves to act against the feelings of the children in order to improve their behaviour and allow them to do as they please, then the little ones will be easily encouraged to act in a harmful way. The parents who unwittingly encourage their children to get spoiled are great in number. Normally the parents love their children. The love, which is overflowing their hearts, is the one foreshadowing the wisdom and reasons. They don't know what

is right and what is wrong; what should be done and what should not be done. So you must be careful to be able to drive and pull your children to walk on the right path, the correct path in the future.

**In teaching the children not to be selfish, you can do it to little children as well.** For example, when they have food and stuff, the mother should give some of them to other children close to them. The children will see your action as “sharing of the things” they have with other people. Sometimes they will receive some portions from the others in return. This will create a thought in the mind of the children that we live together with other people, so it is a good idea for us to share things with them. The adults themselves will also share food and other things among one another. Even though it is not a whole lot but it also create a habit of sharing which will allow the children to see in a good way.

When your children are still very young and innocent, you may be neglectful to a certain degree regarding the toys, i.e., allowing them to have some as they want in the things they should have until they become bored and look for the new one. However, the parents must be careful not to give the children too many toys. They will become greedy and want to change them very often. When they grow up they will have a habit of being desultory and not being serious about any work. This will be a big problem when they become adults. But when the children are old enough it is time to talk and to understand each other. It is not proper to let the situation drift aimlessly. You need to put on a brake by using nice words. “This one is yours, this one is not yours. It belongs to that guy, give it to him please. Good people will not take things, which belong to other people. If you want it, I will get one for you some day. When you have one, you should put it away properly. No one will take it away.” You talk to them like that, hopefully they will understand.

There is another issue, which needs your attention. When you went out visiting relatives with your children, the host and hostess were kind to the children and they found some toys for them so they would not bother the adults. The children who had not been trained about this situation, when they liked the toys, they just kept them to take them home. The hosts did not say anything because the toys were minor issues to

them. But it was a major issue for the future of the children. For the children to do that was one way to boost their selfishness. Later on the children will retain this bad habit. Please do not be kind to the children like that. The adults may spoil the children by being generous to them in this way. A kind person must also think of the reason, the time and the place. Whether you should do it or not. If you did not think you should, just don't do it. The same is true for the parents. You have to tell the children. "This thing is not yours, they only allow you to play temporarily. You cannot take it home with you. They will say that you are selfish. You are greedy even for little things." But if the thing was meant to be a gift for the children and it was brought for them in friendship and your children did not ask for it then allow them to keep it. **A desire to take because of selfishness is not a good thing.** If the children show this symptom, the parents must find a way to eliminate or to prevent it immediately. This kind of evil is like a fire burning our house. Whoever saw it first must put it out right away.

While you are giving away things to your children, you should watch carefully to see who are not satisfied with what they received. They will glance side way to see who are getting more or better things than the others. They will feel hurt and show signs of obvious displeasure. Sometimes they will simply throw that thing away. This is a clear sign of selfishness, which manifest itself as being hurt because they thought they should get more. But if they received anything before or better, they love to show them off with pride as if to tell them that, "My mom loves me very much, so she gave me good stuff." It turned out to be playing a game of one-upmanship again. They all have a tendency to turn out negatively in one way or another. Sometimes, the parents tried their best by dividing things into equal piles to be chosen as they pleased. The children will try to take advantage of one another by choosing better-looking piles. Sometimes two people wanted the same pile and they argued. This is a bad habit. The parents have to be extra careful in giving away things. Do not allow any prejudices whatsoever, because prejudice however little will create a crack in the mind of your children.

When I was a temple boy, dozens of us stayed together. Some were

good; some were bad; all mixed. When there was going to be things being given to us the guardian would count the number of the boys to divide the amount of the things to be distributed. Then piles of things were arranged in lines to be the same as the number of the boys as well. Then the guardian would ask the boys to line up according to their heights. The smallest boy at the end of the line would be called first to receive the gift, then the next boy until the last one at the head of the line. Everybody got one pile. He did it that way because he wanted to teach the bigger boys to be protective of the little ones. If the bigger boys need to sacrifice once in a while, they should do so for the little ones. All of us stayed together peacefully without any quarrel. This was fairness in the adult in our family, meaning my guardian.

It is the same for your family. You have several children in your charge. You must give them equality. Do not create a bad habit of selfishness by your prejudice. When you are giving things to your children, do not pay any attention to any age difference. Give each of them equally to make them feel that every one in the family has the same status with equal rights to receive anything in the family. No one is more important than the others in regard to receiving things from the parents. The idea that I am more important than the others does not exist. To act without any prejudice by the parents is the right way, the proper way for the parents to do.

While your children have cookies or some food in their hand, if there is another child nearby, you should take an opportunity to teach your children to give some of the food to the other child. You do this by telling your children in a nice way to make them give it willingly. Do not force them to do it in anger. Things like this are matters of the heart. We must let them do it with pleasure. It is better than using fear. Anything as a result of fear does not stay long. It is also better to plant the seed of contentment then let them do it. Some children, having been requested to share things, will be unhappy because selfishness is there to block it. Try to find an excuse to teach them so they would understand that the world is still here because of giving and receiving. Parents love their children. They give milk, food, clothes and many other things to the children.

“The things I gave to you, I received from my mother as well. If I received it and just kept it, I did not give it, you cannot live. My duty therefore is to give. My giving allows you to live in this world.”

Good people when they receive anything from anybody or when they have something, they will give some to the others. We cannot live alone in this world, we need friends. We depend on one another. This fact must be taught to the children all the time to make them realize that it is a job for them to do. Then you can be considered having cultivated this wholesome habit in your children. Remember that unselfish children will help build Thailand. But selfish children will destroy Thailand until nothing is left. Do you want to see Thailand\_ progress? The answer is already in your heart. I don't have to tell you because you know it already. The voice of your heart is saying something, listen carefully. Do the right thing to make your children the people of virtue.

When your children grow up and go to school, the parents must try to train their mind to have a feeling that they cannot live alone. Food, clothing, and everything combine to make a life, are all related. They come from several places, several sources to be together in one place to enable the body and the soul to survive and live on. All citizens of the world are related and they are equally important. You should give as an example the life in your family so the children can see easily.

The parents are the leaders of a family; they are the heads, the chairpersons of the home. The father and the mother must take care of each other. No one is more important than the other is. They both must help each other in making a living for the well being of the family. The parents will help every one of their children equally. They must love one another and have unity. They stay together in happiness and in sickness. They take care of one another all the time. The cook and the servants who sweep the ground and water the plants are also important in the work they do equally. On the day the cook was ill, we were all in trouble because no one cook for us. The janitor did not sweep the place for one day and there was dust all over spreading all kind of diseases. You will see that every one of us live together we must depend on one another. Happiness and progress will prevail. If each of us stay and live our lives

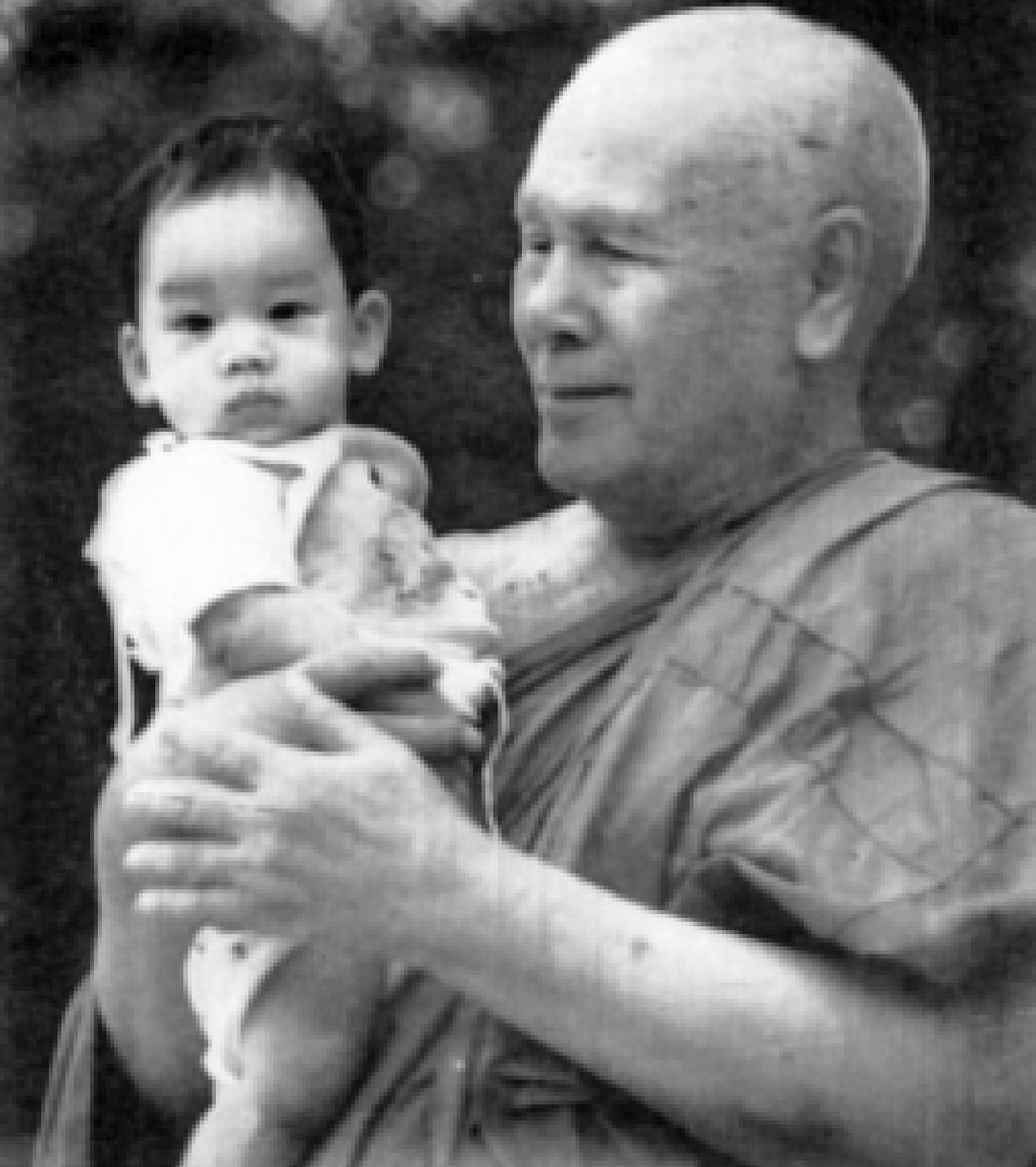
apart, each looking just for his or her own happiness with no assistance given to anybody; think for a minute, what will happen?

“At the school you go to, the roads you walk on, there are friends who provide these conveniences to us. The teachers teach you to make you a wise person. The policeman looks after peace and safety by directing traffics to help you to cross the street. All the work is meant to make you comfortable. Who receives comfort from somebody should do the same to other people. This is what helping and sacrificing for one another is all about. **Sharing and sacrificing wider and wider will in turn increase peace and happiness in the world.**”

May I beg you, the parents, to teach your children to be generous and not only think about themselves; to be kind and not only to human but also to all animals. They should receive our kindness to live their lives in relative comfort. Don't think only of your own fun so much that it may destroy the happiness of other people.

When you are with some one, look for an opportunity to train him or her to be generous and to sacrifice for the others, e.g. to make way for the elderly and the children. Give your seat to the people you should. It is an example of a good person. Do whatever you can to make your children wholesome. Don't be tardy about it or the devils will eat up your children.

END OF PART TWO



LOVE YOUR CHILDREN  
THE RIGHT WAY

PART III

# *Love Your Children The Right Way*

## *Part Three*

### *Cultivating Unity among Your Children is Very Important*

DEAR PARENTS,

**L**AST SATURDAY we talked about selfishness for your listening pleasure. You must have seen the truth that **all the evils in this world mostly come from selfishness.** All of us do not want to create evils in this world so we must find a way to prevent and to eliminate them to the best of our ability. To build the future of everything depends on the development of our children. If the parents of all families will together help in developing good habits of the children, happiness and progress will prevail without any doubt. Hopefully the articles which you have listened to will be of some benefits to you.

Today I would like to talk about a necessity we all must face with sooner or later. You must have heard of the news that in several big families when the head of the family passed away, the people left behind broke apart. Each one of them wanted to get the inheritance of the parents. In the end, they could not come to an agreement and the case had to go to a court of law. Even though each may get some money out of the trouble but most would be given to the lawyers and the court. Every time there is a middleman, never hope that they will do it for free, they will get some retainers for that. The story about “Grandpa Yu” in a book for children is a good example. Why would members of the same family not love one another and have unity?

I looked at the problem. There seemed to be several factors. For example, the family had several mothers. Children of several mothers are difficult to get along even with the same father. With different mothers, they rarely get along with one another. With one mother they tend to be closer. Ancient people said, “They were brothers crawling one by one after another.” The meaning is they were of the same mother. The rela-

tionship is usually stronger. With different mothers, even one father, it is hard. The father of the family should be careful about this. Do not be too active sexually. Don't have more than one wife because your children will quarrel. Your good family will weaken. Due to the above, big families need to break the rice pot to divide the goodies among their members.

Some families have enormous amount of wealth, including rice fields, orchards, buildings for rent. There are several children of different mothers. Every child wrangles for a piece of property. In this kind of wrangling, mothers are usually in the background supporting their children. This kind of mothers is short-sighted, selfish and does not think of the good of the family. Eventually everybody is all disturbed emotionally. They wrangle over every piece of inheritance. At long last, the solid foundation of the family disintegrates. The ownership of rice fields, the orchards and the buildings are transferred to other people. It is really a pity. If those children had been trained to do the right thing and to come together for unity and compromise and help one another to continue in the family business, they could incorporate the business into a partnership or a corporation. Each one of them has certain number of shares in the corporation by using the inheritance they received as the capital. They can collect the profit each year to be their income. Anyone wanted to work in the company could earn some salary and bonuses at the end of the year. The wealth will not be disappearing. The analogy is that of the father who planted a tree. When he died, one son took the roots, one daughter took the trunk, and another one took the leaves and the last one took the branches, the tree would die for sure because of the disagreement. But if everyone thinks that they want to keep the tree and make it to grow bigger by watering, working the soil and putting the fertilizer in it, then the fruits will be distributed among them. That tree will live several more years longer producing more fruits. But if they decided to divide among them like the above, then they would get nothing.

Many families went under using the method mentioned above. So I would like to ask you to use them as a good lesson. Use the lesson to teach your children, each and every one of them to understand that every one in the family is a part of the body, Just like our body, we have a head, a trunk,

two arms, two legs and other organs. Every part of the body has different functions, i.e., eye for seeing, ear for hearing, mouth for talking, nose for breathing in and out, and other organs have to do their own duty. Every part of the body has to work in coordination with one another all the time. For example, in eating the food, the hand will put the food in the mouth. The eye looks and sees whether the food is good enough for consumption or not, any doubt, the nose will smell, if the smell is good, the food can be put in the mouth. Inside the mouth, the tongue has to turn over to accommodate the food to be chewed conveniently. The saliva glands send out the saliva to mix with the food and it is digested in the mouth well enough to be swallowed through the throat (oesophagus) down to the stomach. This is a unity of all body organs, which work in orderly manner. Our body stays healthy this way. If one of the organs is sick and it does not function normally, we will also be sick or sometimes dead.

A family is the same. **If all the children in the family unite, help one another, love one another sincerely, that family will progress.** It will be stable and strong enough to work effectively. Whenever the unity disappears, the family will come to an end. You must explain to the children so they understand the meaning of unity. If they still don't understand correctly, ask each one of them to find a piece of wooden stick. Tell them to break it one by one. After they are broken in half, try putting them together in a bundle. Ask each one of the children to break the bundle. They cannot break the bundle. Ask them to help one another to break it, still they cannot do it. Ask them, why was it easy to break a piece of wood. The answer would probably be because it was not strong enough. Why could we not break a bundle of wood? They would answer, because they combined the strength. Tell them that to combine the strength together is called "unity". The Buddha once said, **"The strength of the people together brings success."**

On the contrary, the strength, which is scattered all over, does not have any power. It is hard to succeed in anything. Teach them further that if you want stability and prosperity in your family you all must unite. You must have unity. Remember that to do it alone will accomplish a little, to join forces will accomplish a lot more. Members of the same fam-

ily should cooperate in doing the work of the groups as a whole to have any progress at all. Teach your children to understand that other people will be able to destroy your love and unity by splitting you apart from one another first. When one of you separates from the group then it becomes more convenient to destroy your group. The analogy is that of separating each stick of wood and breaks it one by one. To separate and destroy is done by creating misunderstanding among the brothers and sisters. For example, by saying that you are at a disadvantage in this way and that way. Why are you so foolish as to allow your brother to take advantage of you? This is an example about destroying. The people who work together must have real unity. Don't believe in the words of other people so easily. Keep reminding yourself that brothers and sisters are closer together than the people on the outside.

The ancient people had a saying, "Do not think the faeces is better than the intestine." (Don't evaluate others better than your own kin.) The intestine remains in our body while the faeces have been discarded. No one can bring it back inside our body again. So you need to think about this carefully. **Do not destroy unity, ever!** The stick, which has not been broken, will have its wood material cohesively attached but a broken stick even with adhesive glue will not be exactly the same. This is analogous to a couple who used to like each other, if they broke up, it is hard to be together again. All members of the family should unite permanently. Do not be unwise as to break apart. The parents should be the best example of unity for the children. Any parents who often quarrel are very bad example for the family. The children having seen the bickering must have felt terrible. When they turn to the father, they were scolded, when they turn to the mother they were angrily berated. Where could they turn then? The brothers and sisters had to talk to one another. They may decide to go out of bound. So I need to tell you that if you want unity among your children, the parents must also unite and stay together in an atmosphere of eternal love.

Another issue, which we must be careful, is when the father loves to have several wives, which we call mistresses. The persons who have mistresses actually have minor wives. They are the fathers who are selfish.

The create a hell in the family. The ancient people said, "Woman will sacrifice gold as big as her husband's head to keep the husband." When she felt that she was going to lose her husband to another woman, she would be angry inside. Then the husband had a child with the new wife. That child was a thorn in her eye. She found a way not to let her child associate with that of the minor wife. The two children did not get along; they quarrel with each other. The two groups had no unity. Then the father passed away. The children sued each other for the inheritance. At the end, the property was damaged. It was hard to blame the children for an event like this because the father was no good. He created the problem for the children. In the present time there seem to be more fathers like this. It is very harmful. For this reason, I would like to remind you to learn to control yourself. Do not pay too much attention to having so much fun like being a slave. It is harmful to your family in the long run.

Having talked about this issue, I would like to continue a little more. Any man, who is intoxicated with sexual desire like simple animals, no matter how big he is, how rich he becomes, will easily be ruin in a flash and lost everything. There are examples all over. You, the parents, must remember. I beg you not to walk in the path of the ghosts, but the path of the monks. You will be safe in all respect. And you will also be called some one who built a firm foundation for your children. This is another reminder for you to think about.

Unity must be taught not only to the siblings of the same parents, but also among all the relatives of that family. Do not just ask your children to extend their love and friendship to a limited number of people. In our lives, there are many issues and they involve a lot of people. The Buddha taught us that, "All our relatives are also the strength we must try to preserve." Any family with many relatives will have a lot strength and power and can accomplish a great deal in their work. Any family with very few relatives will have less power. Whoever wants stability and greatness in their family must have ways to promote friendship among those in the same family. For the children who are related, the parents should find a way for them to meet one another once in a while so they can play and travel together, eat together. They can sit together listening to stories told

by the adults. It was a chance to get to know one another. The friendship, which began from childhood, will stay on a long time. The adults should find a way to create this sort of a situation to allow the children to be a part of the same group. Even though they grew up to be young adults, they should be taught more about this fact. The adults in the same big family met and talk to one another joyfully. The children will remember those scenes in their mind. If a bad thought crosses their mind, that scene in the past will remind them to think twice. So this one thing that needs to be done.

Unity is a double-edged sword. It can be used positively as well as negatively. It depends on how to use it. If the teaching was not done right and the family were united, but they went out and picked on other families. That is not correct. It is destroying the people of the same nation. We are a part of the nation. If a part destroys another part, it is like destroying the nation as a whole. It is like the right hand is scratching the left hand. The left hand is hurt and also is the right hand. Nothing is gained from that act. Even though the country have war ships and guns, but if the people of our nation are not united, those guns and weapons and the soldiers will not do any good without the unity among the people of the nation as a whole.

Unity is therefore very important and powerful. All the parents must teach your children so they will understand and to have this virtue in their mind.

The Thai people will not destroy the Thai people. The Thai people will support and help the Thai people for the progress of Thailand. But to help the Thai people develop Thailand, they must not make trouble for other peoples. Because the peoples of the world are all the same, all of us are sentient beings who have birth, old age, sickness and death the same as anybody else. We love happiness, and hate suffering. So we all should love one another. We should be well acquainted with one another. We should help create peace and happiness in the world we live in. How much we love ourselves; we should love the others as much. **The unity that the world needs is the unity in creating peace and happiness for the whole world and not the unity to destroy one another.**

## *Train Your Children to Save Money at a Young Age*

DEAR PARENTS,

**M**Y TALK ON, 'LOVE YOUR CHILDREN THE RIGHT WAY,' has gone of the air for a long time. You must have been wondering where it was. The fact is I have been gone for a while. Now I have more free time to sit and write again. So LOVE YOUR CHILDREN THE RIGHT WAY will be heard again. Please listen attentively.

Every radio station in Thailand has been broadcasting this very nice reminder. "This government did not ask you to tighten your belt but it advises you to save." This wholesome phrase was intended to remind and to warn you, all the Thais, first of all to realize that all work you do are for the happiness and progress of yourself and your country. Secondly to conduct yourself in discipline and order, and thirdly to help improve the economy of the country. It is an interesting reminder, which should be practiced by all. Why did the government give this warning? Don't the Thai people save money? Some of you may have some doubt about that.

Several months ago, I went to give a sermon at the Province of Phichit. I met a young man. He saw a monk so he came, to talk to me. We talked about the work he was doing. He said he was a carpenter. In the beginning he was just a helper. Then he became a leader and accepted the job to do it for himself. He had been doing that for five or six years. I asked about his income. He said it was good. He made about three to four thousand baht a month. After subtracting expenses his profit was about one thousand or more in a month. I asked further how he spent his money. He said he spent it to make his family happy. He gave some to the parents; he gave some to charity and some for taxes. I was glad to hear that. So I told him you have done right by a Buddhist principle, which says, "Every person should work diligently; should work an honest job, which will not bring trouble to yourself and the others. When the work is done, the result is money and other valuables. Then it should be spent in the right way, i.e., to look after yourself and your family, your parents, your good friends, to pay taxes, and to make merits in religions, which

are the lights of the world. It is the correct benefits you received from the money you earned from working. What you did was reasonable. But there is something important that you are missing.”

He asked what was it. I told him it was about saving some money. I also asked him whether he saved any money. He said he used to but only temporarily but he had spent all of it. Do you have any significant amount of money now? He said none at all. He made the money and he just spent it. I asked again if you cannot make any more money, then what will you do? What will you do when you are sick? If your parents passed away, if you wanted to make merits, then what? When he had to answer this kind of question he told me he never thought about all this at all. “I am very negligent.” When I saw he was feeling that way I reminded him that according to a Dhamma teaching, all things are impermanent. Our lives are not permanent. No one can guarantee our being. We may die any time. You have a wife and you have children. If you cannot make a living, what will your wife and your children eat? One more thing, the children need to have an education when they grow older. If you have no money to pay for their education, what will you do? Do you want your children to stay uneducated? It is not the right thing to do. The father is the one who is responsible for the family. Everyone needs the father to work hard. If the father stays home they are happy. If the father is gone, they are all sad. The father must think about this very carefully. **Don't think only for comfort at the present time. Think of the future as well.**

To think about the future of your family you must be frugal. You made some money; you must save some of it. If next time you cannot make any, you will not be in trouble. You are lacking this, is that right? He answered in an affirmative. So I went on giving him another pointer. When you return home, I want you to start doing one thing. You do as I request but it will be of benefit to you in the future. I want you to put some of your money in the Government Savings' bank. Do you have a Savings' bank at home? He said yes. I said you put some money in the bank. Just a little each time but do it regularly until it becomes a habit. When you receive any money, a part of it must be put in the account in the bank. If there is no real need do not withdraw the money from the

bank. Consider that sum of money to be the money for the future. But if there are any incidents, which will make your money grow, e.g., be a partner in a business, or accept mortgage on a house, you can withdraw the money for that purpose right away. If you are able to do like that you will feel secure about the money; you will feel secure on the future of the family. When we get old and can work no more we have some money left to spend without any problem.

**Young men who can find work should start working early so they have the money to spend in old age.** If you only have fun when you are young, you will be in trouble when you are getting old. Not only you will be in trouble but also the children who will be born later will have to suffer your sin as well. And the future of the children will not be so bright. The parents who are responsible for that dark future are sinful. The only way not to be sinful in that way is to **train yourself to be frugal; to save and to spend only on what is really necessary.** If it is not then do not spend the money. **Do not compete in spending the money** or the money will fall into the hands of other people. Look around yourself and see what really belongs to you. If you are not in control of yourself you will be in trouble in the future. Most Thais are flawed in this regard so I want to warn them about this.

In many civilized western countries, if we observe the way they make their living, we will see that they are most frugal. They eat only as necessary. They dress only as necessary. They go out only as necessary. They socialize only as necessary. Talk about eating and they eat only at meal times; eat only the food, which is useful to the body and did not think about the taste of the food but the value of the food. They eat only what is needed for the body and did not eat just because they feel like eating. The mind of a person always want something without any ending, without being full, without having enough. We are attached to delicious food. We are the slaves of the taste. But our body has a limit. When we are hungry, the body says so. When we are full, the body says so as well. Eat more and it will be trouble. But most our people are stubborn. They don't trust their body. They eat until something bad happen. The diseases and illnesses due to eating improperly are numerous. In other countries, their

public parks don't have food and sweets-wrappers scattered all over. It is because their people are frugal. Our country is still pretty bad. People seem always to be eating here and there and at all time. After eating the people just go all over without having any discipline and order. **There is no discipline without being frugal.** We have to build our country. We have to build the mind of the people as well. **The stability of the mind is based on being frugal.** I would like to ask those of you, who have never been frugal before to start now and save the money for the rainy days.

The ancient people said, **"Seeing an elephant defecate, don't do as the elephant."** This saying is so appropriate. If we compare an elephant to a human; they are so different. An elephant is huge while a human is small. When compared to an elephant, it eats coarse food, and eats a lot in proportion to the size of its body. We, human have smaller body, eat less. When the time to defecate, big elephant has very big chunks of faeces. If we, human, are going to do the same way as an elephant then we really are in big trouble. In our society, we, human, don't have the same level of wealth. Some are rich; some are poor. Some have large income; some have small income. Their spending will be in accordance with their situation and status. Some one, with 5,000 baht a month, may be able to afford a nice car and go to a big restaurant. But another person with 1,000 baht salary will not be able to drive a car and go to that same restaurant. It would not be right or feel right. To defecate like an elephant means trouble for sure. Our habit is like that a lot too. I want to warn you not to do that, it will mean trouble. It is competition in wasting money. It is not useful at all. It would be better if we compete in work, compete in saving the money. It is also a way to help our country.

In saving, it does not mean that you save so much and never spend your money at all. That is too good. An ancient saying, **have one quarter, make it one baht; but don't miss whatever you really need,** is quite spicy to hear and to practice just to get to one baht.

But do not make it too hard to live your life, which should be balanced and comfortable as your status allows. The word status is, the thing you must give it a thought. What is your status? You must think carefully and reasonably the way it was written following the above state-

ment, earn little, spend less; spend too much and trouble will come; do not buy if you think not, both for food and sweets. To be able to do like that needs self control. Do not have so many needs. Don't fall in love too much with spending the money. You have to ask yourself first before spending the money, is it necessary? Is it time to spend? If I don't spend, can I live? **Does my life need that? This is the kind of questions, which must be asked before spending.** If you think it is not necessary just don't do it. Walk by that place. Don't stick around too long. It will spoil you in the long run. This is a way to control your mind.

Another thing is you have to be careful in making a comparison between you and another person. To compare in order to make you love your work, like to progress, love to save, this should be done. But if the comparison was made to compete in spending, in being wasteful, then you should not do it. You must think that you and they are different. Or you may ask yourself whether you were born to be living like that. Your restless mind will become more peaceful. Those who have friends should persuade one another to be frugal to help the family and ourselves. Don't persuade one another to destroy one self. The Thais are lacking in this respect. **When we see some one being frugal, we often tease them so much that they could not put up with it and become extravagant like the others. This is very harmful.**

All of us please help correct the damages. Begin anew by being frugal, and it will lead to having discipline and order and to know how to control ourselves; know the time and the place, what should be done and what not, then the family will be happy and feel secure in our own situation. If every one of us is frugal and become well off, the economy of the country will be stabilized. Thailand will progress and be equal to other nations as we wish. Please think about this a little.

## *Train Children to Save Money at a Young Age (cont'd)*

DEAR PARENTS,

**P**LEASE LISTEN TO ME. Listen to the good news and remember it well so you can practice for the happiness of your family and yourselves. Today I have something to tell you.

Once upon a time when the Buddha was still alive, he spent his time in *Savatthee*. King *Pasenthikosol* became interested in Buddhism so he had on occasions listened to the teachings of the Buddha. Then the Buddha after staying there for some time, he travelled to other cities to allow more people to meet and listen to him. Once he went to the city of *Kosampee* and stayed at *Khositaram* Temple close to the city. At that time King *Uthane* had given each lady in the palace a piece of good quality silk. All together there were several hundred pieces of silk for several hundred ladies. Those ladies after having received the clothes went to listen to the sermon at the abode of *Phra Ananda*. They were all impressed of his teaching. All of them decided to give all the silk to *Phra Ananda*. There were five hundred ladies. The next day, King *Uthane* saw that none of his ladies was using the new silk and was surprised. He asked them. When he knew that all the silk was given to *Phra Ananda*, he could not help wondering what a monk could do to five hundred piece of silk. Afterwards they met and there was the following dialogue:

*King: I was told that you received five hundred silk clothes from my servants in the palace.*

*Ananda: Yes, Your Majesty, it is true.*

*King: There were so many of them. Could you use all of them?*

*Ananda: I am a man of small means. I am content with what I have and use only what I need. I did not use all of the silk but I gave them to the monks who had old robes.*

*King: The monks who had old robes receive new robes. What then did they do to the old robes?*

**Ananda:** They gave their old robes to those who had older robes so they could change that for once.

**King:** *The monks, who received new robes, exchanged for their old robes. What did they do to the old ones?*

**Ananda:** The old ones were so old and could not be used as the robes any more. They were used as mops to wipe the floor of our abodes.

**King:** *What happened then to the old mops?*

**Ananda:** They were used to wipe the feet when the monks entered the abodes. Your Majesty.

**King:** *What did you do with those pieces of old rags then?*

**Ananda:** They were mixed with clay to add on to the walls of the abodes. Your Majesty.

**King:** *I am very pleased that the monks know how to use every piece of the robes without wasting any of them, dear reverend.*

Gift giving to the monks who know the value of all things produces good results. The benefits are always great.

This was a story about *Phra Ananda*, the personal attendant of the Buddha. He was a virtuous monk. He knew the value of the things given by the people. He did not allow the gifts of the people to be wasted at all. His way is the right way. We should use his way in this day and age. **Any articles, which can still be used, should not be discarded. They should be repaired and recycled for use in another function or form.** If the housewives know what to do with used materials in the family, they should find a way to continue using them. Some families have so many clothes. They were left hanging without being used. They should be donated to the poor or we should find a way to use them somehow. We Buddhists should consider doing the same as Phra Ananda.

To train some one to be frugal needs to be done since children. How do we do that? I would like to tell you my story just a little. I am so frugal that sometimes I was accused of being stingy. When I was a little boy I did not have many clothes. I went to school and have on a pair of black short pants and one white shirt. I used them everyday and washed them once in seven days and used for seven days. I did not feel that I had any

problems. Sometimes I felt I wanted a new dress. But the money in the family did not allow it to happen. I had to be content with what I had. I walked to school everyday because we did not have any transportation. The ink I used was in a small bottle. The pen was partly made of bamboo. I did not have to pay. I cut it from our fence anywhere. My mother gave me only three satang a day when I attended the primary school. She also insisted that I did not spend all and had to return one satang. I did as told. Once in a while I violated the instruction and was punished every time.

Then I went to a secondary school. It was far from home. I received five or six baht pocket money a month. I had to spend only for the necessities and if there was no need I did not spend any at all. For lunch a dish of curry rice only cost three satang. I did not have any trouble with that. I was used to not having a lot of money so I was accustomed to not spending any money. When I received any money I could not find a way to spend it. So the money was always in my pocket. When I became a young man, I earned my living working as a labourer in a mine making 1.30 baht a day. I did not spend much of the money either. I thought money was hard to make. I had to carry so heavy a load that my shoulders were deformed to make one baht. So I knew the value of work and money very well.

When I became a novice and was made a teacher, my salary was twenty-five baht. I did not spend much either because I had the rice and free lodging. After having the robes there were not so much needs. The things I bought a lot were books. I loved to study. I did not allow the time to pass by without doing anything. I loved to read for knowledge and I would buy any new good books even though they were expensive. So my knowledge was increasing each day. I did not have any other extravagant habit. And I felt that I was rich at heart. I did not have much trouble with money because when I had the money I did not spend it if there was no need to do so.

When I lived in Bangkok to study I had only 264 baht. I spent it for three years. You may not believe me but that was the truth. I had only a few belongings. Besides a rice bowl and the robes, I had one water bowl.

I lived comfortably. My guests would be given a glass of tap water. I did not smoke. I did not snuff. I did not drink any hot tea. I only ate what I received from the morning round of walking with my rice bowl. It was a comfortable life. Our happiness is to be content with what we have. To have enough is happiness. If it is not enough then it is unhappiness. Who trained me to be frugal? This was the work of my mother, who did for me since I was little. To give me three satang and told me to return one satang was a magical tactic which she trained me to have restraint, to know what is enough in my daily life. Everything seemed to be going well all the time. Whenever I needed extra money, e.g., to buy books and pencils, she never gave the money easily. She would ask questions so she knew what was it all about. She never gave anything to me an easy way. Whenever she allowed me to go out for some fun events she would give me ten satang or more without giving any special instruction. But when I came back in the evening she would ask whether I had any money left. If I had spent all I would be given a long lecture about the evil of spending and eating too much. Money was hard to come by and there would be trouble ahead. The lessons like this would teach our mind little by little. It turned out to be the lesson of a lifetime. Even when I reached my adulthood, I still did not know how to be extravagant.

To tell you my personal life story is to allow you to know the lessons in my life. You can adapt it to suit your needs and your status. **There are lots of people who invest their money to destroy the mind of the children by the money they have, e.g.,** giving their children so much money; they ask for it and always get it, and very conveniently so. They are afraid that the children will be unhappy. To do that is to destroy the mind of the children. The children will never appreciate the value of money. They think that money is like a pebble, which can be easily taken from the parents. There is no love in the money. The gratitude for the one giving the money does not exist. It seems so easy for them. It is very easy to spoil the children this way.

I beg you the rich parents who have children to be very careful because the money can destroy the children more easily than anything can. Money has spoiled many children. One of my childhood friends was

like that. And until now he had not been able to recover. Whose fault was it? It was that of the parents for sure.

But there is one thing you must be careful. If your children don't have enough they can be spoiled too. You must use the middle way, which would depend on the family situation. For this reason to teach the children about frugality you must not induce any inferiority complex in the children. You can do that by explaining the real situation to them. Tell them about the value of work, money, and the subjects they should study. It is hard to teach anybody when he or she has become young adults. They can easily go out of the way any time. It is necessary to explain all the reasons for them to understand. The behaviour will then become a habit. A lot of children having left the wings of the parents often have money problems because they don't know anything about managing the money. The thing that must be emphasized to the Thai children is that the money is not in the hands of the Thais, because Thai people don't know how to spend the money. They only pay out but no pay in. So all the money is in the hands of other people. Make them understand that to be able to save one satang is the way to save one baht. If they don't know about saving one satang, one baht will never be realized.

No one in this world gets rich from earning much and spending more. People get rich because of saving money. Tell them to look at beehives. The bees have honey to feed the young ones because the bees collect and accumulate little by little. The white ants build ant hills by adding the earth little by little until it becomes a big ant hill. Human **has to accumulate too so they will not be in trouble in the future.** Take your children to the Saving's Bank or buy them a piggy bank and teach them to put coin money in it. When it is full, open it. The children will be happy with that money they have saved. Take the opportunity to teach them where the money comes from; how it grows and if they keep doing it there will be even more. Cultivate the seed of frugality in them little by little. They will grow up being able to save, to spend, and to work to earn money to keep it there. Please teach your children to save money.

## *Train Children to Have Gratitude at a Young Age*

DEAR PARENTS,

THERE IS A BUDDHIST PROVERB, which we should pay attention to, and to use it to train our children. It will help our family to become stable and strong in the future. That proverb states:

“ นิมิตต์ สาธุรูปานํ กตญญูกตเวทิตา ”

*Gratitude and its manifestation is a sign of a wholesome person.*

This Buddhist proverb teaches us that a good person has a symbol. The symbol of a good person is gratitude. Whoever has this virtue has the symbol of goodness. Whoever lacks this virtue does not have the symbol of goodness. All the teachings in Buddhism teach the people to be grateful. Gratitude is a foundation of the morals, a foundation of progress. If the people of the world practice this virtue, they will surely survive. In the Dhamma of the Buddha, there are teachings about gratitude in so many places. And at the same time it criticizes those who lack gratitude in several places as well.

*Phra Sareebut*, the Buddha's chief disciple, came to be under the discipline because he had listened to the Dhamma of *Phra Assachi*. After he was ordained to be a Buddhist monk, every time he went to sleep he would lie down with his head pointing in the direction where *Phra Assachi* was staying at the moment. This was to pay homage to his great teacher. Several monks who did not know about this fact accused him of being *a worshipper of the direction* as in Bhramanism. The Buddha knew about the incident, so he called *Phra Sareebut* over and then he said, “A good person, who heard the Buddha Dhamma from anybody, will be respectful to that person like a Bhramin worships a fire.”

Once a Bhramin whose name was Ratha wanted to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. He entered the temple to ask for a monk to ordain him but no one wanted to do that for him. They all thought he was an old man, who would be difficult to teach anything new. When he would not

be ordained he became pitifully emaciated. The Buddha heard about him so he called a meeting of the monks. After the meeting was called to order he asked whether anybody would recall any favour that had been done by that Bhramin to any of the monks. Phra Sareebut stood up and told the Buddha that he could recall an incident that the Bhramin had once gave him a ladle of rice. The Buddha was happy. He complimented *Phra Sareebut* for remembering the good deeds that was done to him and that he was a very grateful man. He went on to say that good people should remember always the good things the other people had done for them. As for the things you did for the others, if you forgot about it, it did not matter. And if there was a way to return the favour you should do it immediately. The Buddha himself was very firm on this virtue. An example was when he went to give a sermon for his parents and the relatives in the city of *Kabilaphasadu*; his permission for *Princess Pachabodi Khotamee* to be ordained as a *bhikkhune* in this religion including the journey to nurse King *Suthothana* when he was ill. All showed gratitude. We, Buddhists, should pay attention to this virtue and should practice the best we can. Or we will turn out to be persons of no value right away.

Gratitude means to appreciate the value of the favour other people have done for you. Even though the favour may be a small one but it is still valuable. Whoever has done you any favour, you should always remember them. To remember and to appreciate the value of any favour done to you is a sign of a grateful person. When you have remembered you should find a way to return the favour whenever you have a chance to do so. As long as you have not returned the favour you still owe them that favour. Good people when they owe some one, they will try to pay back. Then they will become really good people.

The people, who read *Sam Kok* (Three Cities), a Chinese historical annals, like *Kuan U*. The Chinese worship *Kuan U* as a god. They also consider him to be an angel. Why did they make *Kuan U* and angel? They did that because *Kuan U* was full of gratitude. Even though that person was his political opponent but he had done him a favour in the past so he did not kill him. He did not even hurt him. *Kuan U* allowed him to pass unmolested. This is a symbol of this hero.

Gratitude therefore is an important virtue we should instill in the mind of the children when they are still young; to make it a habit so that when they grow up they have already got it inside like their second nature. Some parents complain loudly, “Too bad! Our children are good for nothing. They are ungrateful to us. We should not have allowed them to be born at all.” Words like that come out of the mouth of the parents, who are disappointed of their children. Why did they have to be disappointed? Who made mistakes in this whole thing? Were the children wrong or were the parents wrong? If we think about it superficially the children were wrong because it is a duty of the children to love their parents and to be grateful to them. But if we think about it more deeply, the mistakes were actually caused by the parents. The parents did not teach the children to appreciate the good deeds of the parents in giving food, clothing, shelter, and everything to the children. But the children did not realize the good deeds they were accustomed to receive. They never thought about not having, or not getting. When they did not think about it they did not see how much the parents did for them. It is the same as eating curry everyday. It tastes good. But we don't know why. Salt makes the curry taste good. The people who eat the curry do not know the value of salt. When there is no salt they know the curry does not taste good. The feeling of gratitude will occur at that point.

The parents are usually with the children everyday. They are a well of love and compassion for the children. They always provide whatever the children want. So the children have a hard time figuring out how much favour the parents have done for them while they are still alive. Once the parents are gone then they know they have lost something very important in their lives. They feel the gratitude when the two parents have left this world. It is too bad that they have lost the good opportunity to repay them. But we cannot really blame the children. We have to blame the parents. So it is necessary for the parents to teach the children all the time to be grateful to the parents. The question is how we are going to teach them. I will tell you as follows:

1. Example is contagious. You must set an example for your children

so they see that you are a grateful person. You have your own parents. Our parents are with us all the time. They are never far away from us. To have your E parents in your family as the grand father and grand mother on both sides is really good because you will be able to teach your children by allowing them to see how well you behave towards your parents. Anything you do to I your parents are good. They will have an effect right away both good and bad. I have seen so many of them. We must be careful. If you want your children to respect you, you have to respect your parents and make sure that your children have seen you doing it. If you want your children to look after you when you become old, you have to look after your parents and they have to see you doing it. You must treat your parents nicely. You must look up to your parents as sacred beings in your family, an angel who should be worshipped. The parents are inviolable. You must always talk to your parents in a polite and respectful manner. That is to allow your children to learn, to remember, to be a good example, and to cultivate good wholesome tradition in your family of “good people” (*phu dee*), who possess goodness in their heart.

A family of wholesome people is where goodness resides. That family is a home of good people. At the same time you can demonstrate as an example for your children that “their grand fathers and grand mothers” are the people, who gave you the knowledge; who found you a job; who gave you a place to live. Without the grandparents you would not have been born and would not be happy. Your children would not be happy either. Their grand parents have done great favours for you. So your children must love and respect their grand parents and respect their parents as well. You may give suggestions or you may ask questions so the children will have to think about them. You must make them realize that their parents are the life and everything to them. The children will have deep love for their parents. Those who love their parents are obedient children. They don't usually make any trouble for the parents.

On auspicious days such as the parents' birthdays, the New Year Day, the Buddha Day and *Asalha puja* Day, which are all important, you should show your gratitude to your parents for the children to observe, for example, by giving them each a gift and pouring water on their hands in accordance with our customs. You may also cook for them special dishes that they like. You should also explain to the children the reason you are doing it. This is a way to cultivate gratitude in the mind of the children. After your parents have passed away you should make merits for them. In all merit making, or in case you have a special monument to put their ashes where you should take your children, teach them to remember and to pay respect to the good deeds of their ancestors. Also explain to them the reason for doing it. What the meaning of this place is and how important it is to the children. If you only tell them to pay respect to the place, it does not mean that much.

2. Train your children to understand about returning a favour when were still little. Talk to your children about the relationship in your family so they know the duty of the father and the mother. Let them know that the parents are like a bodh tree to the children. Without the shade of the tree, the children will surely suffer. Tell them little by little. Make them realize that they were born from the parents. All flesh and blood belong to the parents, all food belongs to the children. The parents are their protectors. Ask them if they don't have you, will they be in trouble? Talk to them often or find a good story about gratitude and gratefulness to tell them. At the end you must compare the story to the life of the children every time. It will make them understand more about being grateful.

To train them to learn to use the word "thanks" and "thank you" is something good to do. Those words are expressions indicating appreciation in advance. In general most families have not practiced it. I would like to ask you to do it. You should tell your children to pay respect before receiving any thing from you. Don't allow them to accept anything without showing gratitude. When your children

want to go out, they must be told to ask first for permission. Before they leave they have to pay respect by prostrating themselves. To see children prostrating in front of the parents is a beautiful sight to behold. When they return they should report back and prostrating themselves again.

At night before bedtime, the children should pay respect to the parents. They should come to say good night respectfully. The parents will wish them well for the night. In the morning after they wake up they should come again. It should be done every day and all the time until it becomes a habit, something to do without pretending. This is one good deed. Beside those, the parents should train them to take care of the parents. Teach them to do some minor tasks for them. Don't force them to do the work but make sure they do it voluntarily. Those who did any work will be given rewards or they will be complimented in front of other children in the meeting in the evening. This will help make the children understand the meaning of gratitude to some extent.

In short, it is the duty of the parents to train the children to understand this topic that if they don't do it, it is sinful because they neglect to do their duty. Dear Parent, have you done the above duty?

## *Train Your Children to Forgive*

DEAR PARENTS,

ONE DAY around three o'clock in the afternoon two people was arguing loudly. Both of them were angry. Darkness came over their minds. They could not see right from wrong. Both women did not want to give an inch. Not only the two of them were there at the scene but also a big audience. They loved to see an open air show. And the show was for free too. It was also open for everybody to see conveniently. Why were the two of them quarrelling? It was only a small matter. It happened to be about the children and not the adults. But the adults were hurt instead. They intervened and the matter got out of control.

The names of the parents were Khamkeo and Buaphan. Khamkeo has a son about four years old. Buaphan had a son about the same age. But Buaphan's son was smaller because he was sickly. The two boys played together all the time. They naturally quarrelled when they played but the incidents were not so serious. They were angry with each other for a while, and then they would get together again and played. They did not have any ill will in their young minds. That day Khamkeo's son grabbed a toy from the hands of Buaphan's son and played alone. Buaphan's son cried and ran to his mother. That day the mother was in a bad mood because she had lost in a card game. Having heard what her son said she was furious. She went out of her house and grabbed the toy from Khamkeo's son. She also slapped at the boy for bullying her son. The boy who was slapped ran to tell his mother. The mother was furious. So they open an open-air theatre for a big show. It was so much fun. This story was the same as "a drop of honey". It became a civil war. Why did it have to be like that?

It is natural for children that they don't like to be alone. If you let two children stay in one place; the two babies will crawl towards each other even though they could not talk to each other. They would make a sound or two and play together as little babies do. They must have learned something from each other in this encounter. This is a char-

acter of innocent children. When they grow up and they can talk they learn to play with the toys. They are happy to see their friends. When they play with some one they know well, they will enjoy themselves a lot. Even though there may be some conflicts, they would be something minor. The adults should not make them big. Consider them a matter of the children. Before long, they will no longer be angry and play together again. **The adults must find a way to cultivate love, unity, and devotion, and do not allow anybody to take advantage of one another.**

The adults must observe the character of the children all the time. Try to learn about the habits of the children to know which, if any, of them love to bully the others. When they know then they can find a way to correct that. Talk to them so they understand **the good and the evil** of their acts. For example, if your children love to bully the weaker ones, tell them that such acts are not nice. It is not gentlemanly and lady-like. "Don't you see that your friend is younger than you? He is like your little brother. You always receive protection from your older brother. Don't you? You are older; you must help him. You should share the food and the toys with him. To share the food and the toys with your weaker friends is a good thing. You will be a likable person. They will sympathize with you. If we help them today, tomorrow they will help us." Use the story of the lion and the mouse to tell them. The children will see the difference between the two animals. The little mouse was able to help the lion. If your children love to bully other children, you should tell the story about the elephant and the little bird. The children will understand it is not nice to bully other children. But to love and have sympathy like real brothers and sisters will make them a lot happier. Unity will also prevail among that group of children. Especially in the same family, it is very important. Oneness in a family is most desirable.

When children did something wrong to other children, the adults should advise them to ask the victimized children for forgiveness so they will recognize the fact that they had done wrong; they had done improperly. "Please forgive me." **This practice will train the children to have sporting spirits; to accept the fact when they were wrong and to lose gracefully, which was the way of sports.**

It is also a good deed. In general we have our pride and our ego. We think of them or of us and we don't yield an inch to other people.

This is true for ordinary people. But it is harmful to the people who hold such thought. So we need to train our children not to believe in that concept. It is by teaching them to accept any mistakes that they have made. Tell the children that mistake is common among all workers and all athletes. But mistakes can be corrected. Every pencil has an eraser because they know that mistakes are human. Any mistakes just erase them and do it right the next time. Dirty pants and shirt of the children can be washed as well. Not that they are not washable. **So when the children did something wrong, tell them to ask for forgiveness and then warn them not to repeat that mistake again.** This is one thing to do.

You raise your children; you find food, clothing and other things for them. Before you give them to the children, you have to select only the best. For example, you will select the food that will not be poisonous to the physical well being of the children. When they are big enough to go to school or young enough to have fun, it is normal that they will have friends. Association is very important. The Buddha said, **"To speak about external causes, which will make or break a man, nothing is more important than association. Association will make people good; it will also make people bad. It is all up to the people we associate with.** Young men don't have the eyes to select the bad ones or the good ones, so it is up to the parents to act as helpers. What to do to know about the friends of your children? In a case like this, the parents must allow your children to bring their friends home, e.g., to come to have lunch together, to come for a talk or relaxation. You allow them to have freedom and at the same time you will lower your level to become friends of your children and to become friends of your children's friends. It will be to your big advantage to do that. First of all the children will see that their home is a comfortable enough place, they don't have to find another place, which may not be suitable for young people. Secondly, you have a chance to learn to know the habits of the friends who came with your children. If you see something amiss, you will think of a way to solve the problem. If it looks hopeless, then you will have to tell the children to stay away

from the friends, who are deemed to have problems. This is how to help your children. Remember to **make your home a place of enjoyment, and to make yourselves the friends in need of your children. It will be easier to improve the habit of your children.**

The association of the children with other people is very important because humans are social animals. They must live together in various groups. To live together, it is necessary to do that both physically and mentally as well. The parents must train the children to make friends, to learn to cooperate among family members and among the relatives, among friends including the people of the same nation, the same language, and the same religion. That is to create unity in the community because every race and every language need to be united. **Love and unity among the children are the foundation of the unity in the community.** The future will be dark for children who lack this virtue. So the duty of the parents in encouraging the children to have unity among friends, is very important. They need to set a good example. The father and the mother must really love each other. The two of them should not quarrel. They have to grin and bear it. Whatever happened they must be patient. Keep them inside and never let them explode in their face. Put our rotten egg away. If it does not break, it does not smell. Whenever it is broken, it stinks. To see parents argue is very tiresome to the children. It is also a bad example for them. So the parents must be careful. Whenever they have to talk with a red face, wait until the children have gone to bed to prevent them from seeing the bad scene. You have to be very careful about this. It has done a great deal of damage in the past.

There is also another damage, which will break the children away from their friends and create more disunity. After a boy was bullied by his friend, he came home and told his parents about the incident. When the father heard the story he became furious. He felt slighted by what he heard. He said in anger, "You could not fight him! You are not a man! Are you a coward? Don't you have a hand to fight?" All those words were uttered just to hurt his son's feelings, to stir up revenge, to urge him to take revengeful action. That is harmful. It is against the religious principle. I beg the parents never to do anything like that. Instead you should

find a way to console him. Tell him it was a small matter. It did not hurt that much. He did not mean to hurt you. Forgive him for doing it, so you can play with him again the next time. **Train the boy to forgive him. Tell him to defeat the evil with his virtue. Learn to defeat anger with non anger.** To win friends with your wholesomeness will make you happier. It is the right thing to do. Make him understand that by not hitting back, not swearing back, not doing anything to the friends, who did some bad things to you, is not considered cowardly at all. But it is the character of a good person, of a person who wins over one self. To win over one self is the most glorious victory. To teach your children this way is a better way, a safer way.

In training our children, we don't hold on to this principle in most cases. So there are troubles all the time. One reason the children always quarrel among one another is because they don't want to give in to the others. The adults come to the rescue, and things get worse.

Thailand is presently calling for unity among the people because we are in the middle of the reconstruction of our country. The country does not belong to any specific individual, but it belongs to all of us. We have to help out any way we can for the progress of our country. To do that we must do things together, do it attentively and for the benefits of the whole. The power of the people who gather together in various groups is the most important. The power must be built within a family first. Members of the family must be sympathetic with one another. They must see to it that the development is spread to their neighbours then on to every one in the same nation. This will create tremendous power. The country will go forward as planned to the destination, which is proper without any doubt.

To summarize this chapter, train your children to be able to treat their friends as brothers and sisters, to love and to have unity with one another, to forgive, to be tolerant, to have sporting spirits in accordance with the Dhamma principle. You will have done your job of cultivating a good habit in your children.

## *Train Children to Depend On & Help Oneself*

DEAR PARENTS,

**W**E AS BUDDHISTS must have heard a Buddha proverb, which is a great reminder for us. Whoever abides by this proverb will be able to survive in this world. This proverb says, “*อัตตาทิ อัตตโน นาโถ.*” It means, “One has to help oneself.” The phrase “One has to help oneself” has very deep meaning. But we Buddhists have used it a bit too little. So we become weak; we don’t want hard work and we don’t like easy work either. We don’t think about depending on ourselves. We don’t build our lives using our own ability. We just wait to be helped by the others all the time. When we run out of helpers we just grumble. “I am so unlucky, I have to depend on myself all the time.” We seem to think that anybody, who depends on the others, or some one, who don’t want to work, is fortunate. A hero in the point of view of the Thai people is one who is slim and weak who can hardly walk due to poor health. When he encounters any difficulty, he would show his weakness right out. This kind of hero cannot go far because he cannot help himself. Why are we that way? The Dhamma teachings in our religion are all good but we do not use them. So we have not received any benefit from our religion. We have to try to correct this big mistake. **In order for all of us to be strong and tough and to be happy to confront any kinds of work, no matter how difficult they are, we have to begin from childhood.**

We are not that good in regard to raising our children. That is why **our children are weak.** Why I said it was not good? I can say simply that we nurture our children too much. We pay too much attention to them; we carry them around all the time and we do not allow our children to have any freedom at all. Either the mother or the grandmothers would **help carry them bodily on her lap and pay so much attention to them that the children become cry babies.** When they cry there would be some one to take care of them but without knowing the reason why. When she heard the noise, she would carry the baby and feed him or her right away. The feeding is done too much that it causes a stomach upset

because the digestive system has gone bad. Our way of raising our babies is worse than that of the cats and the dogs. You must not be angry with me for using that comparison. Please listen carefully so you will understand a little this whole issue.

While I was writing this article, a dog just gave birth to four puppies in our tunnel at Wat Umong. A novice at the temple told me about them. So I told him to move the dogs to a hole in the wall of the big pagoda near my abode. While I was writing I could also observe the movements of the mother dog all day long. During the day, in the morning, the mother dog went to find some food at the kitchen. She left the puppies alone. I went to take a peek at them. They were lying one on top of the others. It was a lovely sight to behold. The hair was clean and looked soft to the touch. When the mother had eaten her food, she came to her puppies. She lay down and let the puppies suck for the milk. She also cleaned her puppies. I noticed that every time she would lick the anus of each puppy to let the urine come out. She licked it clean and licked all over the body as a way to clean it up. After the feeding, the mother would leave immediately. She would lie down some where else. She came back around 1.00 P.M. for another feeding and she also did the same thing all over again. In the evening she returned one more time. It seemed to me all puppies were strong and healthy. After 15 days, their eyes had not opened and could not walk but they crawled all over. This was a story of a dog.

It was the same for a cat. Feeding and cleaning were done punctually all day. For the cat, when the kittens grow up and with a full set of teeth and canines, she would start teaching the kittens to depend on themselves right away. She took them down below. Her method was by walking in the front and crying all the time, meow, meow. Her eyes would look for any dangers all around. If a dog walked past her, she would suddenly go after the dog to protect the kittens. While they were walking, if the kittens walked too slowly, she would wait for them to catch up. Then she would lead them through the tall grass. She jumped to allow the kittens to do likewise. Sometimes she would hide and let the kittens seek for her. The whole thing was to train the kittens to help themselves. In the beginning the kittens could not catch a mouse. She taught them to do it

correctly. One day she caught a squirrel. She left it for the kittens. The little ones were at first scared. They went to hide near the wall because they were fearful. She picked the squirrel up with her mouth and went after the kittens to show them how to catch their prey. She chewed on it until the blood oozed out. When they smelled blood they came at it and took it by the mouth to feed on it. The mother just sat there and watched. She ate what the kittens left. After the kittens had grown up then she had no more responsibility to look after them. The puppies and the kittens had to fend for themselves. This was the way of cats and dogs.

Now let us look at the birds in the sky. It is the same, i.e., to lay eggs and to hatch them and to nurture them when the little birds have no wings that can fly. When the wings get stronger, they fly together from one tree to another first until the wings become strong enough to be able to fly. When they can fly, the mother let them fly away. You have to live on your own wings and your own beak. Animals have their way of raising their young ones like that. But how do we human beings do that?

I did not mean for you to have to do like that all the time. But I would like for you to have an idealistic thought that you want to bring up your children so they can help themselves, and not having to hold them always in our arms. **You just raise them to grow up and not to raise them forever.** The Westerners say, "The Thai people raise their children not to grow up." This is the truth. Even though our children grow up physically but they still talk like little children. They talk and ask for the money from their mother all the time. Some of them have already graduated from a university. They have a job but they still need money from the mother. This is called raising children not to grow up. The Westerners raise their children to grow up because they only do that when the children cannot help themselves. When the children can depend on themselves, they will allow the children to be on their own. The parents will only keep an eye on them and to give some advice. That is all. They don't do anything else for them. They will make the children wait for the parents' money. They don't give any money to them until after they have died. Every one of them has to find food and shelter for themselves. That is why their people are strong and tough. Their countries have progressed

so much, because they train their children that way.

Look at our children for comparison. When a baby boy was born there were so many people who paid attention to him. His mother, grandmothers, all got so excited about the little baby boy. They took turn watching him. The little one had to be on the lap, on the waist of this person, that person, all the time with no exception. In fact he wanted to rest to get some sleep. He wanted to be left alone some time, but no way. Even while he was sleeping a grandmother sat looking at him and she felt an urge to bend down and kiss him until he woke up. Feeding was not done regularly. All that made the baby weak but no one gave it a thought. When the baby was big enough to learn to walk, he should have been allowed to learn freely but unfortunately not, for fear that he might fall. Don't worry too much about falling. Falling is common among toddlers who just learn to walk. He falls then he will get up again. Let him walk. He falls then he will get up again. Let him walk, let him fall. The only thing is you have to be careful not to let him fall from high places. It is really an obstacle for an advancement of the children that the grown-ups don't let them walk on their own, because the legs are for walking. They will be lean and weak if they are not used much. Some children have grown up and they still walk unsteadily. That is a result of the adults blocking their growth. Please remember not to be a hindrance to the natural growth of the children. Let them grow the way they are supposed to. Everything will turn out all right. In the old days in Thailand, there were many families of the so-called aristocrats. In such a family the children, who were loved very much by the parents, would be the ones who could not help themselves. They would be weak in all aspects. After the parents were gone, they used the inheritance to live on. When the money was totally spent, they became totally helpless. That was a system, which created weaklings. In the present time, we can no longer raise our children that way. **We must do the best we can to make our children tough and strong. They must learn to do all kinds of work no matter how hard they are.** The only way to accomplish that is by having them to depend on themselves from childhood. Please do not help them to do everything.

Once I was on a boat trip from Sri Lanka. When the boat arrived in Rangoon, several Caucasian families came on board. There were several children both boys and girls. I did not see the parents paying them so much attention. It was the duty of a nurse on board the ship to take care of the children. At meal times, they all ate together and they had good table manner. I looked and could not help wondering why that could happen. But I got my answer right away that they trained their children to help themselves in every step of their lives. Thai children must be fed by hand until they were grown. Most of the time while they were eating, they would walk all over the place. That was not right at all. You should train them to eat by themselves and so nobody would have to be bothered. Besides the children would learn to do things they should be able to do any way.

Children old enough to come and go on their own should be trained to take care of themselves, e.g., when, where and how to walk on the street and how to cross at an intersection. Train them to be alert in using their eyes and ears, to know how to take an evasive action when there were dangers. Normally human will know to avoid a danger if they have to look after themselves. But if they know that there are other people looking out for them, they will pay no attention to do that by themselves. That is a fact of life. Help them to know how to use what they have got. It will help to grow intellectually.

Children around 11–12 years old and attending the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at the least, can read quite well. It is at the right time to allow them to have their own space. You should give them a room. A small room is enough for them. Give them a full set of personal belongings they need. They will be proud that the room belongs to them. Let them arrange everything the way they want. Give them full responsibility for that room. The parents will only come in to take a look and give some advice once in a while. Make sure they arrange, their things in orderly fashion. Train them to be thorough, e.g., to latch on the hook every time a window is opened; to lock the room when they go out. This will train them to learn to look after their own personal belongings. Tell them to learn how to wash their own, clothes. For example, on Saturdays, let them wash and iron their

clothes. Don't do everything for them because it will weaken them by doing that. Sweeping and mopping the floor of the house are not a low class job. Let them try doing them. If they do a good job then give them a reward. If they did badly, give them some criticism. This is a way to train the children to be responsible for themselves. When they grow up they will surely be able to fend for themselves.

When your children can do things, **train them to work on something according to their ability.** Some families have so many servants. The servants do everything and the children don't know how to do any housework. They grow up to be weak. Some turn out, to be criminals because of mental deficiencies. Some rich people do not bring up their children by themselves. When the children grow up, they send them over to work for other people; to be in their, employment. Then they will return to be a boss later. To do that is one way to train them to help themselves.

Only the children who can depend on themselves are an important resource of our country and their own families. The weaklings, the cowardice, who depend on the others, are like weeds, which litter the world. They are the ones who are burdensome to our country.

In which category your children are? Have you trained your children to stand on their two legs? If the answer is no. Then, please change your tactics. Do not destroy your children. Be a good trainer for your children to have an ability to live in this world.

**Even though there is no one to help them, they can still help themselves. This is what "One has to help one self" is all about.**

## *Train Your Children to Study the Environment*

DEAR PARENTS,

**I**N THE LIVES of all sentient beings, after they have been born they have to fight against all sorts of adversity. As soon as they came out of the belly of their mother, they would start crying. Why did they cry? They wanted to announce to the world that their lives had not been a happy one. They had been inside the body of their mother for ten long months and they did not have to face the outside world, which was always changing. Now they had to come out and they did not like the situation outside one bit. So they cried out as if they did not want to be born in this world. But they had already been born. So it is the duty of the parents to support them until they grow up and can make a living by themselves. The duty of the parents to bring up their children is a big responsibility. If the job is done correctly, the children will be good; if the job is done wrongly, the children will be bad and the sin also falls on the parents. The offspring of a human is not the same as that of an animal. Animals only raise their offspring physically. They don't have to be concerned about their mentality. But the children of humans have both the body and the soul. **To raise them only physically is not enough; the mind must be taken care as well.** To raise the mind means to allow the children to develop into wholesomeness as mentioned before. I ask you to use them as a guideline for teaching your children.

Once your children are big enough to go to school, it is the duty of the parents to register the names of the children with the school. At present they have the kindergarten section of the school. A four-year-old can attend the school. The methods used at a kindergarten are very good. The children will develop physically and mentally. We should help promote this kind of school. But there are very few of them in Thailand, may be not even in all provinces. To send the children to school to learn to read is a direct duty of the parents because education is necessary for everybody. Uneducated children will become like weeds scattered all over the world and in our country. Educated children on the other hand

will become truly good citizen of the country and that of the family. The parents should not be neglectful about this duty by making sure to send all of your children to school.

When your children attend a school, you must consider yourself having a close relationship with the school. You must also communicate closely with the teachers so that both you and the teacher would be able to help each other in developing wholesome habits in the children for them to become good people in the future. There are too many parents who do not pay attention to the learning habit of their children. They don't pay enough attention to talking and asking questions about the results of learning and behaviour of their children from the teachers at the school. Sometimes the teachers asked them to come to a meeting, and they did not bother to come. When they don't participate in any meeting like that, it showed their lack of responsibility. The guardian or the parents should pay a visit to the teachers once in a while to discuss all matters concerning their children. At least once a month is pretty good. The reason for the visit is to know the results of their study including their conduct at the school. And the parents can tell the teachers the behaviour of the children at home so that the teachers can find a way to improve the situation if need be. The teachers supervise the students at the school while at home the parents try to do the same thing and very closely so. This way the children will be well disciplined. I would like to give this idea to all the parents to think about it very thoroughly.

Every day before the children go to school, the parents should look at them just a little bit to observe the cleanliness of their outfit and make sure that they comply with the rules and regulations. You must also tell them to dress properly and cleanly. You should check the body parts of your children as well, such as, the nails, the teeth, and the skin and including the hair. Make sure they are orderly and clean. Check the books and the stationery to see that they are all there and are in good, functional condition. Anything missing, they must be corrected or added to be fully operational. You must advise your children to always keep their body and their belongings nice and clean. Tell them that all things have their prices. Nothing is for free. They must be purchased. You must train your chil-

dren to be systematic in using all the things that they have and to keep their belongings in good working order at all times. If you see that they might be doing the damage to anything don't let the incident pass you by because doing that will be very harmful to them. Some children go to school from home in really bad condition. Their clothes were a mess. Their body was dirty. They are actually a signboard advertising the lack of interest of their parents. Please don't let your children advertise your shortcoming any more. Pay more attention to them just a little for their future and your own family.

In the afternoon, the children came home from school. It is the duty of the parents to make another inspection to see whether they are in the same condition as in the morning. Observe their conduct to find out if there were anything that need to be corrected. If you find anything you must tell them right away. If there are good things just let them be. In the evening you have to supervise them to read and to write and to know what need to be studied and to remember to do their homework. If they don't understand you can help explain to them so they will understand better. Do all this until bedtime and you let them get some rest and to go to bed. Don't forget that not only the teachers at the school but also you are all teachers. And as a matter of fact, you are the first teacher of your children. Please try to keep this honoured position to the end.

On non-school days, such as Saturdays and Sundays, you should take your children out to study the environment for a change. It will help them to have more general knowledge about the surrounding circumstances so they will understand some of the things that are all around us. There is so much to see in our country and all the things are interesting in one way or another. They are the things that the children should try to learn and they will make the children wiser. Please notice that the children from up-country and those from Bangkok have different kind of knowledge about the things around them. Their advancement in ideas is not the same. The upcountry children don't have much to see besides natural occurrences and things such as rice fields, forests, and mountains only. As for the children from big cities, they have seen all kinds of environments so they are more knowledgeable than the children from

up-country but the children from the city are at a disadvantage regarding endurance and toughness. In order for the children to see things in nature, they should be permitted to see things they have not seen nor understood before. During vacation time, the big city children should be taken out of the city for a change of scenery. The trip would be for fun. They should go to the rice fields and the forests. It would be better also to get up to the mountains and down the creeks.

The parents should go with the children on a trip like that. They will be able to help explain about the thing they see. They will know what things are and how useful they are to the lives of human beings and also what we should do to treat them right. Like for instance when they saw a big flock of birds in the rice field, we can tell them that those birds help the rice farmers in various ways. For example, bird's dung in the rice fields become fertilizer for the rice stalks; the birds eat the worms and crabs, which destroy the rice stalks to make the rice grow big and beautiful. The human then eats rice. So we should be thankful to the birds. Do not harm any birds. You explain to the children and they will enjoy listening to you and to breathe in the fresh air, to have obtained knowledge, and to get the endurance and toughness from walking. All this is a profit of living their lives. It is better than to go to a movie theatre, which is cluttered with dirty stuff. If we take the children to sit under a big tree with thick leaves, the body received the coolness from it you should use the opportunity to teach them under the shade of a tree by asking them, "Are you hot when walking outdoor?" The children would answer very hot. "Then what happened under the shadow of a tree?" The children would of course say it is nice and cool. You should go on saying that the trees give shadow and coolness to the world. If we cut all the trees, the world will become too hot. There would be no water for drinking and bathing. We will never be able to live. The children will understand the value of a tree, a flower, which gives them joy and pleasure. It is natural for human that if they know what are useful to them, they would love and preserve those things. Teach your children to know the useful things for them to try to preserve them for the future.

Besides taking the children to the rice field, the forests and the moun-

tains, they should be taken to the public parks and the zoos on some occasions so they will see something they have never seen before. For example, there are several kinds of animals at the zoos. They are all lovely to look at. The children should absolutely be taken there. Then you find a way to make them love the animals and to preserve them for future generations. This is one good thing that needs to be done.

In big cities in every country, they built statues in order to remind younger generation to remember the good deeds done by their ancestors and to help maintain the goodness for their children and grand children. It is a good thing. In India, the great Mahatma Gandhi who lived with love and compassion to the world at large, when he died they took his body to be cremated at a place somewhere. Later on that place became the centre of the hearts of India. Every morning and evening we will see the mothers with their children there. They taught the children to worship and pay homage to the goodness of Mahatma Gandhi. Doing that is to promote wholesomeness in the mind of the children. Thailand also has several statues. We should take our children to one of those statues. Explain to them that the persons who perform good deeds for any country should be immortal. Their goodness will remain forever. The children should remember and try to follow the example and they will do more good as well. They will help build our country and our nation in the future. The children having seen and heard the story would become proud of their ancestors and they will come up with an idea to do the same as that great man because example is always contagious. On the contrary, the evils we see in all places are the things we should teach them to know about as well. Our life will not be complete if we know only about the good side and do not know about the bad side. They will not be able to compete with other people because they think that this world is always pure and innocent.

The truth is the world has two sides, the good and the rotten. To educate the children, we must tell them what the evils are, and the ill effect of those evils. We love our life. We should stay far away from all evils. Children should not do any bad deed no matter how small it may seem. But if they don't know what it is they may do it. So it is the duty of the

parents to tell and to give them some advice. Whenever there is a real life lesson right in front of the children, tell them right away. For example, we go and sit at a roadside shelter. We will see that all over the place including the posts are all kinds of graffiti drawn by naughty hands. Tell them that it was bad to do that because the shelter looked dirty. It announced to the world that the ones who drew them were careless psychopaths. Good people would never do that. This is one thing.

Another thing regarding the trees they grow to make shades for cooler environment for the people walking to and from, some bad people broke the branches and plucked the leaves for their own use. Or they use a knife to chop on the trunks to damage the bark. Those are destructive acts. Every thing public belongs to everybody. It would be nice for every one to help protect them to be in a safe and secure condition. Thai children still have destructive habit due to lack of proper training in this regard.

May I beg you, all the parents, who are responsible for the well being of your children to provide them with good education always; to guide them towards wholesomeness; to be the ears and the eyes for your children regarding the evil and the danger lurking around them. Do not allow your children to become a victim of those devils. It was so difficult for each one of them to be born as a human being. Raise them; advise them to travel always the right way, the proper way. Open the ears and the eyes of your children to receive only the things that build their habit in a good way. Do not just keep your children inside your house. Allow them to come out to learn about things that should be learned and to know about.

The responsibility in their life is still in their hands.

To give them an education on nature and environment are useful to the children as stated above.

## *How to Prevent Children from Missing School*

DEAR PARENTS,

PLEASE CONTINUE LISTENING to this story about children. One day while I was staying at *Buddhasathan*, when the library was opened, I went in to make sure that everything was in good order. It was about 10.00 A.M. I saw a boy in student uniform. I could see clearly the logo of his school. I wondered why he was not in his class at the school. Why was he here reading a magazine? I approached him using my right hand to touch his back lightly with compassion.

I asked him, "Don't you go to school?" He did not respond but he lowered his face almost touching the magazine. He seemed to be uncertain about something. I could not help being suspicious. So I asked him again whether the school was closed and was that the reason he did not go to school. He sat still and did not answer. I figured he must be absent from school without leave. So I talked to him in a low voice, "You should go to school. Missing your classes like this is not good. You will not be able to catch up with other students and you might fail in your final examination and you will be sorry. When you grow up you will have trouble making a living. I ended my short lecture with the words, "Please go to school." He sat still looking down. So I told him again, "If you do not go to school you cannot come in here reading a book. It is time to be in your classes. It is not time to read books. So he went out and left on his bicycle.

Another time, there were two male students. It was during school hours and they were so far away at *Suan Buddhadhamma*. I saw their books and stuff in the back of the two bicycles. They walked around and ran into me looking uneasy. I called for him to come over. They did not talk freely. I knew right away they were missing school. But I wanted to learn what kind of tricks they had. I asked them, "Why didn't you go to school?" They said, "There was no class today because the teachers had to take the student athletes to practice so we came here instead." They were tricky in trying to conceal their identity. They used a piece of paper

to cover the name of the school and their identification number. I talked to them again. "What is that piece of paper you have in your pocket. May I see it?" They said it was just a piece of paper. "Please let me see your handwriting." They had to pull out the piece of paper so I saw the school name and one of their numbers. I knew right then that they were lying because one of my boys also went to the same school. So I told them just go ahead and have fun. But they were not feeling good already so they simply said goodbye and left.

Nowadays we have movies during the daytime. Many students missed classes; some go to a movie; some go to public parks. The parents thought that the children were at the school. The teachers at the school thought that the children were at home because both sides had very little contact with each other. It was easy for the students to deceive them. I would like to suggest that the parents and the teachers keep in contact regularly. If the children missed the school for only one day, they must communicate with each other right away to know the real reason why. Any children who always missed school should have a special notebook for the class teacher to sign everyday. In the afternoon when they returned home the parents should check the notebook as well in order to know whether their children had actually been to school. It is a lot easier in a big city where telephone can be used. It is one way to prevent the children from cutting classes at school.

Another fact about children is they have a brain but they have no thought. They don't know what is right and wrong; what is good and bad. They have memory and interest in some simple things with which they have had experienced. They don't pay much attention to difficult subject. For this reason they have a tendency to just go around having fun. It is easy to play. It is also easy to remember and it is enjoyable. That's why they take pleasure in playing and keep playing all day. Sometimes they forget to eat. To study is different; it is very serious. They have to think. They have to take note and to remember. It is a matter of being concentrated. If they don't have enough patience they will easily quit.

When I was young and attending the third grade, I had gone AWOL as well. Why did I miss school? It was because the subject I took was a lit-

tle bit too difficult. I did not take a final examination in the second grade because my teacher allowed me to be in the third grade in the middle of the year so I had a little bit of a problem. And the teacher was a little bit too fierce. He made up some tough arithmetic questions and at the same time he declared that whoever made any mistakes would be hit twice on the hand for each question. Being hit two times by that teacher hurt so much. I got bored of studying and so I did not go to school. I left home everyday with all the books but I did not go to school. I went to hide with the cattle boys. I did like that for seven days then I got caught because the teacher wrote to my parents. They made me come with them to the school. The teacher asked me, "Why did you miss coming to school?" I told him the truth that I was afraid of being hit by the teacher so I ran away. The teacher asked, "When you ran away, were you not afraid to be hit when you returned?" I told him I did not think I would be returning without being caught like this. The teacher was sympathetic with me so I was never punished again. But my actual punishment was that I failed in the final examination and had to repeat the third grade. This was the ill effect of missing school. Please do not miss school. And the system of caning children is too severe as well. It is boring to the children. Nowadays we don't use that system any more. The teacher has a way to teach, to persuade the children to have fun and enjoy learning without knowing. The children in the present time love to go to school. Sometimes the mother did not want them to go yet, they cry and they say they want to go to school. Why do they want to go to school? They do because there are many friends at school. The grass lawn is wide. They can run more. It is a lot better than being at home.

Nevertheless, there remain some problems about missing school. It is burdensome to the parents and the teachers. It must be prevented and corrected. Buddhism taught us that **"All things happen from causes. If we want to stop them, we must find their causes.**

**Then eliminate the causes, the effects will be eliminated as well."** We should study the causes of this phenomenon. Consider the following causes to compare with that of your children who often miss school at the present time.

## Why Do Children Miss School?

1. Children miss school because they have poor original foundation. For example, they were forced to learn abruptly. There was no friendly persuasion for the children to want to learn. The parents have to find a way to arouse them to love the learning period. Find a school with good teachers who can really teach their pupils.
2. The place of learning is not good. For example, there are too many rules and regulations; there are many boys who bully smaller children; the teachers are weak academically and administratively. There are also too many bad examples. The only way is to move the children to another school.
3. The children are weak in catching up with other pupils. They feel embarrassed of their classmates. The parents need to give extra tutoring at home or they could hire a special tutor.
4. The subjects taught are not suitable to the ages of the children. The children have to do the thinking too much. They are bored of having to learn. For example, the arithmetic problems are too difficult for the children in that age group; they get bored of having to study them. They have an inferiority complex in their mind. They may run away from school. When something like this happened, the children should be moved to another school where teaching is done more appropriately for the children in that level.
5. The children associate with mischievous pupils. Those friends persuaded them to go to a movie or to play in the water near the wharf. They just wanted to have some fun. The parents have to intervene by making sure that they understand the harmful effects of doing something like that. You may have to put them on probation in case they do that again the next time.
6. They were hurt by the action of the parents. For example, the amount of the pocket money received was too small or none at all; the dresses could not be compared with those of their fellow students and they felt hurt easily by that. Sometimes the parents were

prejudiced. They did not love their children the same way for every one of them. They did not give the children the same amount of money. If the same attention was not given then there might be feelings of uneasiness. The parents must try to correct the situation. If you were poor, don't put your children among the rich. The children do not know the difference between being poor and being rich. They think only we are worse off than they are. It created a negative complex and they may miss coming to school. It is better to send them to the school, which suit their background.

7. The children are in poor health or sickly. They should get some rest to improve their health. Then they can return to school later on.
8. They are handicapped in certain parts of the body. For example, crooked arm, crossed eyes, deformed leg, etc. This can be corrected by telling them that parts of a body are not that important. What important is the knowledge and a good mind. You should give an example of some famous handicapped people to tell the children how good and how smart they were.
9. A weakling or sometimes called "a sissy". This condition was caused by the wrong up bringing from the beginning. We can correct by telling them to play more sports in order to promote stronger will power. If you invite their friends to your house, it may help making braver.
10. Being wayward and lazy from very young age. This type cannot be trained, cannot be taught. The monks call those people *ur Ji n ~titi i* (hard to be trained and taught).
11. Missing school due to having done something wrong or committing an unlawful act, which was against the rules and regulations of the school. They were afraid of being punished so they just ran away. In case like this the teachers and the parents have to work together to correct the situation in a gentle way using love and compassion to change their habits.

12. This kind of character is not suitable for taking academic subjects but they prefer doing handiwork and being a craftsman or to become a boxer. You should arrange for them to have training in that particular areas they like. They might turn out to be outstanding in that area. This is very important. Whatever they want to learn, the parents should allow them to decide for themselves. Do not force them to do in contrary to their aptitude. **“It is hard to learn to do what you don’t like doing.”**

All the causes for missing school mentioned above should be used as a guideline for the parents to consider and search for the flaws of the children, who love to miss school. If you found out such flaws and the reason was that of the children themselves, or that of the parents and the teachers, and for what reason. Due to the fact that the cause of the problem may be the children, or the parents and the teachers, or even the place where they go to school, all parties must try to solve the problem as soon as possible. Do not think that it was a small matter. The future of the children depends on the parents and the teachers. If you don’t pay enough attention to them, the small matter may turn out to be a major one. To stop the fire before a storm comes is a smart move. How your children walk, how they do things, should be under your scrutiny all the time. When you see that something was wrong counsel them right away.

In giving advice for any improvement you should consider proper time and proper place. Any time you should hit hard, if you were too soft, it is not going to good. To be too hard is not good either. It depends a lot on the situation and the character of your children. Some children love gentleness. If you scolded them too much they could not do anything right. Don’t scare them too much. Give them reasons so they would understand. Or ask them to get some answers. You should also talk together when you are in a happy mood. That is when the parents are happy; the children are happy. Both the teachers and the students are happy then there will be friendship between them and can really appreciate the things they talk about. After they have taught and they have

learned you should make a check once in a while to follow up the results of those talks.

The parents must be intelligent enough to talk to your children. You have to teach them and to try always to come to a correct understanding. Then you will feel comfortable and have a warm feeling to see your children behave in a nice way, which will bring peace and happiness to you at all times. I would like to ask all of you to keep this important matter in mind.

## *Teach Your Children to be Humble*

DEAR PARENTS,

IN THE *Mangala Sutta*, which the monks chant in a house-warming religious ceremony at home, one of the *man gala* mentioned in the chanting is *na bha*. Its translation is "To be respectful and not being cocky is a blessing." This teaching is intended for all Buddhists to respect one another because respect one another will give rise to having a regard for one another, and to trust one another. Any group of people who have trust in one another will be strong and secure. When the monks chant a blessing or in the northern Thai dialect called "mor+a." they will mention the four auspicious things, namely, long life, clear complexion, good physical and mental health, and strength to fight against sickness and diseases. All those would happen from being humble as a way of life. To be humble to those we should be humble is the right thing to do for those wishing to prosper. Anybody, who can normally do like that in fact, has a prosperous life.

According to a Thai custom from the ancient time to the present time, the parents teach their children to always be humble. That is why the manner of the Thais is pleasing and there is hardly anybody who does not want to be associated with them. They can go anywhere and conveniently so. But nowadays most of us are modern people. We tend to copy the Westerners. Whatever we do we think the western style is good. As a matter of fact, the western concepts are not good in every way. But they have been doing that for a long time, it is hard to change, especially in regard to their family life. They pay a little bit too much attention to equality. The children and their parents live together like friends more than anything else. They have fun together without regard for being respectful. The children may use their hand to touch the head of the father and the mother and the latter are not offended. Whatever the parents do for the children it would be done in the name of duty, which must be performed.

When the children cannot help themselves, the parents are the pil-

lars for the children. When the children can help themselves, they will work for their own living. The parents will live on their own. They have hardly anybody to take care of them. Some parents were left on their own and were forced by the circumstance to live in a home for senior citizen provided by the government for that purpose and they don't have very much in the way of assistance and looking after the elderly persons. There is little respect for the elderly. That is why there are an enormous number of lonely old people. This is the Westerner system. The manner of the Westerner is more bravado than being gentle to the more senior people. The children can come close to the parents and stand above their head just like that. When they walk past the parents they never have to lower their body in any way. The manners like that are considered by the Thais to be a little too rough and not likable.

The oriental on the other hand has been trained to be respectful to the father, the mother, the brothers and sisters, and to be that way according to seniority. We don't call senior and junior for nothing because we are not all equal in status. It is like our five fingers. They do not have the same size. The thumb is bigger than the other fingers and it is considered the leader, the number one of the group. Next to the thumb, the fingers get smaller and smaller, to the smallest, which is the little finger. Different sizes of the fingers teach us that our lives are not equal; some are big, some are small. In our family the father is big. He is the head of the family; he is responsible in all the affairs while the mother is his helper. She is the mother of the household, who looks after all the affairs of the home to make sure that they proceed in an orderly manner. The mother must listen to the father as well. Some households have two old people living within; one female and one male. They are the grand mothers and the grand fathers of the children depending on the situation of the family. The parents respected both senior people and the children respected them. They are like the high priests of the family. Then about the children, whoever is the first born or the oldest sibling, he or she will be respected more or less according to who was born first or last. This is the system of a Thai family. If we observe this system strictly and to do it the right way, there will be no disunity in the family

and they will be stable and firmly established. If we take a look at some families, when the parents have passed away, the children don't see eye to eye. They try to oppose one another in various ways in order to be as big a part of the inheritance as possible. The result instead would be to divide the amount to other people as well. This was because they don't listen to one another and did not allow anyone to be bigger. What happened was actually the fault of the parents. It was not that of any one else. If you want to see your family firmly established, then you must try to avoid doing anything, which will make your children become disrespectful of one another.

I was told that the Japanese considered all Japanese are brothers. The emperor is the head of the family, the heart and soul of the whole country of Japan. The Japanese respect their emperor unswervingly. His words are absolutely inviolable. They are a very disciplined nation. Soldiers or non-commissioned officers who commit any wrongdoing will be punished severely. They respect and obey each other. When they go to war, they do it wholeheartedly. When they lost, they lost totally. It is like an old saying, "Brave as a lion, but gentle as a lamb." To be able to do like that is the result of the training in the family. The Japanese family respects one another according to their levels at all times. The mother will be the one who put the food in each plate for all members in her family. She would give the first one to the head of the household, then to herself and the first born and the next. The youngest child will be the one to receive the last every time. Doing that creates respect according to seniority. When the father passed away, the mother would take over. Every one must listen to her. When the mother passed away, the first born would become the leader. Every one will have to listen to the big brother or sister. The situation in the family is well under control. There is no split among them. Famous Japanese corporations have been in existence for almost a century. They are still here because of the respect in the family. So it is a good example for all the parents to think about and to use this system in their families.

In the Buddhist principle, the Buddha warned his disciples to respect each other according to the number of years. The monk who was ordained

first would be a big brother while the monk who was ordained afterwards will be a younger brother. Entering the Buddhist lent, the monks will ask for an apology according to the seniority to show their respect between each other. Seniority is considered all the time in all aspect of being in the monkhood except for one thing, i.e., to go to the toilet. At such time no seniority is under consideration but they use first come first serve system. For the rest of the affairs, e.g., going out of the temple, or in the temple, in order to receive the alms from merit givers, they all do it according to seniority. And it is really a beautiful tradition. In the *Aparihaniyadhamma Sutta* the Buddha said, “**The Bhikkhu must respect the senior monk who is the leader, the chief monk. If every monk respects one another like that our group of will stand forever.**” The monks in Buddhism have stood more than two thousand five hundred years because they observe the guideline concerning respect to the elders.

In regard to the practice in our family, we have to think about what we should do because, as mentioned before, it is necessary to cultivate the habit in the children for them to have love and respect among one another. We should advise the children to recognize at what level they are when they relate to one another, e.g., to give the portion to the older siblings before the younger ones. Tell them to understand that the older ones are more senior and they have given assistance to the younger ones so they have the rights to receive anything before the younger ones. At any time when the older ones give some advice to the younger ones and they resist, the parents should intervene by telling them that their words are always to be listened to because the older ones have more knowledge. They also are responsible for the well being of the younger ones as well. To teach the children to understand the meaning in this way help them to respect the more senior ones. In fact, it is easy to teach the families up country because the elder ones have to look after the young ones all the time. Any time the parents have other work to do, the siblings will help one another. When we talk about gratitude, the children can see the picture right away. But in a big family, they have nannies and baby sitters. The children are closer to the nanny than to their own big brother or big sister. In this situation the children do not see the importance of

the older ones. So the parents have to explain to them not only to teach the younger ones to respect the older ones, but they must also teach the older ones to be considerate to the younger ones and to listen to what they have to say. If they don't listen to one another, there will be no sympathy among them. There will be no love. The family may split apart because of that.

Whenever the father has an opportunity to talk to the children to appreciate the action of other people on them, he must do that promptly. For example, if the children fall down and some one came to help them stand up, to help them relieve the pain, introduce the children to that person. Tell them to pay him or her respect properly to show their gratitude.

Besides teaching the children to respect one another, you should teach them to know about the family tree. Tell them who are the grand parents, the aunts and the uncles. They are senior relatives of the children. They must always obey them. They must honour them whenever they come to see us, or we go to see them. It is to train the children to understand that we live our lives among our relatives. The shadows of all our relatives will give a nice and cool shade. Additionally you must teach the children that we do not live alone and only one family, but we live as a nation. A nation is the gathering of the people who speak the same language and who have the same customs and traditions. The people who came together as a nation will live in a country. The country has a leader of the whole country and that leader is our king. He is the Bodh tree of the people. He gives the people peace and security. We the people must respect him every day and every night. We must observe the law and the order of the authority. Because the officials work in the name of the king, to show respect to the authority is the same as to respect the king. Those who respect senior people are good people.

Teach your children to be humble to those they should be humble, such as, the parents, the teachers, and the monks, who maintain and uphold religion. You must make them understand the reason why they have to do that and what will happen if they don't. When the children understand and know how they are related to those persons, they will

cooperate and the respect will occur. As for the adults, when the children show their respect, don't act indifferent. Pay attention to them and acknowledge their respect. Give them blessing to make them feel good of what they have just done.

To promote unity among every brother and sister, there should be a get-together party on certain occasions, such as the New Year, and the ancestor's day. The party will allow the children to come and play together. They will learn to sympathize with one another tightening the relationship among the people in the same extended family. This will help the children to develop mentally in a positive way as well.

Whatever the training of the children will be, the example is the most important. The parents are examples for the children. Be a good example of your children at all times. Whatever you want to teach your children, you yourself have to be an example in a positive way. It will be a good impression on the mind of the children for as long as they live. This is another thing I want you to remember.

*Give Children a Chance to Express Their Ability so They can be Proud of Themselves. Do Not Use an Absolute System with the Children*

DEAR PARENTS,

PLEASE LISTEN to this useful subject. Several years ago, I knew this family. It was a well-to-do family because the head of the household took his work very seriously. He knew how to work his way up and to settle down. The people from the outside looking in would think that every one in this family lived happily. But the fact was not so. Why not? Please listen carefully.

I am going to tell you about the father first. He worked hard and was very disciplined. He always intended to do everything well but he was easily upset. He would be mad as hell all the time. If some one did something, which irritated him he would become very emotional. Sometimes he would beat his people or use very strong language. The wife, on the other hand, was quiet and a little slow but her work was good and neat. She did not say much and did her job in the rear of the house all the time. Due to the fact that she was slow, her action was always too slow for the husband, who was quick in everything. Whatever she did or said if it were a mistake in the eyes of the husband, he would always scold her strongly. But the wife was patient and tolerant; she never argued with him so the husband was always the fire burning his own self. The situation in the family was not that smooth but bearable. They had several children both males and females. When they were still young, they did not have any ideas about the behaviour of their father so they respected him. But after they had grown up and sufficiently educated they had their own thoughts and ideas. They felt a great deal of sympathy for their mother, who was often intimidated by their father. The situation in the family got worse because there were several people who seemed to violate his orders. The father remained his own self in doing everything the way he wanted. He never changed but seemed to get even more violent.

The disagreement in the family seemed to intensify. The father became very annoyed but he never tried to find out the cause of the annoyance. He always thought it was the fault of other people. He never realized it was his fault. So he never thought about doing anything to improve or modify his behaviour.

What was the cause of all this? Because the head of the household wanted to hold on to his absolute power too much, he considered only his own needs in whatever he wanted and always thought he was right so he always must get what he wanted. When his wife and children tried to explain their reasons they would be accused of being disobedient in violating his order and he would scold them again and again. This was really a dictatorship in a family. It was a bad system, which if ever existed in any family, there would always be trouble. Any order, which is too strict, will create disorder. People need to have a way to vent their feelings. If the feelings are kept under wrap too much it will explode for sure one day. That is why we need to relax a little sometimes. In general, human beings have their own thoughts and ideas. Do not ever think, "I know everything" and other people don't know anything because every one has a brain and ideas. Don't believe only in your own opinion. **You should respect their opinion as well. This will help your children to learn to use their brain power and to develop themselves in the future.** To force them to do everything really will block the growth of their brain. When the parents passed away, the children will become weak and cannot help themselves. It is considered a big mistake. I would like to warn those who like to use dictatorship in their family to think about this carefully and try to improve themselves by allowing their wife and their children to have their opinion sometimes.

I met a group of people. They lived in a big group and they considered each individual a unit of the people in that group with equal responsibility. Every one had a duty to work together without being told or forced to do the work. They taught every one to know his or her duty. Whoever was good at anything would do that job without being reminded. I saw them work very hard and very well. The work was progressing very well too. Some of those people were children of the rich and famous and

some were the children of labourers but they honoured one another all the time. Once they were planning to construct a big auditorium and they decided to hold a meeting to talk about it. When they started the meeting they sat and meditate for a while to concentrate their thought process. Anybody, who had any ideas, would think out and write down the ideas in their notebook. Then they would tell one another. The ideas would be digested and brought to good use. Even though those ideas might have come from those with low education, they were also considered and even accepted. Their work was carried out with success. This is really the right way.

It is the same for our family. If our children have some knowledge about something, train them to learn to think about doing them. You will also have a chance to know about the brain power of your children; how much each of them know about anything and how good they are and in what way. **You will be giving them an opportunity to show off their ability. They will be proud of themselves and it will make them want to do more work in the future.** The father will act only to mould the thought process of the children to be formed properly. Do not accuse your children as being unintelligent. It is common for a newly born not to know whole lots maybe except to eat, to sleep, and to have a bowel movement. We are adults but in the past we were like that too. Learn to forgive your children. When they spoke wrongly or did something wrong tell them promptly to do that in the correct way so they can remember. To do that is another way to support the progress of the children. On the other hand, to force or to tell some one to do this and that is a system which should have been abolished in this day and age because even our country is under a democratic government, meaning the people are the powers that be.

The words “the people are the powers that be” mean to respect the ideas of one another. Whatever we do, the majority counts and not only one person should push his or her idea through by oneself stubbornly. The democratic government will not have a strong foundation if we have not trained our children to have their own ideas in something since childhood. And at the same time they have to learn to respect other people’s

ideas. I would like to beg you to help create a correct system in the mind of the children from a young age.

One more thing, to do things like I mentioned before will also create a good systematic discipline in the family. A good order will prevail due to us being considerate and helpful to one another and not from being scared so much. Fear will prevent anybody from being close to somebody. But to have respect will enable him or her to get along with one another properly. I ask you to please remember and to do the best you can as mentioned here. This way your family will have a solid foundation even after you have left this world.

What are the reasons for the parents to use their power to force the children to do things like that? As a matter of fact, the parents naturally have good intention for the children. But it was too strong. They did not think of the Dhamma principle, which said, “True loving kindness comes from the heart, which is pure. If the mind is sad, the loving kindness is also sad.” We want the children to respect us. We must give love to the children in a way that makes them happy. If the love from us makes the children sad, they may think that the parents do not love them. This may give rise to them being pulled away from the right path. There were so many examples. Try asking the children loitering in front of a movie theatre, you will find that they came from the families which used scolding words regularly and never used the kind words. When the children did something wrong they kept scolding them until they could not eat nor sleep. That method is not good at all. The authority is important too. But do not use it too often because authority often used will have negative effect later on. To scold in order to force people to do something was for the Stone Age men. Nowadays we use reasons to persuade the children to understand what is right and what is wrong. Normally the children do not like to make mistakes. But they did them because they did not know. The parents must try to warn them and to remind them all the time to make sure that they really have understood.

When I was young, we used a book called a Thai Quick Method Reader. There was a story in the book about a couple of elderly farmers, who used an ox to pull their cart. The old ox died so they got another ox.

The new ox never walked with a plough before so he did not know how to walk properly. The old man got mad. He scolded the ox saying what a stupid ox, a stubborn ox. Then he became angrier and hit the ox so many times that the ox ran away and broke the plough. He was furious and tied the ox to a post under the strong sun light without giving food or water to the ox thinking it would be an appropriate punishment. But the old wife thought otherwise. She thought that to do like that was not right. She told him so when the old man was in a better mood. She said, "My dear husband, that ox is new. He never did this kind of work before. Please don't do anything to him like that again. Try to train him a little. He looked strong enough for the job." The old man listened to his wife. He inclined to agree with her so he did not beat up the ox any more. He treated him more kindly. Not long after that the ox became tame and did a great job of plowing for the old man. You all will see that even animals love to experience kind words, gentleness, and understanding. If we use them nicely they will do the work willingly. Even the ox could not talk but it could be trained. Children can surely talk so it should be a lot easier and more conveniently so to train them. Please try to train them then one day your children will become really good people. You will be happy in the wholesomeness of your children, who, because of you, have come to this rough and tumble world.

There is another point, which is very important. The children are forgetful in most of the things they encounter. The teacher of the children must have a cool head. **Do not want too much for the children to be like what you have taught.** If your desire is too strong it may involve force. To force some one to do something may be bad. For this reason you must realize that it is normal for the children to need some one who will be a guide to keep telling them, and reminding them, all the time. **Once may not be enough. Remind them all the time until they become good or until they can protect themselves safely.** So the parents must always have a cool head and be patient in telling and teaching them. You must use reasoning to teach them. You talk to them using the words, which are easy to accept so they will understand the true meaning. After having taught them, you have to follow up to see if they will do wrong again.

If they do, then you must warn them again. It is both corrective and preventive depending on the situation.

To prevent is to do like this, e.g., if we asked them to go some place, or to do something, and you know that the children may make a mistake in doing what you asked them to do. In order to prevent a mistake from occurring, you must tell them how to do it and make them understand, and at the same time, tell them to be careful doing it. Let them know that if something went wrong, it would cause damage and how much. And they would be punished in what way. Make them understand clearly. They will pay attention to their task by themselves. Normally people love happiness and hate suffering. If they know that what action will create suffering they will avoid doing it except in case of the things beyond their control. The parents must explain to the children for them to understand clearly. Don't even think that the children already know by themselves. To know something needs other people to teach them first. How can they know by themselves right away? The parents of the children must think ahead that their children do not know so they will have to explain until they understand so that the parents will not have to be involved in other troubles in the future. The children will also have received something in their brain. To train the children little by little is a good method.

May I ask all of you to please think about this carefully and teach your children by your tongue and don't teach them by a cane and a strong arm. That is a dictatorship system, which will bring suffering later on.

## *Home is School*

DEAR PARENTS,

**T**HE BUDDHA taught us that “Mother and father are the first teachers of their children.” Why don’t we take a look and see if both of them are really in that position? Who gave the most to the children? Whose mannerisms are like theirs more than those of anybody else? Whose ways with words are like theirs more than those of anybody else? The answer is that of the father and the mother, who else? Any children who were close to the father more than to the mother, they would love the father more than the mother and would assimilate most of the mannerism of their father. If they were close to the mother, they would love the mother more than the father and they would assimilate that of the mother without intending to do so. The parents have become the teachers of their children. To be in that position without any intention may be harmful, because the ones who were acting as the teachers did not even know that they were the teacher of their children. They may do something improperly without realizing their role and that behaviour has become example for their children to follow. So I would like to remind all the parents that you are the teachers of your children long before any other teachers. When you are the teachers you must be aware of your responsibility. The activities in your daily life will always be transferred to your children and assimilated by them.

Moreover, speaking in term of duty, the parents have total responsibility to educate their children by forbidding them from committing sinful acts, by insisting that they believe firmly in doing good deeds, and by giving them good education in accordance with the status of the family. These are the basic foundation to develop the children both physically and mentally. **The home of the children is therefore in itself a school.** It is the school, which never closes but it opens all the time. The teachers also teach all the time and the pupils learn all the time too. But the teaching and the learning are done incidentally without any specific intention even though the effects are overwhelming; much more so than

the instructions in the classroom. The foundation of the life of the children depends on the life in their home. When we look at the children and see their behaviours, we will be able to see through the lives in that family almost right away. So it is extremely necessary for the parents to improve the condition in the home, the area surrounding the house proper, the people in the house including the parents, who are the heads of the household, to be a good example to the children. Examples are always quickly contagious, both good and bad.

The leader or the head of the household must always be on guard -and to be careful in bringing anybody into his home. For example, you had a friend but his conduct was bad. He loved to keep company with gamblers and drunkards, etc., so you must try to prevent him from coming to your house. If by accident he happened to come by, you must explain to the children so they understand that to be like that was not right and the children should recognize him as a bad example. Tell your children not to have that kind of conduct. The servants in the house may also become teachers of your children. You must be careful not to allow them to show your children any unwholesome behaviours or speeches. You should try your very best to arrange your home to have the same atmosphere as that of the school, which is supposed to be an example of the pupils because, as mentioned before, the home is also the school.

When your children are old enough to enter a school, you should take them to the school for an application. The school should be suitable to your children. Many parents, after having surrendered the children to the school, they thought that it was now up to the teacher and they did not have anything to do with the children any more. In fact, even though, the teachers teach the children at school but they stayed with the teachers only for a few hours before returning home. If the people at home forget their duty, they forget that they are the first teachers of their children; they forget that the home is also the school, the bad effect will be on the children. For instance, the knowledge of your little boy may be weakened because normally children love to have fun. They love to do easy things. They don't like to do difficult jobs. This is the character of the children in general.

So I would like to remind all parents not to forget your job. Your job in bringing up the children is not finished. You must continue doing it until you stop breathing.

The impression, which the children have in regard to the home school, reflects mostly their morality. Morality is a mental thing. It is the thing, which the parents must be careful and they must not allow the children to accept any unwholesomeness in their mind. If every family can accomplish this feat, it is a way to help the children to have a bright future and to be able to help the family in a useful way. Remember that the future of the children depends on what is going on in your home. So it is your duty to make an arrangement to improve the house, and the people, including the environment to be in good order and nice at all times.

What should you do for your children? When they returned from school, you should ask them, persuade them, to talk about the results of what they have learned. For example, smaller children should be asked whether they were able to write any alphabets. Ask them to show you how to write some words. If the children were able to do it, you should compliment them. Give them some rewards as an incentive to increase their will power to learn. Ask them everyday so they are proud that they have received new knowledge all the time. For the bigger children, who have homework, you must persuade them to finish their assignment before allowing them to do something else. You must always supervise and look after them. If you know your children are weak in any subject you must try to help them. In assisting the children **you must help them to think on their own and not by doing everything for them** because it may cause the children to become even weaker. The parents must be careful about this as well. Some lessons must be memorized, for example, the multiplication table. After dinner they get some rest. While doing so, the parents should talk to each other about useful topics to give an opportunity for the children to listen to it. They can sit and observe the way the parents converse between the two of them. It is a way to train them and at the same time it gives them some knowledge. On some occasions, the children will tell their parents what took place in their activities, e.g., suppose the teachers took them out somewhere. When they came back they

could check their feelings and memory. Ask them to relate the events that they had seen. Tell them to talk freely and as they really feel. The parents will only try to fill in some of the omitted parts. If there were several children, try urging them to argue and to answer questions among one another to test their verbal skills and to learn to be brave for a reasonable period of time. Then tell them to read some books as required in their studies. This method will help them to develop in another way. To pay attention in directing and pointing the way to the children should be done all the time by the parents. If it was done regularly as mentioned before, the children will not be weak in the subjects they study. So its success mostly depends on the parents.

In persuading and pointing the way for the children to take an interest in learning, if necessary you should use incentives. For example, use a movie as an incentive by telling them “If you can solve all of the arithmetic problems correctly, I will take you to a movie this Saturday.” If the children want to go they would study very hard. “If you get 75 percent in your final examinations, I will take you on a vacation to a seaside resort.” Or you may tell them that if they study English and are good at it, and you can memorize a lot of vocabularies, you will be able to speak English fluently. When you grow up you may win a scholarship and you will be able to further your education abroad. You will see skyscrapers; beautiful water falls, just like in the movies. They will like the idea and will be enthusiastic about learning their lessons. When they are able to get especially good grades, do not forget to compliment them and to give them some rewards so they can be proud that their parents love them and give the rewards for their goodness. They will try even harder in the future in their studies. The encouragement of the parents is a powerful incentive for the children. Please do not neglect to do that.

One more thing you need to understand in training your children, i.e., do not make things hard for the children by making them fun as well and for them to receive lessons about life at the same time without them even realizing it. Do not force them to do anything because children are not soldiers, who after meals, will be told to go to the auditorium for a training session. The training is so intense that most soldiers fall asleep.

That kind of training is of little value to the children. We should teach them like we are having a conversation with them, which will be enjoyable to them as well. This is another good way to help the children.

If you have an opportunity to inject any ideas or opinions into the children's brain, do not fail to do so. Tell them always whether the story is good or bad. Your teaching and preaching should be done whenever it is possible to do so. Even the Buddha did the preaching and teaching to his disciples. Every time when something happened, he would teach them and preach them again and promptly so. If you can do it, it will be of great value to your family. Your home will become a very good school and at the same time you will become a very good teacher.

There is another problem which we must help solving it, i.e., in assisting the schools in your locality. The school belongs to all of you. You receive useful things from the school by sending your children to learn to become intelligent person who can work well for the community. The local schools, the municipal schools and the government schools are the same as the temples, which give knowledge to the people in general. In the old days, all kinds of schools were in the temples. The monks were the teachers so the villagers or local people gave them a helping hand. They considered the deeds to be meritorious acts. In fact they were both meritorious and useful. Nevertheless, the school still needs to receive help from the general public. I would like to ask you to help the school in any way you can. To help the school is the same as to help yourself and to help your children to be comfortable and happy. It is merit making which is effective right away. There are many ways to help, e.g., construction of school buildings, repair and maintenance of school facilities, and arrangement for supplies of essential educational materials the school needs in various classes; provision of toys and the playground for the children for them to have physical exercise on appropriate occasions. These are helps, which are useful to the school.

All the aforementioned assistance is just external help. To do it internally and needless to say, several times more effective, is by cooperating with the teachers at the school in persuading your children to become good persons. Our nation wants, as mentioned before, real assistance. If

we let the teachers do everything alone; it is going to be difficult for them to develop our children. I would like to ask you, who love your children, to help the teachers at the school; to sculpt the children to be as good as you had wished them to be as your goal. The teachers at the school and the teachers at home should meet each other once in while to discuss the issues that need to be resolved. This is in a spirit of true cooperation. In this way our children will never have any escape route to turn to unwholesomeness.

May I ask you, the parents, who love and wish your children well, to look at yourselves and your children? Look at the results of the education they are receiving. Look at the school where your children attend. If there are anything that you can help, you can improve, do not delay your action. Please do whatever you can promptly. You will have not cause to be sorry later on.

## *Children & their Dress*

DEAR PARENTS,

THIS OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup> was also the first Monday of the month. It was officially designated the International Children's Day. Every organization concerning children had some sort of celebration on the Children's Day. In order for the children to enjoy themselves as they like, *Buddhasathan* was also a centre of the community where the children came for a meeting. Some of the children were led by the teachers, some by the parents. It seemed to me all the children were in good spirit and they did enjoy themselves in all the activities. I was there at *Buddhasathan* and had a chance to talk to the audience a little. I reminded them to realize always that they were going to be the adults of the future. To be adults, they have to help themselves. They must earn their living for themselves and for their family. The adventure in this world in the future that lies ahead is so great and it is going to be quite difficult. Every one has to be prepared to be a good person.

For the children to be considered good person, they must possess three attributes:

1. To have good knowledge.
2. To have an ability to use that knowledge well.
3. To have good conduct.

These three attributes are like insurance for a person to live securely and to progress in his or her life. I also reminded the children to be modest, to respect the teaching of the parents and the teachers because they were still young to this world and they needed to have adults as teachers in their lives. The children must follow the leaders in order to be safe as they wish for. I only talked to them a little because I saw that they had listened to the letter from the Prime Minister for a long time and in that letter there were already several interesting topics. If the children could remember and abide by them, they would surely prosper in their lives. After the meeting in the auditorium they paraded around and near the

compound of *Buddhasathan*. Then they returned to participate in the sports events among schools. They seemed to have a lot of fun and they played the games in orderly manners. There was no fist fight or rowdiness. I looked at them and could not help feeling good about those children and I wanted to be once again a child. But how could it happen like that? Childhood has passed me by and the only way to go for me is downward. Eventually my life will end. Birth and death, it is normal. You and I, we are in the same boat.

Late that morning there were many parents and their children. I was interested in the children so I went around looking for little children. I found one who was a girl. She came with her mother. She was about 6 or 7 years old but the way she dressed was peculiar, i.e., she was in a make-up like an adult with very red lips. Both cheeks were reddish and her hair was cut with two ribbons on it. The fingernails and toenails were painted red also. The skirt she was wearing was short and stitched together in several layers. I looked at her and said to myself, a little overdressed. I looked at the mother. She had more make-up than her daughter and much more overdressed. So I came to a conclusion that the mother was the one who dressed up her daughter so much that she looked terrible. It gave me an idea that I should talk about this a little. On that day I teased the mother, "Wow, you dressed her up so beautifully." The mother smiled happily. Every one loves flattering words. No one likes critical words. But flattering words can be a poison too.

Little children are by nature cute and lovely to look at. Whoever sees the children cannot help but to love them and wants to give them a hug. Children are charming in themselves without any make-up. Too much make-up makes them look more awful than beautiful. Most parents do not think about this fact. They put paints all over on the lips and the cheeks of their children. They don't look nice at all. The mothers, who love to dress up, dress themselves and tend to forget. They dress up the little girls as well. So they look so messy. Doing that is more destructive to the children than being constructive. So I would like to warn all the mothers to allow the children to look nice naturally. Don't make them look nice by a make-up. Because the more the make-up, the more they

look like a French doll and not human being. Let your children be their own selves. It is better not to destroy their true identity. The children who dress plainly look lovely. Those who dress boldly don't look nice at all. The parents should be aware of that.

When you want to think about dressing up your children you should consider the following guidelines. You will see how harmful it can be.

1. It will make your children pay too much attention to adorning themselves. When they grow up they will become intoxicated with the images of themselves by seeing that beauty due to make-up is important. They will only attire themselves physically and never want to consider the grooming of their mind. The children will be too proud of their physical attributes. They will be fascinated by their body and look down upon the others, who do not dress up like them. It is one way for them to become spoiled.
2. It is needlessly a cultivation of extravagant habit in the children because all these physical decorations were mostly imported items from overseas. It is not appropriate for us to train our children to become luxurious in nonessential goods. To do that was an encouragement for the children to spend more. It is harmful in another way.
3. It is also normal for human beings that the more they dress the more the defilement in their mind. Beauty is a cause of *Chanda Raga* (loving passion), which is a fire burning oneself. You don't need to stimulate this passion so much that it will be over active. It is better to allow nature to take its course gradually. This day and age children become young adults too soon because we seem to stimulate them to grow so fast. I want you to think about this just a little so you can find some way to prevent it from happening.

Order and discipline are essential and important in developing our country. Besides the make-up of the face as mentioned before, care must be taken in choosing the dresses for the children. At present our people seem to be wearing strange looking outfits in various shapes and forms. It is a way to waste money needlessly. But for the adults, I am not going

to say anything to hurt your feelings. But I would like to ask you to think of the future of our country for just a little bit. Please help raise the Thai children properly and correctly. Skirts and blouses of the children should be of simple designs, easy to put on and comfortably so. As you know, **the main purpose of wearing clothes is to protect the body against the cold and the hot weather and against other animals, which may attack our body.** It is not for other reasons. To dress simply and comfortably will not allow the children to look down upon one another. If we dress in so many different ways, those who do not have similar dresses will feel uncomfortable. The outfits of bizarre designs will stimulate the minds of the children more negatively than positively. Children's pants sometimes were made to fit the body parts so much especially for the girls who wear tightly fit pants like a matador pants, which should be, used by the bull fighters in Spain and not here. Girls in that kind of tight outfit will leave a lot in the confused mind of the boys. There were many sexual abduction cases, which were the results of this kind of challenging outfits. The parents should warn their children not to show off their powerful impulse so much because it will cause trouble sooner than they think. Even the colour of the dresses should be those which are neutral and cool to the eyes. They are a lot better than those annoying colour are. The colour is very important in creating emotions in the audience. But our children are not movie stars. There is no need to use loud colour to damage the eyesight. One more thing, the more colour the more the money to be spent. When there is no money then the future is big trouble. So you have to be careful as well.

Besides the clothing, there is other decorative jewellery, which is not at all essential to the children so they should not be bought to decorate them at all. The parents who used their hard-earned money to buy bracelets, necklaces, or other decorations, which are valuable items to adorn their children, should think twice whether they are the necessities. If they think long and hard they will realize that they are not at all. Without those jewellery, the children can still live comfortably. But why do they have them? The desire to be beautiful often causes trouble to one self. Those gold ornaments are a lot of temptation for a lot of

people especially the thieves who always want to steal them. I heard that a little boy with two baht of gold necklace was missing. They went looking for him and found his body in a pond minus the necklace. This is a danger resulting from adorning the boy's body with the things too valuable for him. The damage did take a life because the parents lacked an understanding of the things they should have understood. All the parents please remember that the money, the gold and the jewellery are not compatible with the children. Do not decorate them with those things. Please refrain from doing it in every family and every one. Do not even have it on you to cause any danger to yourself. In this day and age the thieves are several times more numerous than in the past. **To adorn the children with valuable jewellery is a way to spoil the children and it also tempted ordinary people to become thieves.** Nothing is gained by doing it at all. You must be careful about this.

I have seen children with very expensive items such as the rings, the wristwatches, and high quality fountain pens. The users must be very proud of the things they have. But using expensive items like that will make an extravagant person out of that child; it is also a temptation for the children, who did not have them to want to have them. It is too much a competition in spending, which is a path to the downfall of most people. I think they prohibited doing that in government schools but there are some private schools that need to be warned against allowing their students to wear expensive items to school. When I was a student, I stayed at a temple. There were forty of us. One boy went home and he returned with a necklace. There was only one necklace in the whole temple. One day he went swimming in the river. He took the necklace off and put it in his shirt pocket and hanged his shirt on a tree. He enjoyed his swimming a lot so when he came out of the river he put on his pants and his shirt, the necklace dropped into the water. He tried to go under the water and looked for it but it was in vain. He came back to the temple and accused his friends of stealing the necklace. All of us had to be interrogated. Their way of interrogation was done by a witch doctor, whose ceremony was performed by caning a rice-grinding bowl! He told us whoever stole the necklace would have caning wounds on his hip. The witch

doctor was at it for a long time but no one had any caning wounds on the hip. And the necklace had never been found besides there were conflicts among friends. This is an example of the trouble caused by non-essential belongings, which I ask all of the parents to think about as well.

Children should be trained to be content with what they have and not to have too much ambition, because it will bring unhappiness. You should teach them to be frugal in spending for things so that they will know how to be moderate in their future life. It is a way to set a foundation in their mind from a young age. The parents should be careful not to allow their children to become too proud and ambitious to be like some one and with endless needs. There should be some discipline about appropriate belongings. Let them use only what are necessary and not too expensive. Teach them to look at their usefulness and not their beauty. This is the thing to be trained from childhood. The parents must also be careful about dressing up because they are the example; you are a mirror of your children. If that mirror is obscure, the children will see bad images. If the mirror is clear, the image is also clear. So the parents must always be a good example of their children. The children then will remember the good example of the parents. When they grow up they will be, without a doubt, good persons in the family.

Hopefully, the listeners will give it a thought and do it accordingly. May the order, discipline, and frugality be with all of you.

## *The Children who have been Trained are the Most Valuable*

DEAR PARENT,

THERE ARE many animals that can be domesticated. As a matter of fact they can be trained to do anything. We have seen monkeys. They trained the monkeys to act in a play. They were able to do as trained. They did a good job of acting, which pleased the audience very much. The dogs in American movies could do so many things that the audience cried out, "Wow! They know everything, even better than some people." A talking mynah in a cage can be taught to speak like human beings. When we see those animals we cannot help but wonder how they trained them. Did they use a whip to beat them so they could do anything they wanted or did they use other methods?

I would like to inform you that they did not have to whip, to threaten, or to torture in any way, shape or form. But they persuade all those animals to do almost anything by giving them what they want. It is natural for all animals including human to be attached to or to like something. If they like something if they can get it they will do anything for you. A young man, who is fond of a girl or a girl, who is attached to a young man, would do anything for each other even though that thing is troublesome or the most difficult to do. They would do that just to get what they wanted, that's why. The monkeys, who could mimic an act, were given opium-laced food. And opium is an addictive drug. They gave the drug to the monkeys after they had done all the acts. At the end, the food was given to the monkeys. The animals were addicted to the taste of the food. Whenever they wanted them to perform, the food was used as an incentive. When they saw the food they liked they acted as the monkey owner told them to do.

Dogs can mimic all acts in much the same way. They used food to induce them. There was a small dog at the temple. When I went to the dining hall, it followed me to get something to eat. I trained it to crouch until I finished my meal. Then I would give it the food. The next days it

would come to crouch near my feet everyday.

Then I wanted it to sit for me. Before I would give it the food, I told it to sit and I grabbed its body in a sitting position. I told it several times to sit. When it was able to sit just a little, I gave it the food right away. Several days later, when the dog wanted the food, it would sit for me. It also put up the two front legs like it was pay me respect. Now it was able to sit quite well. Food was really a big incentive. When it wanted something it would do anything to get what it wanted. Even though it is hard to communicate with animals but they can still be trained. Human can talk to one another. Why can't we train them?

Examples from training animals give an idea for training human beings. First of all the trainer and the trade must love each other. The parents naturally love their children to begin with. But due to love, harm may be a result. Too much love makes for being hotheaded and angry-prone. When the children did something against their wish, the parents became angry and spank them right away. It was not proper to do that. The trainers must train themselves to be cool-hearted, to be reasonable and to use wisdom a lot. When the children did something disagreeable to them or not according to their wish, do not punish them the first time. You have to think why it was like that. Was there anything wrong that made them violate your command. For example, there was a guest at home; the little one was in that room as well. The mother told him to pay respect to the guest or it was like a command telling him to pay respect saying, "Why didn't you do it?" The boy was standing or sitting still without complying with the mother's instruction. Sometimes he would act shyly or by raising his hand to cover his face. All those acts indicated that he was embarrassed or he was not familiar with that guest. Or he might not like the look of that guy that's why he just sat there doing nothing. If the mother scolded him or spoke sarcastically about him, he would become even more embarrassed and acted like he was rebellious and not paying attention to her. The parents, who are supposed to be wise and reasonable, have also learned a lot about child behaviour. They must look at the situation carefully. Do not assume that your children are stubborn. There must be a cause in his heart not to pay respect to the

man. For example, he might not understand the reason why he had to pay respect to that man. What connection did he have with the guy for him to have to show him any respect? He was hesitant in doing so. Perhaps he was embarrassed to have to do that so he did not do it. Or he might have some feelings inside. The adults did not know about those feelings and they accused him of being this and that. Do not forget that the children also love and hate like adults. We must look at them with our wisdom. Don't just make a guess it will be harmful to the children later on.

Sometimes it was not because of the children but the adults themselves, who had not shown good examples for the children to see. Instead they forced the children to do another way. How can it be done? It is like, "Do as I say but not as I do." The Buddha once said, "If we want to teach anybody about anything, we must be able to do it ourselves first; then our teaching will not be confusing." His teaching is worth our consideration and it should be followed. Especially in regard to the children, it is very important. As mentioned before several time, by nature the children love to simulate the acts of those who are close to them. When there is no example for them, it is not fair to blame them at all. The parents must act as examples. To teach them to do as they have been taught then you must also teach them to like what they are doing too and not by forcing them to do it. Even the parents, or anybody for that matter, do not like to be forced to do anything. We all love to do things voluntarily. So there is one principle to follow, "Refrain from doing things which cause pain; instead give them pleasure often."

This is very important. No matter what topic you want to teach your children, you must try to make it pleasant to them and make it agreeable to them to do as told by themselves. When I talk about this I need to ask you to think about *Kho Nanthavisal* (Nanthavisal was an ox) a little. The owner of the ox lost a gamble the first time because he forced the ox to do things using unpleasant words. So he lost the money. The second time he use gentle words and not a threatening one, *Kho Nanthavisal* was able to pull one hundred carts without much difficulty. The story should teach you something. One principle to have in training the children is "Request some one to do something is always better than forcing that

person to do things.” In general, for most people if they resist, there is no way to force them. The heart of training human beings is right here.

The Buddha was known to be the teacher who could train people better than anybody could. How did he train those people? If we look carefully we will see that he trained people with love and gentleness. Even though, the people who visited him came in haste and with hot temper, he did not answer them in the same way. Because if we bring a hot person near a heater, how can he be cooled down? The proper thing to do is to bring him close to an electric fan or in an air-conditioned room. Every time people came in hot and bothered, the Buddha answered them with a cool head or he would agree with them first. When they had cooled down then he would answer back with reasons. Those people would kneel down by his feet. This is an example of a good training tactic.

In training children to have good manners, you must consider a Dhamma principle the Buddha taught. It said **everything happened from a cause. If there is no cause, there will never be an effect.** Use this principle to consider the action of the children and to find a solution to the cause of that event. In presenting the solution, you must wait until the children are no longer in a bad mood. When the current is running strong, the boat will sink for sure if you dare turn one side of the boat against the current. You should talk to them when they are feeling good. It is better because the people who are not feeling good are not reasonable. They could not listen and understand anything. Besides they might get mad again. So we must be careful.

The people in the ancient time taught us “**not to use temper to fight in boxing.**” In boxing, if one boxes in anger, using anger as power, then he will be at a disadvantage to the coolheaded guy. It is the same in working with the children. Don’t ever use rage. You must do the job with a cool heart. Only coldness can fight against heat. Some adults talk too much. When the children had done something wrong they would nag and nag. They thought that their nagging would help the children to remember and would not do like that again. The children instead push harder. Please do not be like that. Talk to them with reasons and a cool head just once. That is enough. If the children kept doing it then you must teach them

again the next time. Every time the teaching is done, your children must feel that they were taught from the mouth of some one who love and wish them well. Do not ever create a feeling that you hated them so you talked to them that way. Eventually the two sides could not get along and they turned against each other for no reason at all.

Another thing that should be avoided is to use spanking every time the children did something wrong. Some mothers every time the children walked loudly; they would call them over and hit the anklebone several times. That was a bit too cruel. Please do not use that method often. Instead make them feel that they have made a mistake and for them to change by themselves. Every time you show your anger towards the children, you are actually training them to be angry as well. How can the training be good if you make them angry? Please use your wisdom to think about this fair and square. You will see for yourself that the disadvantage outweighs the advantage. And so you should avoid doing that. Remember the words of some wise people, **“Admire them to work is better than admonish them to work.”** Every one must have done something for us to admire him or her if we take an interest in giving the compliment especially at the time when something good is done and the warning has been given by us previously. A few words of compliment at the right time are priceless.

Looking after the children or a group of people needs decisiveness at times. But the decisiveness will be effective only when you will do as you said and do not talk too much but only with reasons and finality. Whatever that was said, it must always be done. You must refrain from nagging but it has to be decisive and without showing anger. To do that your words will be respected a lot. Suppose your children were having a meal together, one of them made a mistake in his/her table manners, which you have already warned them. They knew that to do that was not proper but they forgot again, you should reprimand them a little but with determined voice. And you should reserve punishment that if it happened again that person would not be allowed to eat together with the group but would have to eat alone or after the others. Punishment like that is not that harsh. If they play with other children and act like they

are the big guys or act selfishly like an athlete who has no sporting spirits then you should reserve the punishment for them as well. The reserved punishment or the probation would be not to allow them to play with their friends or not to join in any sports. This will prevent them from becoming too aggressive. If you take your children anywhere or to visit some friends at their home, you should advise them how to behave themselves so they understand clearly. If they do not behave as promised then you would refrain from taking them out again because to go out with those who do not know the rule of social conducts is embarrassing. The children will know it was their own faults so they will be more attentive to your teaching. Regarding all these, the parents must always pay attention to the children. When they see that the children have done something good people would not do, you must find the time to explain to them and to make correction of their behaviours.

In regard to the manners of the children, if the parents do not pay enough attention to correct the situation, the bad habits will stay with the children. And the future of your family will be obscure and joyless.

The responsibility on all of these rests totally on the shoulders of the parents. I would like to remind all of you for the last time to pay full attention to them at all time.

THE END

**It is not at all easy nor a minor responsibility to be a perfect father/mother.**

**The responsibility does not stop only when a child has been created in this world.**

**You cannot think only in term of,  
“to have a house to live in,  
a bed to sleep on,  
a pillow to rest their head,  
a means to support”.**

**It is not totally correct to think that is all that is needed.**



**The most important point depends on whether you have developed a guideline for your children to live their lives in such a way that they ‘have a bright future’.**