

# Buddhist Wisdom



The Aphorisms of  
Venerable U Janakābhivaṃsa  
Mahāgandhayon Sayādaw

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Bhikkhu Pesala

Association for Insight Meditation

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### About the Author

The late Sayādaw U Janakābhivāṃsa, also known as Mahāgandhayon Sayādaw, devoted his life to teaching Buddhist studies (*pariyatti*) to many hundreds of monks. In Burma the fame of his monastery is perhaps comparable to that of Oxford University in England, and many young monks wish to go there to study. He followed the vinaya very strictly, and worked tirelessly for the preservation of the *sāsana*.

# **Buddhist Wisdom**

## **All People Are Stupid**

1. All people are stupid unless they have attained enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

## **Since the Arising of the Buddha**

2. Throughout the infinite round of rebirths one could never before have gained the kind of wisdom that one could get after the Buddha appeared.

## **No Being is Afraid**

3. No being is afraid until it gets into trouble.

## **No One Can Help You**

4. If the trouble that you are in is of the kind that nobody can help you out of, then telling anybody about it will not do you any good.

## **No Guarantee**

5. If you have not yet attained the state of moral purity, there is no guarantee that you have got the right view for your journey in saṃsāra.

## **Heedlessness**

6. People are born, grow old, and die heedlessly. In fact, they should prepare themselves for old age, sickness, and death after they have got the necessities of life.

## **Base and Ignoble**

7. Some religious people have contempt for other's religions. This is base and ignoble.

## **Materialists are Fools**

8. Those who encourage materialism to flourish in the world are fools.

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<sup>1</sup> Delusion (*moha*) exists in all non-Arahants. *See also* v 246 (ed.)

**Religious People Beware!**

9. Religious people beware! Science will reject anything that does not conform to reason, anything that does not accord with the law of cause and effect.

**Not Only One Life**

10. Look to the series of existences you have gone through, not only to your situation in this transitory life.

**Work Earnestly**

11. Some people want to attain the Dhamma without working earnestly for it.

**Hard to Attain**

12. Few people are reborn as human beings. Even as human beings, few have come into the scope of the Buddha's teachings. Even if one is a Buddhist, one can rarely become a true Buddhist.

**Worthy of Respect**

13. A person who deserves respect ought to have the qualities of morality, concentration, and wisdom.

**Aiming Too High**

14. People are not satisfied with their own position in life, and are always aiming too high.

**Heed the Buddha's Advice**

15. The Buddha cannot save you if you take shelter in this dispensation without heeding his advice.

**Concentration**

16. Serenity, or concentration, is of great value. The discovery of the atom was due to concentrated effort.

### **Do Charity on Your Birthday**

17. If you want to do some meritorious deed for your birthday you should be doing it always, for you are born and you die in every moment.

### **Sacrifice A Small Gain**

18. Greed increases: if you can expect a gain of a thousand, you will forgo a hundred. Naturally, if you want to achieve a greater gain, you must sacrifice a smaller gain.

### **Life-Span**

19. One's life-span is not shorter because of living a good life, nor is it longer by living in dissipation.

### **Good Results Take Time**

20. Good results take time to mature whereas bad results are often instant.

### **Can You See Misery?**

21. If you can see the misery of the present existence, you will want no more existences.

### **Annihilationism**

22. It is owing to the doctrine that death is the end of things that immorality flourishes in the world.

### **This Useless World**

23. In this useless world, where there are only useless people living useless lives, do you think there will be any improvement without reason. If there is any good in the world, it is due to good morals without which nothing good can possibly result.

### **Competition**

24. Competition is not always good. Competition can ruin the world.

**Where is There Equality?**

25. In this world there is luxury in one place, famine in another, war in yet another. Is there any such thing as equality?
26. Men are equal but there is no equality in talent and ability.

**For Their Own Benefit**

27. People readily ask others to do things for their own benefit, but are reluctant to help others.
28. People look to their own welfare; they are reluctant to do good for others.
29. If you don't work for others' interests, you won't have any benefit for yourself.

**Getting the Better of Others**

30. People have the habit of getting the better of others, and scorning and condemning them.
31. If you get the better of another, people will side with you, but if they get the better of you, they will change sides. That's natural.

**A Bad Motive**

32. If one speaks and acts with a bad motive, all one's speech and acts will be just as bad.

**To Be Outstanding**

33. If you want to stand out from the common people, do not do what they are doing.
34. Truly good people still exist in the world. They are noble, intelligent, and courageous.

**The Key Position**

35. Human existence is the key position; you can work for moral purity to achieve celestial existences and even nibbāna.

**Humans and Animals**

36. Naturally, human beings have more benefit from good deeds than animals, and in doing bad deeds too, they surpass animals.



### **Face Up to Suffering**

37. If you are afraid of suffering, face up to it.
38. Happiness does not beget more happiness. We can achieve it only by facing up to suffering.

### **What Kind of Person Am I?**

39. What kind of person am I? I ought to be one for whom I would have a high opinion. I can lie to others but I cannot lie to myself. Everybody should try to become worthy of high self-esteem.

### **Take the Long Way**

40. If you take the long way, the Buddha's word will not be in vain. Take the long way as long as you can. Take long to practise the Dhamma.

### **Adore the Buddha**

41. Focus your adoration on the Buddha; it is like living with the Buddha.
42. If you deeply adore the Buddha, you will faithfully follow his admonition.
43. Contemplation of the attributes of the Buddha will make the devotee powerful, intellectually developed, and influential. So you should contemplate the attributes of the Buddha and visualise the Buddha as still living.
44. Radiate loving-kindness to all beings while adoring the Buddha. The person who does this will have a better destiny. So always radiate loving-kindness.

### **The Best Person in the World**

45. If anyone asked me "Who is the greatest person in the world?" I would say, "The Buddha."

### **Subtract Ignorance and Craving**

46. From an existence subtract ignorance and craving; then there will be no more rebirths.

**Do-It-Yourself**

47. If you can help yourself, do not give trouble to others causing them to make bad kamma.

**Fame and Wealth Are Nothing**

48. Fame and wealth are, after all, nothing. When you die you have to depend on morality, concentration, and wisdom.

**National Solidarity**

49. Interracial marriages are necessary for national solidarity among Upper Burma, Lower Burma, Hill Tribes, and Plains people.

**Give As Good As You Get**

50. If someone offers you one pound, you must do something worth two.

**The Upper Classes**

51. If one looks from the upper class, one can see the lower class; if, on the other hand, one looks up from below one cannot possibly see the upper area.

**The Lower Classes**

52. When people reach the upper classes, they regard lower class people with contempt; while those in the lower classes usually have envy and jealousy.

**The Lower Realms**

53. In this universe there is a hell, and the animal kingdom, ghosts, fools, and poor people. All will die one day. Be careful!

**A Kind of Arrogance**

54. People say that a person is arrogant if he wears a stern face, shouts at people, spurns them, or being power-drunk, doesn't care to behave politely. I don't mean that kind of arrogance.

What I mean is that you should be high-minded about your status as you wander through saṃsāra.

### **World Leaders**

55. Look at those whom people call world leaders. Scientists invent new and deadly weapons. Capitalists buy these weapons. Those in power never stop giving orders to kill.

### **The Peace Keepers?**

56. The stupid leaders of the world expect to get peace only through war. That's why they are reinforcing their armies with men and hardware while talking glibly of peace.

### **Under A False Pretext**

57. If you commit a sin under the pretext that it is a traditional practice, it is still a sin.

### **Women Are Clever**

58. In the human world, women are very clever. If there were no women in the world, life would be cold and dreary. It would be difficult even for the Bodhisatta to appear on the scene.

### **Mothers Should Work Hard**

59. Children remain idle because parents are busy. To ensure that their children are good and clever, mothers should work at least as hard as their men.

### **Pointing the Finger**

60. People are in the habit of pointing their fingers at others. They do not point at themselves. If they point at others, they point with just one finger while the other four are pointing at themselves.
61. Don't speak ill of others in their absence; don't condemn them in their presence; don't be hasty to blame them.

**Which Path Will You Follow?**

62. If you believe in the next existence, you should know what you should and should not do. If you don't believe, then do what you will. Yet if you have to choose between these two paths, follow the right one.

**Instead of Weeping**

63. Instead of weeping when your parents are dead, you should look after them well when they are alive.

**Treat the Dhamma With Care**

64. In practising the Dhamma, you must treat the Dhamma with care. Otherwise, you will be like the ladle that has contact with soup, but does not know its taste. Cemetery workers have daily contact with dead bodies; doctors have to deal with human anatomy, but they do not gain a deep conviction of the Dhamma.

**More Difficult**

65. It is more difficult to have dealings with someone you respect than with someone you don't.
66. Attaining wisdom is more difficult than gaining fame and influence.

**Offerings of Faith**

67. Bhikkhus should not misuse the lay people's offerings of the essential requisites, and thus commit an evil deed.
68. Entrepreneurs carry on their business to gain profit. Those who enter the Holy Order should work to gain merit. Do noble deeds so that there is no loss.

**The Path of Misery**

69. People are talking of trouble, but they are walking the path of misery. So the trouble-infected one will meet trouble in the midst of troubles.

70. Today, people are following the path for the increase of greed, anger, and misery. They are not able to see the path that leads to peace and happiness.
71. If people have much demerit, they will be afflicted with many diseases and will live a short life. They will live a miserable existence.

### **Leave Human Society**

72. One who has a noble mind should leave human society after dealing with people according to the moral code.

### **Slaves to Craving**

73. People have been slaves to craving while they are alive. To be candidates for Hell after death is not good.

### **Earn People's Reverence**

74. People love you if you are generous; they respect you if you are well-behaved; they revere you if you have wisdom.

### **With Wisdom Gained**

75. When one gains wisdom, one becomes courageous. At first one may be coarse, but with wisdom gained, one becomes wise, having a broad outlook.

### **Four Kinds of People**

76. One who comes out of the dark and is going into darkness; one who comes out of light and is going into darkness; one who comes out of darkness and is going into light; and one who comes out of light and is going into light: these are the four kinds of people. Try to become like the fourth.

### **Perfections**

77. Cultivating perfections for enlightenment is not easy. Although others contribute their efforts, you will only get as much as you earn.

**Buddhist Culture**

78. If we (Burmese) conduct ourselves according to our Buddhist culture, we will keep abreast of advanced countries.

**Status**

79. The status of laymen can be gauged by their standard of living, but monks have to live on the charity of others.

**A Careless Life**

80. Anyone who lives carelessly will incline towards evil, and will always be vulnerable to the effects of bad kamma.

**Ignorance is Worse Than Poverty**

81. Ignorance is worse than poverty. It is worse than not practising the Dhamma, but wrong view is worse than non-practice.

**Nowhere to Hide**

82. Evil deeds are impossible to conceal. A rotten thing is always detected.

**The Buddha's Dispensation**

83. The laity will respect the Buddha's dispensation only if the monks respect it, and if all Buddhists respect it, non-Buddhists will respect it.

**Value Your Life**

84. People don't value their lives highly enough, so they speak, act, and live heedlessly. That is why they have to lead ordinary lives.

**Make Good Efforts**

85. If you want to obtain good results make good efforts. People want to enjoy benefits without really trying.

### **Self Importance**

86. To every being, his or her own affairs are the most urgent and important.

### **Everyone Enjoys Life**

87. Every being enjoys his or her own existence.

### **Lip Service**

88. In this mendacious world, people are using their lips to utter boastful words. Lip service will not produce solid work.

### **Nothing Strange**

89. There is nothing strange. Everything under the sun comes into existence, and everything dies.

### **People Love Trouble**

90. What one loves best gives one the worst trouble. For every love-object there is trouble. Many love-objects, many troubles. No love-objects, no trouble.

### **A Person's Value**

91. If a person's value lies in his grave, then there is not much to reckon with.

### **Pride**

92. If you are educated, wealthy or good-looking, don't despise others.

### **Know Your Own Character**

93. Don't tell others about your own character. It is for you to know if your character is good or bad.

### **A Normal Standard**

94. Living up to a normal standard is very difficult. To rise above the norm is barely thinkable.

**Opportunity**

95. Opportunity that comes to you is not for your enjoyment; it is for your progress.

**Objectives**

96. Everybody must have his or her own objectives.

**Punctuality**

97. Except in dying, be punctual in eating, going, and doing things.

**Doing Your Own Thing**

98. Everybody feels happy and thinks highly of what he or she has done when achieving his or her aim.

**Measuring Things**

99. Everybody measures things with the yardstick of his own views.

**Have A Liberal Outlook**

100. People are generally liberal in their outlook on secular matters, but they are not so liberal in religious matters.

**Are You Lucky?**

101. Determine whether you are lucky or not by examining your personality, wealth, intelligence, and social status.

**Die With Courage**

102. However great one may be, it is not good to shed tears on one's deathbed.

**Do Good to be Good**

103. If you do good, you will be good. That is natural.
104. If you want to be attractive, do your work well.
105. Loving others is the same as loving yourself.



### **Injustice**

106. In this unjust world, there is one injustice after another. Conducting one's life righteously is difficult.

### **Think Seriously About Death**

107. Now think about this. Death comes to the old and young alike, so what shall we do? Think about this seriously.

### **Fame Will Corrupt You**

108. If you don't have enough intelligence, fame will probably corrupt you even in such a pure and clear religion as Buddhism.

### **Worldly Progress**

109. Wisdom is the chief factor for progress in the world.  
110. When those who take great pains to achieve worldly ambitions attain their goal, they revel in the pleasures their success has afforded them.  
111. Scientific progress offers a good life materially. Nevertheless, it fails to develop good morality, and so people are unhappy. The Buddha's teaching alone can afford the means for true happiness.  
112. Worldly progress is meant only for enjoying its benefit.  
113. Eventually, the progress of science leads to ruin.  
114. Material progress is to the detriment of spiritual progress.  
115. Today's world is progressing very much. There are big buildings, various kinds of vehicles, but there is no peace of mind; the mind is burning with anxiety and misery. You shouldn't accept that kind of progress.

### **Spiritual Progress**

116. Man usually tries to improve the material side of his existence; he rarely recognises the importance of the mental aspect. That is why people are always looking to material progress.

### **Oppression**

117. People usually oppress others when they get the upper hand.

### **Everyone Makes Mistakes**

118. Everyone is likely to make mistakes because of ignorance, so it's better not to say too much.

### **Making Headway**

119. If you want to make headway in life, try to become proficient according to your age.
120. With good behaviour, a good mind, and a good education, I will make headway in life. Otherwise, I will get into a rut.

### **Strike A New Path**

121. People cannot strike a new path; they follow the beaten track.
122. Sometimes, it may not be advisable to behave according to the times. People will have to suffer the consequences of bad times.

### **Behave Moderately**

123. If you are too soft, you may be insulted. If you are too tough, you may make many enemies. Behaving moderately is better.
124. Even if those around you don't love you, don't let them hate you.

### **Useless Work**

125. You cannot gain any benefit from doing useless work.

### **For the Benefit of Family**

126. Though one may be highly educated, very rich or hold a high official position, one still has to work for one's family.

### **Contempt**

127. People tend to hold others in contempt due to their own skills.

### **Customs and Culture**

128. You can acquire culture from parents and teachers, and their writings. You cannot acquire it only from customs and traditions.

### **Education**

129. Education is not only literature, but includes any art or craft by which to earn a living.

### **Gain Knowledge While Young**

130. Whatever art or knowledge it may be, we must acquire it at an early age. There will always be a difference in status between the educated and the uneducated.

### **Beyond Their Ken**

131. Many people don't believe what others know. Because it is beyond their ken, they think that it is not true.

### **Conceit**

132. The conceited will earn others' contempt.

### **Pride of Wealth**

133. People are proud as much as they are wealthy.

### **Busybodies**

134. Some people interfere in affairs that are not their own.

### **No Benefit**

135. No benefit will accrue from two or three persons shouldering the responsibility that one man can bear.  
136. If you do anything that is of no benefit, you will not gain any benefit.

### **Eat for Health**

137. The purpose of food and nutrition is good health.

### **Getting on Well**

138. People think that one gets on well only when one wins a lottery or does good business. However, if one contemplates natural phenomena and purify one's mind, one gets on very well indeed.

139. It is not that one has happiness if one is in a good position materially; it is only when one has less desire and anger that one attains happiness.

### **A Good Turn**

140. If you do a good turn, you will naturally get thanks.

### **Indulgence**

141. You should enjoy pleasures only for a limited portion of your leisure time.
142. If you are in for serious work, no work is as easy as eating and drinking.

### **Bad Signs**

143. If courts, places of entertainment, and liquor shops are crowded it is a bad sign.

### **Be Mindful**

144. Bad thoughts occur spontaneously. Good thoughts occur only when the mind is alert; it is always good to be alert.

### **Taking Pride**

145. People take pride in what they did when young. If they cannot take such pride, they take pride on being elderly.

### **Foolishness**

146. "All men are fools" is a saying that encourages people to do more foolish acts.

### **Perseverance**

147. In doing any work, first, you must have general knowledge; second, you must be mentally active; third, you must discriminate between right and wrong, finally, you must have perseverance.

### **Beauty and Goodness**

148. Goodness is apparent when compared with badness, just as beauty is apparent when compared with ugliness.

### **Keeping One's Prestige**

149. Keeping one's prestige is more difficult than to achieve it.

### **Rowing Downstream**

150. Like someone who tries to row downstream in a boat that is already drifting down, some members of the Holy Order today are creating a bad impression, which pushes down the boat of the Buddha's teachings.
151. The Buddha's dispensation is like a large boat with full sails set and all men at oars rowing downstream with the wind.

### **Lack of Friends**

152. There is no lack of friends for the wealthy, the educated or the high-ranking officer, whereas no one comes near the poor, the uneducated or the lower class.

### **Praying is Not Enough**

153. People are merely praying when there is a clear path to nibbāna.
154. If mere praying will do, then all in the world will become Buddhas.
155. You cannot get potential for enlightenment merely by praying. However, you can get it if you only practise without praying.
156. Prayer is not essential; practice is.

### **Knowledge and Practice**

157. In the scope of the Buddha's teachings there are as many things to know as there are things to practise.
158. The Buddhist religion means the teachings of the Buddha: morality, concentration, and wisdom.
159. In the round of rebirths, relatives are of no account; being of noble morality is the only thing of value.

**A Heedless Life**

160. If asked to show someone leading a heedless life, point out someone who neglects to do meritorious deeds.

**An Honourable Death**

161. As a Buddhist monk, you should do the work of a monk and behave like one, so that you will lead a good life and die an honourable death. Then you will have a significant gain in the round of rebirths.
162. If one conducts oneself according to the Buddha's teaching one becomes noble and attains happiness in this existence. One can leave this existence without fear because one has committed no sin.

**No Benefit Without Practice**

163. Preachers preach about the good results of charity, morality, and meditation, and the audience listen to the sermons, but none of them get down to practice; they are merely preaching and listening.
164. The Dhamma that is just preached and listened to is not effective; only the Dhamma that is practised is effective.
165. Preaching the Dhamma for others to practise without practising it oneself is like playing a tape recording.
166. You cannot achieve the highest moral purity by praying. You must work for the achievement.
167. Neither monks nor laymen can cook and eat the seeds of charity, morality, and meditation. They must work to develop their perfections.
168. Prayer alone is not enough to attain nibbāna. You must work to cultivate the ten perfections for enlightenment: generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truthfulness, resolution, kindness, and equanimity.

**Reform Yourself**

169. If you do not reform yourself with a view to spiritual happiness, your life is a sham.

### **A Term of Encouragement**

170. Kamma is just a term of encouragement. If you do good, good will result; if you do bad, bad will result.

### **Under Attack**

171. Our body is a target which is constantly being hit by birth, old age, disease, and death.

### **One Life is Very Short**

172. Compared with the endless round of rebirths, one life is very short — just a moment. Consider your welfare in the long future of saṃsāra, not just your success in this life.

### **Take the Long-term View**

173. Working for the good of the present without having any regard for the future existences is not wise or just.
174. If you take the long-term view, and work for your good in the round of rebirths, the short-term benefit of the present life will be included in the long-term benefit.
175. You should look to both the present and the future. If you cannot visualise the future that is invisible, you are blind in one eye. It is necessary to acquire knowledge.

### **Do Meritorious Deeds**

176. If you are forgetful of doing meritorious deeds, you will be the same as an animal.

### **The Strands of Desire**

177. In the realm of desire, sensual pleasures are the most dominant factors.

### **Others Are Superior to You**

178. In this realm of living beings there are beings far superior to yourself.

**Look Beneath the Surface**

179. Contemplating on the thirty-two component parts of the body is better than just looking at the surface.

**The Blind**

180. The blind cannot tell the right path from the wrong path.

**Be High-Minded**

181. If you have a mean outlook and do base deeds, you will be mean and base.
182. If you have a noble outlook and do noble deeds, you will be noble.

**Work for Buddhism**

183. During the Buddha's dispensation you should work to promote Buddhism; do not covet anything for yourself.

**Keep to the Straight Path**

184. If you do anything in contravention of the monastic discipline, everything will go awry.

**Preparation for Insight Meditation**

185. First, contemplate the attributes of the Buddha so that you will adore the Buddha more. Then radiate loving-kindness for the welfare of all beings. Then only, start insight meditation by contemplating the impermanence of all things.

**Buddha Images**

186. Images and pictures of the Buddha are just imitations of the physique of the Buddha.
187. Burmese sculptors make Buddha's images in Burmese style; likewise Chinese and Indian sculptors carve in their own styles. The real intention is to make people think of the Buddha and adore him even more.
188. Images, pictures, and pagodas conceal the real Buddha; sermons conceal the real Dhamma; shameless monks conceal the real Saṅgha.



### **Death is Natural**

189. Death is not a strange thing. It is the end of a life as determined by kamma.

### **Tranquillity Meditation**

190. If you practise tranquillity meditation (*samatha*), you will attain stability of mind. Only when the mind is stable can you get rid of desires and passions.
191. One can acquire a stable mind not only through meditation, but also by religious education and secular pursuits.

### **Insight Meditation**

192. If you practise insight meditation, you will gain wisdom. If you have developed wisdom, you can remove ignorance.
193. Insight meditation requires constant practice, or one will be just the same as any other person.
194. Just as you take your meals at regular hours, you should practise insight meditation regularly.

### **A Refuge for All**

195. The poor mistake religion as the refuge of the upper classes.
196. Religion is not anyone's personal property; it is a common asset.

### **Finding the Right Path**

197. It is vital to develop one's intelligence and find the right path through religion.
198. Effective ways to practice meditation are to be found in Buddhism.

### **They Do Not Know**

199. Being a monk is like mining precious metals with food and clothing provided. You will get precious metals if you dig for them, but the stags who do not know the value of gems only hanker after grass.

### Heirs of the Dhamma

200. The property that parents leave their children as a legacy will help them only in this life, but if parents can give them the Dhamma, it will benefit them throughout saṃsāra.

### Like A Sinking Boat

201. Our religion is like a boat that is sinking while rowing. Although religious devotees give the monks the necessities of life, and although the monks are learning and teaching the Dhamma, there is no progress in confidence in Buddhism, observance of morality, and attainment of wisdom.

### Buddhist Monks Must Behave Well

202. Foreigners and modern young intellectuals will hold in contempt Buddhist monks who do not behave properly and live loosely. Devotees will also lose confidence in them. The monks will suffer from disgrace, and when they die they will go to Hell.
203. The female quail risks her life to guard her eggs. The mythical *samari* bird guards its feathers with its life. We Buddhist monks should maintain our moral precepts at the risk of our lives.
204. You, monks! If you can teach, and if you are weak in morality, you will be like a tree that does not bear sweet fruit. If you are good at preaching but cannot properly keep the precepts, you will be like the flowers with no fragrance.
205. Monks, if you receive alms from others and live the life of an average good person, you are not doing your duty satisfactorily.

### Saṃsāra

206. Saṃsāra does not mean only rebirth after death; the constant arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena is also saṃsāra.

### Self-Love

207. Human beings love themselves more than they love others. Their close relatives may not have been intimately associated

with them in previous existences, but self-view has been with them throughout saṃsāra.

208. Loving yourself best will not suffice. You must do as many meritorious deeds as possible. Otherwise, your self-love will lead to ruin.

### **No Self**

209. People are striving for their own benefit, but there is really no 'self' to be found.

### **Cheerfulness**

210. As long as you do not think of old age, disease, and death, you will remain cheerful.

### **A Man of Courage**

211. A man of high morals performs his duties as a human being while he is alive, and so leaves the world with courage.

### **The Real Work**

212. The real work of a man's life lies in fulfilling perfections for enlightenment and cultivating a good mind; if prestige or status follows, it counts for nothing.

### **Kamma Always Follows You**

213. Kamma is the deed done with good or bad intention. So long as one has not got rid of ignorance and desire, the consequences of kamma will not fade out. Like the embers covered with ashes, these consequences will flare up when the occasion arises.
214. Heedless people's thoughts tend towards evil deeds so the chances of unwholesome consequences always follow them.

### **Kamma is Not to Blame**

215. People put the blame on kamma. They believe that good fortune will come when kamma is on the rise, and that they will meet failure and misfortune when their kamma is down. They are labouring under this misconception. One should not

depend entirely upon one's kamma; there is a saying, "If one treads on thorns one will still have one's foot pricked."

216. People blame everything on kamma. The Buddha advised improvement by intelligence and diligence. If people blame kamma they are ignoring the Buddha's teaching, and simultaneously do a disservice to the nation by their fatalistic view.

### **Expect More Than One Existence**

217. One can probably look forward to the next day, but one cannot possibly look forward to all one's existences in infinite saṃsāra.

### **A Pot of Gold**

218. People only consider charity as a gold pot, but morality and mental culture are also very precious. They are just as valuable as charity.
219. Almsgiving entails spending money; observing moral precepts doesn't need money, but it is more rewarding.
220. The person who admonishes you by pointing out your faults and defects is like one who points out a pot of gold.
221. If you are morally pure, you will be mentally pure. You will then experience a subtle joy which will develop into a mature joy, and thus you will have true happiness, physical well-being, and mental stability.

### **One Cannot See Nibbāna**

222. If you cannot see how your own mental process works, you cannot possibly see or know the state of ultimate purity (nibbāna), which is transcendent, through ordinary intelligence and contemplation.

### **Defeatism**

223. People do not strive hard to overcome setbacks, but tend to accept them with a defeatist attitude.

### **Make Your Own Good Luck**

224. Make your own good luck by doing good deeds; if you wait it may never come.

### **A Noble Teacher**

225. Just as one who gives others food and water will never starve or go thirsty, so also one who teaches others so that they may be wise and polite will never attain an inferior position throughout saṃsāra.

### **Strive to Preserve the Dhamma**

226. The teachings of the Buddha who strove for four incalculable aeons should not fade out after only 2,500 years. The members of the Holy Order should strive to maintain the dispensation with the help of the laity.

### **A Lost Day**

227. A day in which meritorious deeds, wealth, health, education, power, and position, or at least one of them, cannot be achieved is a lost day, to be regretted. It is a kind of death while being alive.

### **Self Esteem**

228. Behave well so that, first, people have a high esteem for you; second, celestial beings have esteem for you; and third, you have esteem for yourself.
229. It is said that people love themselves most. In fact, if you love yourself, you must try your best to improve yourself. If you allow yourself to be submerged in greed, hatred, and delusion, you cannot claim that you love yourself; you are really letting yourself sink.

### **This World of Craving**

230. This world began with craving and you have always been led by craving. If you subtract craving from life, you will no longer find life worth living.

### **Spiritual Riches**

231. If they are rich in gold, we are rich in morality; if they are rich in silver, we are rich in mental stability; if they are rich in diamonds, we are rich in mindfulness.

**Choose the Best Course**

232. One cannot possibly achieve improvement and progress merely by knowing about things; one must choose the best course and pursue it.

**Good Begets Good**

233. It is natural that good deeds produce good results.

**The One-Man Show**

234. A one-man show will be ruined by the absence of that one man.

**Don't Criticise What You Don't Understand**

235. People who cannot grasp the meaning of what a person is doing often say that he is doing the wrong thing.

**Co-operation**

236. One cannot achieve anything only by one's ability: only co-operative effort will produce achievement.

**Arrogance**

237. People who think that they can do what they like with impunity, think highly of themselves.

**Respect Work and Time**

238. If one has no respect for work and time, one cannot solve a domestic problem, nor can one fight a battle successfully. Time is an important factor for people of all classes.

**Real Happiness**

239. Enjoyment of pleasures is for attaining happiness, but happiness resulting from mental stability is the most precious.

**Work and Save**

240. People want to be well off, but if we tell them to be industrious and thrifty they don't work hard or restrain their desire. They have the same attitude to health and education.

### **Gratitude**

241. If there is no religion and no culture, there will be no gratitude; then human society will degenerate completely.

### **Patch Up Your Own Boat**

242. If you can patch up another's boat and cannot patch up your own, you will be drowned in midstream.  
243. Never mind others' faults; know your own.

### **Envy**

244. The stupid person envies the clever one; the inferior man is jealous of the man in a superior position. Such attitudes stem from malice.

### **A Long Journey**

245. The round of rebirths is the physical and moral journey to nibbāna. It is a long one. If you take a long view, you will no longer regard anything as strange. To have the wisdom for continuing on the journey steadily is important. Never mind the transient events of just one existence, look to the destination of the journey — nibbāna.  
246. The journey is long; Travellers are fools;  
The food has gone rotten; Companions are bad.  
Interference of passions leads one to hell,  
where once there, escape is difficult.

**Meaning:** The round of rebirths is a long journey and those taking the road are foolish. The food that they carry for the journey such as pride, prestige, charity, morality, and meditation, have gone rotten. Their constant companion is craving, so when they go down to Hell the chances of redemption are remote since craving cannot be eradicated.

### **True Love**

247. However much parents say that they love their children, they do not really love them if they fail to give them a good education. If they neglect their children's health, their love is not genuine.

**Children Are Treasures**

248. Children are treasures. Sons and daughters are born to adorn the world. They could do a great service to the entire world and to the Buddha's dispensation.

**Building Character**

249. Character building should begin early in life. You cannot learn to build good character when you are advanced in age. It is hard to change old habits. Nowadays, people like cinemas, so Burmese children are becoming more like foreigners than true Burmese.

**Do Good to Those Who Hate You**

250. One cannot travel through saṃsāra alone. One needs others to help one make progress. Our Buddha had the villainous Devadatta who formerly murdered the Bodhisatta when he was the hermit Khantivādī, and again when he was Prince Dhammapāla. It would be good to have good associates. You must do no harm to those around you. If they ill-treat you, it is for you to treat them well.

**Prestige is Not Important**

251. Gaining prestige is not important. Maintaining the prestige already gained is more important. Prestige is gained by right conduct, but sometimes it is gained by wrong means.

**Morality is Better Than Charity**

252. You are gradually approaching the end of this life and a transfer to the next existence. It is better to have high morality than charity for the next life. If you have sufficient store of morality, you can be happy in your next life even if you don't have much charity. It is best to observe eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth, which is observed by good people.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ājīvamattṭhaka sīla* = abstaining from: 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) sexual misconduct, 4) lying, 5) slandering, 6) abusive speech, 7) idle chatter, 8) wrong livelihood (dealing in alcohol, weapons, living beings, etc.)



### **Go From Strength to Strength**

253. Merit cannot be obtained without really trying. You must work hard to earn merit. The confidence in Dhamma you have now should be used to cultivate more confidence. The diligence that you use now will augment the diligence you will have in the future.

### **Contentment**

254. The Buddha said that contentment is the greatest treasure. In olden days people lived on frugal meals, wore home-woven cloths, and yet were happy and contented. Happiness does not result from wealth, only from contentment.

### **Enthusiasm**

255. You must practise the Dhamma enthusiastically. If you are listless, the practice will be boring. You cannot succeed unless you are enthusiastic and active.

### **A Good Teacher**

256. A teacher must be able to gauge the ability of his pupils. Some of them are more intelligent than the teacher. However, there will be confusion if the teacher is not efficient.
257. A teacher must live by high moral standards or he cannot admonish his pupils. If a teacher has defective morality he will never be able to guide and instruct his pupils.
258. First, you must be well-behaved. Then only can you make others well-behaved.

### **Greed**

259. Greed should be allowed within limits. One can be allowed to have desire for one's food, clothing, and shelter, but once desire exceeds a reasonable limit it cannot be controlled.
260. In giving charity, if you hanker for popularity and prestige, and desire celestial realms in your next existence, then all these desires are motivated by greed.

**Purify Your Mind**

261. If your ear is clean, you will hear better. If your eye is clear, you will see better. If your mind is pure, you will understand better.

**Well Done**

262. We Buddhists offer food on birthdays, and when a man dies his relatives offer almsfood on his behalf. That's just fine! We Buddhists are alright! We have done well!

**Well-being**

263. Well-being includes joy (*pīti*), happiness (*somanassa*), and bliss (*sukha*).

**For the Good of Others**

264. A noble and pure person is one who sacrifices his interests for the good of others. He has to reduce his greed and ill-will.

**Seek the Best Profit**

265. People work to live a happy and comfortable life. If making a living causes physical and mental misery, the purpose of working will not be achieved. People should seek a pursuit which makes for less physical discomfort and more happiness. If earning a living in this existence leads to rebirth in Hell it will be most regrettable.

**A Leader Must Go Straight**

266. The leading bull must go straight, or the following cattle will fall victim to the tiger. If the abbot goes up to the loft, the novice will climb on the roof of the monastery.

**Give and Take**

267. Buddhist monks shouldn't be only on the side of taking; they should also give. What are they to give? They should give education to children, preach the Dhamma to the laity, and contribute their efforts to the welfare of the country.

### **Life Goes On**

268. Life is not static; it is always moving. We are all going on a journey. So we should know where we come from and where we are going.

### **Abandon Greed**

269. Misery is always the result of passion and greed. More greed, more misery; less greed, less misery. Those who have attained perfection (the Arahants) do not have the slightest greed, so they are free from misery.

### **The Hook is Baited**

270. If you are obsessed by sensual pleasures, you will suffer like a fish that has swallowed the angler's hook.

### **Practise Loving Kindness Always**

271. Loving kindness must be radiated always; while you are sitting, walking or lying down. Radiate loving-kindness always, if you are not asleep.
272. Forest fires burn dry leaves more easily than wet leaves. The fire of immorality burns the man who has no kindness more easily than the man who saturates his mind with loving-kindness. If you have a weapon to defend yourself, no tiger will bite you. If you don't have a weapon, even a cow will gore you. So depend on weapons. The most effective is loving-kindness.

### **Corruption**

273. As the jackal growls proudly over the food left by the lion, the infatuated one who delights in existence is corrupted by the bribes people leave for him. It is improper for an ordinary person to gloat over what a noble one has discarded.

### **I Don't Want Heaven**

274. I don't want an existence in the celestial realms. There I won't have much chance to do meritorious deeds. Here in the human

world, we can do meritorious deeds and serve others' interests. The human realm is much better.

### **Morality is Always Beneficial**

275. Morality confers happiness both here and hereafter. Loving-kindness, compassion, truthfulness, and forbearance, too, are always beneficial.

### **If the Buddha Did Not Appear**

276. If the sun did not appear in the world the people would be groping in the dark and some would fall into a chasm. If the Buddha did not appear, there would be no knowledge of the Dhamma, and people would fall into the chasm of Hell. It is because the Buddha appeared that wisdom prevails to distinguish Hell from nibbāna, celestial realms and so forth. Otherwise, there would be profound ignorance.

### **Aging, Disease, and Death**

277. Just as the cowherd drives the cattle to the pasture by prodding them with a stick, so too old age, disease, and death are always prodding people to the grave.

### **Unaffected**

278. The ocean cannot be burned by fire. A great mountain is not shaken by the wind. Rock cannot be melted by water. So also the morally pure person will not be affected by the misdeeds of an evil-minded person.

### **Let the Dogs Bark**

279. While fleeing from a chasing tiger, don't heed the dog's barking.

### **Happy Birthday**

280. A birthday is a reminder of your increasing age. You must admonish yourself, saying, "I am one year nearer to death. Those of my age, and those younger and older than I am, have died. As nothing is permanent, I am getting nearer to death.

Before I die, I will try to reinforce my potential for future goodness.”

### **May the Buddha’s Teaching Last Long**

281. I am not striving just for my own benefit. I am trying to maintain the noble attributes of the Buddha’s teachings that tradition has established so that the dispensation may continue to prevail.

### **Have Good Morality**

282. Truth is the opposite of falsehood. Nowadays the truth is weak. Even in the five precepts, avoiding lies has been featured. The person who has morality can get the rewards he wishes to have. If you don’t have good morality, you will either go to Hell or become an animal in your next existence. Even if you are reborn as a human being, you will be poor and foolish.

### **Gradual Attainment of Happiness**

283. Prosperity resulting from good intentions and meritorious deeds will prevail not only now but also in the future until you attain the state of perfection. Merit leads to gradual attainment of happiness. Those who pursue material prosperity do not know this. They should try to understand it.

### **Two Kinds of Well-Being**

284. Of the two kinds of well-being, mental well-being is preferable to material well-being. Mental happiness that is mixed with desire should be shunned. Misery always dogs the steps of people seeking such happiness. That is not real happiness, it is just misery in disguise.

### **What Will You Do?**

285. I don’t want to be alive without doing any work. I will be serving the interests of the country and the Buddha’s dispensation as long as I am alive.  
Everybody is trying not to die.  
What will you do if you don’t die?

286. Having a large following, fame, and luxury do not defer death. Prosperity and misery of all kinds are perishable. You must add to your potential for enlightenment for a better future.

### **Dedication**

May the Buddha's dispensation contribute to the welfare and well-being of the people of the world.

May the people, following the teachings of the Buddha, enjoy physical well-being and mental happiness.

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