



Venerable  
Luangpor Pramote Pamojjo

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

Venerable Luangpor Pramote Pamojjo

Translated by Hataitip Devakul

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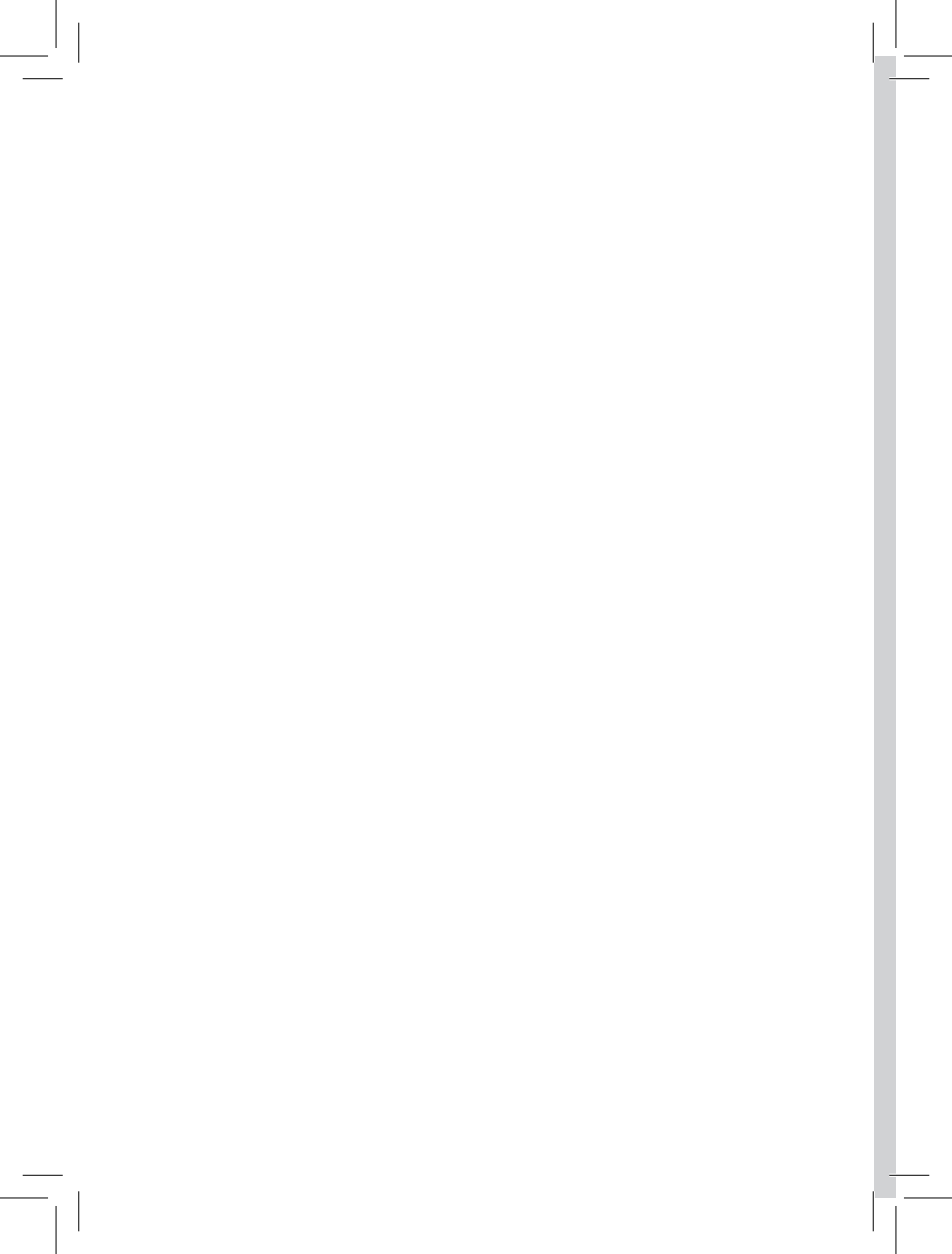
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# Preface

Luangpor Pramote Pamojjo clearly expounded on so many topics which will make us advance or deteriorate both in worldly matters and in Dhamma in his talk on Sunday March 18, 2018. It is the guideline for which his pupils can use to fulfill worldly duties and at the same time advance in Dhamma, with the aim of eradicating suffering.

Luangpor Pramote Pamojjo's Teaching Media Fund deem it fit to publish this talk for the benefit of fellow practitioners walking the path of wisdom.

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# TEN

## Subjects of Discussion

Dhamma Talk by  
Luangpor Pramote Pamojjo,  
March 18, 2018.

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

I have some questions for you all.

First, **what will make us advance both in worldly matters and in Dhamma?**

Second, **what will make us deteriorate both in worldly matters and in Dhamma?**

Third, **what will make us deteriorate in worldly matters but advance in Dhamma?**

And lastly, **what will make us advance in worldly matters but deteriorate in Dhamma?**

Answering these questions could take a long time, so let's try and be brief.



To answer the first question: the thing which we have, in which we indulge, with which we familiarize, that will make us advance in both worldly matters and in Dhamma, is association with the virtuous, and wise consideration.

Living in this world, if we associate with the virtuous we will get good advice. Even in worldly matters, to have good friends is one of the four factors in accumulating wealth. And having wise consideration, thorough method in reasoning, and critical thinking, are good for living in this world.

In Dhamma, either associating with the virtuous or having wise consideration is the entrance leading to the noble path. The Buddha

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

said association with the virtuous and wise consideration are the gateways to the noble path. However, wise consideration in Dhamma and wise consideration in worldly matters are not exactly the same.

Association with the virtuous is also different in worldly matters and in Dhamma. In worldly affairs true friends give good investment advice, they advise which stocks to buy and which to avoid. Wise consideration in Dhamma is not just thinking things through, but analyzing them and seeing whether what we do is in accord with what the Buddha taught; and whether what we avoid is in accord with what the Buddha prohibited. If we do what He prohibited and don't do what He instructed,



this is not wise consideration. It is unacceptable.

Second, that which, when accumulated, will make us deteriorate both in worldly matters and in Dhamma, are vices.

There are six causes of ruin, namely:

1. Addiction to intoxicants.
2. Roaming the streets at unseemly hours. Nighttime is supposed to be for resting or practicing Dhamma. Frequenting pubs and bars and drinking alcohol doesn't help to advance in either worldly matters or Dhamma.
3. Visual entertainment. Watching TV series or football all day and all night is definitely degenerative. In the morning when we have to go to work, our eyes will be red, work

won't be productive, and some may even fall asleep during working hours. Watching football or TV series are forms of entertainment.

4. Indulgence in gambling. No need for further explanation.

5. Association with bad companions. For monks, association with bad monks, such as Devadatta is degenerative.

6. The habit of idleness. When it's time to work lazy people say that they'd rather practice Dhamma than go to work. Some even let their wives or parents take care of them. I met someone like that. At the age of thirty, he was still with his parents. They would offer him food as if he were a monk.

This is definitely not an advancement. In fact, it is degrading not to do the things one is supposed to do. Monks can also be lazy, such as when they don't want to receive food offerings during morning walks, or not wanting to sweep the temple grounds with the excuse that it's raining or too hot or too cold, that it's too tiring, that they're too hungry, too sleepy etc... These people have the habit of idleness. It is degenerative.

Taking intoxicants, frequenting nightclubs, watching visual entertainment, gambling, associating with bad companions, and being lazy – all these make us deteriorate both in the world and in Dhamma.

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

Third, what, when practiced, will make us deteriorate in worldly matters but advance in Dhamma? Let's look at the Ten Subjects of Discussion. Starting with moderation, contentment, seclusion, not mingling together, and diligence, let's analyze ourselves and get rid of those unwholesome qualities that haven't been eradicated, and cultivate the wholesome qualities that need to be developed.

For the first five points, moderation means desiring little, knowing the limit. Contentment means being satisfied with the outcome, no matter how much effort was put in. Seclusion means seeking tranquility. If we are distracted all day we will not progress. Not mingling together, for if we do we will not progress.

But being in this world it is difficult to not mingle with others. And if we only desire a little and work only just enough to get by each day, we will not survive.

In secular life some people follow the first five points and their livelihood deteriorates, but their Dhamma practice progresses.

When we want only a little, are content, seclude ourselves, do not mingle, and are diligent, then we develop morality, concentration and wisdom. The first five points will benefit the development of morality, concentration and wisdom.

From morality, concentration and wisdom come true liberation and insight into true

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

liberation. These are the result of having morality, concentration and wisdom, or the result of putting the Ten Subjects of Discussion into practice. They are what the Buddha encouraged us to study, learn, listen and teach. Buddha commended these Ten Subjects of Discussion.

He praised one of His disciples, Punna Mantaniputta, for teaching and practicing these Ten Subjects of Discussion in depth. For us, if we follow these Ten Subjects, we may not be as successful in this world because we no longer want the world. At the deeper level, however, if we practice these Ten Subjects, we may deteriorate in worldly matters, but we'll gain so much more, rising

up towards the supramundane. Therefore, yes, we will be detached from worldly affairs, rising beyond this world.

If we follow these Ten Subjects of Discussion, we may not be so successful (in worldly life). Our boss might not trust people who frequent temples, thinking that we may be lazy or crazy – many people think that practicing Dhamma will result in insanity.

Nevertheless, if we follow these ten points: wanting little, being content, secluding ourselves, not mingling, and being diligent, we will refrain from doing wrong and instead do what is beneficial.

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

Be analytical. What we have to practice is morality, concentration and wisdom. If we do this enough, we will gain liberation; we will walk the noble path, gain the noble fruition and have insight to true liberation. According to the scriptures this is the reflection stage after enlightenment, to take stock of which defilements have been eradicated and which ones are still present. And to see which of the defilements that have been eradicated have been temporarily eradicated, and which ones are gone for good. If this is the last stage of enlightenment it will give rise to Nibbana. With these ten points one will leave this world, and rise to the supramundane.



To come to the last question: what, when practiced, will make us advance in worldly matters but deteriorate in Dhamma? For this we just take the opposite of the Ten Subjects of Discussion: to desire a lot of things, to be greedy, to look for trouble – these may be fun but Dhamma will deteriorate.

These days we go out to parties, or go in large groups to faraway places to make merit, taking tour buses to this or that temple. Are we truly happy? We don't really care about tranquility. We don't really care about morality, concentration and wisdom.

The world thrives because today it is the world of injustice. Bad people flourish

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

while good people struggle. This is the era where evil prospers and goodness struggles. Social standards are low. Good people are despised while bad people are admired due to common corrupted interests. They are full of greed, and gather in big groups. So Dhamma deteriorates.

In an era where Dhamma flourishes, evil will be subdued. A person who does wrong, even minor wrong, will be punished by society. These days one does wrong but is rarely punished. Further, the social networking world can't really be trusted because it's full of emotion, and doesn't use facts or reasoning.

An example of this is the incident of the middle-aged woman who attacked a parked

car with an axe. At first she was condemned. Then it was said that she did it because the car was blocking her house, and she was worried in case there were a medical emergency and she wouldn't be able to get out. The car owner was then condemned.

This is reasoning in the social network world. It can't be trusted. It's the voice of the majority, or democracy, but not the meritocracy. It's not based on looking at what's right and wrong.

In this wicked world, doing wrong is not always wrong. If everybody is corrupt, if every political party is corrupt (probably there is no need to say 'if' since everybody is...) then no

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

one will condemn bad people. It's like the Thai folk saying, 'flies don't swarm over flies' – bad people don't attack bad people. But if some good person opposes corruption, he will be crushed. In a bad world, doing bad may make the world prosper, but it will definitely make Dhamma deteriorate.

Elaborating on this would take at least three hours so let's be brief. Go study further by yourselves.

Go and practice Dhamma and your lives will improve. You must also know your duty. Lay people have their duties, and monks have their duties. If you practice and forget your duties, you will fail in Dhamma.

In my own case, as a layperson, I didn't fail in worldly matters even though I followed the Ten Subjects of Discussion. And I also advanced in Dhamma. I excelled at work because my mind was well-trained and my concentration was good. Sometimes my superiors would hover around my desk at work, waiting for me to finish a report so they could sign it. If I hadn't had good concentration I would have panicked. With good concentration I was able to compose the document, type it and have it printed out for signing in a short time. But once my superiors left (heavy sigh) I was totally exhausted.

Living in this world, if we manage well we will not deteriorate, and at the same

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

time we'll maintain our virtues. At first we may be laughed at, but eventually that will stop.

As a junior civil servant, when I attended dinner with senior officers it required lots of planning – I observed the precepts and didn't drink alcohol but everyone else did. However, I survived and, with mindfulness and lots of wisdom, was able to maintain my morality. Later, when I became a senior officer, everyone who sat on my table knew I didn't drink and didn't dare drink alcohol. It was the opposite. So, have strong determination.

Know your duty, but don't be neglectful. If you have to earn a living, then do it. Do what

is right towards your boss, your company, your client, and your family. Do what is right towards yourself. That is the development of mindfulness. We have to be diligent. It's wrong to neglect our duty.

I became a monk late in life, at the age of forty eight. This was because I had my duty: to take care of my foster parents. They could easily have been my grandparents. They didn't have children, so they adopted me when I was still a kid. My birth mother is still living.

My stepmother died at the age of ninety. My stepfather was the same age. Every day I thought that once he passed away I would become a monk. Then an idea popped into

# TEN

Subjects of  
Discussion

my head, and I went to ask my stepfather if he wanted to come and stay at the temple with me. He knew I wanted to ordain. So he said yes and moved to the temple with me.

He was happy there. At home he was lonely as the only person who visited the house was a part-time helper who came to clean the house. At the temple he had many visitors all day long. He loved to talk, he could talk all day.

But this didn't last long. His legs were weak, and one day he fell and broke his hip. The doctor couldn't operate on him right away due to diabetes. He then choked on some food while eating, got an infection in his lungs, and



passed away. So he stayed at the temple with me, but only for one month.

I had duties, and fulfilled my duties as best I could. Then I entered the monkhood. So I had no worries after that. I have another monk here who as a layperson worked hard and saved enough money for his parents. He then gave himself time and became a monk. He fulfilled his duty.

So, go and practice.

# Map to Wat Suan Santidham

