

THE SUTRA ON HAPPINESS

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was living in the vicinity of Savatthi at the Anathapindika Monastery in the Jeta Grove. Late at night, a deva appeared whose light and beauty made the whole Jeta Grove shine radiantly. After paying respects to the Buddha, the deva asked him a question in the form of a verse:

“ Many gods and men are eager to know
what are the greatest blessings
which bring about a peaceful and happy life.
Please, Tathagata, will you teach us?”

(This is the Buddha’s answer):

“ Not to be associated with the foolish ones,
To live in the company of wise people,
Honouring those who are worth honouring -
This is the greatest happiness.

“To live in a good environment,
To have planted good seeds
And to realize that you are on the right path-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To have a chance to learn and grow,
To be skilful in your profession or craft,
Practicing the precepts and loving speech-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To be able to serve and support your parents,
To cherish your own family,
To have a vocation that brings you joy-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To live honestly, generous in giving,
To offer support to relatives and friends,
Living a life of blameless conduct-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To avoid unwholesome actions,
Not caught by alcoholism or drugs,
And to be diligent in doing good things-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To be humble and polite in manner,
To be grateful and content with a simple life,
Not missing the occasion to learn the Dharma-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To persevere and be open to change,
To have regular contact with monks and nuns,
And to fully participate in Dharma discussions-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To live diligently and attentively,
To perceive the Noble Truths,
And to realize nirvana-
This is the greatest happiness.

“To live in the world
With your heart undisturbed by the world,
With all sorrows ended, dwelling in peace-
This is the greatest happiness.

“For the one who accomplishes this
Is unvanquished wherever she goes;
Always he is safe and happy-
Happiness lives within oneself.”