**THE SUTRA TO ELIMINATE EPIDEMICS**

(Quoted from Vol. 18 - The White Peak - Written by Venerable Thich Chan Quang)

“The world is impermanent

Birth and death cycle is inevitable

Greedy life results in nothing

But just more sins.

Hatred does not help

But just leads to more suffering

Those who are wise

Would follow Buddha’s path.

Would practice compassion

Would love all beings

Would live a noble life

Would avoid killing and lust

Would get rid of greed.

Would be modest

Would always think of others

Even just a drop of water

Or just a small grain of rice.

Wish for everyone around us

All will be healthy

Be released from all illness and distress

Have a peaceful and relaxed mind.

Wish for everyone around us

All will pay homage to

The Triple Gem:  The Buddha

The Dharma and the Saints.

Vow to practice forever

Always think about liberation

From death and rebirth cycle

And eliminate selfishness.”

*SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION THAT LED TO THIS VERSE:*

*“That year, every country in that region suffered from a shortage of rain. Most seriously, in Vesali, the capital of Licchavi, there was a severe drought. The fields turned scorched, the crops were lost, famine threatened everywhere, and the epidemic started to appear here and there.*

*At that time, Prince Mahali came to the King and the Royal Council of Licchavi, to express his opinion on the reason for that calamity. He said it was because, in the previous year, many of the Vesali royal members were too prideful about themselves that they refused to listen to the marvelous teachings of the Blessed One when He came to Licchavi. That reduced their blessing, which led to more severe drought here than in other regions.*

*Upon the King’s suspicion about his explanation, Prince Mahali bet on his own life that if the Vesali royal family reverently invited the Blessed One there, the disaster would end. It was not until then that the King allowed him to hurriedly lead a delegation to Rajagaha Capital, to meet with King Bimbisara and to ask the King to invite the Blessed One to save Vesali from the disaster.*

*With the permission of King Bimbisara, the Prince went to the Veluvana monastery to invite the Buddha and got His acceptance. The Prince sent his soldier speeding on horseback to report to his King. When the soldier just arrived at the palace to deliver the news, the Buddha and some Bhikkhus were also about to enter the Licchavi border.*

*Suddenly huge clouds came and covered the whole region, thunder roared, and rain poured down from the sky. The King and his mandarins cheered. Notably, the old King shed tears and knelt down to bow toward the sky. People streamed to the streets, cheering and dancing as if they had never been so happy. In the countryside, boys and girls, the elderly and the young, all went outside under the rain and sang. The rain continued, the streams began to flow, the fields started to become waterlogged.*

*At the border, the Buddha and the 12 Bhikkhus, with the bowl in hands, calmly kept walking into Licchavi in the rain.*

*The King and the Royal Council of Licchavi were extremely excited, demanded to prepare parasols, palanquins, incense sticks, and a large entourage, to leave the capital in the rain to pick up the Buddha.*

*The next morning, the Buddha summoned the Bhikkhus, told them to go and teach the Vesali people this Sutra and tell them to teach it to others to eradicate the epidemic. This Sutra will help them eliminate illness. One person asked: "Venerable, we have not fully understood the meaning of this Sutra, so will reciting it help us cure the illness?". The Bhikkhu replied: "Respectful man, please recite the sutra by heart first, that will help eliminate the illness. When you recover, you should go to Mahavana to learn its meaning from the Blessed One."*

*In the royal palace, Prince Mahali and the delegation had just arrived and knelt to talk to the King. The Prince was delighted and deeply touched for what he had seen on the way back: waterlogged fields, revitalized plants, flowing streams. The Prince also no longer saw ill people awaiting death by the forest. He gratefully offerred his Mahavana garden to the Blessed One for use as a monastery whenever He returned to Vesali.*

*The King happily accepted the Prince’s ideas and told the Prince to take everyone to Mahavana to attend the Buddha's sermon. At Mahavana, the Buddha preached about the existence of five jewels that were difficult to find in life.*

*After the sermon, many Princes of Licchavi asked to be ordained. The Buddha told Venerable Kimbila to stay in Vesali to guide the cultivation of these new monks until they became matured.*

*The Buddha and the Bhikkhus walked on the road, many people knelt down and paved their path with flowers. Then, the Buddha and the Bhikkhus got on a boat to cross the Ganges River. The King, the mandarins and the people knelt down to see Them off, many couldn't help but shed tears...”*