

Ajahn Sumedho has said that he is deeply grateful for so many blessings that he has had in the forty-odd years of his monastic life, including great teachers, the generosity of many laypeople, living with the forest Sangha, and having the opportunity to practice the Dharma. Regarding such blessings, in the Maha Mangala Sutta, the Lord Buddha lists the thirty-eight highest blessings for a Buddhist. We can use this sutta as something to reflect on, realizing how fortunate we are to have those blessings that we do, and contemplate how we can gain those blessings that we do not. Here are the highest blessings, first in Pali, and then in translation:

1. **Bala-asevana – not to associate with fools**
2. **Panditasevcana – to associate with the wise**
3. **Pujaneyyapuja – honoring those who are honorable**
4. **Patirupadesavasa – living in a suitable region for safe practice**
5. **Pubbekatapunnata – having done meritorious deeds**
6. **Attasammapanidhi – right self-guidance**
7. **Bahusacca – Extensive learning**
8. **Sippa – knowledge of the arts and sciences**
9. **Vinaya – to be highly restrained by a moral code**
10. **Subhasitavaca – to be well-spoken**
11. **Matapitu-upatthana – to support one’s parents**
12. **Puttasangaha – to cherish one’s children**
13. **Darasangaha – to cherish one’s wife (or partner)**
14. **Anakulakammanta – to make one’s livelihood wholesomely**
15. **Dana – to be generous, charitable**
16. **Dhammacariya – to behave in line with the Dharma**
17. **Natakasangaha – to cherish one’s family**
18. **Anavajjakamma – to act blamelessly**
19. **Papavirati – abstinence from evil**
20. **Majjapanasannama – abstinence from intoxicants**
21. **Appamada – heedfulness in the Dharma**
22. **Garava – to be respectful**
23. **Nivata – to be humble**
24. **Santutthi – contentment with what one has**
25. **Katannuta- gratitude**
26. **Dhammassavana – the opportunity to hear the Dharma**
27. **Khanti – patience; forbearance**
28. **Sovacassata – easily corrected**
29. **Samana-dassana – to see monks and nuns**
30. **Dhammasakaccha – the opportunity to discuss the Dharma**
31. **Tapa – self-restraint; austerities**
32. **Brahmacariya – to live the holy life**
33. **Ariyasacca-dassana – to see the Noble Truths**
34. **Nibbana-sacchikiriya – to realize nirvana**
35. **Akampitacitta – having a mind unshaken by worldly events**
36. **Asokacitta – having a mind free from sorrow**
37. **Virajacitta – having an undefiled mind**
38. **Khemacitta – having a secure mind**

The Maha Mangala Sutta concludes with the following utterance of the Buddha:

**“Those who live following this path
Know victory wherever they go,
And every place for them is safe.
These are the highest blessings.”**