The Ground Plan of the Mangala Sutta
with its Thirty-Eight Blessings

Verse

v. 1. The opening inquiry:
What is truly auspicious, truly a blessing (*maṅgala*, *sumaṅgala*)?

v. 2. *Proper Orientation*
Cultivating the conditions for *discretion*
(1) Not to associate with the foolish (*asevanā bālānaṃ*)
(2) To associate with the wise (*paṇḍitānaṃ sevanā*)
(3) To honor those worthy of honor (*pūjā pūjaniyānaṃ*)

v. 3. *Establishing secure foundations*
The inner and outer requisites for success in life
(4) Residing in a suitable locality (*paṭirūpadesavāso*)
(5) Merits done in the past (*pubbe katapuññatā*)
(6) To set oneself on the right course (right resolution: *attasammāpaṇidhi*)

v. 4. *Preparations*
Training oneself for success in life
(7) A well-rounded education (abundant learning: *bāhusaccaṃ*)
(8) Skill in a craft or profession (*sippaṃ*)
(9) Being well-grounded in a code of discipline (*vinayo susikkhito*)
(10) Well-spoken speech (*subhāsitā vācā*)

vv. 5, 6: *Leading a virtuous life in the world*
v.5. *Fulfilling family responsibilities*
(11) Supporting one's mother and father (*mātāpitu-upaṭṭhānaṃ*)
(12) Maintaining a wife (husband) and children (*puttadārassa saṅgaho*)
(13) A harmless occupation (*anākulā kammantā*)

v.6. *Becoming a pillar of society*
(14) Generosity (*dāna*)
(15) Righteous conduct (*dhammacariyā*)
(16) Assistance to relatives and friends (*ñātakānaṃ saṅgaho*)
(17) Blameless actions (*anavajjāni kammāni*)

v.7. *Personal ethics*
A life of moral integrity
(18) Ceasing from evil (*ārati pāpā*)
(19) Abstaining from evil (*virati pāpā*)

(20) Refraining from intoxicating drinks (*majjapānā saṃyamo*)
(21) Heedfulness in wholesome practices (*appamādo dhammesu*)

vv.8, 9. *Developing a spiritual life*
Cultivating inner virtues & wisdom

v. 8

(22) Reverence (*gāravo*)
(23) Humility (*nivāto*)
(24) Contentment (*santuṭṭhi*)
(25) Gratitude (*kataññutā*)
(26) Timely hearing of the Dhamma (*kālena dhammassavanaṃ*)

v. 9

(27) Patience (*khanti*)
(28) Being amenable to advice (*sovacassatā*)
(29) Seeing of renunciants (*samaṇānaṃ dassanaṃ*)
(30) Timely discussion on the Dhamma (*kālena dhammasākacchā*)

v.10. *The ascent towards realization*
Practicing and attaining the world-transcending Dhamma

(31) Austerity (*tapo*)
(32) The spiritual life (or celibacy: *brahmacariyaṃ*)
(33) Seeing of the noble truths (*ariyasaccānadassanaṃ*)
(34) Realization of nibbāna (*nibbānasacchikiriyā*)

v.11. *Fulfillment*
Embodying the world-transcending Dhamma in the world

(35) A mind unshaken by the vicissitudes of life (*phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi cittaṃ yassa na kampati*)
(36) A mind that is sorrowless (*asokaṃ*)
(37) stainless, "dust-free," passionless (*virajaṃ*)
(38) and secure (*khemaṃ*)

v.12. *Conclusion*: These are victorious everywhere; they attain security everywhere (*sabbattha-m-apārājitā, sabbattha sotthiṃ gacchanti, tesaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ*).

Worshipping the Six Directions

The Reciprocal Social Responsibilities

I. *The Eastern Direction*

A. Children worship the *eastern* direction in relation to parents. They should:
   1. support them in old age
   2. perform their duties for them
   3. keep up the family tradition (e.g., maintain charities they supported)
   4. be worthy of their inheritance
   5. after their deaths, offer gifts in memory of them.

B. Parents, showing compassion to their children:
   1. restrain them from evil
   2. encourage them to do good
   3. teach them some skill
   4. find a suitable marriage partner for them
   5. in due time, give them their inheritance.

II. *The Southern Direction*

A. Pupils worship the *southern* direction in relation to teachers:
   1. by rising to greet them
   2. by waiting on them
   3. by being attentive
   4. by serving them
   5. by mastering the subjects they teach.

B. Teachers, showing compassion to their pupils:
   1. give them thorough instruction
   2. make sure they have understood their subject
   3. explain all aspects of their craft
   4. introduce them to their friends and colleagues
   5. provide them protection in all quarters.

III. *The Western Direction*

A. A husband worships the *western* direction in relation to his wife:
   1. by honoring her
   2. by not disparaging her
   3. by being faithful to her
   4. by relinquishing authority to her
   5. by providing her with ornaments.

B. A wife, showing compassion to her husband:
   1. properly arranges her work
   2. shows hospitality to his relatives
   3. is faithful to him
   4. protects his earnings
   5. is skillful and diligent in all her tasks.

IV. *The Northern Direction*

A. A friend worships the *northern* direction in relation to his friends and colleagues:
   1. by gifts

2. by kindly speech
3. by promoting their well-being
4. by treating them like himself or herself
5. by being truthful and not misleading them.

B. The friends and colleagues, showing compassion to a friend:
1. protects them when they are heedless
2. looks after their property and belongings when they are heedless
3. serves as a refuge when they are afraid
4. does not desert them when they are in trouble
5. shows concern for their children.

V. *The Nadir*

A. An employer worships the *nadir* in relation to his workers:
1. by assigning them work according to their ability
2. by providing them with food and wages
3. by looking after them when they are ill
4. by sharing special foods with them
5. by giving them vacations at a suitable time.

B. The workers, showing compassion to their employer:
1. get up before him
2. retire at night after him
3. take only what they are given
4. do their work properly
5. uphold his good reputation.

VI. *The Zenith*

A. A householder worships the *zenith* in relation to ascetics and brahmins:
1. by doing work for them with loving-kindness
2. by speaking to them with loving-kindness
3. by thinking of them with loving-kindness
4. by opening their doors to them
5. by supplying their material needs.

B. Ascetics and brahmins, showing compassion to householders:
1. restrain them from evil
2. encourage them to do good
3. are compassionately benevolent towards them
4. teach them what they have not learned before
5. improve their knowledge of what they have learned
6. point out the path to heaven.

The Maṅgala Sutta and the Five Stages of Spiritual Development

I. The Stage of Preparation /Accumulation (*sambhārabhūmi*)
   Verses 2–9

II. The Stage of Exertion/Striving (*payogabhūmi*)
   Verse 10, §§31–32

III. The Stage of Seeing (*dassanabhūmi*)
   Verse 10, §33

IV. The Stage of Cultivation (*bhāvanābhūmi*)
   Verse 10, §§31–32, §34

V. The Stage of Completion, No-More Training (*asekhabhūmi*)
   Verse 11