

Dhammadakaya Open University, California, USA



# THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE

SB 101 E



# **The Buddhist Way of Life**

## **SB 101E**

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# FOREWORD

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The course SB 101: the Buddhist Way of Life serves to introduce the Lord Buddha's Teachings in such a way that the student can easily practice them in his daily life. The Lord Buddha's Teachings are sublime, true, and timeless. To know the Lord Buddha's Teachings is to experience them personally. Therefore, it is necessary that students of the Lord Buddha's Teachings practice what they learn in their daily lives.

The preparation of this course material has been a team effort. It is possible that even after many rounds of editing; the material may still contain mistakes. The Committee hopes to receive comments and feedback which will allow it to further improve upon this course material.

The Committee

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# COURSE SYLLABUS

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## 1. Description of the Course Material

*SB 101: The Buddhist Way of Life*

It is the study of the practices which form the foundations of the Buddhist way of life. These practices include Dana practice (or alms-giving), Sila practice (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana practice (or meditation practice).

## 2. Course Objectives

1. To enable the student to gain a deeper understanding of Dana practice (or alms-giving), Sila practice (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana practice (or meditation practice).
2. To enable the student to apply what he has learnt in his daily life.
3. To enable the student to share his Dhamma knowledge with other people.

## 3. Topics Covered in the Course

- Chapter 1 Lifestyle
- Chapter 2 Dana
- Chapter 3 How to practice Dana correctly
- Chapter 4 Dhammadana
- Chapter 5 Sila
- Chapter 6 The human norm
- Chapter 7 Sila practice
- Chapter 8 The fruits of Sila practice
- Chapter 9 Sila-8 and Uposathasila
- Chapter 10 The main points of Bhavana practice
- Chapter 11 Bhavana practice: Its objectives and its fruits
- Chapter 12 The correct lifestyle

# How to Study this Course

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## 1. Preparation for Self-Learning

In order to achieve the objectives of the course, the student should follow the steps for studying each chapter as follows.

- a. Spend an hour each day on the course material and try to finish each chapter within one to two weeks.
- b. Complete the pre-test provided at the beginning of each chapter so that the student can gauge his existing knowledge of the subject matter. Complete the exercises provided for the chapter at the scheduled time. At the end of the chapter, the student should assess his/her comprehension of the material covered in the chapter by completing the test.
- c. Spend time on other learning tools especially the long-distance learning provided through satellite as detailed in 5.

## 2. Self-Evaluation before and after Each Chapter

The student should complete the pre-test before beginning each chapter in order to gauge his knowledge of the subject matter. The student should also complete the test at the end of each chapter. Completion of the test will allow the student to know how well he has learnt the material covered in the chapter; and whether he/she is ready to proceed to the next chapter. The test score should be at least 80%. Self-evaluation would be meaningful only if it is carried out honestly.

## 3. The Course Book

The student should first go over the layout of each chapter in terms of its topics, concepts, and objectives before proceeding with the detailed study. After having finished reading the entire chapter, the student should write down its main points and complete the exercises provided at the end of each chapter. The exercises will help the student to evaluate how well he has learnt the material covered so that he can apply what he has learnt in his daily life. Therefore, the student should not wait until the last minute to do all of the exercises because such practice is missing the point.

## 4. Completing the Assignments

The student should write down the main points of each subject and complete all of the assignments provided at the end of each chapter. The assignments are an important part of the coursework.



## **5. Long-Distance Learning via Satellite and Other Media**

The Dhamma study for the Environment Foundation broadcasts its programs via satellite 24 hours a day. Each program aims to give the general public practical information for the promotion of morality. There are different programs that can help the student with this course. These include Buddhist Words, the Law of Kamma, Meditation for Beginners, Luang Por's Answers, Life in the Round of Rebirth, Dhamma for the People, etc. Additional learning can be obtained through E-learning provided by DOU. For more details of these learning tools, please contact DOU's coordination center.

## **6. Attending the Inner Dreams Kindergarten Program**

The student can learn about how to apply the Lord Buddha's Teachings in his daily life through real life examples by attending the Inner Dreams Kindergarten. This valuable program is broadcasted via satellite every Monday to Saturday from 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. (Thai time). There are also reruns of the program as posted in the broadcasting schedule. The student can request the broadcasting schedule from the DOU Coordination Center.

## **7. The Exam**

The student will be evaluated for his knowledge of this course by a multiple-choice exam (70 points) and the completion of all assignments (30 points). Assignments allow the student to put what he has learnt into practice. Therefore, it is important that the student completes each assignment at the allotted time.

# Chapter 1

## Lifestyle

### **1.1 The Meaning of Lifestyle**

### **1.2 The Importance of Lifestyle**

#### 1.2.1 The Foundations of the Correct Lifestyle

- Having Sammaditthi
- The Meaning of Sammaditthi
- The Levels of Sammaditthi
- Sammaditthi and its importance

#### 1.2.2 Our life Objective

- At the Basic Level
- At the Intermediate Level
- At the Ultimate Level

### **1.3 Life's Obstacles**

#### 1.3.1 Kilesa

- The Meaning of Kilesa
- Three Families of Kilesa
  - Lobha
  - Dosa
  - Moha

### **1.4 Overcoming Life's Obstacles**

#### 1.4.1 Punna

- The Meaning of Punna
- The Sources of Punna
  - Dana Practice
  - Sila Practice
  - Bhavana Practice
- The fruits of Punna

### **1.5 The Pursuit of Parami**

## **Concepts**

1. The correct lifestyle enables us to meet with success and happiness in life.
2. The best way to formulate the correct lifestyle is to cultivate Sammaditthi (or Right View) and right understanding about Punna (or merit). Sammaditthi (or Right View) tells us how to live correctly. Right understanding about Punna (or merit) accumulated by practicing Dana (or alms-giving), Sila (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana (or meditation practice) is instrumental in achieving our life objective at every level.
3. In the pursuit of Parami (or Perfections), it requires that we be not easily perturbed or discouraged by obstacles but to have full confidence in the fruits of Punna (or merit) and continue to accumulate Punna even under adverse circumstances.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand how Sammaditthi (or Right View) helps us to formulate the correct life objective.
2. To enable the student to understand our life objective at all three levels.
3. To enable the student to understand the importance of Dana practice (or alms-giving), Sila practice (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana practice (or meditation practice) and how they help us to realize our life objective at every level.

# Chapter 1

## Lifestyle

### 1.1 The Meaning of Lifestyle

Lifestyle means a way of life that reflects the attitudes and values of a person or group.<sup>1</sup>

Here, it means the course of conduct which leads one to meet with success and happiness in life.

### 1.2 The Importance of Lifestyle

Every human being desires success and happiness in life and each chooses his particular course of conduct in order to obtain the desired success and happiness. And the desire for success and happiness constitutes a person's life objective. However, a person's chosen course of conduct cannot always guarantee the desired success and happiness.

When we want to take a trip somewhere, the first thing we need is a map. If the map is inaccurate, we will not be able to reach our desired destination. Worse, we may even get lost.

Likewise, to meet with success and happiness in life we need a good start in the forms of an appropriate course of conduct and a clear life objective.

#### 1.2.1 The Foundations of the Correct Lifestyle

##### Having Sammaditthi

How we choose our lifestyle depends on our outlook on life. Our outlook on life in turn determines our thought, our word, and our action. Take for example, three children saw a bird perching on a branch. The first child thought of it as food, he wanted to shoot it, roast it, and eat it. The second child thought of it as a toy and wanted to have it as a pet. The third child thought of it as a poor animal and wondered what past Kamma caused it to be born a bird. This example shows very clearly how our outlook on life determines our thought, our word, and our action.

Since our outlook on life is such an important factor, it behooves us to be able to look at life and the world around us for what they are in reality. And the only way we can do this is by cultivating what Buddhism calls "Sammaditthi."

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<sup>1</sup> The Free Online Dictionary

## **The Meaning of Sammaditthi**

Sammaditthi (or Right View) means having right understanding about life and the world in that life and the world fall under the Three Characteristics. These Three Characteristics dictate that everything animate and inanimate comes into being, exists for a time, and eventually disintegrates.

## **Levels of Sammaditthi**

There are two levels of Sammaditthi (or Right View).

1. Basic Sammaditthi or Sammaditthi at the Lokiya level: It is the level of right understanding which allows one to meet with happiness here and now as well as in future existences until one can attain Nibbana.
2. Elevated Sammaditthi or Sammaditthi at the Lokuttara level: It is the level of right understanding which allows one to penetrate the truth as a result of one's elevated meditative attainments as in the case of Ariya individuals.

### **1. Basic Sammaditthi**

The Lord Buddha teaches that there are ten components of basic Sammaditthi, which every human being must cultivate.

1. Dana practice (or alms-giving) bears fruit.
2. Yunna practice (or aid-giving) bears fruit.
3. Venerating those deserving to be venerated bears fruit.
4. The Law of Kamma exists.
5. Life on earth is dictated by the Law of Kamma.
6. The round of rebirth exists.
7. We owe our mother a debt of gratitude.
8. We owe our father a debt of gratitude.
9. The Spontaneous Rising birth mode exists.
10. Self-enlightened Arahats exist.

### **2. Elevated Sammaditthi**

There are four components of elevated Sammaditthi.

1. Knowledge about Dukkha (or suffering)
2. Knowledge about Dukkhasamudaya (the Cause of Dukkha)
3. Knowledge about Dukkhanirodha (the Cessation of Dukkha)
4. Knowledge about Dukkhanirodhagaminipada (the Path Leading to the Cessation of Dukkha)

Elevated Sammaditthi is Sammaditthi cultivated above and beyond basic Sammaditthi. This is achieved as a result of elevated meditative attainments. Here, the emphasis will be placed on basic Sammaditthi.

Out of the ten components of basic Sammaditthi, the most important component is the Law of Kamma. The Law of Kamma states that one reaps what one sows in that good deeds beget good consequences and evil deeds beget evil consequences.

A person with a firm belief in the Law of Kamma is a person motivated to perform wholesome deeds ever increasingly. He understands that wholesome deeds are the sources of Punna (or merit). He believes in Punna and its fruits. He is motivated to devote his entire life to the accumulation of Punna (or merit) and the pursuit of Parami (or Perfections). Belief in the Law of Kamma helps one to further cultivate other components of Sammaditthi.

A person possessing all ten components of Sammaditthi can be said to have the perfect lifestyle. In the face of temptation, he knows to restrain himself. He will never commit a misdeed privately or publicly. In fact, when it comes to accumulating Punna, he will always do his very best whether anyone knows about it or not.

### **The Role of Sammaditthi in a Person's Lifestyle**

Sammaditthi (or Right View) allows a person to think, say, and do what is correct and good.

A person may be very knowledgeable in the sciences and the arts but if he lacks Sammaditthi, he cannot be a refuge unto himself.

The best astrophysicists, the best astronauts, the best physicians, the best mathematicians, the best politicians, cannot have right understanding about life and the world for as long as they do not possess Sammaditthi.

Education, position and power, enormous wealth cannot cause a person to possess Sammaditthi.

Whenever the Lord Buddha talks about human peace and human happiness, He always cites the importance of Sammaditthi.

Sammaditthi is also a sign of good things to come, since Sammaditthi individuals attract Punna (or merit) and wholesomeness.

### **1.2.2 Our Life Objective**

Every human being regardless of his race and creed has a life-goal in mind.

It is the reason people work so hard in order to achieve what they deem to be their life-goals. An athlete's goal is to win.

A rock star's goal or a movie star's goal is to gain popularity and many fans. A businessman's goal is to make a lot of profit.

Some people are happy with a simple goal. Some physicians are happy treating patients in rural areas. Some politicians are happy looking after the welfare of their constituents in their hometowns. Some teachers are happy being a homeroom teacher teaching their students to be good and decent. These goals are but one level of our life objective.

And that is fine and good. However, Buddhism teaches higher life goals given the Lord Buddha's penetrating knowledge about the reality of life and the world. Buddhism makes it possible for everyone to have the means to develop his quality of life in such a way as to attain the ultimate level of his life objective.

According to Buddhism, there are three levels to our life objective.

1. The basic level
2. The intermediate level
3. The ultimate level

### **The Basic Level of Our Life Objective**

It has to do with our life objective here and now. And it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that it is reached. The basic level of our life objective has to do with being a Sappurisa (or a righteous person). A Sappurisa is a person everyone wishes to associate with because he can be trusted to bring them only the things that are wholesome.

A Sappurisa (or a righteous person) is a person who possesses Sammaditthi (or Right View). He believes in the Law of Kamma. He believes in the fruits of Punna (or merit). He believes in the ill consequences of Papa (or demerit). He is equipped with the knowledge that allows him to live a happy life. A Sappurisa knows that the sources of happiness are the habitual practices of Dana (or alms-giving), Sila (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana (or meditation practice).

A person who willingly shares what he has with other people endears himself to others and can be depended upon by those around him. Dana practice (or alms-giving) is the first thing required of a social being.

In any community, it is inevitable that conflicts among people can arise out of differences in opinion, etc. When conflict arises, one must learn to control one's temper so that one does not say or do anything that can negatively impact another person. Such self-restraint prevents one from making enemy. It also helps one to be a virtuous friend. Sila practice (or Precepts observation) allows one to cultivate self-restraint.

A tranquil mind has the power to keep our word and action wholesome. We are made up of body and mind. "Our mind is the master, and our body is the servant."

The Lord Buddha teaches that the only way to keep our mind quiet and still is Bhavana practice (or meditation practice). During Bhavana practice, we bring our mind, which is in the habit of attaching itself to different emotions, persons, animals, and things, back to the center of our body, which is the original dwelling of our mind. When our mind is tranquil, joyful, and bright, it is fit to command our word and our action causing our word and action to be wholesome. When everything about us is wholesome, we cannot help but feel happy. Nothing in the world can be compared to the happiness derived from a quiet and still mind. Such is the kind of pure happiness that pervades everything and everyone around us. When more and more people practice

keeping their minds quiet and still, more and more of us will know peace and eventually the entire world will know peace.

Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice cause us to achieve the basic level of our life objective. These are the practices that lead to our happiness here and now.

### **The Intermediate Level of Our Life Objective**

The reason we need the intermediate level of our life objective is that our life does not end at death. After we die, the hereafter awaits. And what our hereafter will be like depends on what we think, say, and do here and now.

The Lord Buddha teaches that our deeds can be put into two categories: wholesome and unwholesome. Wholesome deeds are the sources of Punna (or merit) and one's accumulated Punna causes one to be reborn in the Celestial Realm. Unwholesome deeds are the sources of Papa (or demerit) and accumulated demerit causes one to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness where one experiences horrific pain and suffering.

It is important to know that every one of our deeds has consequences here and now as well as in future existences.

Even those who are skeptical about life after death should still accumulate Punna because wholesome deeds are praiseworthy in themselves. Moreover, they are the sources of happiness here and now.

Therefore, it is not enough to be concerned with the basic level of our life objective. We must also be concerned about the intermediate level of our life objective. We cannot afford to postpone making provisions for our future existences, since we do not know when our last day on earth will come.

It is noteworthy that the best place to accumulate Punna is our earth. After we die, we will no longer have the opportunity to accumulate Punna because the Celestial Realm is the place for reaping the fruits of our accumulated Punna. For the pursuer of Parami (or Perfections), the Celestial Realm is regarded as a respite, a place where one waits for the right time to be reborn on earth so that one can continue to pursue Parami.

Rebirth in the Human Realm is hampered by the fact that the moment we are born, we forget everything about our previous existences. Therefore, we cannot remember the life-goal and the aspiration cherished when we were last born as a human being. This is a highly dangerous situation because in our ignorance of the Law of Kamma we may inadvertently commit misdeeds and end up being reborn in the States of Unhappiness. To rectify the situation, we must make it a habit to accumulate Punna so regularly and so earnestly that this habit can follow us across lifetimes.

A wise person is heedful in regards to his lifestyle. He sets for himself the basic and intermediate levels of his life objective and strives to achieve them. His life objective is synonymous with Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice. He performs these wholesome deeds to the best of his ability while earning right livelihood at the same time. Such a person has a



clean and pure mind. He cannot be easily dominated by Kilesa (or defilements). His mind is healthy and strong. His accumulated Punna has the power to cause him to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

It can be said that Dana, Sila, and Bhavana are what every human being has to practice. These are our lifeworks and they enable us to achieve simultaneously the basic and intermediate levels of our life objective. It goes without saying that a person incapable of achieving the basic level of his life objective will also be incapable of achieving the intermediate level of his life objective.

### **The Ultimate Level of Our Life Objective**

The ultimate level of our life objective is to achieve complete emancipation, end our round of rebirth, and attain Nibbana. This is the highest goal for Buddhists. The teachings about the ultimate level of our life objective can be found only in Buddhism.

A person sees the danger of the round of rebirth because he sees the truth that birth brings Dukkha (or suffering).<sup>1</sup> Birth is not a sign of joy as is widely understood. Frequent rebirth causes frequent suffering. Suffering comes to an end only when we can attain Nibbana.

Knowing about the round of rebirth and the suffering wrought by it, one becomes tired of rebirth and wishes to search for the end of the round of rebirth. After all, things in nature have their counterparts: darkness vs. light, black vs. white, cold vs. hot. If there is birth, then there has to exist non-birth. Having so thought, one begins to search for the way to achieve the goal of non-birth. Such a person is called a “Bodhisatta” in Buddhism. A Bodhisatta possesses a magnanimous heart and the wish to put an end to suffering and attain Nibbana.

To achieve the ultimate level of one’s life objective, one must perform wholesome deeds to the fullest extent. One’s heart and mind is focused on Punna accumulation. One knows how one is born for the purpose of accumulating Punna. Every breath is about Punna accumulation. One knows the way to make one’s every breath a merit-making moment. One’s heart is stout. One is unperturbed by anyone’s adverse thought, word, or action. One is not deterred by obstacles.

One must love to practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana to such an extent that one willingly puts one’s life on the line.

The objectives of Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice can be summarized as follows.

1. Dana practice (or alms-giving): Its main objective is to remove Lobha (or greed) from our mind. The maximum fruit of Dana practice is the wealth of a Universal Monarch.

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<sup>1</sup> Dukkha means the sufferings associated with our body; these include aging, sickness, and death.

2. Sila practice (or Precepts observation): Its main objective is to remove Dosa (or anger and vindictiveness) from our mind. The maximum fruits of Sila practice are the Perfect Man's 32 special physical attributes.
3. Bhavana practice (or meditation practice): Its main objective is to remove Moha (or ignorance) which comes from Avijja. The maximum fruit of Bhavana practice is the attainment of Vijja-3, which is the means to extinguish Kilesa (or defilements).

A person aiming for the ultimate level of his life objective has a deeper understanding of Punna (or merit). He understands that Punna makes it possible for his every wish to be fulfilled be it material wealth, favorable physical attributes or favorable mental attributes. Such a person knows to put his life on the line when it comes to Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice especially Bhavana practice, since it is the means to achieve the ultimate level of his life objective. He also knows that Dana practice and Sila practice facilitate Bhavana practice.

At this level of life objective, Dana practice is meant as an accumulation of provisions needed for life in the round of rebirth until such time that Nibbana can be attained. Dana practice ensures that however many times rebirth takes place in the Human Realm, one is blessed with more than enough material wealth necessary for life and its sustenance so that one has all the time in the world to practice Bhavana. In other words, one does not have to worry about earning a living.

Sila practice is meant to ensure rebirth in the Human Realm because the human form is the most conducive to Bhavana practice and the accumulation of Punna. The different non-human forms make the pursuit of Parami impossible and the attainment of Nibbana that much further away.

Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are crucially important for those wishing to achieve the ultimate level of their life objective. In fact, Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are most necessary for achieving every level of our life objective. And it is every human being's duty to practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana so conscientiously and so regularly that it becomes a habit. Dana, Sila, and Bhavana are the foundations of the correct lifestyle.

## 1.3 Life's Obstacles

### 1.3.1 Kilesa

However powerful Sammaditthi (or Right View) may be, it cannot prevent us from encountering life's obstacles from time to time because our Sammaditthi (or Right View) is still imperfect. Life's obstacles can present themselves as an economic problem, an illness, an accident, a bad mistake, etc.

According to Buddhism, every problem encountered in life comes from our mind, that is, from Kilesa (or defilements) in our mind. Kilesa in our mind is the cause of every obstacle in our life. If Kilesa can be completely removed from our mind, every obstacle in our life will disappear.

## The Meaning of Kilesa

Kilesa means the entity that causes our mind to be gloomy. It is the unwholesomeness inherent in our feeling and thought that makes our mind murky and impure.

### There Are Three Families of Kilesa.

1. **Lobha** means greed or miserliness
2. **Dosa** means anger or vindictiveness
3. **Moha** means ignorance about the reality of life and the world; ignorance is caused by Avijja.

## 1.4 Overcoming Life's Obstacles

**1.4.1 Punna (or merit)** has the power to cleanse our mind of Kilesa, which in turn is the source of life's obstacles.

**The meaning of Punna:** Punna means a thing that cleanses the mind and keeps it away from Kilesa.

**The sources of Punna:** These are called "Punnakiriyavatthu" or "Ways of Making Merit" and they include:

1. **Danamaya** is the Punna gained from Dana practice (or alms-giving).
2. **Silamaya** is the Punna gained from keeping the Precepts.
3. **Bhavanamaya** is the Punna gained from meditation practice.

Danamaya removes Lobha (or greed). Silamaya removes Dosa (or anger). And Bhavanamaya removes Moha (or ignorance).

### The fruits of Punna

Three kinds of fruit can be gained by Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice.

1. **Happiness:** A person who practices Dana, Sila, and Bhavana can expect to feel happy and joyful.
2. **Good habit:** A person who practices Dana, Sila, and Bhavana regularly is forming a good habit.
3. **Punna:** A person who practices Dana, Sila, and Bhavana earns Punna (or merit). And Punna has the power to cleanse the mind of Kilesa (or defilements).

Whoever accumulates a great deal of Punna will meet with few obstacles in life. On the contrary, a person with a low level of Punna will meet with many obstacles in life. A Sammaditthi (or Right View) person believes in Punna and loves to accumulate it regularly. He knows that Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are the sources of Punna.

## 1.5 The Pursuit of Perfections

Punna (or merit) can be accumulated and when Punna is accumulated to a certain point, it will be condensed into “Parami” (or Perfections). Therefore, Parami is the condensed form of Punna and Parami is much more powerful than Punna.

Parami means sublime virtue and to attain Buddhahood every Bodhisatta must cultivate all ten aspects of Parami called Parami-10 (or the Ten Perfections). These include:

1. **Danaparami:** The Parami earned from practicing Dana (or alms-giving)
2. **Silaparami:** The Parami earned from abstaining from all forms of unwholesomeness
3. **Nekkhammaparami:** The Parami earned from leaving the householder life in order to seek for the means of emancipation
4. **Pannaparami:** The Parami earned from searching for the knowledge leading to emancipation
5. **Viriya-parami:** The Parami earned from being persistent, having the courage to overcome obstacles
6. **Khantiparami:** The Parami earned from being patient and able to tolerate what is pleasing and displeasing alike
7. **Saccaparami:** The Parami earned from being determined to perform wholesome deeds
8. **Adhitthanaparami:** The Parami earned from being resolute
9. **Mettaparami:** The Parami earned from cultivating loving-kindness.
10. **Upekkhaparami:** The Parami earned from exercising equanimity in the faces of happiness and unhappiness alike, from exercising impartiality

Parami-10 (or the Ten Perfections) must be pursued over countless lifetimes until they become part of one’s innate character. Parami-10 is synonymous with the ten excellent habits. The pursuit of Parami begins with the persistent and consistent accumulation of Punna through such practices as Dana, Sila, and Bhavana. The pursuit of Parami is facilitated when one’s Sammaditthi (or Right View) has been highly developed. Therefore, one has the correct understanding that life and the world fall under the Three Characteristics (impermanence, suffering, the absence of selfhood). One is therefore motivated to penetrate the Path of Nibbana in order to become emancipated from the round of rebirth. And one is courageous and resolute enough to put his life on the line performing every kind of wholesome deeds. Such a person is called a Bodhisatta. There are three levels of Parama-10 as follows.

1. **Parami:** This is the basic level of Parami. It is the pursuit of wholesomeness to an extraordinary degree.
2. **Upaparami:** This is the intermediate level of Parami. It is the pursuit of wholesomeness to the extent where one willingly gives up one’s flesh and body parts for the cause.
3. **Paramatthaparami:** This is the ultimate level of Parami. It is the pursuit of wholesomeness to the extent where one willingly gives up one’s life for the cause.

These three levels of Parami-10 become Parami-30.

The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro, Luang Pu Wat Paknam) describes the relationship between Punna and Parami as witnessed through his Dhammacakku or Dhammakaya-Eye as follows. Parami has the appearance of a sphere. It is the condensed form of the Punna Sphere. The Punna Sphere in turn comes from the continuous accumulation of wholesome deeds. The Parami Sphere condenses into the Upaparami Sphere. And the Upaparami Sphere condenses into the Paramatthaparami Sphere as shown in one of Luang Pu's Dhamma lectures as follows.<sup>1</sup>

“It is not easy to pursue Parami. Dana practice gives rise to a Punna Sphere. It does not matter whether the sphere is big or small as long as you continue to accumulate Punna. In time, the Punna Sphere will grow and eventually condense into a Parami Sphere.

The diameter of a Punna Sphere is 25 centimeters. It looks like the full-moon or the sun. When condensed into a Parami Sphere, the diameter is reduced to approximately 2 centimeters.

When the Parami Sphere reaches 25 centimeters, it will be condensed into an Upaparami Sphere and its diameter will be reduced to approximately 2 centimeters.

When the Upaparami Sphere reaches 25 centimeters, it will be condensed into a Paramatthaparami Sphere and its diameters will be reduced to approximately 2 centimeters.

Parami has altogether 30 parts. And these must be pursued to the fullest extent before one can become self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha. It is indeed an extremely difficult feat. It is for this reason that the Lord Buddha said, “Buddhuppado ca dullabho”. The happening of the Lord Buddha is extremely rare.

When more and more Punna is accumulated, it will be condensed into Parami. It can be said that Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are the starting points of the pursuit of Parami for the ultimate purpose of attaining Buddhahood and leading living beings to Nibbana.

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<sup>1</sup> Phra Monkolthepmuni, Luang Por Wat Paknam's Dhamma Inheritance (2539 B.E. ) pages 609-610

## Summary

Every human being desires happiness and success. The correct lifestyle must be able to lead us to our life objective. The best starting point of the correct lifestyle is Sammaditthi (or Right View) because Sammaditthi helps us to think, say, and do wholesome things. It enables us to understand the importance of Dana practice (or alms-giving), Sila practice (or Precepts observation), and Bhavana practice (or meditation practice). Moreover, these wholesome practices are the foundations of Parami. They enable us to achieve all three levels of our life objective. For a Sammaditthi person, life's obstacles do not prevent him from continuing to accumulate Punna and pursue Parami, for his mind is constantly focused on Nibbana.

### ASSIGNMENTS

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 2

## Dana

### 2.1 Dana in Our Life

### 2.2 Dana Has Several Meanings

### 2.3 Dana Means Giving Something Away

### 2.4 Punna and Dana

### 2.5 Why Must We Practice Dana?

### 2.6 Types of Dana

#### 2.6.1 Amisadana

- Based on the quality of the alms
  - Dasadana
  - Sahayadana
  - Samidana
- Based on the giver's intention
  - Patipuggalikadana
  - Sanghadana

#### 2.6.2 Dhammadana

## Concepts

1. Dana means giving away something such as an object, secular knowledge, or Dhamma knowledge without expecting anything in return.
2. We practice Dana in order to cleanse our mind of Kilesa (or defilements), to repay someone or to help someone.
3. There are two types of Dana: Amisadana and Dhammadana. Amisadana can be divided into Dasadana, Sahayadana, and Samidana depending on the quality of the alms. It can be divided into Patipuggalikadana and Sanghadana depending on the alms-giver's intention. The Lord Buddha tells us that Sanghadana bears more fruit than Patipuggalikadana.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to understand the Ten Ways of Making Merit.
2. To enable the student to understand the purposes of Dana practice.
3. To enable the student to understand Amisadana and how it is categorized based on the quality of the alms and the alms-giver's intention.
4. To enable the student to understand the details of Patipuggalikadana and Sanghadana.



# Chapter 2

## Dana

### 2.1 Dana in Our Life

Human life and Dana practice are intertwined. Our parents give us life. They raise us and teach us so many things. They send us to school so that we can be educated. They give us food, clothes, toys, etc. They give us love and take good care of us. Children obey their parents but when they grow up they take care of their aging parents. Not only do parents and children give to each other but so do siblings, teacher and student, friends, boss and subordinate, etc.

Dana practice enables members of the community to live together in peace and harmony. Dana practice plays a key role in human life.

Buddhism teaches that Dana is Samaditthi (or Right View) at the basic level. Dana is a virtue every human being must cultivate. Dana practice increases the quality of our life and enables us to grow as a righteous human being.

The cultivation of Dana allows us to cultivate other virtues. We know this from the Lord Buddha's example as written in the Dana Sutta. He had started the pursuit of Parami (or Perfections) by practicing Dana. And Dana when practiced to the fullest extent will bear incalculable fruit.

Dana is the easiest virtue to cultivate but its fruits are many. A person who practices Dana regularly tends to want to do it more and more because he can see for himself the many benefits of Dana practice.

### 2.2 Dana Has Several Meanings

“Dana” means the act of giving, the act of sharing, donation, consideration, generosity, cleanliness, purity, etc.

### 2.3 Dana Means Giving Something Away

In general, Dana means the act of giving. It includes giving things, giving secular knowledge, giving Dhamma knowledge in order to help other people. Dana practice bears maximum fruit when the giver can overcome his miserliness. It means that he gives out of a pure heart expecting nothing in return. All he wants are Punna (or merit) and the joy of giving.

When a person gives in order to get something in return such as giving food to a dog expecting it to guard his house, feeding a cow expecting it to give him milk, bribing a government official expecting for acquittal, etc., these are not considered acts of giving in Buddhism.

There are other forms of Dana such as Viratidana. Viratidana means to give by abstaining from exploiting or harming other people, and by keeping other people safe. It means forgiving other people as in Abhayadana. Viratidana is a result of Sila practice (or Precepts observation). For an example, when we observe the First Precept, we abstain from killing, which means that we keep safe the lives of other living beings.

## 2.4 Punna and Dana

“Punna” (or merit) is stored in the mind and it has the power to keep the mind clean and bright. Punna improves the quality of our mind.

Punna makes our mind steadfast, pure, clean, magnanimous, comfortable, tranquil, bright, and happy.

Punna can be accumulated inside our mind.

According to Buddhism, there are “Ten Ways of Making Merit” or Punnakiriyavatthu-10.

1. Danamaya: The merit earned by an act of giving
2. Silamaya: The merit earned by observing the Precepts
3. Bhavanamaya: The merit earned by practicing meditation
4. Apacayanamaya: The merit earned by being gentle and humble
5. Veyyavaccamaya: The merit earned by helping out and working for a good cause
6. Pattidanamaya: The merit earned by dedicating merit to other people
7. Pattanumodanamaya: The merit earned by rejoicing in other people’s good deeds
8. Dhammassavanamaya: The merit earned by listening to Dhamma lectures
9. Dhammadesanamaya: The merit earned by giving Dhamma lectures
10. Ditthujukamma: The merit earned by cultivating Sammaditthi (or Right View)

These “Ten Ways of Making Merit” can be summarized into the “Three Ways of Making Merit” or Punnakiriyavatthu-3: Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice.

Dana practice consists of Danamaya (1), Pattidanamaya (6), and Pattanumodanamaya (7).

Sila practice consists of Silamaya (2), Apacayanamaya (4), and Veyyavaccamaya (5).

Bhavana practice consists of Bhavanamaya (3), Dhammassavanamaya (8), and Dhammadesanamaya (9).

Ditthujukamma (10) can be part of Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice.

## 2.5 Why Must We Practice Dana?

### The Reasons for Practicing Dana

The Lord Buddha tells us in the Pathamadana Sutta eight reasons for practicing Dana.

1. Some people give because they expect something in return.
2. Some people give out of fear.
3. Some people give in order to return a favor.
4. Some people give hoping to be repaid later on.
5. Some people give because they deem Dana practice to be a virtue.
6. Some people give because they feel that they should help those who cannot help themselves.
7. Some people give expecting their reputation to spread far and wide.
8. Some people give in order to boost the quality of their minds.

According to the Danavatthu Sutta, there are eight more reasons for giving.

1. Some people give out of affection.
2. Some people give out of anger.
3. Some people give out of ignorance or stupidity.
4. Some people give out of fear.
5. Some people give because they want to keep with family tradition.
6. Some people give because they want to be reborn in the Celestial Realm.
7. Some people give because they believe in Dana practice and they derive joy and happiness from it.
8. Some people give in order to raise the quality of their minds.

Not all of the reasons for giving cited above are considered to be “Dana practice” according to Buddhism. When a person gives because he expects something in return, his giving has nothing to do with Dana practice.

According to Buddhism, there are four reasons for practicing Dana.

- 1. One gives in order to remove Kilesa (or defilements):** This is called “Pariccagadana”. One practices Dana in order to remove miserliness from one’s mind. One gives without any regards to who the recipient may be. This manner of giving earns the maximum Punna (or merit) especially when the giver gives out of a pure heart and the recipient has a very pure mind.
- 2. One gives in order to repay another person’s kindness:** This is called “Patikaradana”. One practices Dana in order to repay someone or honor a person possessing a higher virtue than the giver. The giver may not be concerned about Punna but he may be more concerned about the recipient’s virtue. The recipients in this case may be one’s parents, one’s teachers, etc. However, one can earn more Punna by being concerned about the Punna earned as well as the recipients’ virtue.
- 3. One gives in order to help other people:** This is called “Sanghadana”. One practices Dana in order to form a closer bond with the recipient whether he is a personal friend or a colleague. At any rate, one gives in order to benefit the recipient.

4. **One gives in order to provide aid to the needy:** This is called “Anugahadana”. One practices Dana in order to help those in need without any regards to who they are and whether they are related to the giver in any way.

## 2.6 Types of Dana

There are two types of Dana.

1. **Amisadana:** It is the giving of alms.
2. **Dhammadana:** It is the giving of Dhamma knowledge.

### 2.6.1 Amisadana

It is the giving of alms such as the four requisites or other items such as rice, water, cloths, means of transport, flowers, scented items, skin powder or skin salves, bedding, shelter, lamps, etc.

- **Amisadana can be divided into three types depending on the quality of the alms.**

1. **Dasadana:** The items given are of an inferior quality to those consumed by the giver. For example, one has three mangos but gives away the smallest one. Or all three mangos are of the same size but one gives away the mango that one likes the least. A person practices Dasadana because he is a slave of miserliness; therefore, he gives away the kind of things that is generally given to a servant or a slave.
2. **Sahayadana:** The items given are of the same quality as those consumed by the giver. For example, one has three mangos but gives away the mango with the quality that one would normally enjoy. It is like giving the kind of things generally given to a friend.
3. **Samidana:** The items given are of a superior quality to those consumed by the giver. When Buddhists offer alms to the monks, they generally offer Samidana in that they offer the best quality alms be they cooked rice, the accompanying dishes, etc. It is like giving the kind of things generally given to one’s parents, one’s teachers, and the monks.

A person who has overcome miserliness to the point where he gives alms frequently and regularly is called “Danapadi”, which means the “lord of alms”. It means a person who is free from miserliness; therefore, he can give alms frequently and regularly.

- **Amisadana can be divided into two types depending on the giver’s intention.**

#### 1. Patipuggalikadana

#### 2. Sanghadana

1. **Patipuggalikadana:** It means giving alms to a particular person. For example, in a house-blessing ceremony, one invites nine different monks of one’s choice to perform the ceremony rather than asking the temple to provide the monks.

The Lord Buddha teaches us **the types of Patipuggalikadana and their respective fruits** as follows.

1. Giving alms to animals out of compassion: Its fruits are longevity, beauty, happiness, health, and a ready wit. The act bears these fruits all throughout 100 existences.
2. Giving alms to an immoral person: It sends forth its fruits for 1,000 existences.
3. Giving alms to a person who practices morality during the time period when the Lord Buddha does not happen: It sends forth its fruits for 100,000 existences.
4. Giving alms to an ascetic who has achieved elevated meditative attainments (or Abhinna): It sends forth its fruits for 1 trillion existences.
5. Giving alms to a person who is working toward the Path and Fruit of Sotapanna be him a householder or a Buddhist monk, whether achieving the Jhanas or not: It sends forth its fruits for Asankheyya (or countless) existences.
6. Giving alms to a Sotapanna: Its fruits are greater than in 5).
7. Giving alms to a Sotapanna who is working toward the Path and Fruit of Sakadagami: Its fruits are very much greater than in 6).
8. Giving alms to a Sakadagami: Its fruits are very much greater than in 7).
9. Giving alms to a Sakadagami who is working toward the Path and Fruit of Nibbana: Its fruits are very much greater than in 8).
10. Giving alms to an Anagami: Its fruits are very much greater than in 9).
11. Giving alms to an Anagami who is working toward the Path and Fruit of Arahatsip: Its fruits are very much greater than in 10).
12. Giving alms to an Arahata: Its fruits are very much greater than in 11).
13. Giving alms to a Paccekabuddha: Its fruits are very much greater than in 12).
14. Giving alms to the Lord Buddha: Its fruits are very much greater than in 13).

Whoever gives alms with the resolute wish to be emancipated from the round of rebirth, his wish will be facilitated.

**2. Sanghadana:** It means giving alms to a group of Bhikkus (or the Sangha). In this case, the giver willingly and respectfully provides requisites to the Sangha as a whole. For example, in a house-blessing ceremony, one approaches the abbot of the temple or a monk in charge of receiving invitations and informs the abbot or the monk in charge of his intention to invite nine monks to receive requisites at his house. Whichever monks the temple sends will be given alms willingly and respectfully by the alms-giver. This type of alms-giving is called Sanghadana.

The Lord Buddha said to Venerable Ananda that the Sangha can be divided into seven categories and any alms given to any of these seven categories of Sangha are considered to be Sanghadana.

These seven categories of Sangha include:

1. A group of Bhikkus and Bhikkunis presided over by the Lord Buddha
2. A group of Bhikkus and Bhikkunis after the Lord Buddha has attained Complete Nibbana
3. A group of Bhikkus
4. A group of Bhikkunis
5. An approved representative of the Bhikkus and Bhikkunis
6. An approved representative of the Bhikkus
7. An approved representative of the Bhikkunis

Currently, we can offer alms only to Bhikkus of categories 3 and 6 because there are no longer Bhikkunis. There are now only two categories of Bhikkus as follows.

1. Four Bhikkus or more are considered to be the Sangha according to the Dhamma-Vinaya. Therefore, alms given to four or more Bhikkus are considered to be Sanghadana.
2. An approved representative of the Sangha: For example, when we go to the temple to request a Bhikku to receive alms at our house, whichever Bhikku is sent by the Sangha is offered alms by us in a respectful manner knowing that we are offering alms to the Sangha. This type of Sanghadana is shown in the following example as recorded in the Tipitaka.

### **The Wealthy Man Who Venerated the Sangha**

There was one wealthy householder who was also the owner of a temple. Normally, he venerated only the Bhikkus who practiced righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya and did not at all care for unrighteous Bhikkus. One day, he requested a representative Bhikku from the temple to receive alms at his house.

Although he knew the Bhikku sent to his house to be an unrighteous monk, he received the said monk in a respectful manner. He prepared a seat and items of worship for him, washed his feet, and anointed them with oil. Later, he offered alms to the Bhikku in a deeply respectful manner as if the Bhikku had been the Lord Buddha Himself. After the meal, the Bhikku returned to the temple.

Sometime later on the same day, the same Bhikku returned to the wealthy householder's house to borrow a hoe. This time the wealthy man used his foot to kick the hoe toward the monk. Some villagers saw what the man did and asked him, "This morning you treated this Bhikku with deep respect but now you show not a shred of respect for him."

The wealthy man answered, "The deep respect I showed this morning was for the Sangha and not for this Bhikku."

This incident shows how the wealthy householder deeply venerated the Sangha and his reverence for the Sangha did not waver even when represented by an unrighteous Bhikku.

The Lord Buddha teaches that Sanghadana bears a greater fruit than Patipuggalikadana in the following example.

### **Queen Mahapajapati**

On one occasion, Queen Mahapajapati wanted to present the Lord Buddha with two pieces of cloth.

“Most Exalted One, these two pieces of cloth have been woven by my own hands for the purpose of presenting them to you.”

The Lord Buddha said to her,

“Behold, Gotami, it is better that you present these two pieces of cloth to the Sangha because by so doing you will be presenting them to me and the Sangha at the same time.

The queen insisted that she presented the cloths to the Lord Buddha for the second and third time but the Lord Buddha continued to give her the same answer. Finally, Venerable Ananda intervened by entreating the Lord Buddha to accept the exquisite pieces of cloth from Queen Mahapajapati.

The Lord Buddha answered that He wanted His aunt to earn more merit by offering Sanghadana instead of Patipuggalikadana.

The Lord Buddha praised the person who does not specify his recipient because such a person gives with true generosity and for the sake of the whole rather than the individual.

### **The Fruit of Sanghadana**

The Lord Buddha tells us about the fruit of Sanghadana in the following example.

#### **The Velama Sutta**

There once was a Brahmin by the name of Velama. He believed in Dana practice and he had an almonry built in front of his house. He had made it known to the people all over India that they were welcome to receive alms at his house for 7 years, 7 months, and 7 days. Anyone in need of shelter or clothing could make his need known to him. And he was true to his word. On the last day, he gave away 84,000 gold trays, 84,000 silver trays, 84,000 bronze trays. Each was filled with gold and money. He also gave away 84,000 elephants, 84,000 vehicles, 84,000 women, and 84,000 thrones. All of them were ornately decorated. He gave away 84,000 milk cows and 84,000 pairs of cloth. The alms given away by Velama were considered to be “Mahadana”. The Lord Buddha said,

1. The alms given by the Brahmin Velama bear their fruit for Asankheyya existences.
2. But the fruit is less than that received by offering food just once to a monk who has attained the Fruit of Sotapanna.
3. The fruit of offering food to 100 monks who have attained the Fruit of Sotapanna is less than that received by offering food just once to a monk who has attained the Fruit of Sakadagami.
4. The fruit of offering food to 100 monks who have attained the Fruit of Sakadagami is less than that received by offering food just once to a monk who has attained the Fruit of Anagami.
5. The fruit of offering food to 100 monks who have attained the Fruit of Anagami is less than that received by offering food just once to an Arahat.
6. The fruit of offering food to 100 Arahats is less than that received by offering food just once to a Paccekabuddha.
7. The fruit of offering food to 100 Paccekabuddhas is less than that received by offering food just once to the Lord Buddha.
8. The fruit of offering food to the Lord Buddha is less than that received by offering food to the Lord Buddha and the Sangha.
9. The fruit of offering food to the Lord Buddha and the Sangha is less than that received by building a monastery for the monastic community.

It can be seen that Sanghadana bears a greater fruit than Patipuggalikadana but the fruit of observing the Precepts and practicing Vipassana meditation is greater still. It does not mean that one should only practice Vipassana meditation, however, because everyone must also practice Dana (or alms-giving).

Dana practice helps a person who observes the Precepts and practices Vipassana meditation to pursue Parami more easily as shown in the Sumana Sutta as follows. On one occasion, Princess Sumana asked the Lord Buddha,

“Most Exalted One, if two disciples of yours are equal in terms of Sila (morality) and Panna (wisdom) but one practices Dana (alms-giving) while others does not, when they are reborn in the Celestial Realm, will there be anything different between them?”

The Lord Buddha said,

“Behold, Sumana, the difference will be that the one practicing Dana will possess a higher level of longevity, beauty, happiness, position, and sovereignty.

The princess asked,

“Most Exalted One, when both celestial beings are reborn on earth, will there be anything different between them?”

“Behold, Sumana, the one practicing Dana will also possess a high level of longevity, beauty, happiness, position, and sovereignty in the Human Realm.”

“Most Exalted One, should both these individuals decide to enter the monkhood, will there be anything different between them?”



The Lord Buddha said,

“Behold, Sumana, the one practicing Dana will receive better quality things in the following ways.

1. If he asks for a robe, he will receive many. If he does not, he will receive a few.
2. If he asks for food, he will receive plenty. If he does not, he will receive a little.
3. If he asks for shelter, he will receive much. If he does not, he will receive a little.
4. If he asks for medicine, he will receive much. If he does not, he will receive a little.
5. In the company of other Bhikkus, they will behave toward him in body, word, and thought in ways that are pleasing to him most of the time. They will bring him things that are pleasing to him most of the time.”

The princess asked,

“If both individuals attain Arahatsip, will there be anything different between them?”

The Lord Buddha answered,

“There will not be anything different between them because both have been completely emancipated from defilements.”

The princess exclaimed with overwhelming joy,

“Most Exalted One, this is truly amazing! It means that everyone should practice Dana because the merit earned is helpful to celestial beings, human beings, and monks alike.”

The Lord Buddha said,

“That is the case, Sumana. It is indeed necessary that everyone practices Dana because the merit earned is helpful to celestial beings, human beings, and monks alike.”

As human beings, we should accumulate as much merit as possible because merit improves the quality of our life now and in future existences in terms of material wealth. When blessed with the kind of material wealth that does not require one to earn a living, one will be able to accumulate more and more merit. One’s practices of Danamaya, Silamaya, and Bhavanamaya will be facilitated. This means the ultimate life-goal of attaining Nibbana will also be facilitated.

## 2.6.2 Dhammadana

Dhammadana means giving good advice, giving the kind of knowledge that helps one to live a happy life, giving knowledge about Punna (or merit) and Papa (or demerit), giving knowledge about the harm of unwholesomeness and the benefit of wholesomeness. Such Dhamma knowledge leads to the extinguishment of defilements.

(Dhammadana will be covered in more detail in chapter 5)

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 3

## How to Practice Dana Correctly

### **3.1 Dana Leads to Happiness**

### **3.2 How to Earn the Most Punna from Dana Practice**

3.2.1 The Alms Are Pure

3.2.2 The Intention Is Pure

- The First Period: Pubbacetana
- The Second Period: Munacanacetana
- The Third Period: Aparaparacetana

3.2.3 The People Involved Are Pure

- The Giver Is Pure
- The Receiver Is Pure

### **3.3 Asappuisadana and Sappurisdana**

3.3.1 Asappurisdana

3.3.2 Three Types of Sappurisdana

### **3.4 How to Practice Dana**

3.4.1 Intention

3.4.2 Obtaining Alms

- Appropriate alms
- Inappropriate alms

3.4.3 Purifying the Self before Practicing Dana

3.4.4 Making a Resolute Wish

3.4.5 The Absence of Miserliness

3.4.6 The Daily Practice of Dana

### **3.5 The Fruit of Dana Practice**

#### 3.5.1 Dana Practice which Bears Instant Fruit

#### 3.5.2 Alms and Their Different Fruits

- Giving food is giving energy
- Giving cloths is giving beauty
- Giving means of transportation is giving happiness
- Giving light sources is giving eyesight
- Giving Dhamma knowledge is giving eternal truth
- Giving shelter is giving everything

#### 3.5.3 Differences in the Fruit of Dana

- Differences arising from intention
- Differences arising from the quality of merit-field
- Differences arising from timing
- Differences arising from practicing Dana individually or as a group

## Concepts

1. Every living being desires happiness at every level from the basic level to the ultimate level. The ultimate level of happiness is attained when one is emancipated from Kilesa (or defilements) and attains Nibbana. Punna (or merit) is the source of every level of happiness.
2. Pursuers of Parami (or Perfections) wishing to earn an enormous amount of Punna from Dana practice must do so according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings.
3. Dana practice bears fruit whether we expect it or not. It bears fruit now as well as in future existences. There exist factors which cause the fruit of Dana practice to be different.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to understand the correct way to earn the maximum Punna from Dana practice.
2. To enable the student to understand the different factors involved in Dana practice.
3. To enable the student to understand the correct way to practice Dana.
4. To enable the student to understand how to start practicing Dana correctly.
5. To enable the student to understand the value of Dana practice and the fruit of Dana practice.
6. To enable the student to know the factors which cause the fruit of Dana to be different.

# Chapter 3

## How to Practice Dana Correctly

### 3.1 Dana Practice Leads to Happiness

Dana practice is the source of Punna (or merit). When a person accumulates Punna by practicing Dana, the quality of his mind improves and the Punna earned brings every good thing into his life.

A person's accumulated Punna is like a treasure trove which follows him everywhere to bless him with every good thing. Therefore, a person possessing a great amount of Punna will encounter few obstacles in life. On the contrary, a person possessing a small amount of Punna will encounter many obstacles in life. The more Punna a person possesses, the easier it will be for him to attain Nibbana. Therefore, it is necessary that every human being accumulates Punna earnestly and as much as possible.

Unfortunately, most human beings still have no knowledge about the reality of life and the world. As a result, they are living life recklessly. They guard their possessions jealously and they do not practice Dana because they see no reason for practicing it.

For the wise person who is already practicing Dana regularly, it is still necessary to practice it correctly in order to earn as much Punna as possible.

### 3.2 How to Earn the Maximum Punna from Dana Practice

**Earning the maximum merit from Dana practice is called “Danasampatti”.** According to Buddhism, we practice Dana in order to cleanse and purify our mind. The cleaner and purer our mind is, the more Punna can be earned. To earn the maximum Punna from practicing Dana, three factors must be present.

1. The alms are pure.
2. The intention is pure.
3. The individuals concerned are pure.

**3.2.1 The Alms Are Pure:** The item given, whatever it is must be obtained in an honest manner. It must not be obtained by stealing, by a deceptive scheme or by exploiting people or animals. If the item is purchased, the money spent to purchase the item must be earned in an ethical manner. The given item must not be the source of unwholesomeness. It must not be an addictive substance, a weapon, or anything that arouses sexual desire.

**3.2.2 The Intention Is Pure:** A person must give with a pure motive in that he gives in order to cleanse and purify his mind. He does not give in order to show off his wealth, etc. An impure motive causes the mind to be gloomy. A pure intention is the reason why Buddhism emphasizes Sanghadana and why Sanghadana earns the maximum Punna.

The intention can be pure only when the giver can keep his mind pure during the following three periods.

- **Pubbacetana:** It means the giver's intention before he gives alms. For example, when a person wants to make a food-offering in the next morning he feels happy that he will be earning Punna from the food-offering. Or he feels fortunate to have the opportunity to offer food to the venerable monks. There are situations when a person cannot practice Dana because he has nothing to give. There are situations when a person has something to give but he does not do it because he does not believe in the merit of alms-giving. There are also situations when a person has something to give and he believes in the merit of alms-giving but there is no one to give it to. In that case, Dana cannot be practiced. Therefore, when a person has available the alms, the faith, and the receiver, he feels appreciative because he can then practice Dana.

- **Munacanacetana:** It means the giver's intention while he is giving alms. For example, when offering food to a monk, a person feels joyful for having the opportunity to offer food to a righteous monk. He offers food to the righteous monk in a respectful and joyful manner. He refuses to allow anything to make his mind gloomy.

- **Aparaparacetana:** It means the giver's intention after he has already given alms. For example, after the food-offering, a person feels joyful. Whenever he recalls the merit-making event, he continues to feel joyful. He is happy to have earned Punna by offering food to the righteous monk.

Keeping the mind clean and pure during these three time periods is a very difficult feat because a person may still be dominated by miserliness. A person may feel unsettled after having given away a great deal of things or money. For example, the receiver may not be virtuous or may not conduct himself properly, and the giver may feel bad for having given things or money to such a person. Whatever the reason may be, if a person does not keep his mind clean and pure during these three time periods, he will not be earning the maximum Punna possible.

Therefore, it is crucially important that we learn to keep our mind clean and pure before, during, and after the alms-giving so that we can earn the maximum Punna possible.

**3.2.3 The Individuals Concerned Are Pure:** It means that both the giver and the receiver are pure because they uphold morality. This is the reason why it is customary for a layperson to pledge the Five Precepts before giving alms. The receiver must practice righteousness according to the Dhamma-Discipline. The Lord Buddha teaches the importance of the giver and the receiver in the Dakkhinavibhanga Sutta and the Kuddakanikaya Peta Vatthu.

When a rice farmer sows rice seeds in a fertile paddy, he can expect the yield to be very good. It is for this reason that the Lord Buddha teaches us about the different fields for cultivating merit. If we wish to offer alms to an individual monk, then it is up to us to choose a monk who practices righteousness according to the Dhamma-Discipline. If we wish to offer alms to a group of Monks or the Sangha, we need to choose a group of monks who practice righteousness according to the Dhamma-Discipline. *Viceyya danam sugatappasathan:* The Tathagatha praises the consideration of different merit-

fields. The teaching about the different fields for cultivating merit is shown in the following example.

### **Ankura, the Male Celestial Being**

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha went to teach the Dhamma to His birth mother in the Tavatimsa Realm. The Lord Buddha was seated on King Sakka's throne and His personal radiance touched all celestial beings like a great light. The Lord Buddha's mother, who was reborn a male celestial being, descended from the Tusita Realm for the occasion and was seated to the right of the Lord Buddha. So was the male celestial being called "Indaka". The male celestial being called "Ankura" was seated to the left of the Lord Buddha, initially. As more and more high-ranking celestial beings arrived, Ankura's seat had to move further and further back until eventually he was seated at a distance of 192 kilometers away from the Lord Buddha. But Indaka's seat remained in the same position. The Lord Buddha observed the two male celestial beings Indaka and Ankura and wished to use the occasion to teach the congregation about the different fields of merit. The Lord Buddha said,

"Behold, Ankura, you'd given alms every day for 10,000 years. Your stoves stood in a line 192 kilometers long. Nonetheless, in my presence you have to be seated at a distance of 192 kilometer away from me. Why is that?"

Ankura answered,

"Most Exalted One, I did give alms in that manner as a human being. However, the recipients of my alms were ordinary folks. But Indaka offered a small amount of alms to an individual worthy of alms. Therefore, he is superior to me in the same way that the moon shines more brightly than the stars."

The Lord Buddha turned to address Indaka who said,

"I offered alms to an individual deserving of alms."

It was like sowing a small amount of seeds on fertile ground, the yield would be abundant.

"A large amount of seeds sown on parched ground, the yield would be scant. And the farmer is not pleased. Alms though in a large amount, when given to individuals of poor moral character, give a low yield. And the giver is not pleased.

However, a small amount of seeds sown on fertile ground, the yield would be abundant. And the farmer is pleased. Alms though in a small amount, when given to an individual of high moral character, give a high yield. And the giver is pleased."

It so happened that when Indaka was a human being, he had the opportunity to offer a ladleful of cooked rice to Venerable Anuruddha Thera, one of our Lord Buddha's Perfected Disciples. The Punna earned was greater than that earned by Ankura who had offered food to ordinary folks every day for 10,000 years.

This account shows that alms offered to an individual deserving of alms bear abundant fruit.



### 3.3 Asappurisadana and Sappurisadana

The giver's attitude is reflected in the manner in which he gives alms. And this has an impact on the end result.

#### 3.3.1 Asappurisadana

“Asappurisadana” means an unrighteous person's Dana practice. An unrighteous person gives alms in an unwise manner; therefore, the yield of his Dana practice is poor. (This is like a person making an unwise investment, the return will be poor.)

- 1. Alms Given Disrespectfully:** Some people do not realize the value of Dana practice and when they do give something away, they do so in a disrespectful manner. Or they may give away something unwillingly thinking that they have to do it, and their unwillingness is reflected in their manner. For example, one may treat the receiver of one's alms like a lowly beggar. Alms when given away disrespectfully shows up in one's future existence as having a low birth, being subjected to contemptuous treatment, being treated with disrespect.
- 2. Alms Given Away without Humility:** A person may be partial to a certain monk and offers alms to him readily. But when an unrighteous monk shows up, he may not feel like offering alms to the monk when in fact he needs to exercise impartiality by thinking that he is making an alms-offering to the Sangha as a whole in order to support Buddhism.
- 3. Alms not Given in Person:** A person may wish to give alms but asks someone else to do it for him. For example, a person may ask his servant to offer food to a monk instead of doing it himself. It is a fact that when a person is offering food to a righteous monk, joy wells up inside him and the image of the food-offering stays with him. Moreover, whenever he recalls the act, his Punna will increase. Such are the advantages of giving alms in person.
- 4. Alms Given by Throwing Them at Someone:** A person may be giving away something nice but he does it by throwing it at the receiver. This has a degrading effect on the receiver. The Punna earned is also degraded and when the Punna bears fruit, the person will receive things that are flawed or broken or he may break them accidentally. Or the person may be wealthy but only for a time. Etc.
- 5. Alms Given without Faith in the Merit of Alms-Giving:** When a person does not believe in the existence of the round of rebirth, he cannot be devoted to Dana practice. It is like working toward a goal that one is not sure of. One cannot be fully devoted to the work. Alms given in this manner earns a low amount of Punna.

The practice of Asappurisadana cannot very much improve one's quality of life because the practice does not cause the mind to be much purer and brighter. In fact, one may even be annoyed during the act causing the amount of Punna earned to decrease further.

### 3.3.2 Sappurisdana

“Sappurisdana” means a righteous person’s Dana practice. A righteous person is wise and knows how to conduct his life correctly. His Dana practice can improve the quality of his life and earn the maximum Punna possible. The Lord Buddha teaches “Sappurisdana” in the Asappurisdana Sutta and the Sappurisdana Sutta.

**1. A Righteous Person Believes in Dana Practice:** He practices Dana because he believes in the Law of Kamma in that good deeds beget good consequences and evil deeds beget ill consequences. He believes that each living being’s life is determined by its overall Kamma. He believes in the Lord Buddha’s enlightened knowledge. He believes that human beings can become pure through wholesomeness in thought, word, and body. He believes that a mind possessing a high level of purity can more easily attain the different stages of Enlightenment.

The Lord Buddha teaches that a person believing in Dana practice will be very wealthy, very good-looking, very attractive, awe-inspiring, and very fair-complected when the Punna bears fruit.

**2. A Righteous Person Practices Dana with Respect:** He respects the receiver of his alms. He is gentle and humble. When he offers alms to a righteous monk, he does so by holding the alms with both hands. Etc.

**3. A Righteous Person Knows when It Is the Right Time to Practice Dana:** For example, he knows when he can make a Kathina Offering to the Sangha, since Kathina Offering is considered to be “Kaladana” (alms which must be offered within a particular time period).

The Lord Buddha teaches five additional aspects of Kaladana in the Kaladana Sutta as follows.

3.1 Agantukadana: Giving alms to visitors

3.2 Gamikadana: Giving alms to those preparing to take a trip

3.3 Dubabhikhadana: Giving alms to the needy during a drought or an economic downturn

3.4 Navasassadana: Making an offering of newly harvested rice

3.5 Navaphaladana: Making an offering of newly harvested fruit

The Lord Buddha says that a person who knows when it is the right time to give alms will be very wealthy and will receive whatever he needs whenever he needs it when the Punna bears fruit.

**4. A Righteous Person Practices Dana out of the Goodness of His Heart:** He gives to the needy without expecting anything in return. The Lord Buddha says that whoever gives away things out of the goodness of his heart will be very wealthy when the merit bears fruit.

**5. A Righteous Person Practices Dana without Causing Trouble for Himself or Other People:** For example, a righteous person does not kill an animal in order to make a food-offering.

Neither does he practice Dana in order to show off or make others feel inferior to him. Etc.

The Lord Buddha says that whoever practices Dana without causing trouble for himself or other people will be very wealthy and his wealth will never be destroyed by fire, water, or taken away by the government, thieves, or an errant heir when the Punna bears fruit.

**There are eight additional aspects of Sappurisdana** as mentioned in the Pathamasappurisa Sutta as follows.

1. Giving things that are clean.
2. Giving things that are neat.
3. Knowing the right time to give alms.
4. Giving things that are appropriate.
5. Choosing an appropriate receiver.
6. Giving alms regularly.
7. Giving alms with a bright and clear mind.
8. Feeling happy after one has given alms.

Therefore, when we practice Dana, we must make sure that all three factors of Dana are met in that the alms are pure, the intention is pure (before, during, and after the act) and the individuals involved are pure (the giver and the receiver). Moreover, we must practice Sappurisdana so that we can gain the maximum Punna from our Dana practice.

## 3.4 How to Practice Dana

To earn as much Punna as possible from Dana practice, several factors are involved. Some of these factors include the belief in Dana practice, the availability of alms, and a receiver worthy of the alms as taught by the Lord Buddha in the Sammukhi Sutta as follows.

Sometimes, even when the three factors mentioned above are present, one may not be able to practice Dana. For example, one cannot make a Kathina-Offering anytime one wishes because certain alms must be given during a particular period (Kaladana).

At any rate, there are things that we can do in order to ensure maximum Punna whenever we want to practice Dana.

**3.4.1 Intention:** We can purify our intention by keeping our mind on the virtue of the Triple Gem and the fruit of Dana practice. We realize that Dana practice is the means to overcome our miserliness. We know that Dana practice cleanses and purifies our mind. We practice Dana because we believe in it and it pleases us to do it.

**3.4.2 Alms:** Once we have the intention to practice Dana, the next step is to find appropriate alms. We can make sure that our alms are clean, beautiful, neatly arranged, and of superior quality (Samidana). We must also follow the directions given in the Tipitaka in order to earn the maximum Punna possible from our Dana practice.

**Appropriate Alms:** We are told in the Sutta that alms consist of ten items. These include rice, water, cloth, vehicle or means of transportation, flowers, scented items, skin treatment, bedding, shelter, and light sources.

We are told in the Vinaya that alms consist of four items. These include 1) Civara (clothing), 2) Pindapata (food), 3) Senasana (shelter), and 4) Gilanabhesajja (medicine).

We are told in the Abhidhamma (Paramattha) that alms consist of six sacrifices or Paramattha-6. It includes taking no pleasure in corporeality, sound, smell, taste, touch, and feeling. This topic is further explained by the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam) as follows.

“Dana according to Paramattha-6 involves Ayatana-6 where Ayatana-6 means taking pleasure in corporeality, sound, smell, taste, touch, and feeling. But Paramattha-6 requires one to withdraw from such pleasures. One is to give up such pleasures. Human beings have taken pleasures in these things before we were born. They do so when we are here. And they will continue to do so after we die.

We are to abandon these pleasures. We do not allow them to penetrate our mind. We must consider the fact that these pleasures belong to the secular world. They do not belong to the Dhamma world. We are to give up these pleasures. We do not hold on to them and allow them to penetrate our mind. But we keep our mind quiet and still instead. This is what is meant by giving up pleasures as Dana practice. This kind of Dana practice is the source of wholesomeness, and the gateway to Nibbana. It is considered to be the highest good or Paramattha.”<sup>1</sup>

**Inappropriate Alms:** These include alcohol, other addictive substances, negative forms of entertainment, animals used for a mating purpose, sexually provocative pictures or things, and weapons.

**3.4.3 Purifying Oneself before Practicing Dana:** One pledges either the Five Precepts or the Eight Precepts and practice meditation before practicing Dana. One contemplates the recipient of the alms. One regards him as if he was an Arahat or a representative of the Sangha who are perpetuating Buddhism.

**3.4.4 Making a Resolute Wish:** One holds the alms with both hands and raising them above one’s head as one makes a resolute wish. “May my Dana practice benefit myself and others...” Whatever one may wish for, it is important that one ends one’s resolute wish with “Nibbanapaccayo hotu”, which means may it lead me to Nibbana. Sages of old ended their resolute wish with “May I find the crystal sphere. May I avoid Mara’s trap. May I attain Nibbana in the future.”

**3.4.5 Having No Regret after the Dana Practice:** One recalls one’s Dana practice with delight so that one can earn the maximum Punna possible. Once Punna is earned, it is time to dedicate it to other living beings. As one keeps one’s mind quiet and still, one can recite the Pali verse,

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<sup>1</sup> The Dhamma Heritage of Luang Por Wat Paknam (Phramonkolthepmuni), pages 358-359

“Idan me natinan hotu sukhita hontu natayo”

May the Punna earned benefit my relatives, and may they live happily!

### 3.4.6 Dana Practice in Our Daily Life

Dana must be practiced daily in order to affirm our Sammaditthi (or Right View). Dana practice must be part of our habit and daily routine. Examples of Dana practice are as follows.

1. **Making a Food Offering:** We can offer food to the monks or the novices who come on their alms-round near our home or we can bring the food to them at the temple.
2. **Offering Sanghadana:** We can offer alms to the Sangha at the temple or invite them to receive alms at our home on such important occasions as a house-blessing ceremony, a birthday anniversary, etc.
3. **Releasing Live Animals:** This form of Dana practice is very popular, and the results of which are longevity and good health. The reason is when we release live animals that are about to be slaughtered for food, we are giving them life.

## 3.5 The Fruit of Dana Practice

When we give alms, we do so in order to earn Punna and the Punna accumulated is stored in our mind. Our accumulated Punna has the power to attract good things into our life the way a beautiful flower filled with nectar attracts bees and butterflies.

It is written in the **Siha Sutta** about the fruit of Dana as follows.

1. A giver endears himself to other people.
2. A righteous person wants to associate with a giver.
3. A giver earns a good reputation.
4. A giver feels at ease and bold under every social circumstance.
5. A giver will be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

Normally, people expect to see the result of his wholesome act immediately and if their expectation is not met, they feel discouraged and may not want to continue performing wholesome deeds. But according to the Lord Buddha's Teaching cited above, a giver can expect to see four different results here and now and one result in the next existence.

Whenever we perform a wholesome deed, we can witness its result with our mind in that we feel good about our action. If we can continue to perform wholesome deeds and nurture the joy we feel each time we perform a wholesome deed, it will have the power to attract good things into our life in the same way that we take good care of a sapling by regularly watering it and fertilizing it. Soon, it will grow and bear fruit. Each time we practice Dana, we feel good and we feel happy because we have overcome our miserliness. We feel magnanimous and we have only goodwill toward the receivers of our alms who feel happy receiving alms from us as well. It is for this reason that a giver endears himself to other people.

When a person practices Dana regularly, he becomes more and more generous and he feels happier and happier. As a result, people enjoy keeping the company of a generous and happy person.

When he is constantly surrounded by righteous individuals and is admired by all, he naturally feels at ease and bold under every social circumstance.

Everyone who practices Dana can witness these four fruits of Dana practice. When a person practices Dana and accumulates Punna regularly, it causes his mind to be wholesome, bright and clear and a bright and clear mind leads to rebirth in the States of Happiness as in the Lord Buddha's Saying,

“Citte Asankilithe sugati patikankha” When the mind is not sad and gloomy, it can expect the States of Happiness.

### 3.5.1 Dana Practice that Bears Instant Fruit

Whenever a person practices Dana, Punna appears. He can experience the presence of Punna because he feels good, happy, clean, etc.

The presence of Punna is not unlike electric current which we cannot see but we can see its effect. We can see how electric current causes the fan to turn, the iron to get hot, the refrigerator to have a cooling effect, etc. We cannot see Punna but we can feel its effect. (However, those who have achieved elevated meditative attainments can see Punna.)

Each time a person performs such wholesome deeds as alms-giving, Precepts observation or meditation practice, Punna appears. Punna has the power to cleanse our mind making it clear and bright. Accumulated Punna turns into a Punna Sphere and the Punna Sphere has the power to attract the three treasures, namely, favorable corporeal attributes, material wealth, and favorable mental attributes.

Whenever a person's accumulated Punna is at a high level and it is bearing fruit, all kinds of material wealth will find its way to him. But when a person's accumulated Punna is at a low level or is being quickly depleted, whatever material wealth he has will leave him either gradually or suddenly.

When a person performs misdeeds or when he allows his mind to be dominated by greed or miserliness, it will cause the quality of his life to deteriorate. To be born wealthy and to remain wealthy for the rest of one's life, one had to have practiced generosity and accumulated a high level of Punna in one's previous life (lives), since Punna causes all kinds of treasure to appear.

There are two different kinds of Punna: Past Punna (the Punna accumulated in the previous existence) and current Punna (the Punna accumulated in the present existence).

- **Past Punna** is the Punna accumulated in one's previous lives up until the moment of birth.
- **Current Punna** is the Punna accumulated since birth up to the present moment.

If there is a high level of past Punna, one will be reborn with every desirable treasure such as material wealth (material wealth is the fruit of Dana practice), good looks (favorable corporeal attributes are the fruits of Sila practice), and a high level of intelligence (favorable mental attributes are the fruits of Bhavana practice). One may wonder how a person is very miserly and does not accumulate merit at all in the current existence, and yet he is able to accumulate a great deal of material wealth. This can happen because he possesses a high level of past Punna.

Another person may practice Dana earnestly and regularly and yet he does not seem to be getting any wealthier. This happens because he rarely practiced Dana in his previous life (lives); therefore, he does not possess enough past Punna to attract great material wealth to him. Nonetheless, the Punna earned in the present lifetime will definitely bear fruit in his future existences.

Another person not only is born under very fortunate circumstances but can also continue to amass new Punna in the current existence. In this case, the high level of his past Punna plus the Punna earned by supporting Buddhism here and now can bear instant fruit. This quality is called “Sampadaguna” which means instant fulfillment.

#### **Sampadaguna consists of four aspects:**

- 1. Vatthusampada:** It means the availability of a merit field in that the receiver of a person’s alms practices righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya. The higher the level of righteousness, the more Punna can be earned.
- 2. Paccayasampada:** It means the availability of alms in that the alms to be offered were obtained through righteous means.
- 3. Cetanasampada:** It means good intention in that a person gives alms in order to cleanse and purify his mind. His motive is pure and he gives without expecting anything in return, be it gain, position or fame. His intention is good; therefore, he feels happy before, during, and after the act.
- 4. Gunatirekasampada:** It means the availability of a special merit-field in that the receiver is an Arahant or an Anagami who has just emerged from the bliss of cessation (or Nirodhasamapatti).

Dana practice involving Sampadaguna can bear instant fruit as in the case of the man called “Punna”.

## **Punna**

When the Lord Buddha was staying at the Veluvanna Temple in the city of Rajagarh, there was a poor man called “Punna”. He lived in the city with his wife and daughter. He was an employee of the wealthy man called “Sumana”. On the day that the city held a festival, Sumana asked Punna,

“Are you going to the festival or are you working today?”

Punna answered,

“Going to the festival costs lots of money. It’s for rich people. I’m a daily wage earner. If I don’t work today, how can I sustain myself tomorrow? I’d better till the paddies today as usual.”

Sumana assigned Punna a team of oxen and Punna went to see his wife saying to her, “There’s a festival in the city today but we can’t go because we’re poor. I’ll go and work in the paddies. Can you double the portion of my boiled vegetable today?”

On that very day, Venerable Sariputra Thera had just emerged from the bliss of cessation and checked to see who would have the special opportunity of offering food to him that day. What he saw with his supernormal insight was the image of Punna. Next, the Arahata checked to see if Punna was a believer and whether Punna would be able to offer him food. The Arahata saw that Punna was a believer and had enough to offer him some food. Moreover, he could also see that after the alms-giving, Punna would receive enormous wealth.

Venerable Sariputra Thera put on his robe and picked up his alms-bowl before appearing at the place where Punna was working. When Punna saw the Arahata, he was filled with joy and hastened to pay homage to the Arahata. He thought what the venerable monk needed at the time was a teeth-cleaning stick; therefore, he fashioned a teeth-cleaning stick for the Arahata. Next, Venerable Sariputra Thera handed Punna his alms-bowl and a straining cloth. Punna understood that the Arahata wished for some drinking water, so he poured some water through the straining cloth and into the alms-bowl for the Arahata.

Venerable Sariputra Thera considered the fact that if he were to go to Punna’s house then, Punna’s wife would not see him. Therefore, he waited at the paddy until it was close to the time when Punna’s wife would be bringing food for her husband. When the Arahata saw with his supernormal insight that Punna’s wife was on her way to the paddy, he got up and walked toward the city.

When Punna’s wife saw Venerable Sariputra Thera, she thought,

“Sometimes I have food but I can’t find a venerable monk. Sometimes, I meet a venerable monk but I don’t have any food with me. Today I meet a venerable monk and I also have some food with me. This is now my opportunity to offer food to the venerable monk.”

She put the food-container down, paid homage to the Arahata, and said,

“Venerable sir, please do not think of this food as being of bad or good quality but please accept it for the benefit of a poor woman like me.”

The Arahata extended his alms-bowl toward Punna’s wife and she poured the food into the alms-bowl. Half-way through the Arahata used his hand to close the alms-bowl. But Punna’s wife said to him,

“Please accept all of the food for the sake of my benefit here and now and for my future existences.” Punna’s wife poured the rest of the food into the alms-bowl and made a resolute wish, “May I attain the Dhamma that the venerable monk has attained!”

Venerable Sariputra Thera said to her,

“May your resolute wish be realized!” Punna’s wife hurried home to prepare food for her husband as the Arahata looked for a place to sit down and have his meal.

On the part of Punna, having tilled much of the paddy, he was famished. He unyoked the oxen and went to rest under a shady tree. He had to wait a long while for his wife to bring him his meal. Punna’s wife realized the time and was afraid that her husband might be



angry at her lateness and might even beat her out of anger and hunger. Therefore, she shouted to him from a distance,

“Husband, keep your mind bright and clear for just this one day. Do not lay waste to the good that I did earlier. I had already brought you food a long while back but I ran into Venerable Sariputra and I decided to offer him your food. I had to hurry home to prepare another meal and couldn’t bring it to you until now. Do rejoice in the merit.”

Punna asked his wife to repeat her words to make sure that he had heard her correctly the first time. He was filled with joy and said to her,

“Ah, you had done well offering food to Venerable Sariputra Thera. This morning I also had the opportunity to offer him some water and a tooth-cleaning stick.”

Both husband and wife were filled with overwhelming joy. After the meal, Punna laid his head on his wife’s lap and took a nap. When he woke up and looked at the tilled paddy, he was very much surprised and said to his wife:

“Take a look at the paddy. Can you see how the upturned earth looks just like gold?”

His wife said that she could. Both rushed to the paddy and picked up a chunk of gold. Punna struck it against the ploughshare, and there was the ringing sound of metal. He burst out in joyous disbelief,

“How absolutely amazing that our earned merit is bearing instant fruit!”

Such a huge amount of gold cannot be easily hidden and Punna felt it necessary to inform the king about it. He placed a few chunks of gold on a tray and presented it to the king. He told the king the whole story. The king had his officials bring the gold to the palace but the officials were talking amongst themselves that the gold belonged to the king.

As a result, when they unloaded the gold, it promptly turned back into clumps of soil. Upon witnessing the incident, the king asked his officials what they were saying when they were unloading the gold.

They answered,

“We said this is the king’s gold.”

The king said to them,

“That was a wrong remark. You should say instead that this is Punna’s gold.”

As the officials did as told, the clumps of soil turned back into gold. The king decided to call a meeting of the ministers before appointing Punna as “Bahudhana, the Wealthy Man”. Bahudhana means enormous wealth.

Punna’s Dana practice involved Sampadaguna in that the receiver of his food was an Arahat in the personage of Venerable Sariputra Thera, the food offered to him was obtained through right livelihood, the intention of the giver was good before, during, and after the Dana practice. Venerable Sariputra Thera had just emerged from the bliss of cessation and was considered to be “Gunatirekasampada”. It was for these reasons that the merit earned could bear instant fruit.

### **3.5.2 Alms and Their Different Fruits**

Generally, when one practices Dana, one receives happiness and joy not to mention merit. And it is a normal practice that one asks for wish fulfillment each time that one practices Dana.

The Lord Buddha teaches that we also automatically receive different fruits depending on what we give as alms.

On one occasion, a celestial being asked the Lord Buddha,

“Most Exalted One, what can a person offer as alms in order to receive physical strength? What can a person offer as alms in order to receive beauty? What can a person offer as alms in order to receive happiness? What can a person offer as alms in order to receive good eyesight?”

The Lord Buddha answered,

“The giving of food is the giving of physical strength.

The giving of cloth is the giving of beauty.

The giving of means of transportation is the giving of happiness.

The giving of a light source is the giving of good eyesight.

The giving of shelter is the giving of every good thing.

The giving of Dhamma knowledge is the giving of eternal truth.”

#### **The Giving of Food Is the Giving of Physical Strength**

Human beings depend on food for survival. Whatever the size a human being may be, he still needs to sustain himself by eating regularly. A person depleted of physical strength feels energized after he has eaten some food. Therefore, the Lord Buddha teaches that the giving of food is the giving of physical strength. It means that when we offer food as alms, the merit earned will bless us with physical strength.

#### **The Giving of Cloth Is the Giving of Beauty**

A person, despite a fair complexion and a handsome body, looks unbecoming and pitiful in dirty and torn clothes. But clean and neat-looking clothes make a person presentable. Therefore, the Lord Buddha teaches that the giving of cloth is the giving of beauty. It means that when we offer cloths as alms, the merit earned will bless us with physical beauty.

#### **The Giving of Means of Transportation Is the Giving of Happiness**

It is normal that a traveler encounters all sorts of hardship especially if the distance is great. The road may be rough and full of potholes. It may be overgrown in some areas. There may be danger from wild animals. The sun may be very hot, the rain very hard, and the winds very strong. However, if someone offers the traveler some means of transportation in terms of an umbrella, a pair of shoes, a set of steps, a bridge, etc., he is offering convenience and comfort to the traveler. Therefore, the Lord

Buddha teaches that the giving of means of transportation is the giving of happiness. It means that when we offer means of transportation as alms, the merit earned will bless us with happiness.

### **The Giving of a Light Source Is the Giving of Good Eyesight**

A light source allows us to see everything clearly in the dark. It is for this reason the Lord Buddha teaches that the giving of a light source is the giving of good eyesight. It means that when we offer a light source as alms, the merit earned will bless us with good eyesight.

### **The Giving of Shelter Is the Giving of Every Good Thing**

After a hard day's travel, a traveler longs to rest inside a shelter. After being in the sun and exposed to the elements all day long, a traveler longs to rest inside a shelter. Having had a respite, he can then resume his travel. Therefore, the Lord Buddha teaches that the giving of shelter is the giving of every good thing. It means that when we offer shelter as alms, the merit earned will bless us with every good thing.

### **The Giving of Dhamma Knowledge Is the Giving of Eternal Truth**

Giving Dhamma knowledge is the supreme form of Dana practice because Dhamma knowledge is true knowledge. Dhamma knowledge allows us to know about things that matter in life such as merit and demerit, wholesomeness and unwholesomeness, the importance of Dana practice, how to cultivate Right View, Precepts observation, meditation practice, how to chant and pay homage to the Triple Gem, and what give rise to favorable corporeal attributes, material wealth, and favorable mental attributes.

Anyone having the ability to pass on the Lord Buddha's Teachings is said to be the giver of ambrosial nectar because people can attain the everlasting bliss of Nibbana, and rise above birth, aging, sickness, and death as a result of having listened to the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

Listeners of the Lord Buddha's Teachings fear all forms of unwholesomeness but feel motivated to continue performing wholesome deeds. They are determined to keep their minds bright and clear. They have the courage to embark upon the Path of Enlightenment. The giver of Dhamma knowledge gives what is truly sublime; therefore, the Lord Buddha teaches that the giving of Dhamma is the giving of eternal truth.

#### **3.5.3 Dana Practice and Its Different Fruits**

Differences in the fruit of Dana arise from different factors such as the number and quality of alms, the intention of the alms-giver, the timing of the Dana practice, the moral character of the receiver(s), etc.

## **The Intention**

A person who feels joyful before he practices Dana (Pubbacetana is pure) will reap the fruit of his Dana practice during the first part of his life in his next rebirth (from birth up until 25 years of age). It means that in the first 25 years of his life, he will be blessed with every good thing in life.

A person who feels joyful while he is practicing Dana (Muncanacetana is pure) will reap the fruit of his Dana practice during the middle part of his life in his next rebirth (from 26 years of age to 50 years of age). During this period of his life, he will be blessed with every good thing in life.

A person who feels joyful after he has practiced Dana (Aparaparacetana is pure) will reap the fruit of his Dana practice during the last part of his life in his next rebirth (from 51 years of age onward). During this period of his life, he will be blessed with every good thing in life.

And whoever feels joyful before, during, and after Dana practice will be blessed with every good thing in life from birth up until the end of his life.

However, if the intention is spoiled, it will have a deleterious effect on his life. For example, if a person did not feel joyful for one reason or another before the Dana practice but at the sight of the monks, he feels joyful to be practicing Dana. Afterward, he feels joyful every time he recalls the act. What will happen in his next rebirth is that during the first part of his life, he will meet with hardship but his life conditions will improve during the middle part and will continue to improve all throughout the rest of his life.

We can also look at things another way. Suppose during the first part of a person's life, he met with good things and continued to prosper during the middle part but when he enters the last part of his life he begins to experience difficulties. For example, he may feel ill at ease spending any of his money. When this happens, chances are that in his previous existence, he might have felt joyful before and during Dana practice but might have had regrets afterward as a result of his miserliness. For example, he might have felt that he should not have been so generous or he might have felt that he should have invested the money instead.

Therefore, to earn the most merit possible from Dana practice, one must feel joyful before, during, and after the act as stated in the Dana Sutta.

## **Quality of the Merit Field**

Besides the intention of the alms-giver, the moral character of the receiver also plays an important role in determining the level of merit that can be gained from Dana practice. When the receiver practices righteousness according to the Dhamma-Vinaya, enormous merit can be gained but not so when the receiver is of poor moral character.

## **Timing**

Some people practice Dana as soon as they are seized by the inspiration. Some people wait until they are ready. Some people hesitate because they are still dominated by miserliness and may take a very long time before they decide to practice Dana.

Naturally, the fruit of Dana practice in the above cases will be different. For a person who practices Dana as soon as he feels inspired, when the merit bears fruit, he will receive the fruit promptly and completely. When a person waits or hesitates before he practices Dana, when the merit bears fruit, it will do so in a hesitant manner and not completely.

## **Practicing Dana as an Individual or as a Group**

Some people are wealthy but lacking in colleagues and subordinates. As a result, they find it difficult to accomplish anything and they have no one to look after their business for them.

Some people are not wealthy but are blessed with family and friends who stand ready to help them in times of need.

Some people are lacking in both material wealth and friends and encounter much hardship in life.

Some people have material wealth, colleagues and subordinates. They find it easy to accomplish anything and life is easy for them.

The Lord Buddha explains the causes of the different scenarios cited above as follows.

The first scenario happens because a person accumulates merit but does not bother to encourage other people to accumulate merit. It can be said that he looks out only for his own future wealth but he does not care enough to look out for other people's future wealth but allows it to disappear instead. Therefore, in his next rebirth, he will be very wealthy but he will lack colleagues and subordinates.

The second scenario happens because a person does not bother to accumulate merit. Worse yet, he discourages other people from doing it. Therefore, in his next rebirth, he will be low-born, poor, and lacking in friends. He will encounter much hardship. He will be born among the same sort of people and he will be looked down upon.

The third scenario happens because a person accumulates merit and encourages other people to accumulate merit as well. In other words, he looks out for his own future wealth as well as the future wealth of other people. Therefore, in his next rebirth he will be wealthy and surrounded by honest and loyal colleagues and subordinates. He will have all the help he needs to accomplish what he wants.

Dana practice bears incomparable fruit. We are so fortunate to be born a human being and a Buddhist. We have the opportunity to learn about the Lord Buddha's Teachings to such an extent that we know to exercise heedfulness at all times by taking every opportunity to accumulate merit.

In terms of Dana practice, we must be sure to practice it our self and encourage other people to do it as well. We must do these things until they become a force of habit. We must also practice Dana as soon as we feel inspired. We must not hesitate for hesitation allows defilements to have the upper hand. We must practice generosity to the best of our ability and nothing is considered too little.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 4

## Dhammadana

### **4.1 Types of Dhammadana**

#### 4.1.1 Vidyadana

- Secular Vidyadana
- Dhamma Vidyadana

#### 4.1.2 Abhayadana

### **4.2 The Fruit of Dhammadana**

### **4.3 Teaching the Dhamma**

#### 4.3.1 How to give a Dhamma lecture

- The lecture must proceed chronologically
- The lecture must contain cause and effect
- The lecture must be given out of loving-kindness
- The lecture must not be given for the sake of gain
- The lecture must not contain sarcastic remarks

#### 4.3.2 When to give a Dhamma lecture

### **4.4 The Fruit of Teaching the Dhamma**

## **4.5 Listening to a Dhamma Lecture**

### 4.5.1 How to listen to a Dhamma lecture

- Do not underestimate the value of the Dhamma topic
- Do not look down on the Dhamma lecturer
- Do not underestimate one's ability to comprehend the Dhamma lecture
- Focus your attention on the Dhamma lecture
- Exercise analytical reflection

### 4.5.2 When to listen to a Dhamma lecture

- On Dhammassavana Day
- When one is worried
- When a Dhamma lecture is being given by a qualified individual

## **4.6 The Fruit of Listening to a Dhamma Lecture**



## Concepts

1. Dhammadana means giving the gift of wholesome and useful advice to other people.
2. There are two types of Dhammadana: Vidyadana and Abhayadana. Vidyadana means giving the gift of knowledge. This includes secular knowledge and Dhamma knowledge. Abhayadana means giving the gift of safety. Abhayadana means not harming oneself or other people. It means not holding a grudge.
3. Dhammadana is the source of enormous merit, much more so than Amisadana (or alms-giving) because Dhamma knowledge can inspire a person to believe in Buddhism, perform wholesome deeds, and attain Ariyahood.
4. To give an effective and efficient Dhamma lecture, the lecturer must possess the attributes of a Dhammakathika.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to know how to practice Dhammadana and the different fruits it bears.
2. To enable the student to know how to give a Dhamma lecture and how to listen to a Dhamma lecture.
3. To enable the student to know how Dana practice can affect all three levels of our life objective.

# Chapter 4

## Dhammadana

Dhammadana means giving the gift of wholesome and useful advice to other people. Such advice includes details about Punna (or merit) and Papa (or demerit), how to abstain from all things unwholesome, how to perform all things wholesome, and how to eliminate Kilesa (or defilements).

### 4.1 Types of Dhammadana

There are two types of **Dhammadana**: Vidyadana and Abhayadana

#### 4.1.1 Vidyadana

**Vidyadana** means giving the gift of knowledge. Vidyadana includes secular Vidyadana and Dhamma Vidyadana.

- **Secular Vidyadana:** It means giving the gift of secular knowledge. It is knowledge in the areas of the arts and sciences. Secular Vidyadana is the kind of knowledge that equips one to earn a living and afford a comfortable lifestyle. Secular knowledge is considered by Buddhism to be “Angasamanidhi”, which means a treasure trove that goes everywhere with us. Secular knowledge allows one to have the confidence that one’s knowledge will help one to survive and thrive.
- **Dhamma Vidyadana:** (Dhamma Vidyadana is considered to be genuine Dhammadana). Giving the gift of Dhamma knowledge is synonymous with giving the gift of sublime knowledge. Without Dhamma knowledge, it is easy to go down the wrong path, hence, encountering many problems. But when a person receives the gift of Dhamma knowledge and decides to practice it in his daily life, he finds the quality of his life to improve. Moreover, he is confident that true happiness is attainable.

The gift of Dhamma knowledge can be compared to an everlasting treasure or a guiding light that leads one to live life correctly. It also leads one to happiness and prosperity.

Practicing what the Lord Buddha teaches allows one to accumulate Punna to the best of one’s ability; the result of which is rebirth in the States of Happiness. And when Punna has been accumulated to the fullest extent, one can extinguish all Kilesa and follow the Lord Buddha to Nibbana. It is for these reasons that the Lord Buddha says, “Dhammadana is the best gift of all.”

#### 4.1.2 Abhayadana

Abhayadana means giving the gift of forgiveness, hence, the gift of safety in that one does no harm to oneself or other people. One does not hold a grudge. One is not vindictive. On the contrary, one feels toward others nothing but loving-kindness and goodwill.

Many people find it very difficult to give the gift of forgiveness but the regular practice of the Lord Buddha's Teachings helps one to understand the benefit of forgiveness. As a result, one finds it easier and easier to forgive other people's transgressions.

When we give the gift of forgiveness, we stand to gain the most from our act. The reason is each time we choose to forgive someone, we feel free, light, cheerful, and happy.

Another form of Abhayadana is the release of live animals about to be killed for food. When we rescue animals from certain death, we are giving them the gift of safety, longevity, and freedom.

When we practice the Sila (or observe the Precepts), we are practicing what the Lord Buddha calls "Mahadana". Sila practice is a higher form of Dana practice because we are giving other living beings the gift of safety and security. More details on this subject will be given in chapter 6.

When we forgive, we no longer harm our self by holding on to anger. Our mind will be calm, clean, and filled with loving-kindness. When practiced to a certain extent, it becomes a form of meditation practice called "Mettabhavana". And Mettabhavana bears tremendous fruit.

## 4.2 The Fruit of Dhammadana

It is written about the fruit of Dhammadana in the Dhammapada Commentary that the fruit of giving the gift of Dhamma knowledge far exceeds that gained from giving the gifts of robes, food, and shelter. The reason is that a person will be moved to give the gifts of robes, food, and shelter only after he has gained a certain amount of Dhamma knowledge. This fact is borne out by the story of Roja, one of the rulers of the kingdom of Malla.

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha trekked to the city of Kusinara along with 1,250 monks.

The rulers of the kingdom of Malla heard the great news and came up with the rule that whoever did not show up to welcome the Lord Buddha would be fined 500 pieces.

Roja, one ruler of Malla was a friend of Venerable Ananda. He did not believe in the Lord Buddha but he welcomed the Lord Buddha nonetheless because he did not want to be fined. Later, he went to see Venerable Ananda.

Venerable Ananda said to him,

"Roja, you welcomed the Most Exalted One in such a grand manner today."

Roja said,

"Venerable Ananda, the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha do not cause me to give them such a grand welcome. I only did it because my relatives had come up with the rule that whoever did not show up to welcome the Buddha would be fined 500 pieces; and I didn't want to have to pay a fine."

Venerable Ananda was not pleased at all with Roja's comment. Later, he went to see the Lord Buddha about it.

"Most Exalted One, the Malla ruler Roja is a famous person. A person of his stature and influence would benefit Buddhism very much indeed. May it please the Most Exalted One to cause Roja to believe in Buddhism!"

The Lord Buddha agreed to do as Venerable Ananda asked. He spread loving-kindness to Roja before leaving His seat to go inside His perfumed dwelling. In the meantime, Roja was running everywhere in the monastery in search of the Lord Buddha. He asked the monks,

"Venerable sirs, where is the Lord Buddha now? I wish to see Him."

The monks said,

"Roja, the door to the Lord Buddha's perfumed dwelling is now closed. Please keep your voice down, and walk slowly and lightly toward the front of the Most Exalted One's perfumed dwelling. Then clear your throat softly and knock on the door and the Lord Buddha will open it for you."

Roja did as the monks advised. After he was seated in the presence of the Lord Buddha, the Lord Buddha gave him a Dhamma lecture called "Anupubbikatha". He told Roja about Dana practice, Sila practice, the Celestial Realm, the harm of degrading and gloomy sense-desire, and the fruit of abandoning sense-desire. When the Lord Buddha saw how Roja's mind was devoid of mental hindrances (Nivarana) but was joyful, and bright, He began to tell him about the Four Noble Truths. During the final part of the Dhamma lecture, Roja saw the Dhamma and attained the Fruit of Sotapanna.

Having seen the Dhamma, having penetrated the Dhamma, having removed every trace of doubt, having reached the state of bold confidence, he said to the Lord Buddha,

"May I ask all of the venerable monks to receive robes, food, shelter, and medicine from me alone?"

The Lord Buddha told him that it would not do for the monks to receive alms from him alone.

The above example demonstrates how Dhamma lectures can convert nonbelievers into believers and allow them to accumulate more and more Punna.

Aside from the Lord Buddha, no one can attain Self-Enlightenment without the aid of Dhamma lectures. Venerable Sariputra Thera was recognized by the Lord Buddha as being foremost in the area of wisdom. But he could not attain the Fruit of Sotapana until he heard a Dhamma lecture from the Arahat Assaji. He attained Arahatship after having listened to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures. Therefore, the gift of Dhamma knowledge is the best gift of all. On one occasion, King Sakka of the Tavatimsa Realm and a host of celestial beings came to see the Lord Buddha with the following question.

“What gift surpasses all other gifts?

What taste surpasses all other tastes?

What pleasure surpasses all other pleasures?

What extinguishment ends all forms of suffering?”

And the Lord Buddha gave him the following answer.

“The gift of Dhamma knowledge surpasses all other gifts.

The taste of Dhamma surpasses all other tastes.

The pleasure of Dhamma surpasses all other pleasures.

The extinguishment of craving ends all forms of suffering.”

## 4.3 Teaching the Dhamma

### 4.3.1 How to Give a Dhamma Lecture

Dhamma knowledge is the best gift of all but it is not easy for a person to give a Dhamma lecture in an efficient and effective manner. The Lord Buddha said to Venerable Ananda in the Udayi Sutta that it is not easy to give a Dhamma lecture and the Dhamma lecturer must adhere to the following five criteria.

1. His Dhamma lecture must proceed chronologically.
2. His Dhamma lecture must contain relevant causes and effects.
3. He gives Dhamma knowledge out of a kind and loving heart.
4. He does not give Dhamma knowledge for the sake of gain.
5. He must not use the Dhamma lecture to satirize himself or other people.

**1. A Dhamma Lecture Must Proceed Chronologically:** A Dhamma lecture must proceed in the correct order by beginning with material that is simple and gradually increasing in complexity. To do this, the lecturer...

- 1.1 Must have a thorough knowledge of the subject such that he knows what to mention first and what to mention later
- 1.2 Must be well-versed in the art of rhetoric such that he can get the message across to his audience.
- 1.3 Must be well-prepared in that he takes the time to prepare his lecture beforehand.

**2. A Dhamma Lecture Must Contain Relevant Causes and Effects:** The Dhamma lecturer must have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. He knows to use appropriate examples so that his audience can have a clear picture of what he is teaching.

3. **A Dhamma Lecture Is Given out of a Kind and Loving Heart:** This criterion is explained by the Lord Buddha in the Candupama Sutta.
4. **A Dhamma Lecture Is Not Given for the Sake of Gain:** The lecturer does not expect gain, recognition, fame, or praise out of his performance. His attitude remains unchanged whether there is a large or a small audience.
5. **A Dhamma Lecture Must Not Be Used to Satirize the Lecturer or Other People:** The lecturer does not use the lecture to promote himself, find faults with other people, or poke fun at someone. His sole intention should be to give Dhamma knowledge. He must make sure that the examples he uses do not negatively impact anyone.

When a Dhamma lecturer bears in mind the above five criteria, he can gain enormous merit from his act. The Lord Buddha says, “Whoever gives Dhamma knowledge without expecting gain and recognition can earn incomparable fruit.”

#### 4.3.2 When to Give a Dhamma Lecture

The Lord Buddha teaches in the Paccayavatta Sutta that during a Dhamma lecture...

1. The Dhamma lecturer has the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
2. The audience has the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
3. It means that both the Dhamma lecturer and the audience can gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter (as shown in the following example).

### 4.4 The Fruit of Teaching the Dhamma

When the Dhamma is being taught and listened to, it is the time of great blessings for all concerned in that it is a sign that happiness and peace is around the corner. The Dhamma has the power to relieve and remove every kind of problems by creating a current of goodness. And the current of goodness has the power to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

The person giving the Dhamma lecture has already learnt to practice the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. The increasing practice of the Lord Buddha’s Teachings allows his Dhamma knowledge to broaden and deepen to such a level that he can eventually penetrate the truth about reality as taught by the Lord Buddha.

It means that the giver of Dhamma knowledge stands to gain many good things such that he can eventually be emancipated from all fetters. The reason is each time one gives a Dhamma lecture, one’s mind is immersed in the Dhamma be it reviewing the material, memorizing it, considering it or contemplating it. The process causes his mind to be cleansed and purified while increasing his level of wisdom and the breadth and depth of his Dhamma knowledge.

In the process of considering the truth contained in the Dhamma lecture, one feels elated and joyful. The elation and joy has the power to overwhelm greed, anger, and ignorance momentarily. As a result, one feels calm, tranquil, and happy. One’s mind

becomes more focused allowing one's meditation practice to improve. When this happens to someone who has accumulated merit to the fullest extent, he can be emancipated from all defilements and attain Enlightenment as in the following story of Venerable Khemaka.

On one occasion, about 60 monks were staying at the Ghositaram Temple in the city of Kosambi. These monks wanted to listen to Dhamma lectures from Venerable Khemaka who was staying at the Badarikaram Temple at a distance of 12 kilometers away. Since Venerable Khemaka's dwelling was too small to accommodate all 60 monks, they decided to ask Venerable Dasaka to visit Venerable Khemaka in their place in the hope that Venerable Khemaka would come to them.

At the time, Venerable Khemaka had been taken ill with a high fever. Venerable Dasaka decided to return to the Ghositaram Temple. However, his fellow monks asked him to return to Venerable Khemaka in order to ask him some Dhamma questions.

The questioning and answering sessions went on for altogether four times. Venerable Dasaka had to go back and forth four times.

Finally, Venerable Khemaka decided to travel to the Ghositaram Temple despite his illness. Having arrived and greeted each other, the monks started asking Venerable Khemaka more Dhamma questions right away. Venerable Khemaka kindly explained every Dhamma topic in question until both Venerable Khemaka and the 60 monks had had the opportunity to consider and reflect upon the contents more and more deeply.

As soon as the Dhamma conversation ended, all 60 monks and Venerable Khemaka attained Arahatsip.

This example shows very clearly how the giving of Dhamma knowledge is the best gift of all. Both the giver of Dhamma knowledge and his audience stand to gain exceedingly much starting from basic goodness all the way to the attainment of Nibbana.

The Lord Buddha teaches that it is rare to have the opportunity to listen to a Dhamma lecture. There are two reasons for this.

1. It is very difficult to find a qualified person to give us a Dhamma lecture. First of all, there must be the happening of the Lord Buddha, and there must be righteous monks to learn His Teachings and pass them on generation after generation.
2. It is very difficult to find someone who sincerely wants to listen to Dhamma lectures. In the first place, a person may not wish to listen to a Dhamma lecture at all. In the second place, a person may wish to listen to a Dhamma lecture but during the lecture he may allow his mind to wander off. He may feel sleepy. He may feel lazy. Or he may have Wrong View. He may be deaf and mute. He may be an inhabitant of an unfortunate realm. In these cases, he will not be able to gain any benefit from listening to a Dhamma lecture.

We can consider ourselves very fortunate indeed to have been born in a Buddhist country where the Lord Buddha's Teachings are still being taught. It is not enough that we have the opportunity to listen to Dhamma lectures. We must also learn to

be a giver of Dhamma knowledge so that we can play our part in perpetuating Buddhism for a very long time to come.

We give Dhamma knowledge in order to preserve and protect Buddhism. As a Bodhisatta working toward Buddhahood, our Lord Buddha had always excelled in the area of generosity. He had given away material possessions. He had given away his flesh, blood, body parts and ultimately his life. As the Lord Buddha, he has given us Dhamma knowledge and Buddhism. He wishes all members of the Four Buddhist Communities to learn and practice His Teachings and pass them on so that they can benefit as many living beings as possible and for as long as possible.

## **4.5 Listening to a Dhamma Lecture**

### **4.5.1 How to Listen to a Dhamma Lecture**

To gain the maximum benefit from listening to a Dhamma lecture,

1. One must not underestimate the value of the Dhamma topic by thinking it simple. The reason is any Dhamma topic, be it simple or complex, when fully understood and earnestly practiced, can lead one to attain Enlightenment.
2. One must not look down on the Dhamma lecturer. One must not think that the lecturer is younger, less educated, of inferior social status, etc. One must consider the possibility that the lecturer may be superior in terms of virtue.
3. One must not underestimate one's ability to comprehend the Dhamma lecture. At times, one may not readily understand the lecture but with time and repetition, one's understanding can improve. And when that happens, one comes to appreciate the true value of Dhamma lectures. The appreciation can lead to one's happiness in this and future lifetimes.
4. One must focus one's attention on the Dhamma lecture. It is very important that during the Dhamma lecture, one does not allow oneself to be distracted. One must listen very attentively so that one can gain a deeper understanding of what is being taught.
5. One must exercise analytical reflection. One must know how to consider and reflect upon what one has heard so that more insight can be gained.

### **4.5.2 When to Listen to a Dhamma Lecture**

1. One should listen to a Dhamma lecture on Dhammasavana Day or the Buddhist Holy Day. Or one may choose a day that one is free from work such as on weekends or on days that a Dhamma lecture is being scheduled at the temple.
2. One should listen to a Dhamma lecture when one feels worried, sad, gloomy or confused, for example, when one is dominated by sexual desire, when one is angry, when one feels vindictive or when one feels the need to exploit other people.
3. One should listen to a Dhamma lecture when it is being given by a qualified individual. Such individuals are rare; therefore, one must take advantage of the situation when it arises.



## 4.6 The Fruit of Listening to a Dhamma Lecture

Dhamma lectures can yield the maximum benefit when the giver of a Dhamma lecture gives it out of the goodness of his heart and the audience listens to the Dhamma lecture attentively. When we listen to a Dhamma lecture, it is important that we listen attentively and respectfully so that we can...

1. Hear what we have not heard before.
2. Gain a deeper understanding of what we have already heard.
3. Remove any existing doubt.
4. Embark upon the Path of Nibbana.
5. Gain a deeper faith in the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

In listening to a Dhamma lecture, a non-believer can become a believer, a non-scholarly person can become a scholarly person, a person lacking in morality, concentration, and wisdom can cultivate morality, concentration, and wisdom. Most importantly, a listener of Dhamma lectures can reach the ultimate goal, which is the attainment of Nibbana.

## Conclusion

The fruits of Dana practice can be summarized as follows.

**The Fruits of Dana Practice in the Current Existence** (the basic level of our life objective)

1. One feels joyful and happy when one practices Dana
2. Dana practice leads to success and happiness here and now.
3. Dana practice gives one the opportunity to cultivate love for Dana practice, eliminate miserliness and attachment. Every Bodhisatta pursues Generosity Perfection to the fullest extent by giving away his material possessions, his flesh and blood, and ultimately his life.
4. Dana practice gives one the opportunity to develop Right View and right understanding in that Dana is a wholesome practice. Such view and understanding motivates one to practice Dana so regularly and earnestly that it becomes a habit, which follows one across lifetimes.

**The Fruits of Dana Practice in the Future** (the intermediate level of our life objective)

5. The practice of Dana leads one to the States of Happiness.
6. The merit gained from Dana practice blesses one with material wealth when one is next reborn in the Human Realm.

Whoever earnestly and regularly practices Dana, when reborn in the Human Realm, will have the opportunity and time to practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana. Dana is the bedrock of every form of wholesomeness.

**The Fruit of Dana Practice at the Ultimate Level** (the ultimate level of our life objective)

7. The attainment of Nibbana can be facilitated.

It must be emphasized that Dana practice lies at the heart of human success and happiness. It can be readily practiced and it underpins all the other forms of wholesome practice.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 5

## Sila

### 5.1 Sila and Our Life Objective

- 5.1.1. Sila and our life objective at the basic level
- 5.1.2. Sila and our life objective at the intermediate level
- 5.1.3. Sila and our life objective at the ultimate level

### 5.2 The Meaning of Sila

### 5.3 Why Must We Practice Sila?

### 5.4 Types of Sila

- 5.4.1 Sila-5 or the Five Precepts
- 5.4.2 Upasatha Sila or the Eight Precepts
- 5.4.3 Parisuddhi Sila and Mahasila
  - Patimokkhasamvarasila
  - Indriyasamvarasila
  - Ajivaparisuddhisila
  - Paccayasannisitasila

## **Concepts**

1. Sila is the intention to abstain from every form of unwholesomeness.
2. Sila practice is the means to prevent every form of pain and suffering here and now as well as in future existences. Sila practice is the source of peace and tranquility for the practitioner as well as for other people. Sila practice is the groundwork for cultivating higher virtues.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand Sila practice and its importance to the achievement of our life objective.
2. To enable the student to understand the correct meaning and description of Sila.
3. To enable the student to understand the correct objective of Sila practice.
4. To enable the student to understand the different types of Sila.

# Chapter 5

## Sila

### 5.1 Sila Practice and Our Life Objective

Every human being shares the same three levels of life objective.

**Our Life Objective at the Basic Level:** This involves a peaceful and happy lifestyle.

**Our Life Objective at the Intermediate Level:** This involves rebirth in the States of Happiness, and the avoidance of rebirth in the States of Unhappiness, which include the Hell Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, the Peta Realm, and the Animal Realm.

**Our Life Objective at the Ultimate Level:** This involves the complete removal of defilements and the attainment of Nibbana.

To achieve all three levels of our life objective, we must begin by practicing Dana because Dana practice is the source of material wealth. And material wealth makes our life easy and comfortable. Material wealth facilitates our pursuit of higher virtues.

#### 5.1.1 Sila Practice and Our Life Objective at the Basic Level

Material wealth affords us an easy and comfortable lifestyle, the next thing we must do is to make sure that our life is filled with peace and tranquility. The practice that allows us to live in peace and harmony with other people is Sila. When we practice Sila or observe the Precepts, we are preventing our self from harming other living beings with our thought, our word, and our action. Therefore, it is crucially important that every human being practices Sila.

#### 5.1.2 Sila Practice and Our Life Objective at the Intermediate Level

Sila not only controls our behavior and makes sure that we can live together in peace and harmony, but it also ensures our avoidance of the States of Unhappiness. When reborn in the Human Realm, Sila practice blesses us with good health, physical strength, and longevity, the attributes suitable for performing all kinds of wholesome deeds and putting our material wealth to good use.

#### 5.1.3 Sila Practice and Our Life Objective at the Ultimate Level

Sila practice makes it possible for us to develop such higher virtues as Samadhi (or concentration), and Panna (or insight).

Since Sila plays such an important role in our life, it behooves us to practice it earnestly and immaculately. It is written in the Silavatherathaga,

“All of you need to learn about Sila as taught in Buddhism because when one understands Sila very well and practices it earnestly, it is the source of every form of wealth in this world. Whoever wishes for the three types of happiness – praise, joy, and celestial bliss in the hereafter knows to practice Sila.

Whoever controls his conduct through Sila practice can hope to gain many friends. Whoever does not practice Sila cannot keep the friends he has. An

immoral person receives blame and the loss of reputation but a moral person receives praise and a good reputation. Sila practice is the basis of every kind of wholesomeness. It is chief among all virtues.

Therefore, it is necessary that one practices Sila immaculately. Sila practice keeps one honest, and causes one's mind to be joyful. Sila practice is the pier that reaches down to the bottom of the ocean meaning Nibbana where dwell all of the Buddhas. Therefore, it is necessary to practice Sila immaculately.

Sila is incomparable strength. Sila is the ultimate weapon. Sila is the sublime jewel. Sila is the wondrous armor. Sila is the bridge. Sila is superpower. Sila is the best perfume. Sila is sublime body powder. Anyone practicing Sila immaculately, the perfume of his Sila practice permeates his surroundings.

Sila is the source of excellent provisions for one's long journey within the round of rebirth. Sila is the most sublime means of transportation. Sila is gentle but its fragrance penetrative. A fool, who does not practice Sila, receives blame here on earth and will suffer horrifically in the state of loss of woe in the hereafter. Pain and suffering will be his lot in life.

A person, who is firmly planted in Sila, receives praise here on earth and will meet with happiness and joy in the Celestial Realm in the hereafter. His life will be blessed with happiness and joy.

Sila is supreme. And a person replete with Panna (or insight) is the loftiest individual on earth. He is triumphant here on earth as well as in the Celestial Realm because he practices Sila and possesses Panna.”

## 5.2 The Meaning of Sila

Sila has several meanings.

1. Sila is derived from the word “**Sira**” which means “head or top”. A person is a top person not because of his material wealth, power, knowledge or other uncommon abilities but it is because of his earnest Sila practice.
2. Sila means “normal” in that it is normal for us to cherish our own life and the lives of other living beings. This feeling motivates us to observe the Precepts because we do not wish to transgress against other people's lives and possessions. Therefore, Sila practice keeps us normal.
3. Sila is derived from the word “**Sitala**” which means “cool”. A person, who practices Sila, feels cool in both body and mind and makes other people feel safe in the same way one feels after having a shower and going to sit under a shady tree.
4. Sila is derived from the word “**Siva**” which means “clear”. A person, who practices Sila, is pure in body and mind. He is harmless. He is free from worry. Therefore, his life is marked by clarity and safety.

Sila is a virtue that makes one a top person, a righteous person whose life is marked by coolness, clarity, and safety.

According to the Patisambhidamagga, Venerable Sariputra Thera said,

Sila means “Cetana” or intention; that is, the intention to abstain from corporeal dishonesty (no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct) and verbal dishonesty (no lying, no offensive speech, no divisive speech, and no nonsensical speech)

Sila means “Cetasika” or the intention to abstain from mental dishonesty (covetousness, vindictiveness, and Wrong View).

Sila means physical, verbal, and mental restraints.

Sila means the absence of transgression.

Sila may have several meanings but the most important meaning is Cetana (or intention). It may be said that...

Sila is the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness and every form of dishonesty.

Sila practice (or Precepts observation) is one way of making merit because each time we decide to abstain from unwholesomeness, from harming other living beings we experience inside us the current of goodness. We feel loving and kind. The current of goodness and the feeling of loving-kindness can also be called the current of merit. Merit cleanses and purifies our mind. Sila practice improves the quality of our life and increases the purity of our mind.

In addition, Sila is a virtue having two characteristics: It is the virtue that keeps the body and mind in proper order and it is the virtue that leads to higher virtues, which include Samadhi (concentration) and Panna (insight).

### **5.3 Why Must We Practice Sila?**

When we understand why we must practice Sila, we can be motivated to practice it correctly and earnestly so that the practice can yield the maximum benefit possible.

There are five reasons for practicing Sila.

1. We practice Sila in order to safeguard our life here and now against unhappiness, problems, and deterioration as a result of doing harm to our self and other living beings.
2. We practice Sila because Sila is the source of happiness and wholesomeness.
3. We practice Sila because Sila is the source of peace and wholesomeness for our family and our society.
4. We practice Sila in order to safeguard our future existences against unhappiness, problems, and deterioration as a result of doing harm to our self and other living beings.
5. We practice Sila because Sila is the foundation of such higher virtues as Samadhi (or concentration) and Panna (or insight), which can lead one to attain the Path and Fruit of Nibbana

The first three reasons for practicing Sila have to do with living a normal and happy life. A person, who does not practice Sila, causes problems for himself and other people.

If every human being practices Sila; hence, does no harm to each other, there will be peace and harmony in the family and the society. Sila practice benefits both the self and the society.

The fourth reason for practicing Sila is to prevent unhappiness and problems in future existences because the lack of Sila practice leads one to the state of loss and woe. When reborn in the Human Realm, one will be short-lived, deformed, and sickly. These problems cause pain and suffering. Therefore, the fourth reason for practicing Sila is to prevent pain and suffering in future existences.

The fifth reason for practicing Sila is to build the foundation on which such higher virtues as Samadhi (or concentration) and Panna (or insight) can be cultivated. Samadhi can happen only when one practices Sila immaculately. Sila controls our body and word while Samadhi controls our mind. When the body and the word are not calm, it will be impossible for the mind to be calm. When Samadhi does not happen, it will be impossible to develop the kind of Panna that allows us to penetrate the reality of life. Without Panna, it will be impossible to remove defilements and attain Nibbana. And one must continue to undergo the pain and suffering of the endless round of rebirth. When one practices Sila immaculately, Samadhi can happen. When there is Samadhi, Panna is the result. When Panna happens, it is possible to remove defilements and attain Nibbana. Therefore, Sila practice leads to the ultimate benefit of attaining Nibbana.

## **5.4 Types of Sila**

There are several types of Sila depending on the objective one has in mind. One can practice Sila for the purpose of maintaining the human norm. One can practice Sila for the purpose of lifting one's mind above the human norm or for the purpose of attaining the highest purity. There are altogether three main types of Sila.

### **5.4.1 Sila-5 (Pencasila, Nicasila, Culasila)**

Sila-5 or the Five Precepts are necessary for maintaining the human norm. Every householder must endeavor to observe the Five Precepts daily.

Sila-5 consists of:

1. No killing
2. No stealing
3. No sexual misconduct
4. No lying
5. No alcohol and other addictive substances

### **5.4.2 Sila-8 (Upasatha Sila, Majjhimasila)**

Sila-8 or the Eight Precepts are observed on Uposatha Day (the Buddhist Holy Day) or on special occasions for the purpose of elevating the quality of one's mind. Sila-8 consists of:



1. No killing
2. No stealing
3. Chastity practice
4. No lying
5. No alcohol and other addictive substances
6. No food consumption from noontime to dawn the next day
7. No singing, no dancing, no playing of music, no forms of entertainment that threaten chastity practice, no adorning the body with flowers, perfume and make-up
8. No sitting or sleeping on a thick cushion or mattress

#### **5.4.3 Parisuddhisila (Mahasila)**

One observes Parisuddhisila for one's purity and tranquility. These are the Precepts observed by a Bhikku (Buddhist monk). Parisuddhisila consists of four categories.

- **Patimokkhasamvarasila**

It involves the 227 Precepts as decreed by the Lord Buddha. Bikkhus pledge the Patimokkhasamvarasila on Uposatha Day (or the Buddhist Holy Day) because they believe in the Lord Buddha's enlightened knowledge. They believe that the practice of Patimokkhasamvarasila can lead the practitioner to not only eliminate pain and suffering but also attain Nibbana more easily. Bhikkus put their lives on the line practicing the Patimokkhasamvarasila. In the Paharada Sutta, the Lord Buddha says,

“Behold, Paharada, water in the ocean is always full and yet it never overflows its shores. Likewise, my disciples do not transgress my disciplinary rules even at the cost of their lives.”

- **Indriyasamvarasila**

It is the restraint of the six sense-faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. It is feeling neither pleasure nor displeasure in seeing something, hearing something, smelling something, tasting something, and touching something. It is the practice that allows one to rise above all forms of unwholesomeness. The practice of Indriyasamvarasila requires Sati (or mindfulness). Sati is the instrument that keeps unwholesomeness at bay.

- **Ajivaparisuddhisila**

It has to do with earning right livelihood. A Buddhist monk earns right livelihood by obtaining in a righteous manner food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. He is content with what he has. The practice of Ajivaparisuddhisila requires Viriya (or effort).

- **Paccayasannisitasila**

It is the consideration of the four necessities which include food, shelter, clothing, and medicine before consuming them for the intended purposes. The practice of Paccayasannisitasila requires Panna (or insight).

These four categories of Parisuddhisila are the tools that help Bhikkus remain in the monkhood happily and joyfully.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 6

## Sila-5: The Human Norm

### **6.1 Sila Means the Human Norm**

6.1.1 Sila-5 is basic human virtue

6.1.2 Sila-5 is the result of commonsense

### **6.2 Sila is a Special Form of Dana**

## **Concepts**

1. Sila-5 means the human norm. It is the result of commonsense which in turn stems from the desire for societal peace and harmony.
2. Sila is Mahadana because it is the giving of safety to other people's lives and possessions.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the origin of Sila-5.
2. To enable the student to understand the importance of Sila-5.
3. To enable the student to understand why Sila is considered to be Mahadana.

# Chapter 6

## Sila-5: The Human Norm

1. Panatipata veramani sikkhapadana samadiyami...  
The intention to abstain from killing
2. Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadana samadiyami...  
The intention to abstain from stealing
3. Kamesumicchacara veramani sikkhapadana samadiyami...  
The intention to abstain from sexual misconduct
4. Musavada veramani sikkhapadana samadiyami...  
The intention to abstain from lying
5. Suramerayamajjapamadatthana veramani sikkhapadana samadiyami...  
The intention to abstain from alcohol and other addictive substances

### 6.1 Sila Is the Human Norm

Sila means normal. Therefore, whoever practices Sila is normal in that he is a normal human being. Normalcy gives rise to harmony and orderliness in everything animate and inanimate. The lack of normalcy causes trouble. For example, it is normal for the sun to shine during the day and for as long as the sun is still shining during the day, every living being on earth can continue to thrive. However, should one day the sun refuse to shine during the day, all kinds of trouble will break out. In fact, a solar eclipse can already pose as a problem. Another example, it rains during the rainy season; therefore, farming can proceed normally. However, if the rain does not come when it is the rainy season, agriculture will suffer and the result will be shortage of food.

Likewise, when human beings are normal, their lives and their societies can go on normally. However, when normal people become abnormal, pain and suffering will ensue for themselves and everyone around them. What makes human beings normal is Sila-5. Sila-5 or the observation of the Five Precepts is what makes human beings normal. Therefore, whoever does not observe the Five Precepts is considered to be abnormal.

#### 6.1.1 Sila-5 Is Basic Human Virtue.

Sila-5 is the tool to help control the physical and verbal conduct of us human beings so that we can live together in peace and harmony. Whoever transgresses one or more parts of Sila-5 cannot naturally behave in an abnormal manner. And abnormal conduct causes confusion and trouble for oneself and others in society.

**6.1.2 Sila-5 Is the Result of Commonsense** derived from the wish to live harmoniously, happily, and safely in society, free from danger and exploitation.

From the Veludavara Sutta, we learn that...

1. The first thing every living being receives at birth is life. Therefore, life is precious to every living being be it human or animal. If life is precious to us and we wish to live a happy life, free from harm and exploitation, then we must realize that others also feel exactly the same way about their lives.

It is precisely because we can put ourselves in other people's shoes that separates us from animals. Animals have no sense of empathy and they regularly exploit each other. Loving-kindness and compassion make human beings normal.

This aspect of human normalcy is the origin of the first Precept: Panatipata veramani or the intention to abstain from killing or using another person to kill for us.

2. It is precisely because life is precious that every human being earns a living and accumulates material wealth. Material wealth be it small or large is precious to its owner. No one wishes his material wealth to be taken away without his consent.

It is precisely because we have respect for other people's possessions that separates us from animals. Animals think nothing of stealing each other's food.

This aspect of human normalcy is the origin of the second Precept: Adinnadana veramani or the intention to abstain from stealing.

3. It is natural for a human being to be concerned about the safety of his spouse and family members. We want our family to live in a safe and loving environment and we want our children to carry on our family's name. Should anyone sexually abuse our spouse or child, we would feel very much aggrieved.

It is precisely because we have respect for other people's spouses and children that separates us from animals. Animals fight each other sometimes to the death for the right to breed with as many females as possible when they come into season.

This aspect of human normalcy is the origin of the third Precept: Kamesumicchacara veramani or the intention to abstain from sexual misconduct.

4. Honesty and trust are what every human being desires. Honesty and trust play a key role in every relationship. Deceit creates divisiveness and pain and at times even the loss of properties and lives.

It is precisely because we value honesty and trust that separates us from animals. And unlike animals that threaten each other with growls we do not use our words to threaten other people.

This aspect of human normalcy is the origin of the fourth Precept: Musavada veramani or the intention to abstain from lying.

A person who intentionally lies is a person that cannot honor truth and goodness. Such a person is devoid of honesty. Such a person is capable of committing serious offences.

5. Everyone desires peace and safety but peace and safety can happen only in the absence of recklessness. A reckless person is a person lacking in mindfulness. And a reckless person is capable of committing all forms of unwholesomeness and causing much damage.

The lack of mindfulness is caused by alcohol and other addictive substances. The lack of mindfulness makes human normalcy impossible.

Alcohol not only causes a normal person to behave insanely but it can also undermine what virtues that have been cultivated previously as exemplified by Venerable Sagata's story.

### **Venerable Sagata's Story**

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha was staying in the city of Savatthi. After the Rains-Retreat, He decided to go to the countryside of Cetiya and to the village of Bhaddavatikagam. Animal herders, rice farmers, and travelers saw the Lord Buddha and said to Him,

“Most Exalted One, please do not go to the Amba Pier because a venomous Phya Naga is living there near the ashram of the fire-worshipper. It may harm you if you go there.”

The Lord Buddha did not respond in anyway although the people had repeated the warning thrice.

At the time, Venerable Sagata Thera had practiced meditation until he could achieve the Jhanas, and he decided to go to the fire-worshipper's ashram where the Phya Naga dwelled. He went into the fire-worshipping hall, placed bunches of grass on the floor and sat down in a half-lotus position.

The Naga saw the venerable monk, and felt extremely annoyed. It spit poisonous fumes at the monk. The monk reverted the direction of the poisonous fumes but the Naga spit poisonous fumes at the monk once again. Venerable Sagata Thera entered the Tejosamapatti State and caused the poisonous fumes to revert direction once again. Finally, the Naga gave up. Venerable Sagata Thera taught the Naga to believe in the Triple Gem before returning to see the Lord Buddha at the village of Bhaddavatikagam.

After staying at the village for a time, the Lord Buddha returned to the city of Kosambi. When the people of Kosambi heard that Venerable Sagata Thera had quelled the Phya Naga at the village of Bhaddavatikagam, they went together to see the venerable monk. They said to the venerable monk,

“We wish to offer you, Venerable sir, anything you wish and however rare it may be.”

At the time, one venerable monk was jealous of Venerable Sagata Thera and he deliberately misinformed the people by saying to them,

“Alcohol the red color of pigeons’ feet is rare and is what Venerable Sagata likes. You should offer it to him.”

The people of Kosambi did as the ill-wishing monk advised such that wherever Venerable Sagata Thera went on his alms-round, the people would offer him the said alcohol. As a result of having imbibed the red liquid from one house to another, the venerable monk eventually fell unconscious at the city gate.

When the Lord Buddha left the city together with a large number of monks, He saw the unconscious form of Venerable Sagata Thera and told the monks to carry him back to the temple. They placed the monk on the floor with his head toward the Lord Buddha but the monk kept turning his feet toward the Lord Buddha.

The Lord Buddha said to His disciples,

“Behold monks, Sagata respects and honors me, does he not?”

The monks answered,

“He does, Most Exalted One.”

“Behold monks, does Sagata respect and honor me at this moment?”

“Not at all, Most Exalted One.”

“Behold monks, Sagata fought with the Naga at the village of Bhaddavatikagam, did he not?”

“He did, Most Exalted One.”

“And now, can Sagata fight with a mere water snake?”

“He cannot, Most Exalted One.”

“Behold monks, any drink that causes the loss of consciousness, should it be drunk?”

“No, Most Exalted One.”

“Behold monks, Sagata’s conduct is improper and unsuitable for a monk. Why did he drink something that causes drunkenness? His conduct can neither cause non-believers to believe nor the believers’ faith to deepen...”

Alcohol not only caused Venerable Sagata to lose his supernormal powers but also caused him to lose his dignity. It changed him from a person worthy of reverence to a person worthy of contempt. His bold heart had lost all of its boldness. These changes were easily brought about just by consuming alcohol.

However hard one may try to observe the first four Precepts, if the Fifth Precept is not observed, all will be lost. An elephant uses its trunk to feed itself, without its trunk, it



will die. In spite of having four legs, it will still die. Likewise, without the Fifth Precept, it will be impossible to observe the first four Precepts immaculately.

Every form of wholesomeness is made possible by heedfulness or the lack of recklessness. Recklessness destroys wholesomeness. Alcohol consumption is the cause of recklessness. When one is dominated by recklessness, one is capable of committing misdeeds, hence, causing one's normalcy to be lost.

Therefore, to observe the first four Precepts, one must abstain from alcohol because alcohol causes one to be reckless. It is for this reason that one must observe the Fifth Precept: Suramerayamajjapamadatthana veramani or the intention to abstain from alcohol and other addictive substances.

Sila-5 results from commonsense which in turn stems from the fact that we cherish our life, we wish to live happily, harmoniously, and safely, and we know that other living beings feel the same way.

Our Lord Buddha teaches us to be considerate. Whatever we do not wish done to us, we must not do it to others.

During the time periods on earth where Buddhism was absent, human beings had been known to practice Sila-5 as summarized in the Agganna Sutta and the Cakkavatti Sutta as follows.

Human problems have always existed even during the time period where food was abundant and human beings had an easy and comfortable lifestyle. The problems arose originally from the differences in human complexion. Some were fair-complected while others were not so fair. Differences in complexion caused human beings to develop prejudice, which gave rise to the caste system. Prejudice breeds arrogance and contempt. Prejudice caused human mental conditions to deteriorate, the consequence of which was the deterioration of the natural environment.

With the deterioration of the natural environment, the quality and quantity of food decreased. Greed and competition resulted. People became selfish. They stole from each other, and they harmed each other. Pervasive problems eventually caused human beings to realize that such problems were brought about by the lack of morality.

Sila-5 has always existed because human beings know to use reason and self-restraint in order to maintain human dignity.

## **6.2 Sila Is a Special Form of Dana**

Sila is Mahadana. Not only is Sila the means to maintain human normalcy or to keep order in society but it is also a special form of giving which is more valuable than the giving of alms. When one practices Sila, one is benefiting living beings at large because one is keeping safe other living beings' lives and possessions.

When we observe the First Precept, we do not kill. Therefore, we are keeping safe the lives of all living beings.

When we observe the Second Precept, we do not steal. Therefore, we are keeping safe other people's possessions.

When we observe the Third Precept, we do not commit sexual misconduct. Therefore, we are keeping safe other people's children and spouses. Observing the Third Precept is the best way to protect the family institution.

When we observe the Fourth Precept, we do not lie. Therefore, we are giving others our honesty and sincerity. We are generating trust.

When we observe the Fifth Precept, we do not consume alcohol or other addictive substances. Therefore, we are keeping everyone and everything safe. A person lacking in mindfulness is capable of all forms of misdeeds. He can kill. He can steal. He can commit sexual misconduct. And he can lie.

Therefore, observing the Five Precepts is a sublime form of giving. It keeps this earth, everyone and everything in it safe and happy. The Lord Buddha calls this sublime form of giving "Mahadana". In the Punnabhisanda Sutta, the Lord Buddha tells us that whoever practices Mahadana can reap the abundant benefits of the practice.

We can see that when we practice Sila-5, we are practicing Mahadana. We are giving to others out of the goodness of our generous heart in that we give to everyone and everything alike.

Therefore, Sila practice is the source of enormous merit. It is the merit generated from a special form of giving. The practice of higher Sila or the observation of additional Precepts can generate incomparable merit because it is the means to cleanse and purify our mind.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 7

## Sila Practice

### 7.1 Virati or Veramani

7.1.1 Samadanavirati

7.1.2 Sampattavirati

7.1.1 Samucchedavirati

### 7.2 Sila and Its Components

7.2.1 Killing

- What constitutes killing?
- Actions secondary to killing
  - Bodily injury
  - Torture
- Levels of gravity

7.2.2 Stealing

- What Constitutes Stealing?
- Characteristics of Stealing
  - Stealing
  - Actions secondary to stealing
  - Actions akin to stealing
- Levels of gravity

7.2.3 Sexual Misconduct

- The Components of Sexual Misconduct
- Forbidden women
- Forbidden men
- Levels of gravity

#### 7.2.4 Lying

- What constitutes lying?
- Characteristics of a lie
- Actions secondary to a lie
- Yathasanna
- Levels of gravity

#### 7.2.5 Alcohol Consumption

- What constitutes alcohol consumption?
- Levels of gravity

### **7.3 How to Practice Sila**

#### **7.4 How to Facilitate Sila Practice**

- How to Cultivate Hiri
  - Considering the status of one's birth
  - Considering one's age
  - Considering one's integrity
  - Considering one's knowledge
- How to Cultivate Ottappa
  - Incurring self-blame
  - Incurring blame
  - Incurring criminal punishment
  - Rebirth in the States of Unhappiness

## **Concepts**

1. To practice Sila, a person must pledge one of the following types of Virati: Samadanavirati, Sampattavirati or Samucchedavirati.
2. One's Sila is considered broken when all the components of the Sila are met. If not, it is considered tainted. Papa (or demerit) is incurred if one intentionally transgresses the Sila.
3. One can easily practice Sila daily by having the determination to observe the Precepts immaculately or by pledging the Sila in front of a Buddhist monk.
4. Hiri and Ottappa are the virtues that facilitate Sila practice.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the meaning and types of Virati.
2. To enable the student to understand when Sila is broken, punctured, stained, or tarnished.
3. To enable the student to understand how to observe the Precepts immaculately.

# Chapter 7

## Sila Practice

### 7.1 Virati or Veramani

To practice Sila or to observe the Precepts does not mean abstaining from unwholesomeness alone. People in prisons are not free to commit unwholesomeness. Infants cannot commit unwholesomeness given their physical limitation. In these cases, it does not mean that they are practicing Sila.

Sila practice requires intention, that is, the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness. Virati or Veramani means the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness.

“Virati” is an indication that a person is practicing Sila. To practice Sila, one must first pledge one of the following types of Virati.

1. Samadana Virati
2. Sampattavirati
3. Samucchedavirati

#### 7.1.1 Samadana Virati

Samadana Virati means the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness because one has already pledged the Sila. No circumstances can ever make one transgress the Sila. Samadana Virati is shown in the following example.

### The Story of an Upasaka

In Sri Lanka, an Upasaka had pledged the Sila in the presence of Venerable Pingalabuddharakkhita Thera at the Ambariya Temple. One day, this Upasaka went to work in the rice paddy. When it was time to rest, he unyoked his team of oxen and let them graze freely. Later, the oxen went missing and he had to go look for them until he reached the mountain called Dantaravadtamana. There, he found himself gripped by a python. He took out his sharp knife, raised it with the intention to kill the python.

But then he realized that he had already pledged the Sila that morning.

He raised his knife three times but finally he decided that he would rather give up his life than transgress the Sila.

He threw the knife away but the power of his intention to observe the Precepts immaculately caused the python to release him and slither away.

### 7.1.2 Sampattavirati

**Sampattavirati** means the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness when faced with a particular situation even though one has not yet pledged the Sila. One pauses to consider one's birth, one's family status, one's education, one's virtue, etc. Such consideration stops one from committing misdeeds as in the story of the Upasaka called "Cakkana".

### Cakkana's Story

When Cakkana was a young child, his mother fell ill and her physician told her that she had to be healed with medicine made of rabbit meat. Cakkana's older brother told him to go out and bring back a rabbit. Out in the rice paddy, Cakkana saw a rabbit munching on some rice seedlings. The rabbit saw Cakkana and tried to run away but was caught by some vines. It started to cry. Cakkana got hold of the rabbit but when he saw how the rabbit was struggling for its life Cakkana was filled with compassion for the rabbit.

"He wondered if he ought to take another living being's life just to save his mother's life.

In the end, he decided to let the rabbit go. He said to the rabbit,

"Go ahead now, graze and drink to your fill."

Upon returning home, he told his older brother everything that had happened. His brother read him a sermon but he said nothing in return. He slowly approached his sick mother and made a truthful remark.

"Ever since I was born, I have never intentionally killed any living being. By the power of this truthful remark, may my mother recover completely from her sickness!"

And his mother did recover instantly.

### 7.1.3 Samucchedavirati

**Samucchedavirati** or Setughatavirati means abstaining completely from unwholesomeness. It is the Virati observed by Ariya individuals who have already extinguished greed, anger, and ignorance.

Since they are devoid of defilements, which are the root cause of all forms of unwholesomeness, they can never transgress the Precepts.

## 7.2 Sila and Its Components

In spite of the effort put into keeping the Precepts immaculately, we may at times inadvertently harm other living beings out of necessity or out of ignorance. Whatever the reason may be, it can cause us to feel bad or question if we have transgressed the Precepts. Some people may give up practicing Sila altogether deeming it impossible to do. But it is not that way in reality.

In order to understand how to practice Sila correctly, we need to learn about the different components of Sila and how to judge when our Sila is broken, punctured, stained, or tarnished.

## 7.2.1 Killing

### • What Constitutes Killing?

Killing has five components.

1. The living being is still alive.
2. Knowing that the living being is still alive
3. Having the intention to kill the living being
4. Having tried to kill the living being
5. Successfully causing the living being to die

Killing when carried out by oneself or having another person do it or forcing other living beings to kill each other as in the case of a cockfight causes the Sila to be broken. However, if all five components of killing are not met, for example, if one tries to kill another living being but it happens to survive, one's Sila is considered punctured. A lesser offence is incurred when Sila is stained or tarnished.

### • Actions Secondary to Killing

Inflicting bodily injury and torture are actions considered secondary to killing and should be abstained from.

Actions secondary to killing include:

### • Inflicting bodily harm on another human being:

- Causing permanent physical damage to another person
- Scarring another person's face
- Wounding another person's body
- **Torture:** Here, it means torturing animals.
- Overworking an animal, not allowing it to rest, not looking after its needs
- Confining an animal by tying it up or keeping it in a cage such that the animal cannot move around; hence, suffer great physical discomfort
- Torturing animals for fun
- Encouraging animals to fight each other as in a bullfight

Killing causes the Sila to be broken. Actions secondary to killing cause the Sila to be punctured, stained, or tarnished. Different unwholesome actions bear different fruits.

### **Killing and Its Consequences**

1. The consequences of killing depends on the living being's virtue; the greater the virtue, the worse the consequences will be. Killing an Arahāt incurs worse consequences than killing an ordinary person. Killing an animal that has worked for us incurs worse consequences than killing a ferocious animal. Etc.
2. The consequences of killing depend on the living being's size. For wild animals, the greater the size, the worse the consequences will be.



3. The consequences of killing depend on the effort spent in the act; the greater the effort, the worse the consequences will be.
4. The consequences of killing depend on the intention; the greater the intention, the worse the consequences will be. Killing out of rage or hatred incur worse consequences than killing for self-protection.

### 7.2.2 Stealing

- **What Constitutes Stealing?**

Stealing has five components.

1. The item stolen is precious to its owner.
2. Knowing that the item belongs to a possessive owner
3. Having the intention to steal the item
4. Putting in the effort to steal the item
5. Having successfully stolen the item

- **Categories of Stealing**

Stealing can be divided into three different categories: Acts of stealing, actions secondary to stealing, and actions akin to stealing

1. **Acts of Stealing:** There are altogether 14 different acts of stealing.

- Taking someone's possessions in his absence
- Taking someone's possessions in his presence
- Taking someone's possessions through extortion
- Taking someone's possessions as a group and weapons are used
- Taking someone's possessions by claiming ownership without justification
- Taking someone's possessions through a deceptive scheme
- Taking someone's possessions by telling a lie
- Taking someone's possessions through a dishonest scheme such as using an inaccurate scale.
- Making and selling counterfeit products and passing them out as genuine products
- Borrowing things without returning them
- Skimming off the top
- Exchanging one's item for another person's item because it has a better quality
- Cheating on taxes by selling illegal goods
- Hiding the possessions that are about to be confiscated

2. **Actions Secondary to Stealing:** There are three categories.
    - Actions that support stealing such as buying stolen goods, providing shelter and food to a thief, etc.
    - Associating with someone for the purpose of fleecing him
    - Taking bribes
  3. **Actions Akin to Stealing:** There are two categories.
    - Destroying another person's possessions as in the case of setting fire on someone's property
    - Taking things that belong to another person out of familiarity or carelessness
- **Stealing and Its Consequences**
    1. The consequences of stealing depend on the value of the stolen item.
    2. The consequences of stealing depend on the virtue of the stolen item's owner.
    3. The consequences of stealing depend on the effort spent in the act.

### 7.2.3 Sexual Misconduct

- **What constitutes sexual misconduct?**

Sexual misconduct has four components.

1. A female or a male that should not be transgressed against
2. The intention to have sexual intercourse
3. Being engaged in a sexual act
4. Genital contact occurs.

- **Three Categories of forbidden females:**

1. A married female
2. A female under the care of her parents or a relative
3. A female forbidden by tradition such as a female forbidden by law, a female ascetic.

- **Two categories of forbidden males:**

1. A male that is not one's husband
2. A male forbidden by tradition such as a monk

#### **Sexual Misconduct and Its Consequences**

1. The consequences of sexual misconduct depend on the virtue of the person transgressed against.
2. The consequences of sexual misconduct depend on the level of the transgressor's defilements.
3. The consequences of sexual misconduct depend on the effort spent to make the sexual act happen.

## 7.2.4 Lying

- **What Constitutes lying?**

Lying has four components.

1. Telling falsehood
2. Having the intention to distort the truth
3. Trying to distort the truth
4. Truth distortion has occurred.

- **Lies and Their Different Characteristics**

- Outright lies
- Swearing that something is true when it is not
- Boasting about the supernatural powers that one does not actually possess
- Pretending that something is true
- Deliberately using misleading words
- Exaggeration
- Cutting out certain passages in order to mislead another person

- **Acts Secondary to Lying: There are two categories.**

1. Deliberately telling falsehood by:
  - Using sarcasm
  - Telling a lie in order to poke fun at another person
2. Patissava: Telling someone in a sincere manner that one will do something but does not do it by:
  - Breaking a written promise: Two parties make a written promise but later one party refuses to honor it.
  - Making a verbal promise but does not honor it.
  - Accepting the request to do something for another person but does not do it.

- **Yathasanna:** Using well-known quotations is not considered to be lying

1. The use of salutations such as respectfully yours, etc.
2. Telling or writing stories for entertainment purposes such as plays, movies, etc.
3. Saying things out of genuine misunderstanding
4. Saying things out of recklessness

- **Lying and Its Consequences**

1. The consequences of lying depend on how much damage is incurred.
2. The consequences of lying depend on the virtue of the person being lied to.
3. The consequences of lying depend on the liar.

- If the liar is a householder and says that one does not have something because one does not wish to give it to another person, the consequences are light. However, the consequences of bearing false witness against another person are grave.
- If the person is a monk or an ascetic and says things in jest, the consequences are light. However, the consequences of boasting about the supernatural powers that one does not possess are grave.

### 7.2.5 Alcohol Consumption

- **What Constitutes Alcohol Consumption?**

Alcohol consumption has four components.

1. The drink taken contains alcohol
2. Having the intention to consume alcohol
3. Making the effort to consume alcohol
4. Alcohol has gone down one's throat

- **Alcohol and Its Consequences**

They depend on:

1. The desire to consume
2. The amount consumed
3. The misdeeds committed as a result of having consumed alcohol
  - Sura means distilled alcohol
  - Meraya means un-distilled or raw alcohol

This Precept also applies to every substance that is habit-forming or causes one to lose self-control.

Knowledge about Sila allows us to decide what action causes the Sila to be broken, punctured, stained, or tarnished. For example, in an effort to chase a mosquito away one inadvertently causes it to die. This does not cause the Sila to be broken because all five components of killing have not been met.

However, an action that causes the Sila to be punctured, stained, or tarnished if it is carried out intentionally can cause the mind to become gloomy because Papa (or demerit) has been incurred. If the Sila is broken, one's mind will turn very gloomy. It is therefore crucially important that we keep the Precepts immaculately for the sake of our well-being here and now and in future existences.

## 7.3 How to Practice Sila

To practice Sila, we merely need to want to observe the Precepts. We practice Sila by intentionally abstaining from every form of unwholesomeness committed through our body, our word, and our thought. We bring to mind each of the Precepts and we tell ourselves that we would observe it as carefully as possible. Should we encounter a situation where we may transgress the Sila, we make the effort to avoid it altogether.

At the end of each day, we should think about how well we have observed the Precepts throughout the day. Should we happen to make a mistake, we must make sure not to repeat the same mistake the next day. For the Precepts that have been well observed, we make sure that we continue to do better. We must observe the Precepts so well and so mindfully that it becomes a force of habit.

We can also emphasize the practice by pledging the Sila in front of the Sangha by way of asking them to witness our commitment to observe the Precepts immaculately. This affirmation helps us to become more mindful of our Sila practice.

### **Pledging the Five Precepts**

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Honour to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One.)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Honour to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One.)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Honour to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One.)

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

Dutiyampi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the second time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Dutiyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the second time, I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Dutiyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the second time, I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

Tatiyampi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the third time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Tatiyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the third time, I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Tatiyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

(For the third time, I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi  
(I undertake the training rule to abstain from killing.)
2. Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi  
(I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given.)
3. Kāmesumicchācāra veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi  
(I undertake the training rule to avoid sexual misconduct.)

4. Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi  
(I undertake the training rule to abstain from lying.)
5. Surā-meraya-majja pamādatṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi  
(I undertake the training rule to abstain from fermented drink that causes heedlessness.)

## 7.4 How to Facilitate Sila Practice

As an ordinary householder living amidst all sorts of temptations and for some amidst scarcity, it can be difficult at times to observe the Precepts especially when no one is watching. Therefore, it is helpful to cultivate certain virtues in order to facilitate our Sila practice.

### 7.4.1 Siri and Ottappa

Two virtues that can facilitate our Sila practice are Hiri and Ottappa.

Hiri means feeling ashamed of unwholesome deeds. One does not dare think, say or do anything unwholesome because one deems it dirty and repulsive.

Ottappa means feeling fearful of the consequences of unwholesome deeds. One knows that misdeeds yield evil consequences. Therefore, one fears unwholesomeness in the same way that one fears a poisonous snake.

Whoever possesses Hiri and Ottappa can better observe the Precepts immaculately whether or not anyone is watching. There is an account about Hiri and Ottappa told by the Lord Buddha in the Silavimansa Jataka as follows.

### Silavimansa Jataka

On one occasion, 500 monks at the Jetavana Temple had entertained thoughts of sensual pleasures derived from physical form, taste, smell, sound, and touch experienced in the past. The Lord Buddha was at the time employing His Celestial Eye to check the monks' mental state like a parent watching with concern over his children. He could see that the monks were in danger and told Venerable Ananda Thera to call these 500 monks to a meeting. At the meeting, the Lord Buddha said to them,

“Behold monks, there is no secret in the world. Therefore, the sages of old refused to commit unwholesomeness.”

The Lord Buddha then told the monks a story about one of His previous lives.

At the time when King Brahmadata was ruling over the city of Benares, our Bodhisatta was born in a Brahmin family. When he was of age, he went to study the arts with a famous teacher in Benares. Our Bodhisatta was the head of the class of 500 male students.

This teacher has a teenage daughter whom he wished to be married to one of his 500 students. But it had to be the one who upheld morality. Therefore, he decided to test his students' Sila practice.

He called a meeting of his students and said to them,

“My daughter is now grown and I wish to arrange a wedding for her but she has need of cloths and jewelry. I want all of you to steal cloths and jewelry from your family and relatives for her. I will only accept the cloths and jewelry that are stolen without being caught in the act.”

The men obeyed their teacher’s command and returned to the teacher with the stolen items, all except for our Bodhisatta. The teacher asked him,

“You brought me nothing?”

“No sir.”

“Why not?”

“Because I do not believe any act of unwholesomeness can be kept secret.”

“There is no secret in this world. People can see trees grown in the forest. Only a fool believes that he can keep his misdeeds secret. When I commit a misdeed, I bear witness to it even if the act is not seen by anyone else.”

The teacher was impressed by what our Bodhisatta told him and he said,

“Behold young man, I have no other possessions in this household except for my daughter. And I wish her to be married to a person with high morals. I thought up this scheme in order to test my students’ moral character. It appears that you are the only one worthy of my daughter.”

The teacher said to the rest of his students, “Return all of the stolen items to your family and relatives.”

After the Lord Buddha finished the story, the 500 monks understood the value of Hiri and Ottappa and continued to keep their minds quiet and still. Having realized the monks’ mental state, the Lord Buddha gave them a lecture on the Four Noble Truths. At the end of which, all 500 monks attained Arahatsip.

Our Bodhisatta could observe the Precepts immaculately in spite of the fact that he was just an ordinary individual. At such an impressionable age, it would have been so easy for him to do as his teacher commanded. But he refused to do it because he possessed Hiri and Ottappa. Therefore, he would never allow anything or anyone to cause him to transgress the Precepts.

A person practicing the Sila immaculately does so because he upholds Hiri and Ottappa. Therefore, he has no need for someone to check up on him.

On the contrary, a person lacking in Hiri and Ottappa does not proactively pledge the Sila and it is easy for him to transgress it anytime, anywhere, with or without someone watching.

Hiri and Ottappa are the virtues that keep society safe, happy, and peaceful. They are the virtues that lead one to meet with good things and prosperity here and now as well as in future existences.

- **Cultivating Hiri**

Hiri means feeling ashamed of unwholesome deeds. Hiri can be easily cultivated by considering the following factors.

1. Considering the status of one's birth: One considers the fact that one belongs to a family that earns right livelihood. Therefore, one does not earn wrong livelihood and run the risk of tarnishing the family's reputation.
2. Considering one's age: One considers the fact that one is old enough to know the difference between right and wrong. Therefore, one knows to practice self-restraint such that one does not do anything immoral.
3. Considering one's integrity: One considers the fact that one has integrity and the courage to do things that benefit oneself and other people. Therefore, one does not do anything that is harmful to oneself or other people.
4. Considering one's knowledge: One considers the fact that one is learnt in the Dhamma and one's conduct is guided by Dhamma Principles. Therefore, one must perform only wholesome deeds.

- **Cultivating Ottappa**

Ottappa means feeling fearful of the consequences of unwholesome deeds. One cultivates Ottappa by being cognizant of the following ill consequences.

1. **Incurring Self-Blame:** When one transgresses the Precepts, one feels anxious and guilty because one blames oneself for having done something wrong.
2. **Receiving Blame:** When virtuous individuals know about one's immoral act, they will fault one for being a fool, for committing a misdeed, for causing harm to oneself and other people.
3. **Receiving Punishment:** When one commits a crime and causes harm to another person, one will be punished by the law.
4. **Rebirth in the States of Unhappiness:** Transgression of the Precepts causes one to be reborn in the Hell Realm, the Animal Realm, the Peta Realm, or the Asurakaya Realm. These are the realms of horrific suffering.

Hiri and Ottappa are the two virtues that enable us to observe the Precepts immaculately. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate them.

## ASSIGNMENTS

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.



# Chapter 8

## The Fruit of Sila Practice

### **8.1 The Fruit of Sila Practice**

#### 8.1.1 The fruit of Sila-5

- The fruit of the Five Precepts
- The different fruits of each Precept

#### 8.1.2 Sila protects us from harm

#### 8.1.3 Using Sila to solve economic problems

#### 8.1.4 A summary of the fruit of Sila

### **8.2 The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Five Precepts**

#### 8.2.1 The harm wrought by transgressing the Five Precepts

#### 8.2.2 The harm wrought by transgressing the Five Precepts here and now

#### 8.2.3 The consequences of transgressing the Five Precepts

## **Concepts**

1. Knowledge about the fruit of Sila practice motivates us to practice it.
2. Knowledge about the consequences of transgressing the Sila prevents us from transgressing it.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the value of Sila practice and the harm wrought by transgressing it.
2. To enable the student to understand the fruits of observing the Five Precepts and the ill consequences of transgressing the Five Precepts.
3. To enable the student to give a summary of the fruit of Sila practice.

# Chapter 8

## The Fruit of Sila Practice

We have already learnt that Sila is the human norm. Sila is the intention to abstain from all unwholesomeness. Sila practice enables us to be born with a physical form most suitable to the pursuit of Perfections. Sila brings about happiness here and now as well as in future existences. Sila practice enables us to attain Enlightenment and Nibbana during our final existence in the round of rebirth. When we learn to practice Sila immaculately, we find that it leads to physical and mental tranquility. We have also learnt what causes the Sila to be broken, punctured, stained, or tarnished.

Such knowledge may be sufficient to help us get started on Sila practice but it is not sufficient to see us the whole way through. The reason is after having observed the Precepts for a while, we may have difficulties observing them or we may try to find justification for transgressing certain Precepts. After all, we are now living in a society where the current of defilements is especially strong. Sila practice is the practice that goes against the current of defilements and all of us must constantly resist the current of defilements, which runs deep inside us. Hence, Sila practice can be compared to swimming against the current.

Therefore, Sila practice requires motivation and inspiration. To be motivated and inspired, we need to learn about the fruit of Sila practice as well as the ill consequences of transgressing the Sila.

### 8.1 The Fruit of Sila Practice

#### 8.1.1 Sila Practice Bears Five Different Fruits

According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Lord Buddha teaches the different fruits of Sila practice to the people of Pataligam as follows.

1. Sila practice gives rise to great material wealth.
2. Sila practice gives rise to a good reputation.
3. Sila practice makes one feel confident and bold in every social situation.
4. Sila practice helps one to be fully conscious at the moment of death.
5. Sila practice leads to rebirth in the States of Happiness.

- 1. Sila Practice Gives Rise to Great Material Wealth:** A person practicing the Sila receives great material wealth and has the freedom to spend it as he wishes.

How can Sila practice give rise to great material wealth? It is noteworthy that every organization be it public or private desires virtuous personnel. And when it comes time to promote someone, a person practicing Sila will likely be the best candidate. This is because a person who practices Sila is righteous, consistent, trustworthy, and well-liked.

Wealthy parents tend to choose to pass on their wealth to righteous children because they can be trusted to not only protect the family's wealth but also cause it to grow. Buddhist parents will want their

children to spend part of the wealth supporting the Buddhist Cause long after their death. In this way, they can continue to receive in the hereafter the merit earned by their children.

How is a person practicing Sila at liberty to spend his material wealth? When one gains material wealth in a dishonest manner, one feels anxious and paranoid when spending it or thinking about it. There is an ancient saying that the material wealth gained by dishonest means is cursed because it makes its owner anxious and paranoid. On the contrary, whoever gains material wealth through honest means feels proud of it and he feels free to spend it as he wishes.

2. **Sila Practice Gives Rise to a Good Reputation:** The conduct of a person who practices Sila is naturally wholesome and honorable. He endears himself to other people who are impressed with his wholesome and honorable conduct. The Lord Buddha says,  
“The fragrance of aloeswood and sandalwood cannot be compared to that of a moral person whose fragrance permeates the Celestial Realm and the Human Realm alike.”
3. **Sila Practice Makes One Feel Confident and Bold in Every Social Situation:** A person practicing the Sila is pure and feels proud of his own goodness. His mind is calm and tranquil and he has no need to worry that other people would find out about his misdeeds simply because no misdeeds exist. Wherever he goes, he feels bold and confident knowing that he has observed the Precepts immaculately.
4. **Sila practice Helps One to Be Fully Conscious at the Moment of Death:** A person practicing the Sila is naturally mindful since he has to exercise care in observing the Precepts immaculately. During the final moments on earth, he will be able to continue to be mindful because he has been mindful all along. He will have the time to recall all of his wholesome deeds and these will fill his final moments on earth with great joy.
5. **Sila Practice Leads to Rebirth in the States of Happiness:** When a person’s mind is filled with great joy during his final moments on earth, he can see with his mind the place where he will spend his hereafter. This place belongs to the States of Happiness. In the Silavimansa Jataka, the Lord Buddha says, “A person’s immaculate Sila practice brings him happiness in the hereafter.”

## **The Different Fruits of Observing Each of the Five Precepts**

### **The Fruits of Observing the First Precept: No Killing**

1. One will be born complete with all body parts.
2. One will be just the right height.
3. One will be physically agile.
4. The soles of one’s feet will be full.

5. One will be graceful.
6. One will be gentle.
7. One will be marked by cleanliness.
8. One will be courageous.
9. One will have great physical strength.
10. One's speech will be lovely.
11. One will be endearing.
12. One's retinue of attendants will not be divisive.
13. One will not live in fear.
14. One will not be murdered.
15. One will not die from physical assault.
16. One will have a large retinue of attendants.
17. One will have a beautiful physical form and a fine complexion.
18. One will have a well-proportioned body.
19. One will not be sickly.
20. One will not suffer from depression.
21. One will not be separated by what one loves be it a person or a thing.
22. One will have a long lifespan.

**The Fruits of Observing the Second Precept: No Stealing**

1. One will be prosperous.
2. One will possess a large amount of material wealth and rice grains.
3. One will be blessed with all kinds of riches.
4. One will receive the riches that have not yet arrived.
5. One's riches will be long lasting.
6. One will receive the riches one desires.
7. One's riches will not be destroyed by any kind of disaster.
8. One will receive uncommon material wealth.
9. One will be a first-rate person.
10. One will not know scarcity.
11. One will have a comfortable lifestyle.

**The Fruits of Observing the Third Precept: No Sexual Misconduct**

1. One will have no enemy.
2. One will be endearing.
3. One will receive things such as rice, water, etc.
4. One will sleep soundly at night.
5. One will wake up happy.
6. One will not be reborn in the state of loss and woe.

7. One will not be born a female or a hermaphrodite.
8. One will be slow to anger.
9. One will be honest and sincere.
10. One will not experience disappointment or sadness.
11. One will not have to hide from anyone.
12. One will be endearing whether one is a male or a female.
13. One will be physically fit.
14. One will have good features.
15. One will not suffer from fear or anxiety.
16. One will be carefree.
17. One will have a comfortable lifestyle.
18. One will be harmless.
19. One will not be separated by the things and the people that one loves.

**The Fruits of Observing the Fourth Precept: No Lying**

1. One's sense-faculties will be bright and clear.
2. One's words will be lovely and important.
3. One's teeth will be white, clean, and neatly arranged.
4. One will not be overweight.
5. One will not be underweight.
6. One will not be too short.
7. One will not be too tall.
8. One will experience a lovely sense of touch.
9. One's breath will be as fresh as the fragrance of the lotus flower.
10. One's retinue of attendants will not be stubborn.
11. One's words will be credible.
12. One's tongue will be thin and the color of a lotus flower.
13. One's mind will not wander all over the place.
14. One will be emotionally stable and not easily perturbed.

**The Fruits of Observing the Fifth Precept: No alcohol and other addictive substances**

1. One has the astuteness to do right work in the past, in the present, and in the future.
2. One will be constantly mindful.
3. One will not suffer from insanity.
4. One will be knowledgeable.
5. One will not be lazy.
6. One will not be stupid.
7. One will not be deaf and mute.

8. One will not be a drunkard.
9. One will not be reckless.
10. One will not be forgetful.
11. One will not live in fear.
12. One will not have to compete with other people.
13. One will not be jealous of other people.
14. One will say only what is true.
15. One will not practice divisive speech, offensive speech or nonsensical speech.
16. One will understand the importance of gratitude.
17. One will know to reciprocate kindness.
18. One will not be miserly.
19. One will be self-sacrificing.
20. One will have high moral values.
21. One will be punctual.
22. One will not be quick to anger.
23. One will possess Hiri (the fear of unwholesomeness).
24. One will possess Ottappa (being fearful of the ill consequences of a misdeed).
25. One will have Right View.
26. One will be highly intelligent and wise.
27. One will possess penetrating wisdom.
28. One will be a sage.
29. One will be able to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is not.

### **8.1.2 Sila Protects Us from Harm**

What can guarantee that we live to a ripe old age? Most of us live with uncertainty and fear because we have no idea what incident or disease may cause us to die prematurely. But the following story demonstrates how Sila practice can guarantee that we live to a ripe old age.

## **The Mahadhammapala Jataka**

Once upon a time when King Brahmadata was the ruler of the city of Benares, there was a Brahmin by the name of “Dhammapala”. He was the head of Dhammapala Village. This Brahmin lived his life according to the Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action. He had a son by the name of “Dhammapalakumara”.

When Dhammapalakumara was of age, he went to study in a school run by a famous teacher in the city of Taxila. He was the head of the class of 500 students.

Sometime later, the teacher’s son died and everyone grieved his death except for Dhammapalakumara. He was more surprised by the young man’s sudden death than anything else. He asked his classmates,

“How was it that our friend should die at such a young age? How could that happen when men and women do not die young?”

“Dhammapala, don’t you know anything about death?”

“Of course I do! I know that only old people die but young people do not.”

“But all conditioned things are impermanent, Dhammapala.”

“Of course they are! Still, no men or women should die young. They should die only when they are old.”

“Dhammapala, has no one in your family ever died young?”

“No, they died only when they were old.”

“Has it always been that way in your family?”

“Of course.”

Dhammapala’s classmates told their teacher about their conversation with Dhammapala. The teacher had Dhammapala fetched and said to him,

“Dhammapala, is it true that no one in your family has ever died young?”

“It is true, sir.”

The teacher thought it unbelievable and he wanted to travel to Dhammapala’s house in order to have his father confirm the story. He also thought that if the father could confirm the story, he would live the rest of his life according to Dhammapala’s family practice.

After having arranged his son’s funeral, the teacher had Dhammapala fetched and said to him,

“Dhammapala, I have some business to take care of in another town. I want you to take over my duty until I get back.”

The teacher then cleaned some goat bones and put them in a sack and had his servant carry it. Master and servant subsequently set off for Dhammapala’s house. When they arrived, Dhammapala’s slaves recognized the teacher and came out to welcome him by taking his umbrella, his shoes, and the sack from his servant’s hand. He told the slaves that he wished to see their master the Brahmin Dhammapala.

The Brahmin came out to welcome the teacher. He invited the teacher inside his house and had a meal prepared for him. After all was said and done, the teacher said to the Brahmin,

“Honorable Brahmin, your son was a very intelligent and clever person. He had completed the study of the Vedas and all the 18 branches of the art. Unfortunately, he had been taken ill and is now dead. Honorable Brahmin, all conditioned things are impermanent. Therefore, it is best that you do not become too grief-stricken.”

The Brahmin laughed at the teacher’s account. The Brahmin’s reaction took the teacher by surprise.

“Why are you laughing, honorable Brahmin?”

“My son could not possibly have died. It had to be someone else that died.”

“Believe me, your son is dead. Here are the remnants of his bones.”

“These are not my son’s bones. My son did not die. For seven generations now, no one in our family has ever died prematurely. I believe you’re telling me a lie.”



The Brahmin and other members of the family clapped and started to laugh. The teacher was only too delighted to find out that what Dhammapalakumara had told him was true.

“Honorable Brahmin, there has to be a reason for your family’s long lifespan. What virtues has your family lived by? Pray tell.”

“Every member of this village abstains from unwholesomeness. We do not keep the company of fools and we keep only the company of sages. It pleases us to give alms and observe the Precepts. We are faithful to our wives and our wives are faithful to us. We do not kill. We do not steal. We do not consume alcohol. We do not lie. Our children are born of our moral wives. Therefore, they are intelligent, clever, and possess breadth of knowledge. All of us fathers, mothers, children, wives, brothers, sisters, our male and female slaves, our servants, and everyone else who live in our household practice the Dhamma for the sake of our lives in the hereafter. It is for these reasons that we do not die prematurely. The bones you showed me belong to someone else and not our son. Dhamma protects those who practice it. Dhamma brings forth happiness. Our son Dhammapalakumara has correctly practiced the Dhamma. Therefore, I am sure he is still alive and well.

“My visit here has benefited me greatly, honorable Brahmin. Please forgive me. Your son is indeed still alive and well. These bones are the bones of a goat. I used them in order to test whether your son’s words were true. And now that I’ve learnt the truth, kindly teach me the Dhamma practiced by your family so that I can practice it too.”

With the Brahmin’s permission, the teacher wrote everything down before returning to Taxila. In time, Dhammapalakumara graduated and returned home to his family with a large retinue of attendants.

Dhammapalakumara had regularly observed the Precepts. He did not harm anyone or anything; therefore, he was completely harmless. His is a life secure and happy under the protection of Sila. Sila is the most effective form of protection against diseases and every kind of harm. It was the reason the Brahmin felt confident that his son would be happy and long-lived.

Members of Dhammapalagam Village had discovered that Sila practice could guarantee that they lived to a ripe old age. Therefore, they had continued to practice it from one generation to another.

### 8.1.3 Using Sila to Solve Economic Problems

The different fruits of Sila practice as described above can be expected by anyone that practices Sila earnestly. However, should everyone in the community, the society, and the country practice Sila earnestly, the community, the society, and the country will reap these fruits of Sila practice as a whole. The country will be blessed with abundance causing the people to live comfortably and happily.

On the contrary, if the leader of a city or a country is an immoral person, chances are that the people of the city or the country will also be immoral. What follow will be widespread droughts and the people will experience scarcity as shown in the **Kurudhamma Jataka** as follows.

## **Kurudhamma Jataka**

Once upon a time when King Dhananjayakorabaya was the ruler of the kingdom of Kururath, he was succeeded by his son after his death. The new king practiced the “Ten Sovereign Virtues” as well as the Kurudhamma or the Five Precepts. Every member of the kingdom observed the Five Precepts, royalties and commoners alike. Moreover, the king also had six almonries built inside the city, an indication of a very good economy.

At the same time in the city of Dantaburi ruled by King Kalingaraj, the people had been suffering from scarcity and diseases caused by droughts. The people had to converge at the palace gate in order to inform the king of their plight. King Kalingaraj asked the people what the kings of old had done in order to alleviate the drought situation. The people replied that they gave alms, remained inside the palace to observe the Uposatha Sila (the Eight Precepts) for seven consecutive days. Afterward, the rain would come and the people could work the paddy fields.

King Kalingaraj did as told by the people but the rain still did not come. He called a meeting of the ministers to discuss the next step. The ministers advised the king to request the auspicious elephant from King Dhananjayakorabaya and bring it to the city of Dantaburi.

King Kalingaraj sent eight Brahmins to the city of Indapattha in the kingdom of Kururath in order to request the auspicious elephant from King Dhananjayakorabaya.

King Dhananjayakorabaya gladly gave the auspicious elephant to the Brahmins. Upon the arrival of the elephant, the rain still did not come. The king called another meeting of the ministers and they advised the king to observe the Kurudhamma or the Five Precepts regularly. Afterward, it rained regularly every 15 days. The ministers advised the king to return the auspicious elephant to King Dhananjayakorabaya and ask for the king’s permission to write down the Kurudhamma on a gold sheet so that it would rain all over their kingdom.

King Kalingaraj sent the same eight Brahmins to take the auspicious elephant back to the city of Indapattha and ask for the Kurudhamma from King Dhananjayakorabaya. King Dhananjayakorabaya refused to give it because on one occasion his arrow accidentally fell inside a pond and he thought a fish might have been killed as a result. Therefore, he asked the Brahmins to request the Kurudhamma from his mother.

However, the Brahmins insisted that since the king had no intention of killing the fish; therefore, his Sila was not broken. It was then that King Dhananjayakorabaya permitted the Brahmins to write down the Kurudhamma or the Five Precepts on a gold sheet.

Having written down the Kurudhamma, the Brahmins bid the king farewell before presenting themselves to the Queen Mother. She felt that her Kurudhamma might not be immaculate, since on one occasion she gave each of her two daughters-in-law a gift but the two gifts differed in value. The Brahmins told the Queen Mother that all was well and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by her on a gold sheet. Afterward, they went to see the queen.

However, the queen also had questions about her Kurudhamma practice because she did at one point think that should the king suddenly die, she would marry the Viceroy so that she could continue to be queen. The Brahmins assured her that her Kurudhamma was not stained or tarnished and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by her on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the Viceroy but the Viceroy also had doubt about his Kurudhamma practice because he had on one occasion inadvertently caused the people to wait for him in vain and his retinue of attendants had to stand in the rain at the palace gate all night long. But the Brahmins told him all was well and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the royal advisor but the royal advisor also had doubt about his Kurudhamma practice because he once longed for a royal chariot sent to the king by the king of another kingdom. And yet, he refused to accept the chariot when the king did offer it to him. But the Brahmins told him that such a low level of greed cannot damage his Sila practice and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the minister in charge of measuring paddy fields. The minister felt that he might have transgressed the First Precepts when on one occasion he accidentally put a wooden stake inside a crab hole previously thought to be unoccupied. But when the wooden stake was driven into the ground, he heard a cry and thought the crab might have died as a result. The Brahmins told him that he had not intentionally killed the crab; therefore, his Sila practice was intact. And they asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the chariot driver but he had doubt about his Kurudhamma practice because he once used a whip on the horses. But the Brahmins told him his Sila was intact and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see a millionaire who had doubt about his observation of the Second Precept because once he had a servant tie some ears of wheat together for fun before giving the wheat as tax payment to the royal treasury. But the Brahmins saw no problem with his Sila practice and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the minister in charge of measuring piles of rice grains but he had doubt about his Kurudhamma practice because of one incident. He was at the time inserting a measuring stick inside a pile of rice in order to measure it but it started to rain so he ran for cover. Meanwhile, his servants were unloading more rice and he forgot which pile he had already measured. The Brahmins did not think his action tarnished his Sila practice and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the city gatekeeper who had doubt about his Kurudhamma practice. One day, it was near the time to close the city gate, he reproached two people who were brother and sister but he mistook them for husband and wife. The Brahmins saw no problem with his Sila practice and asked for permission to write down the Kurudhamma practiced by him on a gold sheet.

Next, the Brahmins went to see the female prostitute Vanna who had doubt about her Kurudhamma practice. On one occasion, King Sakka transformed himself into a man and gave her a sum of money saying that he would return to see her later. But she had been waiting for him for three years already. She refused to take on another client fearing her Sila practice might be broken.

Not being able to earn more money, her savings were depleted. She had to go and see the judge who decided that she could then entertain other clients. That evening, a client came for her service but King Sakka appeared as the same man. Therefore, she refused to take on the client. King Sakka transformed himself into a glorious celestial king standing in midair and told her that she had been a truthful person. King Sakka

caused a rain of precious gems to pour down above her house. But the Brahmins saw no problem with her Sila practice and asked for permission to write down her Kurudhamma practice on a gold sheet.

The Brahmins gathered together all the gold sheets inscribed with the accounts of these eleven individuals and presented them to their king. King Kalingaraj was overjoyed and decided to observe the Five Precepts immaculately from then on. All the Brahmins and high-ranking officials followed the king's fine example. In time, the people encouraged each other to follow suit. As a result, the kingdom no longer experienced droughts and became a land of abundance once again.

Sila practice by the masses can cause the earth environment to improve, and the rain to fall during the rainy season. As a result, harvest will be excellent. Food will be plentiful. And the economy will be good.

But if the people of the land do not practice the Sila, the outcome will be completely opposite.

Sila practice bears fruit here and now. When people practice Sila, the community, the society, the country, the environment, and the economy will be hugely improved.

#### **8.1.4 A Summary of the Fruit of Sila**

The fruit of Sila can be summarized into three major categories.

“Silena sugatim yanti  
Silena bhogasampada  
Silena nibbutim yanti  
Tasama silam visodhaye”

1. Silena sugatim yanti means Sila leads one to the States of Happiness.
2. Silena bhogasampada means Sila brings about material wealth.
3. Silena nibbutim yanti means Sila leads one to Nibbana.

The third category means that without Sila practice, one cannot attain Nibbana. Nibbana has two meanings as follows.

1. Basic Nibbana: It means that a person who practices Sila feels relaxed and happy. He experiences tranquility and joy wherever he is.
2. Elevated Nibbana: It means that a person, who has practiced Sila to the point where all of his defilements can be extinguished, will most certainly attain Nibbana.

Nibbana is every Buddhist's ultimate goal. To attain Nibbana, it is necessary to cultivate Sila (morality), Samadhi (concentration), and Panna (supernormal insight). Sila is the foundation of Samadhi and Samadhi is the foundation of Panna. If Sila is not practiced immaculately, Samadhi and Panna cannot happen.

Therefore, it is crucially important that we practice Sila first in order to control our physical act and our word. Sila practice causes our mind, our word, and our body to become pure.

“Sila is the borderline. It prevents dishonesty. It causes the mind to be joyful and bright. It is the pier that leads one to the ocean which is Nibbana where dwell all of the Lord Buddhas. Therefore, everyone should practice Sila immaculately.”

## 8.2 The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Five Precepts

While Sila practice bears many good fruits, the lack of Sila practice can also yield many ill consequences.

When a person transgresses the Precepts, human normalcy can no longer be maintained. The mind that used to be clean and clear now turns gloomy. The more a person transgresses the Precepts, the poorer the quality of his mind will become. His life will be plagued with pain and calamitous situations here and now as well as in future existences.

### 8.2.1 The Consequences of Transgressing the Five Precepts

In a Dhamma lecture given to the people of Patali Village and recorded in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Lord Buddha tells us about the consequences of transgressing the Five Precepts as follows.

1. It causes the loss of material wealth.
2. It gives rise to a bad reputation.
3. It causes one to feel awkward in the company of other people.
4. It causes one to lose consciousness before one dies.
5. It causes rebirth in the state of loss and woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in perdition.

**1. It Causes the Loss of Material Wealth.** A transgressor of the Five Precepts is not trustworthy. He cannot go far in his career. His parents do not want him to inherit their wealth. Whatever material wealth he possesses will disappear for one reason or another.

**2. It Gives Rise to a Bad Reputation.** A transgressor of the Five Precepts earns a bad reputation. People close to him know about his misdeeds and they cannot help but talk about them behind his back.

**3. It causes one to feel awkward in the company of other people.** A transgressor of the Five Precepts feels anxious and uneasy because he fears that other people may know or find out about his misdeeds.

**4. It causes one to lose consciousness before one dies.** This is one of the consequences of transgressing the Five Precepts on a regular basis.

**5. It causes rebirth in the state of loss and woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in perdition.** Before a transgressor of the Five Precepts dies, he will see a replay of all the misdeeds committed in life. This causes his mind to become gloomy near death. A gloomy mind coupled with the loss of consciousness at death causes him to be reborn in the Hell Realm, the Peta Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, or the Animal Realm. The Lord Buddha teaches that one's misdeeds lead one to the States of Unhappiness.

### **8.2.2 The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Five Precepts Here and Now**

Transgression of the Five Precepts yields consequences that are clearly evident here and now as follows.

#### **The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the First Sila: Killing**

Killing causes a person to be short-lived. Many mafia bosses or powerful mobsters are murdered because they have murdered other people as a result of conflict of interest, etc. Their misdeeds cause them their lives as a result of retaliation, vindictiveness, etc.

#### **The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Second Sila: Stealing**

Stealing causes psychosis such as panic-attack because one feels anxious that one's misdeed may be found out. Living with long-term anxiety can trigger a panic-attack.

#### **The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Third Sila: Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual Misconduct causes venereal diseases, AIDs, etc.

#### **The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Fourth Sila: Lying**

Lying causes loss of memory as in the cases of dementia and Alzheimer. A person that lies on a regular basis will in time have a real difficulty remembering what the truth is. This affects one's decision making process and eventually causes one's loss of memory.

#### **The Harm Wrought by Transgressing the Fifth Precept: Alcohol Consumption**

Habitual drinking causes alcoholism, liver cirrhosis, cancer, etc. It also causes one to get into fights and become injured in the process.

Transgression of the Precepts yields consequences not only here and now but also in future existences. Some people are born physically or mentally handicapped or both. Some people are inflicted with strange diseases while other people are born completely healthy and remain healthy for the rest of their lives. What causes these differences?

The Lord Buddha teaches in the Culakammavibhanga Sutta that Kamma separates living beings one from another in terms of crudeness and refinement.

It can be concluded that each living being's past Kamma or past deeds cause living beings to be different. A person who had accumulated misdeeds in his previous life or lives will receive their ill consequences here and now. A person who had accumulated wholesome deeds in his previous life or lives will receive their good consequences here and now.

### **8.2.3 The Consequences of Transgressing the Five Precepts**

#### **1. The Consequences of Transgressing the First Precept: Killing**

- 1) Rebirth in the Hell Realm
- 2) Rebirth in the Animal Realm
- 3) Rebirth in the Peta Realm
- 4) Being born with a physical handicap
- 5) The lightest of the ill consequences of killing is a short lifespan as seen in the cases of abortion, etc.

#### **2. The Consequences of Transgressing the Second Precept: Stealing**

- 1) Rebirth in the Hell Realm
- 2) Rebirth in the Animal Realm
- 3) Rebirth in the Peta Realm
- 4) Being born poor and destitute
- 5) The lightest of the ill consequences of stealing is having one's possessions destroyed by flood, fire, storm, or other disasters.

#### **3. The Consequences of Transgressing the Third Precept: Sexual Misconduct**

- 1) Rebirth in the Hell Realm
- 2) Rebirth in the Animal Realm
- 3) Rebirth in the Peta Realm
- 4) Being born crippled, homely, and sickly
- 5) The lightest of the ill consequences of sexual misconduct is being surrounded by enemies.

#### **4. The Consequences of Transgressing the Fourth Precept: Lying**

- 1) Rebirth in the Hell Realm
- 2) Rebirth in the Animal Realm
- 3) Rebirth in the Peta Realm
- 4) One's word is not believed or trusted. One has a very bad case of halitosis.
- 5) The lightest of the ill consequences of lying is encountering false accusations.

#### **5. The Consequences of Transgressing the Fifth Precept: Alcohol Consumption**

- 1) Rebirth in the Hell Realm
- 2) Rebirth in the Animal Realm
- 3) Rebirth in the Peta Realm
- 4) Being born mentally handicapped, stupid, retarded
- 5) The lightest of the ill consequences of alcohol consumption is insanity.

The fruits of keeping the Five Precepts are incomparable. Conversely, the ill consequences of transgressing the Five Precepts are terrible. Therefore, it behooves each one of us to be heedful and to hasten to earnestly keep the Five Precepts.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.



# Chapter 9

## Sila-8 and Uposathasila

### **9.1 The Meaning of Sila-8 and Uposathasila**

9.1.1 Why must we practice Sila-8?

9.1.2 The components of Sila-8

### **9.2 Uposathasila**

Types of Uposathasila

- Pakatiuposatha
- Patijagarauposatha
- Patihariyauposatha

### **9.3 Pledging the Sila-8**

9.3.1 Requesting the Sila-8

9.3.2 Requesting the Uposathasila

### **9.4 The Fruit of Practicing Sila-8**

### **9.5 How to Get Motivated to Practice Sila-8**

9.5.1 for a single person

9.5.2 for a married person

## **Concepts**

Keeping the Eight Precepts or the Uposathasila is one way to elevate one's mind because it involves chastity practice. Chastity practice in turn facilitates high level meditation, which is the shortcut to Nibbana.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the meaning of Sila-8 and Uposathasila and how to practice them correctly.
2. To enable the student to understand the importance of practicing Sila-8 correctly.
3. To enable the student to learn about the different categories of Uposathasila.
4. To enable the student to pledge the Sila-8 and the Uposathasila correctly.
5. To enable the student to understand the fruit of practicing Sila-8.

# Chapter 9

## Sila-8 and Uposathasila

### 9.1 The Meaning of Sila-8 and Uposathasila

Sila-8 or Uposathasila is one way to elevate one's mind above the practice of Sila-5. Sila-8 also provides an excellent foundation for meditation practice. In general, we use the term Sila-8 when we observe the Eight Precepts regularly or on special days. We use the term Uposathasila when we pledge to observe the Eight Precepts on the Buddhist Holy Day. Sila-8 or Uposathasila consists of :

**1. Panatipata veramani**

The intention to abstain from killing

**2. Adinnadana veramani**

The intention to abstain from stealing

**3. Abrahmacariya veramani**

The intention to abstain from anything that may jeopardize chastity practice

**4. Musavada veramani**

The intention to abstain from lying

**5. Suramerayamajjapamadatthana veramani**

The intention to abstain from alcohol assumption, which is the cause of recklessness

**6. Vikalabhojana veramani**

The intention to abstain from food consumption from noon to dawn the next day

**7. Naccagitavaditavisukadassana malagandha vilepana dharana mandana vibhusanatthana veramani**

The intention to abstain from dancing, singing, playing music, watching different forms of entertainment that may jeopardize chastity practice, decorating the body with flowers, perfume, and color cosmetics

**8. Uccasayanamahasayana veramani**

The intention to abstain from sleeping on a thick mattress stuffed with kapok and cotton wool

#### 9.1.1 Why Must We Practice Sila-8?

In chapter 6, we learn that the Lord Buddha encourages us to observe the Five Precepts in order to keep our body and word pure, since Sila (or morality) provides the foundation for meditation practice.

The Lord Buddha teaches that different levels of Sila are suitable for individuals at different levels of purity. He encourages us to observe the Eight Precepts during the Buddhist Holy Day, during the Rains-Retreat, during Dhutanga, or anytime we wish. Sila-8 further facilitates our meditation practice and lessens our defilements as explained below.

**In the Third Precept – It says Abrahmacariya veramani:** the intention to abstain from anything that may jeopardize chastity practice, it means that one intends to live like a Brahma being. One intends to live a pure and chaste life. This Precept is the way to not only elevate one's mind but to also keep it tranquil for high level meditation practice.

The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Precepts facilitate chastity practice.

**In the Sixth Precept – It says Vikalabhajana veramani:** the intention to abstain from food consumption from noon until dawn the next day, it means that one intends to have only two meals a day.

According to Buddhism, breakfast is the meal used to repair the body whereas lunch is used to give physical strength and physical growth. Dinner is deemed excessive. Moreover, it gives rise to sexual appetite especially for those who do not engage in hard physical labor during the day.

Most people are addicted to taste and will look for delicious food especially in the evening. Addiction to taste causes Tanha (or craving). In Buddhism, this form of Kilesa (or defilements) is called "Rasatanha". The body does not need it but the mind craves it to the detriment of the body.

This particular Precept aims to lessen and eventually remove "Rasatanha". It is also beneficial to the body because it cuts out excess food which is the cause of serious diseases such as high blood pressure, blocked arteries, etc. It also facilitates meditation practice. In the Bhaddali Sutta the Lord Buddha said,

"Behold monks, I have just one meal a day and find that I suffer from few illnesses. My body does not suffer. It is light, strong, and happy."

Behold monks, you should also have just one meal a day so that you will have few illnesses. Your body will not suffer. It will be light, strong, and happy."

**In the Seventh Precept – It says Naccagittavadiavisukadassana malagandha vilepana dharana mandana vibhusanattana veramani:** the intention to abstain from dancing, singing, playing music, watching different forms of entertainment that may jeopardize chastity practice, decorating the body with flowers, perfume, and color cosmetics, it means that one intends to lessen and eventually remove three different kinds of Tanha (or craving). These include Saddatanha, Gandhatanha, and Rupanaha.

**Saddatanha:** This kind of Tanha has to do with sound in terms of singing and playing music out of the need for lovely sounds. One becomes addicted to them. Such addiction gives rise to Saddatanha.

**Gandhatanha:** This kind of Tanha has to do with smell in terms of scented items for the body. One becomes addicted to them. Such addiction gives rise to Gandhatanha.

**Rupanaha:** This kind of Tanha has to do with corporeality in terms of different forms of entertainment, which are the enemies of wholesomeness. Every form of entertainment is meant to attract as many viewers as possible. Therefore, beautiful people and things are used in all the forms of entertainment in order to arouse interest, increase popularity, and cause addiction. Such addiction gives rise to Rupanaha.

**In the Eighth Precept – It says Uccasayanamahasayana veramani:** the intention to abstain from sleeping on a thick mattress stuffed with kapok and cotton wool, it means that one understands how a soft and thick mattress can

cause one to be reluctant to rise early in the morning. The enjoyment of a soft and thick mattress gives rise to another form of Tanha called “Phothhabbatanha”. This kind of Tanha arouses sexual appetite.

We observe the Eight Precepts for the specific purpose of chastity practice. These Precepts subdue sexual appetite, lessen Tanha (or craving) and are an improvement to the Five Precepts.

The observing of the Eight Precepts improves the quality of our mind. Chastity practice is above and beyond the normal practice of ordinary people. When we practice chastity, we are emulating the practice of Brahma beings, the inhabitants of the Brahma Realm, which lies closer to Nibbana than any other realms of existence.

### 9.1.2 The Components of Sila-8

The First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Precepts are like those in the Five Precepts. Therefore, only the Third, the Sixth, the Seventh, and the Eighth Precepts will be elaborated as follows.

**The Third Precept** – According to the Tikabrahmjala Sutta and Kankhavitani, two things are considered to be detrimental to chastity practice.

1. Thinking about having sexual intercourse
2. Having genital contact

According to the Commentary’s Khuddakapatha, four things are considered to be enemies of chastity practice.

1. Having sexual intercourse through the three openings (the mouth, the genital, and the anus)
2. Thinking about having sexual intercourse
3. Endeavoring to have sexual intercourse
4. Feeling pleasure from having sexual intercourse

**The Sixth Precept** – Six things are considered to be enemies of this Precept.

1. Eating between the noon hour and dawn the next day
2. What is eaten is considered to be food.
3. Endeavoring to eat the food
4. The food has been swallowed.

**The Seventh Precept** – Two things are considered to be enemies of the first part of this Precept.

1. Dancing, singing, and making music
2. Watching or listening to different forms of entertainment which include dancing, singing, music making

Three things are considered to be enemies of the second part of this Precept.

1. Decorating the body with flowers and perfume
2. Using a body lotion, a body powder, etc., allowed by the Lord Buddha only in the case of a sickness when one is not sick
3. Decorating the body with items expected to enhance one's looks.

**The Eighth Precept** – Three things are considered to be enemies of this Precept.

1. A thick and large couch or mattress
2. Knowing that the couch or mattress is thick and large
3. Sitting or lying down on the thick and large couch or mattress

It is evident that much more effort is required to keep the Eight Precepts than the Five Precepts. Keeping the Eight Precepts elevates the practitioner above and beyond ordinary people because he has the opportunity to contemplate higher Dhamma. Keeping the Eight Precepts is a shortcut to Nibbana, which is every living being's ultimate goal.

## 9.2 Uposathasila

**Uposathasila** has the same meaning as Sila-8 except that Uposathasila is practiced on the Buddhist Holy Day. The words used to pledge the Uposathasila are different from those used to pledge the Sila-8.

Uposatha means observance. The observance of Uposathasila is limited to one day and one night beginning at dawn of the Buddhist Holy Day and ending at dawn the next day. Dawn here can be defined by two periods: the silver light and the golden light.

In pledging the Uposathasila, one must pledge to observe all eight Precepts called "Ekajjhasamadana". It means that if any of the eight Precepts is broken, then the entire Uposathasila is considered broken.

### Types of Uposathasila

**Uposathasila** is divided into three types depending on the time period involved.

1. **Pakatiuposatha:** It is the Uposathasila that is observed for one day and one night generally during the Buddhist Holy Day. It is the basic level of Uposathasila.
2. **Patijagarauposatha:** It is the Uposathasila that is observed for three days, that is, one day before the Buddhist Holy Day, during the Buddhist Holy Day, and one day after the Buddhist Holy Day. It is the intermediate level of Uposathasila.
3. **Patihariyauposatha:** It is the high level of Uposathasila and consists of two different time periods.
  - 1) **The Short Time Period:** It begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waning moon and ends on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> waning moon for a total period of 14 days.
  - 2) **The Long Time Period:** It begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> waning moon and ends on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> waxing moon for a total period of four months.

## 9.3 Pledging the Sila-8

There are two ways to pledge the Sila-8

1. Taking the pledge by oneself
2. Requesting the Sila-8 from a monk.

### 9.3.1 The Words Used to Request the Sila-8

Mayan bhante tisananena saha attha silani yacama

Dutiyaampi mayan bhante tisananena saha attha silani yacama

Tatiyaampi mayan bhante tisananena saha attha silani yacama

Venerable one, we request the Sila-8 together with the threefold Refuge

Venerable one, we request the Sila-8 together with the threefold Refuge for the second time.

Venerable one, we request the Sila-8 together with the threefold Refuge for the third time.

### 9.3.2 The Words Used to Request the Uposathasila

Mayan bhante tisananena saha atthangasamannagatam uposathan yacama

Dutiyaampi mayan bhante tisananena saha atthangasamannagatam uposathan yacama

Tatiyaampi mayan bhante tisananena saha atthangasamannagatam uposathan yacama

Venerable one, we request the Uposathasila which has eight components together with the threefold Refuge.

Venerable one, we request the Uposathasila which has eight components together with the threefold Refuge for the second time.

Venerable one, we request the Uposathasila which has eight components together with the threefold Refuge for the third time.

(To request the Sila as an individual instead of a group, change the words “mayan” to “ahan” and “yacama” to “yacami”.)

### Pledging the Sila-8:

1. Panatipata veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami

(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from killing a living being or having another person do it for me.)

2. Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami

(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from stealing or having another person do it for me.)

3. Abrahmacariya veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami

(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from any act that may be detrimental to my chastity practice.)

4. Musavada veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami  
(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from false speech, divisive speech, offensive speech, and nonsensical speech.)
5. Suramerayamajjapamadatthana veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami  
(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from alcohol consumption, which is the cause of recklessness.)
6. Vikalabhajana veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami  
(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from food consumption from noon until dawn the next day.)
7. Naccagitavaditavisukadassana malagandha vilepana dharana mandana vibhusanatthana veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami  
(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from dancing, singing, making music, watching forms of entertainment which are enemies of wholesomeness, and to abstain from decorating my body with flowers, perfume, and color cosmetics.)
8. Uccasayanamahasayana veramani sikkhapadan samadiyami  
(I pledge the Precept in that I intend to abstain from sleeping on a thick mattress stuffed with kapok and cotton wool.)

## 9.4 The Fruit of Practicing Sila-8

The practice of Sila-8 bears similar fruit as the practice of Sila-5 except at a higher level. In addition, it bears fruits that are beneficial to the society and the economy as follows.

1. The practice of Sila-8 is a natural form of birth control.
2. The practice of Sila-8 lessens the gap between the haves and the have-nots, since there is no reason to show off in terms of jewelry, fashion, etc.
3. The practice of Sila-8 is the source of tranquility at the basic level. It is also the source of loving-kindness and compassion.
4. When the mind is tranquil, it is easier to achieve a higher level of meditative attainments.

### Three Types of Uposathasila

The Lord Buddha told Visakha in the Uposatha Sutta that there are altogether three types of Uposathasila depending on how one practices it.

1. **Gopalakauposatha:** It is the Uposathasila practiced by a cowherd.
2. **Niganthauposatha:** It is the Uposathasila practiced by a Jaina ascetic.
3. **Ariyauposatha:** It is the Uposathasila practiced by an Ariya disciple.

**Gopalakauposatha:** After a person pledges the Uposathasila, instead of observing it for an entire day and an entire night, he spends the time talking about nonsensical things such as what he had for lunch today was delicious and the same delicious meal must be prepared in the morrow, etc. His action is not unlike that of a cowherd, who after returning the cows to their owner in the evening, thinks about where he has taken the cows to graze and drink today and where he should take them the next day.



**Niganthauposatha:** It is what a Jaina ascetic practices. He may encourage his followers to scatter animals every which way. He may encourage them to be loving and kind to some animals while encouraging them to torture other animals. He may encourage them to wear nothing on Uposatha day, etc.

Both Gopalakauposatha and Niganthauposatha bear very little fruit.

**Ariyauposatha:** It is practiced by a person who endeavors to turn his gloomy mind into a bright and clear mind by recalling the Buddha-Virtues. Ariyauposatha causes the mind to be bright and clear, full of joy, and free from defilements. Next, he contemplates the Dhamma-Virtues and the Sangha-Virtues respectfully. An Ariya disciple may also contemplate his Sila practice which is not broken, punctured, stained or tarnished in any way. He is free. His Sila practice is praised by the sages. And it facilitates his meditation practice. In contemplating his Sila practice, his mind becomes bright and clear, joyful, and free from subtle defilements. Or he may contemplate the celestial beings and the virtues that cause a person to be reborn a celestial being in the Catumaharajika Realm, in the Tavatimsa Realm, in the Yama Realm, in the Tusita Realm, in the Nimmanarati Realm, in the Paranimmitavasavatti Realm, in the Form Brahma Realm, or in the Non-Form Brahma Realm. Such beings possess Saddha (or faith), Sila (or morality), Suta (or learning), Caga (or self-denial), and Panna (insight). And he realizes that he too possesses such virtues. In recalling these virtues, his mind becomes bright and clear, full of joy, and free from defilements.

Ariyauposatha is the Uposathasila practiced by an Ariya individual who has completely abstained from killing, stealing, unchaste conduct, lying, alcohol consumption, food consumption from noon to dawn the next day, dancing, singing, making music, decorating the body with flowers, perfume, and every type of cosmetics, sitting or lying down on a thick seat or a thick mattress stuffed with kapok or cotton wool.

The Lord Buddha also says that Ariyauposatha bears tremendous fruit as in the following analogy. A king having sovereignty over 16 kingdoms, replete with seven kinds of precious gems, and considered to be the richest man on earth; even then all of his wealth cannot equal 1/16<sup>th</sup> of the fruit of practicing Ariyauposatha.

## 9.5 How to Get Motivated to Practice Sila-8

Now that the student has sufficient knowledge about Sila-8 and the great benefit it gives, he may now feel motivated to practice it. However, the observation of Sila-8 may pose some problems given the life of a householder and its many obligations. Still, for those wishing to observe Sila-8 regularly, they may find the following advice helpful.

### 9.5.1 For a Single Person

A single person may begin practicing Sila-8 by observing one Precept at a time and gradually add more and more Precepts until he is confident that he can observe all eight of them. Once he has practiced observing the Eight Precepts to a certain point, he may pledge the Sila-8 on every Buddhist Holy Day and gradually increase to the day before the Buddhist Holy Day, during the Buddhist Holy Day, and the day after the Buddhist Holy Day. He may also try to observe the Eight Precepts on important days in Buddhism and as many days as possible until he can easily observe them daily.

### 9.5.2 For a Married Person

It can be difficult for a married person to observe the Eight Precepts because his or her spouse may not share the same aspiration. Therefore, a married person needs to exercise care and try to first of all persuade his or her spouse to attend Dhamma lectures at the temple and observe the Five Precepts in order to cultivate Right View. Once both partners share the same level of commitment in practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings, they can begin to observe the Eight Precepts together.

Initially, they can employ the steps provided for a single person by observing the Eight Precepts during the Buddhist Holy Day. When this can be done without undue strain, they can add more days in which to observe the Eight Precepts.

For a married person, the key is to first make sure that both partners share the same willingness in observing the Eight Precepts. Certain adjustments need to be made along the way until they feel comfortable observing the Eight Precepts on the Buddhist Holy Day and on other days as agreed.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the student has learnt that Sila practice yields many benefits which can be categorized into three different levels as follows.

### The Benefits Received Here and Now

1. Sila practice gives us peace and tranquility, and the lack of anxiety, suspicion, and fear.
2. Sila practice trains us to be slow to anger, never exploitative, never thinking about doing things that harm oneself and/or other people.
3. Sila practice deepens our Right View. We become fearful of Papa (or demerit); therefore, we endeavor to exercise better self-control.

### The Benefits Received in Future Existences

1. Sila practice causes us to be reborn in the States of Happiness.
2. When reborn in the Human Realm we will be blessed with a healthy body and longevity.

### The Ultimate Benefit

Sila practice leads one to Nibbana because Sila (or morality) is the foundation of Samadhi (or concentration) and Samadhi is the foundation of Panna (or insight). Panna is the supernormal insight, which allows one to penetrate the whole truth about reality.

## ASSIGNMENTS

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

# Chapter 10

## The Main Points of Bhavana Practice

### 10.1 The Importance of Bhavana Practice

### 10.2 Bhavana Practice Is a Universal Practice

### 10.3 What Is Bhavana Practice?

### 10.4 Types of Bhavana

11.4.1 Samathabhavana

11.4.2 Vipassanabhavana

### 10.5 Types of Bhavana

11.5.1 Kammatthana

- Samathakammatthana
- Vipassanakammatthana

11.5.2 Samadhi

11.5.3 Types of Sammasamadhi

- Samadhi practiced outside of Buddhism
- Samadhi practiced in Buddhism

11.5.4 The Difference between the Two Types of Samadhi

### 10.6 The Center of Our Body

### 10.7 Attaining Dhammakaya

### 10.8 The Levels of Samadhi Practice

- Khanikasamadhi
- Upacarasamadhi
- Appanasamadhi

### 10.9 Things that Hinder Samadhi Practice

- Kammachanda
- Byapada
- Thina middha
- Uddhaccakukkucca
- Vicikiccha

## **Concepts**

1. Bhavana practice or meditation practice is necessary for every human being regardless of his race or creed.
2. Bhavana practice or meditation practice has to do with training our mind to come to a standstill at the center of our body called the seventh base by following the Middle Way. When our mind can come to a standstill in just the right way, we will be able to achieve elevated meditative attainments.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the universal importance of Bhavana practice and how it enables every human being to put an end to suffering and the round of rebirth.
2. To enable the student to understand the meaning and the types of Bhavana as well as some of the words related to Bhavana.
3. To enable the student to understand the difference between Samadhi in Buddhism and Samadhi outside of Buddhism.
4. To enable the student to understand the center of our body, its importance, and how to practice Bhavana in order to attain Dhammakaya.

# Chapter 10

## The Main Points of Bhavana Practice

### 10.1 The Importance of Bhavana Practice

In previous chapters, the student has already learnt that merit can be accumulated by Dana practice and Sila practice. These practices are the sources of merit. Merit is necessary because it is the only form of provisions that can follow us across lifetimes.

A person traveling across a desert needs to carry enough provisions with him in order to cross the desert safely. Likewise, a person traveling in the endless round of rebirth needs to accumulate a large amount of provisions by earnestly practicing Dana and pursuing Generosity Perfection. Dana practice and Generosity Perfection give rise to material wealth, which allows us to continue our Dana practice and Generosity Perfection in future existences.

Sila practice is just as important as Dana practice. Some people are of the opinion that Sila practice protects us from causing other people trouble; hence, it is other people who benefit from our Sila practice. Actually, Sila practice benefits first the person who practices it because the instant he decides to practice the Sila, he no longer causes trouble for other people. This enables him to feel safe because he will no longer cause himself trouble.

Sila practice guarantees that its practitioner will meet with happiness and prosperity. Moreover, it can guarantee that its practitioner will be reborn in the States of Happiness. And when reborn in the Human Realm, he will have the opportunity to continue accumulating merit ever increasingly.

However, Dana practice and Sila practice alone are not enough when it comes to putting an end to suffering and defilements. To use an analogy, during wartime troops need the best provisions and the best forms of protection. Provisions can be compared to Dana practice. Forms of protection can be compared to Sila practice. But provisions and forms of protection cannot destroy enemies in the forms of defilements. To extinguish defilements we need to practice Bhavana by keeping our mind quiet, still, tranquil, bright, and clear. Therefore, Bhavana practice is important work that every human being must do.

### 10.2 Bhavana Practice Is a Universal Practice

Not only is Bhavana practice (meditation practice) important but when practiced correctly it can also attract many good things into our life. Bhavana practice is universal in that every human being can practice it regardless of his race, gender, age, or creed. Bhavana practice is not confined to Buddhists only but it can be practiced by every human being on earth.

### 10.3 What Is Bhavana Practice?

The ultimate aim in Buddhism is the complete removal of defilements and the attainment of Nibbana. And the only way to reach this ultimate aim is to train our mind in a process called Bhavana or Kammatthana.

Bhavana means to prosper, to increase, to create.

Bhavana means mental creation, making a resolute wish.

It is explained in the Commentary that the Dhamma, which the sages should cause to happen for the first time and regularly henceforth until it grows further and further, is called Bhavana.

Bhavana practice means training one's mind to be firmly planted in wholesomeness by keeping the mind free from Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances) until it can penetrate wondrous things.

## 10.4 Types of Bhavana

There are two types of Bhavana.

1. Samathabhavana
2. Vipassanabhavana

### 10.4.1 Samathabhavana

Samathabhavana is the meditation practice that trains one's mind to be quiet, still, and devoid of Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances). The Commentary describes Samatha as the removal of the things that are detrimental to meditation practice such as Kamachanda (or sensual desire). Samatha is the name of Samadhi.

There are 2 categories of Samathabhavana as follows.

1. It is the Samathabhavana practiced by individuals who have not attained Upacarabhavana. This category of Samathabhavana has to do with the ability to keep the mind still momentarily.
2. It is the Samathabhavana practiced by individuals who have already attained Mahagatajhana starting from the First Jhana to the higher Jhanas.

Another name for Samathabhavana is Cittabhavana. Cittabhavana has to do with training our mind to be full of virtue, strength, stability, joy, tranquility, brightness and clarity along with endeavor, mindfulness, and concentration.

### The Levels of Samathabhavana Practice

There are three levels of Samathabhavana practice, which give rise to Samadhi or concentration.

1. Parikammabhavana: It is the meditative state in which the mind is getting ready to become still.
2. Upacarabhavana: It is a more advanced meditative state where Upacarasamadhi is present.
3. Appanabhavana: It is the advanced meditative state where Appanasamadhi is present and the Jhanas can be attained.

## 10.4.2 Vipassanabhavana

The term “Vipassana” is a combination of two words, “Vi” meaning wondrous and “Passana” meaning penetrating sight. Therefore, Vipassana means supernormal insight.

Vipassanabhavana has to do with training one’s mind until it can attain supernormal insight. Supernormal insight is the wondrous ability to see for examples the Three Characteristics and the Four Noble Truths so clearly that one can extinguish Avijja (or ignorance), Tanha (or craving), and Upadana (or attachment).

It is explained in the Commentary that when one has the wondrous ability to see clearly Khanda-5 (or the five aggregates) as being Anicca (impermanent), Dukkha (full of suffering), Anatta (absent of true selfhood), and Asubha (impure), that ability is called Vipassana.

**There are three types of Vipassananana (or supernormal insight) as follows.**

1. The Vipassananana which gives rise to knowledge about Sankharadhamma (or the nature of compounded things), Rupa (or corporeality), and Nama (or mind).
2. The Vipassananana which gives rise to Samapatti or meditative attainments.
3. The Vipassananana which gives rise to Nirodhasamapatti or the Cessation of Suffering.

Another name for Vipassananana is Pannabhavana. Pannabhavana has to do with the cultivation of Panna or the kind of insight that allows one to understand things for what they are in reality until one’s mind is free from the domination of Kilesa (defilements) and Dukkha (suffering).

## 10.5 Words Related to Bhavana

1. Kammatthana
2. Samadhi

### 10.5.1 Kammatthana

The term “Kammathana” is a combination of two words, “Kamma” (or work) and “Thana” (or basis). Therefore, Kammatthanana means the basis of work. Here, it means the basis of mental work or the means to train the mind.

According to the Commentary, Kammatthana includes Samatha and Vipassana. Therefore, Kammatthana is the means to attain the Jhanas and the Path and Fruit of Nibbana.

## **There are two types of Kammatthana.**

1. **Samathakammatthana:** There are altogether 40 different methods that can be employed to still the mind. These include Kasina-10, Asubha-10, Anussati-10, Brahmavihara-4, Aharepatikulasanna-1, Catudhatuvavatthana-1, and Arupa-4.

Kasina means an object that keeps the mind's attention and prevents it from wandering or wavering. One example is Pathavikasina. It has to do with keeping the mind focused steadily on the ground that is, using the ground as an object to keep the mind under control.

Asubha means ugliness. Here, it means the decomposition process of a dead body. Asubhakammatthana practice means contemplating on the various stages of a decomposing body in order to see the ugliness of it all.

Anussati means constant mindfulness. One example is Buddhanussati, which means keeping the mind focused constantly on the Lord Buddha.

Brahmavihara means Brahma-Virtues. These include Metta (loving-kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathetic joy), and Upekkha (equanimity).

Aharepatikulasanna means contemplating the loathsomeness of food.

Catudhatuvavatthana means contemplating the male and female human beings, animals, and other living beings and seeing them all as consisting of the four elements.

Arupakammatthan means focusing the mind on the Non-Form Jhanas.

2. **Vipassanakammatthana:** It has to do with the six means of cultivating Panna or insight. These include Khanda-5 (or the five aggregates), Ayatana-12 (or the twelve spheres), Dhatu-18 (or the 18 elements), Indriya-22 (or the 22 sense-faculties), Ariyasacca-4 (or the Four Noble Truths), and Paticcasamuppada (or the Law of Causation).

### **10.5.2 Samadhi**

Samadhi means a stable mind, a stable Citta (Citta is one of the components of the mind), keeping the mind quiet and still, keeping the Citta focused on one particular thing.

According to the Vimuttimagga, **Samadhi** means a thing that keeps the mind stable, calm, not wavering, not wandering, not disturbed, quiet, not bound by any emotion. It means a thing that causes meditation to increase in effectiveness and strength.

Generally speaking, Samadhi (or concentration) is quite a common occurrence. Samadhi occurs for example while a professional gambler is playing card for money. It also occurs while an assassin is taking aim at his target. Etc. However, these types of Samadhi are not the ones taught in Buddhism.



**Samadhi in Buddhism** means the state in which the mind is stable, unwavering, calm, and tranquil. A mind that is unwavering but filled with greed as in the case of the professional gambler or filled with the intention to kill as in the case of the assassin is not considered to be Samadhi according to Buddhism. These types of Samadhi are grouped as “Micchasamadhi”. Micchasamadhi is discouraged because it has no real benefit.

The kind of Samadhi taught in Buddhism is called “Sammāsamadhi”. Samadhi means the state in which the mind is filled with wholesomeness.

According to Phrabhavaraviriyakhun, Samadhi covers the following different states of mind.

1. Samadhi is the state in which the mind is devoid of Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances).
2. Samadhi is the state in which the mind achieves one-pointedness.
3. Samadhi is the state in which the mind is at a standstill, stable, and unwavering.
4. Samadhi is the state in which the mind comes to a complete standstill at the center of one’s body called the 7<sup>th</sup> base. Hence, the mind is so pure, bright, and clear that the purity can be seen with one’s mind. The experience brings about encouragement, motivation, wisdom, and happiness.

When the mind comes to a standstill during Samadhi, it means that the Sight Sphere, the Memory Sphere, the Thought Sphere, and the Cognition Sphere emerge as one inside the Dhamma Sphere. The Dhamma Sphere is what gives rise to the human body. It resides at the center of the body. When these four spheres converge as one, it means that Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances) are no longer present. The mind has achieved one-pointedness and comes to a standstill.

It can be concluded that Samadhi means the state in which the mind is devoid of Nivarana. Hence, it is focused, quiet and still. This state of mind appears as a bright and clear sphere at the center of the body. It is the gateway to achieving elevated meditative attainments.

### 10.5.3 Types of Sammasamadhi

Sammāsamadhi is necessary in everyday life. When practiced correctly, it keeps the mind quiet and tranquil. There are two types of Sammasamadhi as follows.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Samadhi Practiced outside of Buddhism:** This type of Sammasamadhi existed long before the Lord Buddha’s time. It is practiced by Yogis and ascetics. The most popular method is to focus one’s mind on an object outside of one’s body. This method is called “External Kasina”. The meditative object may be round as in a disk fashioned out of clay with a diameter of 25 centimeters and a thickness of an inch. The meditator places the disk in front of him,

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<sup>1</sup> Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Padet Dattajivo), “What Thai People Must Know”, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2537 B.E.) page 34

looks at it until he can memorize it, closes his eyes and visualize the disk by focusing his mind on it. At the same time, he chants the word “Pathapi” (meaning the ground) repeatedly to prevent his mind from wandering. With practice, the mental image will gradually turn brighter and brighter and he will see it in front of him at some distance from him. With more and more practice, the mental image will be as sharp and clear as if seeing it with one’s physical eyes. In time, he will be able to make more and more use out of the Kasina (or meditative object).

2. **Samadhi Practiced in Buddhism:** The Lord Buddha taught this type of Sammasamadhi by improving upon the method used by the Yogis and ascetics of old. Therefore, the size of the meditative object and the mantra used were the same. The major difference was in focusing one’s mind on the center of one’s body as one visualizes the meditative object.

#### 10.5.4 The Difference between These Two Types of Sammasamadhi<sup>2</sup>

Initially, there is no difference between these two types of Sammasamadhi. The meditator, who focuses his mind on the meditative object in front of him, will see the image in front of him whereas the meditator, who focuses his mind on the meditative object at the center of his body, will see the image at the center of his body.

With continuing practice, a clear difference will emerge. The visualized object of the first meditator will not remain still in that it may be near or it may be far away; it may be clear or it may be fuzzy; it may be big or it may be small. In other words, the visualized object is difficult to control. Moreover, other images may also appear. For example, he may see an event that happened in the past, etc. Such interferences make it impossible for him to distinguish between what is real and what is not.

The reason is mistakes can be easily made when one focuses one’s mind on an object outside of one’s body. For example, if we look at a watermelon that has been cut in half on the uncut side, it will appear as a whole watermelon. This type of Sammasamadhi makes it difficult for the meditator to advance his meditation practice into the area of Vipassana because Vipassana can take place only when the mind comes to a standstill at the center of one’s body.

The drawbacks of this type of Sammasamadhi include:

1. A huge waste of time, simply because the meditator needs to adjust the distance and the size of the visualized image through trial and error. And it can take a very long time for the visualized image to keep still.
2. A risk, because of the constant appearance of false and distracting images.
3. A low level of Panna or wisdom, because it cannot lead to Vipassana.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 36

For a meditator who focuses his mind at the center of his body, once the image can be visualized, it will remain still and stable. With practice, the visualized image will disappear and be replaced by the bright and clear sphere called “The Pathamamagga Sphere”<sup>1</sup>, which is the entrance to the Middle Way, the gateway to Nibbana.

## 10.6 The Center of Our Body

The center of our body plays a crucially important role in meditation practice, since it is the center of our mental awareness. When we focus our mind at the center of our body, our mind can be at its most stable state, hence, enabling it to achieve meditative attainments. The Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) has the following to say about the center of our body.<sup>2</sup>

“How can one keep one’s mind under control and devoid of suffering? One must bring one’s mind to a standstill at the center of one’s body, at the center of the Dhamma Sphere, which gives rise to the human body. The Dhamma Sphere is a clear and pure sphere the size of a chicken egg yolk.”

Once the mind comes to a standstill at the center of the body, it will achieve a higher and higher meditative state. All doubts will be dispelled as described by the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro) as follows.

“The Dhamma is real. Just keep your mind right there at the center of your body. Do not let it wander at all. If you cannot see anything yet, just give it time. Once your mind can become quiet and still in just the right way, you will see the Dhamma. There is no need to search for it anywhere else. You won’t find it in the forest, in the mountain, or any other place. But once you see it, you’ll realize how the head wrap has been on your head all along but you have gone searching for it elsewhere and to no avail. The Dhamma dwells at the center of our body but we cannot see it. But once we can see it, all our doubts will disappear.

## 10.7 Attaining Dhammakaya

To practice meditation until one can attain Dhammakaya, one must practice according to the Middle Way or Majjhimatipada by bringing one’s mind to a standstill for a prolonged period at the center of one’s body called the seventh base. Once the mind becomes quiet and still in just the right way, one will see the Pathamamagga Sphere (or the Dhamma Sphere). It is the gateway to other Inner Bodies and all the way to Dhammakaya.

Many different methods can be employed in order to attain Dhammakaya depending on each individual’s preference. Everyone can attain Dhammakaya provided that he practices according to the Middle Way. The meditative methods used to bring the mind to a standstill at the seventh base may be a million but these can be summarized into 40 methods altogether. These methods appear in the Visuddhimagga. One can pick and choose any one of these methods to train the mind to become quiet and still. When one’s mind feels relaxed, quiet, and still in just the right way, one’s mind will

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<sup>1</sup> Luang Por Wat Paknam’s (Sodh Candasaro) Dhamma Inheritance (2539), page 746

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 126

fall precipitously inward as if from a steep cliff to meet the Dhamma Sphere. If the mind can be kept quiet and still continuously, one will attain the Inner Triple Gem. Whichever method one chooses, one's mind must be in a comfortable and relaxed state before it can be brought to a standstill.

## 10.8 The Levels of Samadhi

There are 3 different levels of Samadhi that can be derived from meditation practice.

1. **Khanikasamadhi:** It is the state of Samadhi which lasts only momentarily. It occurs daily when one reads a book, watches TV, drives, etc. It is the state of Samadhi that can be further developed.
2. **Upacarasamadhi:** It is the state of Samadhi where the mind is getting close to a permanent standstill. It is the state where the mind is devoid of Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances). It is the state of mind just before achieving the Jhanas.
3. **Appanasamadhi:** It is the state of permanent Samadhi where the mind has achieved the Jhanas.

## 10.9 Enemy of Samadhi

The worst enemy of Samadhi especially at the level of Upacarasamadhi is Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances).

Nivarana means hindrances. Nivarana prevents us from making progress in our meditation practice. It prevents us from experiencing the bliss of meditative attainments. Nivarana can also mean Kilesa (or defilements) that causes the mind to be gloomy, hence, unable to attain the Dhamma.

**Nivarana (or the Five Hindrances) includes:**

1. **Kammachanda:** It means sensual desire caused by corporeality, taste, smell, sound, and touch. Kammachanda causes the mind to be on fire.
2. **Byapada:** It means vindictiveness. Byapada causes the mind to be on fire and devoid of peace.
3. **Thinamiddha:** It means sloth and torpor. These two kinds of Kilesa are like fungus grown on plants and causes them to wither. These two kinds of Kilesa cause one to lose the motivation to perform wholesome deeds.
4. **Uddhaccakukkucca:** It means restlessness and worry. These two kinds of Kilesa make the mind gloomy and unhappy. They may cause some people to suffer neurosis.
5. **Vicikiccha:** It means hesitation and doubt. When plagued with Vicikiccha one cannot decide which method to employ in terms of meditation practice. In everyday life, Vichikiccha causes one to be indecisive. Vichikiccha hampers one's spiritual growth as well as growth in other areas of life.

It can be concluded that Bhavana practice (or meditation practice) has to do with training our mind to come to a standstill at the center of our body. It has to do with gently urging our mind back inside our body in a relaxed manner. It has to do with not allowing our mind to wander off. It has to do with “coaxing our sight, our memory, our thought, and our cognition to converge at the center of our body”<sup>1</sup>.

## Conclusion

Bhavana practice must go hand-in-hand with Dana practice and Sila practice. Bhavana practice is universal and can be practiced by anyone regardless of his race and creed. Bhavana practice has to do with training our mind to come to a standstill for a prolonged period at the center of our body called the seventh base. When the mind ceases its activity in just the right way, it can achieve higher and higher meditative states as Kilesa is removed from the mind to the point where it can achieve Vipassana (supernormal insight). At the Vipassana stage, one can see everything for what it is in reality. One can attain Enlightenment which is every living being’s ultimate life-goal.

### ASSIGNMENTS

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> The Dhammakaya Foundation, The Main Points of Phra Monkolthepmuni’s (Sodh Candasaro’s) Dhamma Lectures, (2541) page 2

# Chapter 11

## Bhavana Practice: It's Objectives and Its Fruit

### **11.1 Why Must We Practice Bhavana?**

- 11.1.1. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness here and now.
- 11.1.2. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness in the hereafter.
- 11.1.3. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness at the ultimate level.

### **11.2 The Fruit of Bhavana Practice**

- 11.2.1 The attainment of true happiness
- 11.2.2 The attainment of the Jhanas
- 11.2.3 The attainment of Vipassana
- 11.2.4 The attainment of the Cessation of Suffering
- 11.2.5 The attainment of Nibbana

### **11.3 Role Models of Bhavana Practice**

## **Concepts**

We practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness here and now, in the hereafter, and in Nibbana. When practiced earnestly and accordingly, we can be certain of its fruit.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand the role of Bhavana practice in all three levels of our life objective.
2. To enable the student to understand the fruit of Bhavana practice.

# Chapter 11

## Bhavana Practice: Its Objectives and Its Fruit

The Lord Buddha says, “A wise person should endeavor to exchange this body, which is plagued by death, aging, and defilements for Nibbana where there is only peace, deathlessness, agelessness, and the absence of defilements...”

To attain Nibbana, one must practice according to Majjhimapatipada (the Middle Way). It is the one and only way to end defilements and attain Nibbana. However, to gain the fruit of Bhavana practice, it requires that one practices it correctly and earnestly. Otherwise, one will not gain the expected result. In the Bhumija Sutta, the Lord Buddha says of someone not receiving the expected result from Bhavana practice as follows,

1. When one wants oil, one extracts it from sand.
2. When one wants milk, one takes it from the horn of a cow with calf.
3. When one wants concentrated butter, one boils water.
4. When one wants fire, one rubs two fresh sticks together;  
and of someone receiving the expected result from Bhavana practice as follows.
  1. When one wants oil, one extracts it from sesame seeds.
  2. When one wants milk, one takes it from the teat of a cow with calf.
  3. When one wants concentrated butter, one reduces yogurt by cooking it.
  4. When one wants fire, one rubs two dry sticks together.

### 11.1 Why Must We Practice Bhavana?

Bhavana practice plays a role in all three levels of our life objective as described in chapter 1 as follows.

1. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness here and now
2. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness in the hereafter
3. We must practice Bhavana in order to gain happiness at the ultimate level, which is Nibbana

#### 11.1.1 To Gain Happiness Here and Now

True happiness can only be derived from Bhavana practice. Bhavana practice is necessary for every human being on earth. The reason is each one of us is made up of body and mind. How well our life fares depends on the state of our body and mind. We require the four necessities and other labor-saving tools for our body. Likewise, we require Bhavana practice for our mind. In fact, our mind is far more important than our body.

It is said that our mind is the master and our body is the servant. We can provide for our body every form of creature comforts, all the money in the world, a retinue of attendants, etc., yet there is no guarantee that we will be happy. On the contrary, a person given just the four necessities may feel



happy because he has no other possessions to worry about. He can be as free as a bird flying in the sky. And if the person practices Bhavana until he can bring his mind to a standstill, he will experience the kind of deep joy that no amount of money can buy.

“The happiness derived from a still mind can be gained at the least cost but it is more valuable than all the material possessions. True happiness can be experienced by a person who earnestly and regularly trains his mind.”<sup>1</sup>

The happiness derived from Bhavana practice stays with the practitioner always whatever he may be doing as shown in the following story. Prince Hatthaka Alavaka had a conversation with the Lord Buddha when He was sitting on the forest floor near a cow path where the seat was uncomfortable and rough.

“Most Exalted One, how did you sleep?”

“I slept well, Prince. I am one of those people who sleep well at night.”

The Lord Buddha’s mind was constantly filled with such overwhelming joy that even sitting and sleeping on a hard place could not cause Him any physical discomfort.

The kind of happiness derived from Bhavana practice can only be gained by the person who practices it.

### **11.1.2 To Gain Happiness in the Hereafter**

Besides gaining happiness from Bhavana practice, one is also practicing according to the Lord Buddha’s Teachings as shown in the Ovadapatimokkha.

“Sabbapapassa akaranan  
Kusalassupasampada  
Sacittapariyodapanan  
Etan buddhanasasanan”

It means abstaining from unwholesome deeds, performing only wholesome deeds, and keeping the mind bright and clear. This is what every Lord Buddha teaches.

It is clear from this Lord Buddha’s Saying that besides abstaining from unwholesomeness and accumulating only wholesome deeds, we must also practice Bhavana because Bhavana practice causes our mind to be bright and clear, and far away from Kilesa.

Bhavana practice is not confined to Buddhists only but it is necessary for every human being. The reason is each one of us regardless of our race and creed possesses Kilesa.

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<sup>1</sup> Phrabhavanavisuddhiguna and Vichai Sutirachanon, “Meditation Practice and How to Teach Meditation Practice for Primary and Secondary School Students” (2535) page 11

If we take a good look at our self, we will realize that we have both good and bad points. As a result, we cannot express only the goodness within us all the time because sometimes we make mistakes and behave badly. Unwholesomeness in our mind is caused by Kilesa and it is Kilesa that drives us to commit misdeeds. The only means to remove Kilesa, which is deeply rooted in our mind, is Bhavana practice.

When we practice Bhavana according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings, what we gain in return is true happiness and a bright and clear mind not only here and now but also in the hereafter.

The power of a bright and clear mind is inestimable. It is the source of wondrous happiness and wish fulfillment.

### **11.1.3 To Gain Happiness at the Ultimate Level**

Most importantly, Bhavana practice is the means to end suffering and attain Nibbana as in the Lord Buddha's Saying "Nibbanan paraman sukhan" which means Nibbana is bliss.

Whoever wishes to end suffering and the round of rebirth must hold Bhavana practice to be the most important thing in his life.

To attain Buddhahood, a person must pursue Parami (or Perfections) to the fullest extent by putting his life on the line lifetimes after lifetimes and in spite of all the obstacles. He is determined to attain his lofty aspiration whatever it takes and however long it takes.

Such a person cherishes merit especially the kind of merit earned by Bhavana practice. But he must also practice Dana and Sila, for Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are the sources of merit. And merit is the source of success.

## **11.2 The Different Fruits of Bhavana Practice**

The different fruits gained from keeping one's mind quiet and still at the center of one's body include:

1. True happiness,
2. Meditative attainments,
3. Supernormal insight (Vipassana),
4. Cessation of Suffering, and
5. Nibbana

### **11.2.1 Gaining True Happiness**

The Lord Buddha says, "There is no happiness other than peace"

What every human being desires is happiness. Samadhi allows us to gain access to true happiness anytime anywhere, all it takes is to keep our mind quiet and still at the center of our body. And we will be amazed to discover that the origin of all happiness resides at the center of our body, which is the original dwelling of our mind.

It is only when we have gained access to true happiness that we realize what we had experienced in the past was only short-lived pleasure or temporary enjoyment. We derive a certain amount of pleasure or enjoyment from different things, different people, and different activities but soon enough we feel bored and want something new. Many people try to look for a person who fits their ideal thinking this person would be the key to their true happiness. But they have yet to find that person. As a result, they are constantly searching for the ideal person, the ideal place, the ideal activity, etc. But the lasting happiness all of us desire can only be found when we can bring our mind to a standstill at the center of our body.

Unfortunately, most of us grow up believing that happiness comes from having a certain level of education, a certain level of material wealth, an ideal spouse, etc. Therefore, we work hard for these things only to discover that education, material wealth, marriage, etc., still leave us yearning for more, and the happiness we desire appears to be forever elusive.

The happiness derived from Bhavana practice is true and can only be personally experienced. We experience true happiness when we can bring our sight, our memory, our thought, and our cognition to a standstill at the center of our body.

Therefore, the first objective of Bhavana practice at the basic level is to gain access to true happiness in our daily life. We feel happy because our mind is relaxed and comfortable as it rests easily at the center of our body. It is the kind of happiness that can spread to every atom of our body.

### **11.2.2 Gaining Meditative Attainments**

Once we can bring our mind to a standstill for a prolonged period, soon enough, we will achieve meditative attainments by attaining the respective Inner Bodies. These are the Inner Bodies where the First Jhana, the Second Jhana, the Third Jhana, and the Fourth Jhana reside. The mind is immersed in the happiness gained by attaining the respective Inner Bodies as it achieves elevated meditative attainments called “Jhanasamapatti”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to keep one’s mind tranquil unless one can bring it to a standstill at the center of one’s body. Such a state of mind is completely tranquil and imperturbable.

### **11.2.3 Attaining Supernormal Insight (Vipassana)**

Vipassana means supernormal insight. Vipassana allows one to gain penetrating knowledge about who we are, what we are made of, where we came from, why we are here, what our life objective is, and how to achieve it.

Supernormal insight is gained when one has attained Dhammakaya and it is through the Dhammakaya-Eye that one sees everything for what it is in reality. Such supernormal insight is called “Dhammakaya-Nanadassana”. It sees impermanence and permanence. It sees happiness and unhappiness. It sees the cause of suffering. It sees everything perfectly and completely.

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<sup>1</sup> Summarized from Luang Por Wat Paknam’s (Phramonkolthepmuni’s) Dhamma Inheritance, (2539), page 269

#### 11.2.4 Arriving at the Cessation of Suffering

Nirodhasamapatti or the Cessation of suffering occurs once Kilesa can be completely removed from the mind. It is the three families of Kilesa: greed, anger, and ignorance as well as the Ten Fetters (or Samyojana) that bind man to the round of rebirth. When Kilesa can be completely removed from the mind, the mind becomes perfectly bright and clear.

Nirodha means cessation. It is a different kind of cessation because once the mind ceases its activity altogether, it will move inward toward the source of ever increasing bliss. The range of Dhammakaya-Eye and Dhammakaya-Nanadassana increases. One can see and know more and more of reality.

#### 11.2.5 Attaining Nibbana

Ayatananibbana is more wondrous than all the realms of existence because it is the dwelling of living beings who have been emancipated from Kilesa. There is no round of rebirth in Nibbana. It is populated by pure living beings who know reality, who are awake and joyful.

### 11.3 Role Models of Bhavana Practice

Every human being is capable of practicing Bhavana. All one needs to do is to make the commitment to practice it earnestly and correctly. Every practitioner of Bhavana will certainly receive the fruit of the practice. It is only a matter of time. For some, it may take longer than others.

The best role model of Bhavana practice is the Lord Buddha. During the countless lifetimes pursuing Perfections as a Bodhisatta, He had never abandoned Bhavana practice. It was due to all of His past endeavors that had made it possible for Him to attain Self-Enlightenment and become the Lord Buddha in His final existence inside the round of rebirth as He sat under the Bodhi tree.

Another important role model of Bhavana practice in the present days is the Most Venerable Phramonkolthepmuni, the former Abbot of Wat Paknam (Sodh Candasaro) who discovered Vijja Dhammakaya. Bhavana practice was foremost in his ordained life. He entered the monkhood when he was 22 years old and he started practicing meditation the day after his ordination and continued to practice it for the rest of his life. In the early part of his monkhood, he studied both the Scriptures (Pariyatti) and Bhavana practice (Patipatti). It was during the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his monkhood that he decided to devote all of his effort to Bhavana practice.

“I made the decision when I was 19 to ordain for life and I vowed not to die before I could enter the monkhood. It has now been 15 years since I made the decision to ordain for life. But I have not yet attained the Truth seen and known by the Lord Buddha. Therefore, it is now time to devote all of my time to this effort.”<sup>1</sup>

Having made the decision, one day in the middle of the tenth month, he entered the Uposatha Hall in the evening and made the following vow.

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<sup>1</sup> Varoporn (alias), Following the Footsteps of Phramonkolthepmuni (Luang Por Wat Paknam), (2543 B.E.), page 8

“If I cannot see the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma this time, I will remain in this seat until I die.”<sup>2</sup>

As a result of his resolution, he attained the Dhamma that night. Upon attaining the Dhamma, he exclaimed,

“The Dhamma is so profound. Who can ever think it? It is beyond all contemplation, imagination, and thought. To attain the Dhamma, one must cease all contemplation, imagination, and thought. Cessation brings about extinguishment. Extinguishment brings about birth. No extinguishment equals no birth. Think about it, everyone. This is the truth. This is where the connection is. If it is not exactly just right, it can never happen.”

The above statement attests to the fact that the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma is real, good, and attainable. All we need to do is to practice meditation earnestly and we will certainly receive the respective result.

## Conclusion

Bhavana practice plays an important role in our life both here and now and in future existences. As soon as we make the decision to practice meditation earnestly and correctly, happiness is ours. It is the kind of happiness sought after by humanity. The most important aspect of Bhavana practice is that it is the only means to attain the Path and Fruit of Nibbana, which is every living being’s ultimate life goal. Therefore, we must make Bhavana practice our first priority in life so that we can begin to receive its many wondrous benefits here and now.

### ASSIGNMENTS

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook before proceeding to the next chapter.

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<sup>2</sup> Sinhon (alias), Phramonkolthepmuni, the Great Master, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (2545 B.E.), page 12

# Chapter 12

## The Correct Lifestyle

### **12.1 The Seed of Goodness**

12.1.1 Sammaditthi leads to true happiness

12.1.2 Sammaditthi and our life objective

- Our life objective at the basic level
- Our life objective at the intermediate level
- Our life objective at the high level

### **12.2 How to Overcome Kilesa**

12.2.1 Kilesa hinders the cultivation of Sammaditthi

12.2.2 How to overcome Kilesa

### **12.3 The Objectives of Dana Practice, Sila Practice, and Bhavana Practice**

- They are the sources of happiness
- They are the sources of good habits
- They are the means to overcome Kilesa

### **12.4 The Fruits of Dana Practice, Sila Practice, and Bhavana Practice**

- Dana practice is the source of material wealth
- Sila practice is the source of favorable physical attributes
- Bhavana practice is the source of favorable mental attributes

### **12.5 The Pursuit of Parami**

12.5.1 Dana practice is the first step of Parami pursuit

12.5.2 Pursuing Parami by practicing Sila

12.5.3 Pursuing Parami by practicing Bhavana

## **Concepts**

1. Cultivation of Sammaditthi (or Right View) allows human beings to have the correct life objective.
2. To achieve our life goal at every level, we must practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana. We practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana regularly and earnestly in order to gain happiness, form good habits, and remove defilements. When practiced to the fullest extent, they are the means to attain Nibbana.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana daily until it becomes a habit.
2. To enable the student to understand the interrelatedness of Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice, the pursuit of Parami, and the human life objective.

# Chapter 12

## The Correct Lifestyle

### 12.1 The Seed of Goodness

Every person on earth desires happiness and prosperity because a happy and prosperous life allows many good things to come into our lives. Happiness is attainable; and it is the result of a clean, bright, and clear mind.

A clean, bright, and clear mind begins with Sammaditthi (or Right View). Sammaditthi allows us to have the correct understanding about our world, our life, Punna (or merit), and Papa (or demerit).

#### 12.1.1 Sammaditthi Leads to True Happiness

Whoever possesses Sammaditthi can easily meet with happiness because he has the correct understanding about reality. Without Sammaditthi, it is impossible to see the world for what it is in reality. Sammaditthi or the lack thereof has a great impact on our thought and our attitude about our environment. Our environment here includes the people and objects around us as well as the natural environment. Our view affects our word and our thought.

Knowledge in a particular field such as political science, economics, astronomy, or the natural and physical sciences cannot help us to live life correctly unless we possess Sammaditthi. Drug trafficking, prostitution, corruption, selling counterfeit products, and even wars occur because the people involved in all these situations lack Sammaditthi. Actions of the people lacking in Sammaditthi bring about trouble and harm for themselves, other people, and the environment.

To survive a shipwreck, a person must know how to swim. Likewise, in the sea of Samsara, only those possessing Sammaditthi can lead themselves out of suffering and meet with true happiness.

Sammaditthi has the power to lead one to true happiness. Therefore, whoever desires true happiness must earnestly cultivate Sammaditthi.

#### 12.1.2 Sammaditthi and Our Life Objective

Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Padet Dattajivo) says that Sammaditthi provides a person the wisdom to set his life goal.<sup>1</sup>

Happiness is what every living being desires. We desire happiness here and now and after we die we also hope to go to a happy place. Ultimately, we desire pure happiness, which is attainable only in Nibbana. For this reason, there are three different levels to our life objective.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Padet Dattajivo), "Keep In Mind", (2546 B.E.), page 90

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 91-92



1. **Our Life Objective at the Basic Level:** This level of our life objective has to do with self-responsibility. It means that a person makes sure that he can support himself and his family by earning right livelihood. He does not become involved in anything unlawful and unethical. He does not become involved in the Causes of Ruin and other forms of unwholesomeness.
2. **Our Life Objective at the Intermediate Level:** This level of our life objective has to do with rebirth in the States of Happiness. A person possessing Sammaditthi understands correctly that the round of rebirth exists and that he must accumulate as much Punna (or merit) as possible here and now. He must abstain from everything unwholesome. And he must make Bhavana practice a priority in his life.
3. **Our Life Objective at the Ultimate Level:** This level of our life objective has to do with putting an end to Kilesa (or defilements). It means being emancipated from Avijja (or ignorance) and Phya Mara. It means putting an end to the round of rebirth. It means the attainment of Nibbana. This level of our life objective is confined to the monks who possess Lokuttara Sammaditthi (or Supramundane Right View).

Nonetheless, all of us should still strive to set our life objective at all three levels. This way we are certain to achieve our life objective at the basic level here and now and at the intermediate level as we make provisions for our next existence.

As a householder possessing Lokiya Sammaditthi (or mundane Right View), should he possess earnestness and a strong Indriya<sup>1</sup> and decide to enter the monkhood under the guidance of the Lord Buddha or an Arahant, he may be able to achieve his life objective at the ultimate level or at least attain one of the stages of Enlightenment.

## 12.2 How to Overcome Kilesa

### 12.2.1 Kilesa Hinders the Cultivation of Sammaditthi

As mentioned above, Kilesa (or defilements) prevents Sammaditthi from being cultivated. Kilesa causes the mind to become gloomy. It reduces the quality of our mind. Kilesa causes the mind to become diseased. There are three families of Kilesa as follows.

1. **Lobha:** It means covetousness.
2. **Dosa:** It means anger, vindictiveness, harboring thoughts of revenge.
3. **Moha:** It means ignorance.

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<sup>1</sup> A strong Indriya means a person whose mind has been developed to such a very high level that he has 1) Saddha or belief in the Law of Kamma, 2) Viriya or being ready to face all obstacles, 3) Sati or mindfulness, 4) Samadhi or an imperturbable mind, and 5) Panna or having a deep understanding about life and the world.

### 12.2.2 How to Overcome Kilesa

The best way to overcome all three families of Kilesa is to accumulate as much Punna as possible, since Punna has the power to cleanse the mind of impurity. Kilesa, which is deeply rooted in our mind, will be gradually removed by the power of Punna. Our mind will become more powerful and able to attract good things and decent people into our life. The sources of Punna include Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice.

1. **Dana Practice:** It means sharing what one has with other people. One may share one's material wealth, one's secular knowledge or one's Dhamma knowledge. The purpose of Dana practice is to remove Lobha (or greed).
2. **Sila Practice:** It means the intention to abstain from unwholesomeness, dishonesty, and every unwholesome thought, word, and act. The purpose of Sila practice is to remove Dosa (or anger).
3. **Bhavana:** It means training the mind to come to a standstill. The purpose of Bhavana practice is to remove Moha (or ignorance).

## 12.3 The Objectives of Dana Practice, Sila Practice, and Bhavana Practice

We practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana in order to:

1. Gain happiness
2. Form good habits, and
3. Remove Kilesa

### To Gain Happiness

**Dana Practice** is sharing what one has with other people. Dana practice benefits both the giver and the receiver in so many ways. It is one way to uplift one's quality of life.

**The more one gives, the more one receives.** One receives in so many ways and at the very least one feels good whenever one gives to another person. Dana practice is the source of Punna and Punna has the power to cleanse one's mind.

Without Dana practice, it is difficult to put an end to suffering and meet with true happiness because one of the causes of suffering is Lobha (or greed). Lobha causes a person to believe that he can gain happiness from things and certain persons. Therefore, much effort is spent toward the accumulation of things and the certain persons in his life. A myriad of problems are created by Lobha. These problems can only be removed by Dana practice.

The Lord Buddha teaches us to consider the reality of life in that **all living beings and all things are impermanent, suffer as a result of impermanence, and lack true selfhood. They are plagued by birth, aging, sickness, and death.** Therefore, it behooves all of us to live in such a way as to benefit our self and other people as much as possible. We need to share what we have with other people especially our material wealth, since we have to leave all of it behind as soon as we die anyway.

**It is not difficult at all to perform wholesome deeds.** They can be in the forms of a smile, an encouragement, goodwill, and everything else that make life easier for other people.

**The joy derived from sharing what we have with others is all-encompassing, lasting, and uplifting.** We give out of a bright and clear mind. We give out of our desire to improve the quality of our life and the lives of those around us. This kind of giving makes the world go round.

**Sila** means human virtue. Human virtue allows human beings to live together in peace and happiness. Sila practice brings about every wish fulfillment. It is the kind of goodness that not only lasts but can also create world peace. Moreover, Sila practice can help solve many life problems faced by individuals as well as society as a whole. It can be said that there is no problem which cannot be solved by Sila practice.

Unfortunately, most human beings know very little about the value of Sila practice. All of the confusions and problems existing in the world stem from the fact that most people in the world do not practice Sila.

To practice Sila, all that is required is intention. It is the intention to be strong, patient, and firmly grounded in goodwill toward our self and all people. It is the kind of intention motivated by a clean mind. When we practice Sila, we are earning merit with our mind. The earnest practice of Sila is the source of incomparable merit.

Bhavana Practice is the source of innumerable benefits for the practitioner and those around him. Bhavana practice is universal and can be practiced by anyone anywhere. It is not confined to monks and ascetics. Bhavana practice is beyond race and creed.

The world today is plagued by wars, conflicts, racial prejudice, etc. Efforts have been made to try and remove these problems but the root cause of these problems has yet to be addressed. The root cause of good and bad things is the human mind. It is our mind that controls our thought, our word, and our action. And it is the collective mind of everyone on earth that influences everything on earth.

When one person practices Bhavana by keeping his mind quiet and still at the center of his body, the peace and purity generated by his mental state will permeate the entire area where he is sitting. If everyone on earth practices Bhavana, the peace and purity generated by everyone's mental state will cover the entire earth. Bhavana practice improves our mind in such a way as to help us overcome every problem, overlook diversity, and feel only loving-kindness toward other people. If everyone on earth feels this way as a result of Bhavana practice, peace and harmony will prevail. Bhavana practice leads to personal inner peace. Collective inner peace leads to world peace.

### **To Form Good Habits**

It is necessary that we practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana so earnestly that it becomes a force of habit because there are so many things today that can easily draw us away from wholesomeness.

## **1. Today's World**

Many things in our hi-tech world today compete for our attention daily: telecommunication devices, movies, entertainments, etc. Technology is changing rapidly and many of us feel the need to keep up with it. Moreover, various activities which are the causes of ruin have also mushroomed in this hi-tech environment.

## **2. Today's Work and Workplace**

Our work is very important to us, since it is our means to earn a living. Right livelihood does exist but what is more prevalent today is wrong livelihood. Many people earn wrong livelihood and accumulate Papa (or demerit) on a daily basis. Such wrong livelihood include raising animals destined for the slaughterhouse, operating a gambling den, trading addictive drugs, trading weapons, etc. Even the so-called right livelihood can become a source of corruption and other unethical dealings.

## **3. Unwholesomeness**

The Lord Buddha says, "A person should diligently perform wholesome deeds and guard his mind against Papa because a person, who is slow in performing wholesome deeds, will take pleasure in Papa."

Papa can easily invade one's mind, if one does not earnestly think, say, and do wholesome things.

## **4. Life's Uncertainties**

An ordinary person has no idea when his last moments on earth will come. Therefore, to ensure rebirth in the States of Happiness, one must earnestly make it a habit to perform deeds of merit such that one's mind is constantly immersed in merit.

## **5. Memory Loss**

Rebirth in the Human Realm causes us to lose all of the memory of our previous existences such that we have to start learning everything all over again. But if we had made it a habit to perform wholesome deeds lifetimes after lifetimes, the habit will follow us across lifetimes as in the example of Prince Vessantara.

The moment Prince Vessantara was born, he extended his hand toward his mother and asked, "Mother, do you have any money? I wish to practice Dana." In our Lord Buddha's previous lifetime, He was born as Prince Vessantara. Our Lord Buddha had practiced Dana all throughout His countless previous lifetimes until it became His second nature.

## **To remove Kilesa**

As mentioned earlier, every living being's ultimate life-goal is the attainment of Nibbana. This most important goal requires persistent and consistent effort throughout countless lifetimes. To attain Nibbana, one must completely extinguish Kilesa which is deeply rooted in one's mind. To extinguish Kilesa, Punna is required. Ultimately, we practice Dana, Sila, and Bhavana in order to accumulate as much Punna as we can.

It had taken the Lord Gautama Buddha 20 Asankheyya Kappas (a Kappa is an earth age) and an additional 100,000 Kappas to accumulate Punna to the fullest extent in order to become self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha.<sup>1</sup> We too must also accumulate as much Punna as possible while we can. It is the only way to make provisions for our long journey inside the round of rebirth.

We must also practice Sila by observing the Precepts immaculately. It is the very means to make sure that our round of rebirth occurs only in the States of Happiness, which include the Human Realm. The reason is the human form is the best life-form for accumulating Punna.

Our human form and our material wealth allow us to continue accumulating every form of wholesomeness which includes Dana practice, Sila practice, and especially Bhavana practice. Bhavana practice has the power to remove Avijja (or ignorance). When blessed with material wealth, a healthy body, and longevity, we will be able to devote as much time as possible to Bhavana practice. When we can keep our mind quiet and still for a prolonged period, we will be able to attain the Inner Triple Gem, which resides at the center of our body. And it is through the Inner Triple Gem that our coarse and subtle defilements can be extinguished.

## **12.4 The Different Fruits of Dana Practice, Sila Practice, and Bhavana Practice**

Dana practice removes greed and miserliness from our mind. Sila practice removes anger and vindictiveness. Bhavana practice removes ignorance and allows us to see things for what they are in reality. We will understand that we are here on earth to accumulate as much Punna as possible so that it can be condensed into Parami (or Perfections). Parami has the power to bless us with every good thing in life as well as every wish fulfillment.

Whoever had earnestly practiced Dana in his previous live or lives will be blessed with material wealth in this existence. Material wealth allows us to easily support our self and our family, afford a comfortable lifestyle, and practice Dana.

Whoever had earnestly practiced Sila in his previous life or lives will be blessed with favorable corporeal attributes. When we practice Sila, we do not harm or exploit other living beings. As a result, we will be born with good looks, a lovely complexion, and just the right height and weight.

Whoever had earnestly practiced Bhavana in his previous lives will be blessed with favorable mental attributes. When one practices Bhavana, one accumulates what is called “Bhavanamayapanna” which is the kind of Panna (or insight) arisen from Bhavana practice. Such a person will be born with a huge intellect and can easily learn the different branches of the arts and sciences.

Material wealth and favorable physical and mental attributes will follow us across lifetimes such that we will be able to accumulate more and more Punna with each rebirth on earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Phraprommoli (Vilas Nanavaro, a graduate of Pali Studies Level 9), “Muninathdipani” (2539 B.E.) page 22.

## 12.5 The Pursuit of Parami

Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice are the sources of Punna. And they are earnestly practiced by every Bodhisatta lifetimes after lifetimes for however long it takes for them to attain Buddhahood. Parami<sup>1</sup> is the condensed form of Punna.

### 12.5.1 The First Parami

Having pursued Parami to a very great extent as a Bodhisatta our Lord Buddha finally received the Buddha-Forecast from the Lord Dipankara Buddha in the existence when He was a Yogi called “Sumedha”. The Lord Dipankara Buddha told the Yogi Sumedha that he would most certainly attain Buddhahood exactly four Asankheyya Kappas and an additional 100,000 Kappas hence.

The Buddha-Forecast is the most sublime forecast, and it must come true in the same way that when a clump of soil is thrown up into the air, it must fall down to the ground.

After the Lord Dipankara Buddha left, Sumedha began to contemplate what makes Buddhahood possible. He came to the conclusion that Danaparami (or Generosity Perfection) is the first Parami that every Bodhisatta must pursue as written in the Khuddakanikaya Apadana as follows.

The Yogi Sumedha said to himself, “I would certainly attain Buddhahood but I must contemplate all of the virtues that allow one to become a Buddha. Having searched everywhere for the Buddha-Virtues, I discover that Danaparami is the first Parami pursued by previous Bodhisattas. I realize that from now on I must pursue Danaparami to the fullest extent in the same way as a water jar being turned completely upside down, hence, giving up all of its water. I must not care for material wealth, position, children and spouse, nor must I care for my body parts. I must give away everything. If I can pursue Danaparami to the fullest extent, I would one day sit under the Bodhi tree and become a Buddha. Therefore, I vow to pursue Danaparami to the fullest extent from now on.”

Danaparami facilitates the pursuit of other Parami. There are three levels of Danaparami.

1. Danaparami: This has to do with giving away one’s material wealth.
2. Danaupaparami: This has to do with giving away one’s body parts, flesh, and blood.
3. Danaparamatthaparami: This has to do with giving away one’s life

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<sup>1</sup> Luang Por Wat Paknam’s (Phramonkolthepmuni’s) Dhamma Inheritance, (2539 B.E.), page 609

### 12.5.2 The Second Parami

Having realized how Danaparami was the first Parami to pursue, Sumedha discovered that the next Parami he had to pursue was Silaparami (or Morality Perfection) as written in the Khuddakanikaya Apadana as follows.

Sumedha understood that Danaparami alone could not lead him to Buddhahood and upon deeper contemplation he discovered Silaparami. He said to himself “I must also pursue Silaparami to the fullest extent in the same way that a yak would rather give up its life than allow its tail-hair to be torn. I must be willing to give up my life for the sake of Sila. If I can pursue Silaparami to the fullest extent, I would one day attain Buddhahood.”

As a Bodhisatta, our Lord Buddha had exercised superhuman effort in pursuing all three levels of Silaparami. At times, it required that he gave up his life in the pursuit.

1. Silaparami: This has to do with being committed to Sila practice to the point where he was willing to give up his material wealth in order to keep his Sila practice immaculate.
2. Silaupaparami: This has to do with being committed to Sila practice to the point where he was willing to give up his body parts, flesh, and blood in order to keep his Sila practice immaculate.
3. Silaparamatthaparami: This has to do with being committed to Sila practice to the point where he was willing to give up his life in order to keep his Sila practice immaculate.

### 12.5.3 The Third Parami

The next Parami Sumedha considered was Nekkhammaparami (or Renunciation Perfection) as written in the Khuddakanikaya Apadana as follows.

Having discovered Silaparami, Sumedha discovered that the next Parami he had to pursue was Nekkhammaparami. He said to himself, “From now on I must pursue Nekkhammaparami to the fullest extent in the same way that a man, who has long been imprisoned, feels no love for the prison but has the utmost desire to leave it. I know that these realms of existence are nothing but a prison. To leave this prison, I must pursue Nekkhammaparami and abandon all sense-desire. If I can pursue Nekkhammaparami to the fullest extent, I would one day attain Buddhahood.”

Leaving the householder’s life to take up the religious life as an ascetic allows a person more time to practice Bhavana. A person enters the monkhood in order to give himself as much time as possible to practice Bhavana so that his Bhavana practice can progress more quickly.

Parami has ten parts altogether (Parami-10 or the ten Perfections) but the successful pursuit of Parami-10 must be based on Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice. These three practices serve as the foundations of Parami-10.

## **Conclusion**

It is crucially important that every human being accumulates as much Punna as possible. And the sources of Punna include Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice. These practices are crucial to achieving all three levels of our life objective.

Therefore, Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice can be considered our most important endeavors in life and we must make it a habit to practice them. In other words, Dana practice, Sila practice, and Bhavana practice must be an important part of our lifestyle.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

After you have finished studying this chapter, complete the test and the exercises provided in the workbook.