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Article 62

The Buddhist Way to Happiness

RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT

[Taken from the book titled *The Buddhist Way to Happiness* by Rahubadde and Tanuja Sarath-Chandra based on the Great Discourse on Blessings (Maha Mangala Sutta)]

Factor (15)

ALL -ROUND PROPER CONDUCT

In a civilised society, many of us have reasonably good conduct in a significant range of areas. The Buddhist recommendation is to be of good conduct in a universal sense. For example, even criminals show somewhat good conduct towards the family and neighbours. That is selective. Genuine good conduct needs to be rounded and universal.

Buddhist ethics indicate the lines along which good conduct can be practiced. These are partly stated as rules conduct, and partly encompassed in ethical principles.

Ethics in Buddhism are not arbitrary but are derived from philosophical psychological principles.

Some ethical practices are conducive to a happy mundane life while other practices are clearly aligned with the path to enlightenment.

Ethical rules are enunciated in two streams, one being for the Sangha (monks and nuns), and the other being for lay people. The rules applicable to the Sangha are very detailed. For a fully ordained monk, there are more than 220 rules to observe. For lay people the minimum set is the five precepts. They can go on to higher precepts by choice. The most comprehensive and meaningful higher set is the eight precepts of livelihood.

This set includes refrainment from killing, stealing, bad conduct, falsehood, slander, harsh speech, frivolous speech, and wrong views. The first three relate

to body conduct, the next four to verbal conduct and the last one to mental conduct.

On special days of practice. Higher rules are practised by lay people. One set is the eight precepts, and the other is the ten precepts.

In terms of philosophy and psychology, Buddhist ethical rules are conducive to the reduction of greed, aversion, and ignorance. That is why they are not arbitrary and have spiritual value.

In the three types of training, virtue, concentration, and wisdom (sila, samadhi, and panna), the first is comprised of ethical conduct.

These three also develop into the noble eight-fold path, which is followed for the ultimate purpose of attaining enlightenment.

The other aspect of Buddhist ethics is the promotion of mundane, or worldly happiness. There are no rules but statements of principles. About fifty such principles are covered in the discourse on Blessings (Mangala Sutta) and the discourse to Sigala (Sigalovada Sutta). The principle considered here is one example.

In the discourse on Blessings, the Buddha concludes by saying that those who follow these practices properly, progress to enlightenment. Please see the last stanza of the discourse.

Article 63

The Buddhist Way to Happiness

HELPING RELATIVES

[Taken from the book titled *The Buddhist Way to Happiness* by Rahubadde and Tanuja Sarath-Chandra based on the Great Discourse on Blessings (Maha Mangala Sutta)]

Factor (16)

HELPING RELATIVES

Whether a person is a close relative or a distant relative, the idea of helping relatives is an extension of the family idea, a little more. Tracing back history many relatives have helped us to become who we are today. When in need because of illness or other misfortune, they naturally rely on relatives. This reliance needs to be respected.

People find it hard to seek help from everyone around. So, they look to relatives. We need to share what we have with others, and it is sensible to share with relatives. Negatively speaking, it would be cruel to look away when your relative needs your help. The principle is extending compassion within reasonable limits.

Helping relatives is a manifestation of generosity in the face of actual and visible needs. It may also be an expression of gratitude.

Looking at the life of the Buddha, after enlightenment his first visit was to Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha, the city in which his old friend King Bimbisara lived. He had promised to visit him after he realised the truth. From there he started a fairly long journey to visit his relatives of the Shakya clan. There he helped many of them to advance spiritually. Senior monks included Ananda, Nanda, Anuruddha and many other relatives.

This is not a case of giving favours to relatives overlooking others. It is only treating relatives as relatives.

This principle has sometimes been mis-interpreted to mean giving advantages to relatives, in preference to those more deserving. For example, in politics, business and government, those in power try to give advantages to relatives and friends, where they do not deserve it. The principle of treating all as equals needs to be upheld.

Helping includes spiritual activities. Relatives who might not have the necessary motivation to practice giving, morality and mind development (Dana, Sila and Bhavana) must be motivated and assisted to tread the right path. You can be a noble friend to your relatives.

When relatives have passed away, alms can be given bringing the relatives together, and conferring merit on the dead relatives.

Article 64

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 01 December 2021]

Views and Intentions (1)

If you have Wrong View, intentions start to go all wrong.

There are three right intentions in Buddhism:

- the intention to let go (renunciation),
- the intention to be kind (no ill-will), and
- the intention to be gentle (no violence).

This is the second of the eight-fold path to enlightenment in Buddhism.

When you've created these beautiful intentions of letting go, being kind and being gentle, that is what we mean by Right View. Right View leads to Right Intentions.

Two centuries after the Buddha, the very famous Buddhist emperor of India called Asoka carved on stones wise thoughts, called Asoka pillars, which remain until this day. One of the wise thoughts written on a pillar reads:

“Anyone who even criticises another person’s religion, let alone destroying that person’s temple of worship, only succeeds in demeaning his or her own faith.”

Spirituality and religion should always be about peace, kindness, and harmony. Whatever creates such conditions is Right View.”

Source:

Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

Article 65

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria, 08 December 2021]

Views and Intentions (2)

When Right View is cultivated, we have harmony and peace. True spirituality is being kind and non-judgmental.

So what actually is Right View? Is it being aware or mindful inside of you—this thing you call intuition or wisdom? You know exactly what’s right or wrong. You know what wisdom does? It leads to peace and harmony.

It leads to three beautiful Right Intentions ie, the intention to let go (renunciation), the intention to be kind (no ill-will), and the intention to be gentle (no violence).

The first one is the ability to let go. When we can actually have a bit of letting go—letting go of our views and preferences, we can have peace with other people.”

Source:

Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

Article 66

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria, 15 December 2021]

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

Views and Intentions (3)

Right View goes across all faiths and cultures, creating peace and harmony, breaking barriers between people.

Forgiveness is important as it is part of Right View. It's called 'letting go' and 'being kind'.

When you remember that everything in life is fragile and know as truth that relationships don't last forever and that one day you're going to die or be separated from your loved ones, you don't need to be afraid. This attitude will save many relationships as you will put more effort and care into them.

When you care for your relationship like it's your most priceless possession, you will not drop it, you will not knock it, and then it will last a long time. And when it does bust up after you've given your best, you don't blame anybody and you don't feel guilty or angry. You don't think there's something wrong with you. You're just like everybody else.

Glasses will break. If you look after them, they'll last longer. And when they break, you know that it's part of life.

So be kind, be generous, let go and share. Those are the Buddhist Right Intentions, which you will have when you have Right View."

Source:

Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

Article 67

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria, 25 December 2021]

Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

“Anicca—Nothing Lasts

Anicca, is often translated as impermanence, but actually it's more than impermanence.

Things come and go; and can change quickly. Possessions can also come and go. This is just life.

Even our desires are impermanent and unreliable. As soon as we have them, we don't want them anymore.

Suffering arises when we don't understand reality, when we have unrealistic expectations of life.

Our loved ones come into our life and then they leave again.

Look at your children, where do they come from?

They come with their own karma from their previous places, and they stay with you for a while, and they leave again.

So you should understand from the beginning that your job is just to nurture them for 19-20 years and once they get their degree or able to live independently, you should say goodbye. But how many of you can do that?

You need to realise that your children don't belong to you.

They're impermanent. They go according to their karma. We go according to our karma. If we can only realise that eventually our children will leave and that things change, then we will be free.”

Source:

Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

COMMENTS ON ARTICLES AND YOUR DHAMMA QUESTIONS

Articles, Comments and Questions are requested. These can be taken up in future Buddhist Forums conducted by QSA. Forums 3 and 4 are now proceeding. For how to join these forums, please see a recent QSA newsletter. Ask for a copy from infoqsa@gmail.com or see under current activities in the QSA website www.sanghaqld.org

THE END OF THE 9 PAGE QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE FOR FEBRUARY 2022

Issued by the President of QSA, Reverend James Wilson

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