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## Article 90

*The Buddhist Way to Happiness*

## HUMILITY

[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 (23)

## BEING HUMBLE (HUMILITY)

This state of mind is easily maintained by people who respect others. Respect is usually active, and humility is usually passive. It is easy to understand when working in a group but is also visible when one is alone. This way it is an attitude of mind sometimes being just a feature of the mind, and at other times being displayed in action.

It arises in relation to others. The opposite is more visible. Pride and conceit are opposites. Both these are rooted in stupidity and ignorance or a shortfall in wisdom. In this light humility is an essential part of the behaviour of a wise person.

One may develop pride regarding wealth, income, status, and power. It may relate to qualifications and other attainments in education and training.

Being healthy also contributes to pride. Family connections, appearance and personality are common reasons for excessive pride.

These are unwholesome qualities and need to be reduced. It is hard to reduce them, and will be eliminated completely on attaining enlightenment. Short of that, we may also reduce them for practical reasons. If you dislike being looked upon as a common fool, it is best to understand that actions based on pride need to be reduced. Even the gait of a humble person is an indication of humility and wisdom.

A practical result of pride is the negative effect it has on learning. A humble person finds it easy to learn from others. If you just say that you do not understand something, a person who knows has a chance of helping you.

The first chief disciple of the Buddha (Venerable Sariputta) second only to the Buddha in wisdom, was extremely humble. Once a novice monk told him that he had not tied the robes correctly, and he immediately turned back and corrected the error. What prevents us from being humble like that?

When Rahula was a novice monk, he was advised not to take pride in the fact that his father was so accomplished, but to think of humility and practice humility. He developed the practice of throwing a handful of sand and wishing that he should receive as many instructions as possible from elders. Very soon, he became an Arahant.

Some people think that if one stays humble, then others will trample them in society. No, that might happen now and then, but the overall attitude of society is to show great respect for such a person.

## **Article 91**

*The Buddhist Way to Happiness*

### **CONTENTMENT (BEING CONTENTED)**

[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 24**

Wishing, yearning, clamouring for more of everything is a common occurrence. This habit appears as a soft desire to start with, and it can intensify to be a strong anxiety, and then burn like a fire within. Those who learn to be content and satisfied, do not suffer in this way.

We receive our day to day needs in food, medicine, clothing and shelter in varying amounts and quality. With reasonable effort we try to improve what we receive. That seems natural.

Having received your needs, it is great if you can be contented with what you receive now. Genuine contentment eliminates the suffering caused by yearning.

If you give a toffee to a child, the child might say thank you and feel happy about it. Another child may demand for more and make a fuss about it. The latter suffers but not the other. The same thing happens with adults, who never learn to feel satisfied with what they have. At times, this may end up in total disaster.

Another comparable experience is when you fall ill. Then, some things are denied. With wisdom and understanding one can stay satisfied. In the alternative, one will yearn for things and suffer thereby.

Elderly people devoted to spiritual practice, sometimes never feel satisfied about their progress, and become anxious. With more ardent practice, they might get over these feelings. For the time being, one needs to be satisfied.

Being content is not being complacent. It is good to work hard. For the moment one needs to feel contented.

Contentment is good for health too. In taking food, it is not necessary to have a belly full. At a certain point, one needs to feel that it is enough. A little bit less would assure one of better health.

At work we are never satisfied with our boss. It is not always based on facts but rather on our feelings. Even in another place, you might feel the same way. Perhaps you might never find the perfect boss. It is more sensible to feel contented.

How many of us are contented with the present salary? It is very few. The feeling is that something more is needed. As to how much more we never know. At least for the time being we need to be contented.

## **Article 92**

*Taken from the QSA Dhamma Practice Training Academy (DPTA) lesson bank  
5.5 Lesson number 6007*

### **THREE STAGES OF INITIAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

In our initial practice, three stages of development can be recognised, Generosity (Dana), Morality (Sila), and Mind development (Bhavana). Generosity is not merely giving things to others but giving coupled with understanding. Morality is to conduct our life so that we do not harm ourselves and we do not harm others. Mind development is disciplining the mind so that no harm is caused to ourselves or to others.

Some people think that charity is not relevant. That is not correct. Later you will realise how charity paves the way for mental development. It helps to dissolve the dirt that envelop the mind.

One cannot just jump at the idea of mind development as the key practice. Generosity and morality both directly facilitate the process.

## **Article 93**

*Taken from the QSA Dhamma Practice Training Academy (DPTA) lesson bank  
5.5 Lesson number 6008*

### **THREE STAGES OF HIGHER SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

After some practice, generosity becomes natural. It is then a thing that happens rather than a thing that is done. It becomes an attitude of mind. The things that you give begins to include kindness and compassion. Ultimately it becomes very wise and all pervading.

At that stage the practice gets on to the next level, Morality, Concentration and Wisdom. Concentration of mind is more like stilling the mind and calming the mind rather than a vigorous action to hold it on one object. Mind development must be a soft exercise.

Wisdom development is attempted through the development of mindfulness. Here one develops the ability to move the mind with the current action mental, verbal or corporeal. It is recommended that these three work together.

## **Article 94**

*Taken from the QSA Dhamma Practice Training Academy (DPTA) lesson bank  
5.5 Lesson number 6009*

### **MANAGEMENT OF THE SENSES**

A simple approach to practice is the management of the six senses, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. It can start where you can and as time and practice goes on, it can expand and ramify.

For example, observe your own behaviour and inclinations, and notice which sense is active. In its activities does it bring you more problems and complications? If it does, then pay more attention to it. Try to discover the origins of such complications and whether these can be managed better.

Generally, complications occur due to excessive attachments. Can these attachments be reduced through understanding? Have the negative aspects of attachments been looked at? Does that help in reducing the attachments?

These exercises cannot be done vaguely. Thoughts must be directed to specific senses. If you always desire to watch television,

then pay attention to that tendency and see why you are doing it and whether it can be reduced. If you manage to reduce it a little, note that you have succeeded. Then you can proceed to tackle another problem and so on.

Every time you succeed you get a little more peace of mind and that can motivate you to further action.

Managing the senses is not easy or quick. It must be done carefully, slowly, and mindfully.

## **Article 95**

*Taken from the QSA Dhamma Practice Training Academy (DPTA) lesson bank  
5.5 Lesson number 6010*

### **ERADICATING UNWHOLESOME BEHAVIOUR**

Unwholesome (akusala) behaviour is discussed in the lessons relating to ethics. In general, unwholesomeness means that it is not conducive to spiritual progress, or not directed towards the attainment of enlightenment.

It is very important to learn what is unwholesome and try to clip them off from your behaviour. For example, telling lies is unwholesome behaviour. It is prompted by some craving or desire, some anger or ill will, or by ignorance embedded in the mind.

Good practice requires that such behaviour must be scrutinised, the roots discovered, and the behaviour eradicated.

Unwholesomeness is widely distributed and entrenched that it is impossible to tackle this problem in a day or two. Examine the whole field and identify where the attack should begin. Begin at that point. Destroying at that point has the ability to make other points loose and slippery. They also tend to get destroyed automatically, making the task of the practitioner easy as time goes on.

In paying homage to the Buddha, the second term is an indication that the Buddha has succeeded in eradicating all unwholesomeness. Hence, this is a key aspect of our practice. It is relatively easy to master and it is far-reaching.

## Article 96

### **Ajahn Brahm's Quote:**

*[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 29 April 2022]*

### **Karma Without Belief**

"What is some basic daily practice that a lay person should do? The daily practice is to start now — be kind, be compassionate. It doesn't matter what you do; how you do it is really important. Developing the attitude to be kind and caring should be our daily practice."

## Article 97

### **Ajahn Brahm's Quote:**

*[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 4 May 2022]*

## Total Listening

"What is some basic daily practice that a lay person should do? The daily practice is to start now — be kind, be compassionate. It doesn't matter what you do; how you do it is really important. Developing the attitude to be kind and caring should be our daily practice."

Source: Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 19 May 2022]

## Listening to the body and mind

What we're doing in meditation is learning how to listen, especially to our body and all its feelings at the beginning. Once you get this great ability to listen, it's not just to understand other people but also to learn about yourself. *I listen to my body, and then my body becomes a friend.*

Source: Opening up to Kindfulness by Ajahn Brahm

### Article 99

### Ajahn Brahm's Quote:

[Gratefully extracted from the newsletter of the Buddhist Society of Victoria 26 May 2022]

## Lower Your Expectations

Many years ago, a gentleman came up to me and said, "I hear you are a very wise monk, so can you teach me what Buddhism is? I've only got about a minute because I have to go to work." Instead of saying that was impossible, I liked to challenge myself. What I came up with is: *Suffering is asking from life what it can't give you.* You've got to learn the limitations of what life gives you and make some plans, but if it doesn't work out as you've expected, you've got to let go, make peace with it, and just adapt as things happen.

**THE END**