

Skillfulness for the Wellbeing of Life

Everyone likes to develop their skills to succeed in their life. They think that when they are skillful, they are successful. According to Buddhism, if we are successful, our inner peace which is our final goal of life should gradually increase. The reason is that if we are not happy, everything we earned is useless. In this situation, Buddhism explains the path how to develop our inner peace to the maximum level while we increase our skills.

The supreme Buddha always describes the peaceful path for wellbeing in this life and hereafter. According to audience, the Buddha explains his message in short or long. No matter whether the Buddha speaks to lay people or monks, he always points out the path of liberation from suffering.

In the Vyagghapajja [Dīghajāṇu] Sutta, the Buddha kindly explains four areas to succeed in this life in the name of happiness.

First, for this life;

“Cattārome, vyagghapajja, dhammā kulaputtassa diṭṭha-dhamma-hitāya saṃvattanti diṭṭha-dhamma-su-khāya. Katame cattāro? Uṭṭhānasampadā, ārakkhasampadā, kalyāṇamittatā, samajīvitā.

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's wellbeing and happiness in this very life. They are;

1. The accomplishment of determined effort (*utthāna-sampadā*)
2. The accomplishment of watchfulness (*ārakkha-sampadā*)
3. Good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*)
4. Balanced livelihood (*sama-jīvikatā*).

1. The accomplishment of determined effort (*utthāna-sampadā*)

This first one explains the importance of earning wealth in righteous ways with effort for the wellbeing in this life. There is the case where a lay person, by whatever occupation he makes his living—whether by farming or trading or cattle tending or archery or as a king’s man or by any other craft—is clever and untiring at it, endowed with discrimination in its techniques, enough to arrange and carry it out. This is called being consummate in initiative. Not only we can apply effort in earning money, but in education and other good works in our life.

2. The accomplishment of Watchfulness (*āraṅkha-sampadā*):

This means the protection of wealth which is earned hard and righteously. There is the case when a lay person has righteous wealth—righteously gained, coming from his initiative, his striving, his making an effort, gathered by the strength of his arm, earned by his sweat—he manages to protect it through vigilance [with the thought], ‘How shall neither kings nor thieves make off with this property of mine, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?’ This is called being consummate in vigilance or watchfulness.

3. Good friendship (*kalyānamittatā*):

This says the associating good friends who explain the Dhamma which is useful for this life and future lives. There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders’ sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.

4. Balance livelihood (*sama-jivikatā*).

This shows the way how to spend wealth according to the income in the correct way. There is the case where a lay person, knowing the income and expenditure of his wealth, maintains a livelihood accordingly, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceeds my expenses, and my expenses will not exceed my income.’ Just as when a weightier or his apprentice, when holding the scales, knows, ‘It has tipped down so much or has tipped up so much,’ in the same way, the lay person, knowing the income and expenditure of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceeds my expenses, and my expenses will not exceed my income.’ If a lay person has a small income but maintains a grand livelihood, it will be rumored of him, ‘This clansman devours his wealth like a fruit-tree eater.’ If a lay person has a large income but maintains a miserable livelihood, it will be rumored of him, ‘This clansman will die of starvation.’ But when a lay person, knowing the income and expenditure of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceeds my expenses, and my expenses will not exceed my income,’ this is called maintaining one’s livelihood in tune.

The more someone succeeds in above four areas the more he is happy in this life. However, the Buddha explains the path for more success in the Sanasric Journey and for getting rid of Sansara.

Secondly, for future life;

Cattārome, vyagghapajja, dhammā kulaputtassa sam-parā-ya-hitāya saṃvattanti sam-parā-ya-su-khāya. Katame cattāro? Saddhāsampadā, sīlasampadā, cāgasampadā, paññāsampadā.

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. They are;

1. The accomplishment of confidence (*saddhā-sampadā*)
2. The accomplishment of virtue or morality (*sīla-sampadā*)
3. The accomplishment of charity or generosity (*cāga-sampadā*)
4. The accomplishment of wisdom or intelligence (*paññā-sampadā*)

When someone comes to this level, he should have a clear understanding about the Karmic law and the dependent origination which is the very important understanding that a person can gain in a Buddha's time. With the understanding and listening to what Buddha taught, someone who wishes to go forward for the wellbeing of future life and the sansaric journey can see the path he or she should practice. Here four conditions are kindly declared to follow by the blessed one. One's real success or happiness depends on how far he or she has achieved these qualities. These qualities are very useful for inner peace and liberation from suffering.

1. The confidence (*saddhā-sampadā*):

When someone hopes to go forward on the path of liberation at the very beginning, he should have some kind of confidence in the Buddha's message which is immediately effective visible results. When someone practices what the Buddha taught, he or she can see the results. Then his or her confidence gradually increases in the Dhamma and the Sangha too. As the result of this practice, the confidence in the triple gems highly increases.

2. Virtue or Morality (*sīla-sampadā*):

This quality indicates the discipline in speech and behavior. When someone is knowledgeable in the Karmic law and the dependent origination, he or she tries to control his or her speech and behavior as much as he or she can for their own wellbeing. Having good discipline helps to successful spiritual life with concentration and insight.

3. Charity or Generosity (*cāga-sampadā*):

When someone goes on the path of liberation, he or she practices loving kindness too. Then they are generous to offer something to others concerning their qualities and needs. Practicing three merits is one of the major characters in the heavenly path. The three meritorious deeds are generosity, virtue and meditation. Practicing generosity brings great happiness.

4. Wisdom (*paññā-sampadā*):

Wisdom or intelligence, which mainly helps us to overcome suffering and attain liberation from defilements, is highly praised in Buddhism. The main cause of our happiness is the level of our wisdom. Our real success depends on how much we have achieved wisdom. Hence, wisdom has been compared to a gem (*Paññā narānam ratanam*). Wisdom brings purification (*Paññāya varisujjhati* පඤ්ඤාය පරිසුඡ්ඤති). There is no other bright light like wisdom (*Natthi paññā samā ābhā*). Wisdom is used in several terms in Pali language such as *Sammā Ditti* (සමමා දිට්ඨි), *Paññā* (පඤ්ඤා), *Amoha* (අමමෝහ). Wisdom should be increased from the beginning till the end to the maximum level of the path of enlightenment. Therefore, Buddhism always guides us to gain wisdom through all kinds of advices that the supreme Buddha explained in his entire life.

We usually experience through our senses such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When objects such as forms, sounds, smell, taste reach our senses, we experience about the world. The nature of this experience is arising at the moment and ceasing instantly. Whatever we experience through six senses, five aggregates arise at that moment. Also, they immediately cease. Five aggregates are forms (*Rupa*), feelings (*Vedanā*), perception (*Saññā*), mental formations (*Sankhāra*) and consciousness (*Viññāna*). These five things arise together and cease together. They cannot be divided. We learn them by intelligence. These five aggregates, six internal senses or external objects are not permanent. They arise with the conditions at the moment, and they cease immediately when conditions separate. However, because of our ignorance we think they are permanent. Only wisdom can awaken us from this delusion. The nature of all conditions is that; Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence. (*ahutvā sambhutam hutvā na bhavissati*). It means if we experience something now, it didn't happen in the past in the same way like now.

Further the Supreme Buddha points out Four types of things (Dhammas) are to be dealt with supernormal knowledge (*abhiññā*) by the wise person who is skillful.

They are;

- The first thing that should be understood with supernormal knowledge is the five aggregates by the wise.
- The second thing that should be got rid of with supernormal knowledge is ignorance and craving for existence (attachment to become) by the wise.
- The third thing that should be developed with supernormal knowledge is tranquility and insight meditation by the wise.
- The fourth thing that should be achieved with supernormal knowledge practicing the Buddha's message is wisdom and liberation by the wise.

Here it is very important to realize the theory of the dependent origination which is the turning point of understanding of the path of liberation. The Buddha explains this theory in his teachings in various ways. Such as;

- “Eye is impermanent” - *Cakkhum anccam*
 “Forms are impermanent” - *Rupam aniccam*
 “Eye consciousness is impermanent” - *Chakkhu Vinnanam aniccam*
 “When this being, this comes to be” - *(Asmim sati idam hoti)*
 “With the arising of this – this arises” - *(Imassa uppada idam uppajjati)*
 “When this not being, this doesn't come to be” - *(Asmim asati idam na hoti)*
 “With the cessation of this – this ceases” - *(Imassa nirodha idam nirujjati)*
 “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

(“yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ”ti)

“Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence”.

- *(ahutvā sambhutam hutvā na bhavissati).*

“All conditions are impermanent, when one sees this with wisdom, then one grows tired of suffering – this is the path to purity. ”

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
 Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

“All conditions are dissatisfactory, when one sees this with wisdom, then one grows tired of suffering – this is the path to purity”.

*“Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
 Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

“All components of mind and body are selfless, when one sees this with wisdom, then one overcomes suffering – this is the path to purity. ”

*“Sabbe dhammā anattā”ti, yadā paññāya passati;
 Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā. (Dhammapada)*

With this understanding if someone can live in the present moment seeing arising and ceasing of the five grasping aggregates wisely with fully awareness, he overcomes suffering completely. Knowing the process of arising and ceasing of suffering is the highest quality and skill which directly helps to overcome suffering and achieve ultimate happiness for the wellbeing of entire life.

May the Triple Gem Bless you!

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