

# The Social Philosophy of Buddhism : The Elements of Ethical Rights and Duties<sup>1</sup>

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The social philosophy of Buddhism has been shown that one of the essential parts -- perhaps the most essential of the Buddha's effort through out his missionary life -- is to restore, patronize, enhance and develop moral values and mental health. What the Buddha expects man to do, in order to live a successful life is that one should discharge one's duties according to one's social status constituted out of social relationships and operated under the moral principles. He has prescribed his doctrine according to the mental elevation of one's being and suited to one's temperament. As he has prescribed several ethical laws for the monks and nuns, so he has given a number of ethical instructions for the householders. His sole subjective is to see the harmony in the life of Sangha as well as in the house. The attainment of perfection is the desired goal of both householder and a monk in the order. No doubt, many instructions have been given for the monks but there are some special moral codes for the householders also. These instructions are a code of ethical life for the householders. From this standpoint, the Sigalovada Sutta (*Digha Nikaya, vol. 3: 180-193*) is the most important discourse. Here the duties of householder have been prescribed in the form of worshiping of the directions (disa).

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The Buddha explained the real meaning of the worshiping of the directions. He explained that ordinary directions were not meant by the term "Disa". It has been used in some special and technical sense. The six directions represent the six types of persons and the worshiping of the six directions means the observance the duty towards the six types of persons. Explaining in this way, the Buddha states :

*The mother and the father are the East,  
The teachers are the South,  
Wife and Children are the West,  
The friends and associates are the North.  
Servants and employees are the Nadir,  
The ascetics and Brahmans are the Zenith,  
Who is fit to lead the household life,  
There Six quarters he should salute.  
Who is wise and virtuous,  
Gentle and keen-witted,  
humble and amenable,  
Such a one to honour may attain.  
Who is energetic and not indolent,  
In misfortune unspoken,  
Flawless in manner and intelligent,  
Such a one to honour may attain.  
Who is hospitable, and friendly,  
Liberal and unselfish,  
A guide, an instructor, a leader,  
Such a one to honour may attain.  
Generosity, meet speech,  
helpfulness to others,  
Impartiality to all,  
As the case demands.*

*These four winning ways make the world go round,  
As the lynchpin in a moving car,  
If these in the world exist not,  
Neither mother nor father will receive,  
Respect and honour from their children.*

*Since these four winning ways,  
The wise appraise in every way,  
To eminence they attain,  
And praise they rightly gain. (Dialogues of the Buddha, pt. 3: 183)*

With this it becomes evident that the Buddha wanted that the worshiping of these persons should be done in proper perspective. Since this instruction forms the basic rule of harmony in the society, therefore, their performance in real form is the following of social ethical law.

### **Ethical Duties of Children towards Parents**

Being regarded as the Eastern direction, the parents are required to bring up their children so that they may become either the Anujataputta (son or daughter equal to parents) or the Abhijataputta (a son or daughter superior to parents) but never the Avajataputta (one who is inferior to parents). For this accomplishment, parents will be held in great esteem and sincere reverence by their children. This will also promote the pride and progress of the family line. In Buddhism respect and love towards one's parents is strongly emphasized. The high esteem in which it is held is based on a conscience of moral which establishes the relationship between parents and children; this high esteem, consisting in the recognition of the supreme position occupied by parents, is prevalent in Buddhist society.

In the Anguttara Nikaya, we are informed that great approval is accorded to family where the parents are held in high respect. Such families are counted as belonging to the Brahma rank as the Buddha says:

*Those families where parents, O monks, are worshipped by children at home are accounted to include Brahma (sabrahmakani)...the divinities of the old (sapubbadevatani)...the teachers of old (sapubbacariyani)...those who deserve offering (sahuneyyakani). 'Brahma', 'the divinities of old', 'the teachers of old' and 'those who deserve offering', O monks, are the terms to denote' 'mother and father'. Why so? The reason is that parents do much for their children : they give life to them, nourish and bring them up, and introduce them to the world'. (Anguttara Nikaya, vol. I: 132)*

A son should be dutiful and grateful to his own parents by remembering rightly the services done by them towards their children. According to the Sigalovada Sutta, the son should be grateful at least in five ways :

- a) He should be their support remembering that once he was supported by them.
- b) He should perform duties incumbent on them.
- c) He should keep up the lineage and the tradition of the parents or family.
- d) He should himself be worthy of his heritage.
- e) He should after aims in the memory of the parents departed from this world. He should also offer merit for their well-being in the next world.

The performance of duty by children towards their parents is a pious act on the part of children. Now as regards the obligatory duties of children towards their parents, the Buddha has clearly stated :

*I declare, O monks, that one can never repay (the debt in terms of moral obligation) to two people, namely, mother and father. Even if one carries about one's mother on one shoulder and one's father on the other, and doing so would live a hundred years, attain a hundred years and ... if they, meanwhile*

*would even void their excrements upon one, ...even if one establishes one's parents in supreme authority, in the absolute supremacy over all this world, even then one should not repay them. Why so? The reason is that parents do much for their children; they give life to them, nourish and bring them up, and introduce them to the world. But one who converts unbelieving, immoral, stigny, and ignorant parents, and establishes them in faith, morality, generosity and wisdom, just by doing so one does repay what is due to one's parents, and does more than that. (Anguttara Nikaya, vol. 1: 61)*

### **The Duties of Parents towards the Children**

The Mahavagga of the Vinaya tells us that when Rahula followed the path of the Buddha by giving up the homely life, for samanera, it shocked his grand father very much. The shock was very much vigorous that he bursts out before the Buddha :

*Lord, when the Bhagava gave up the world, it was a great pain to me, so it was when Nanda did the same, and now my pain is excessive that Rahula has done so as well. The love for a son, Lord, cuts into the skin (and dwells even in the marrow), having out into the skin, it cuts into the hide, having cut into the hide, it cuts into the flesh, the ligaments, the bones, and in this way reaches the marrow. Pary, Lord, do not let the venerable ones confer the going forth on a son without the mother's and father's permission (Vinaya Pitaka, vol. 1: 60)*

The passage quoted above reveals to us how deep the sense of love a father does process for his children and how the pain of separation of the children creates a great sorrow to the parents. Since the children are the source of joy and satisfaction for the parents. Their separation is regarded as painful for them. In this

background the duty of the parents towards their children are equally important in Buddhist tradition.

According to the Sigalovada Sutta, the parents are advised to look after their children as the Eastern quarter and show their compassion for them;

- a) They should be alert about the well-being of the children and restrain them from evil.
- b) They should encourage them to do good.
- c) They should be alert in providing education to the children beneficial according to the family tradition.
- d) At the proper time they should hand over their inheritance to them.

In these five ways the parents show their compassion and love to their children.

### **The Duties of Pupil towards Teacher**

The ideal underlying the relationship between teacher and pupil is very highly valued in Buddhism. It can be considered as similar to that between parents and children. In the Mahavagga, the Buddha says : *'I prescribe a teacher; the teacher should arouse in his pupil the attitude of son and the pupil also arouse in his teacher the attitude of a father. Thus these, living together with reverence, deference and courtesy towards one another will come to grow, progress and maturity in the norm and law.* (Vinaya Pitaka, vol. 1: 60) In this way a real teacher has been described as possessing the virtues of morality of good conduct, of concentration, of wisdom and of clear of release. In the context the Buddha himself lays much emphasis on such virtues in his following statement :

*A man should first establish himself in a proper position (in knowledge coupled with good conduct), only then could he be entitled to instruct others, since a wise man will do so and not grow weary ... If a man could make himself what he instructs others to be and have himself well-trained first, he*

*may train others, because it is a hard thing for a man to train himself.*  
*(The Commentary on the Dhammapada, vol. 1: p.144)*

In the Anguttara Nikaya, (vol. 3: 123), there is a mention of the six types of teachers; *namely, some whose conduct is impure, some whose mode of livelihood is impure, some whose doctrine is impure, some whose method of doctrinal exposition is impure, some whose knowledge and insight are impure, and some whose conduct, mode of livelihood, doctrine, method of doctrinal exposition, and knowledge and insight are altogether pure, the Buddha has commented the last type and identified himself with it.* It should be said that in teaching others one should always consider the threefold essential principle :

- (1) one who teaches the doctrines must be able thoroughly to penetrate into the literal and doctrinal meaning thereof,
- (2) one who is taught must be able to do likewise, and
- (3) both the teacher and the taught must be able to do both of these.

Moreover, the teacher denotes one who is very learned, knows the texts and is well-disciplined, versed in the doctrine, the law and systematization. He knows and realizes and is a thorough expert in the subject, able to solve the problems put by the pupil, to discuss and clarify points of the subject and to make clear what is obscure.

With regard to an ideal teacher, it has clearly been prescribed in the Milindapanha (1962: 94) that the teacher, behaving towards to his pupil as towards a son, is advised to keep a constant and continuous guard over the pupil, to instruct him as to what should be followed and what should not be followed, as to the evil consequences of slothfulness and the advantages of diligence, when to take rest and when to get up, how to prevent illness and how to cure it, what kind of food should be accepted and should be rejected, and finally as to what is the highest good and how to obtain it. The teacher should share with his pupil what he has gained, advise him to be free from fear, teach him to behave on paying a visit to certain people and the proper places he should visit, but he should not hold foolish

conversations with him. On finding his pupil's faults or defects he should be patient and he should advise and help him to correct them. He should be jealous, behave impartially, keep nothing secret from his pupil, hold nothing back, arouse the attitude of a begetter thinking, 'I have begetten him in the crafts...' make him strong in knowledge, thinking 'I will do my best to make him strong with the strength of the rules and courses of training. He should promote his pupil's growth and prosperity and envince affection and friendliness towards his pupil. He should not desert him in misfortunes; he should not be slothful in any thing to be done for the good of his pupil, but should befriend him if he stumbles. From this point of view, it has been shown that teacher should have alert of giving everything and train his pupil with correct training.

Considering the teacher as the Southernly direction, the Sigalovada Sutta gives five duties in which a pupil should conduct himself towards the teachers :

- a) A pupil should rise from his seat in honour of his teacher.
- b) He should wait upon him and serve him.
- c) He should be eager in learning the instructions given by the teacher.
- d) He should do personal service to the teacher, and
- e) He should pay attention and honour while receiving teaching from the teacher.

These five duties can be summarized into the basic duties that a pupil should serve the teacher with devotion and honour and receive his instructions eagerly, attentively and sincerely.

### **The Duties of a Teacher towards his Pupil**

According to Buddhist tradition, the teacher and the pupil should live just like father and son. The teacher should develop in his pupil the affection of a son. This has been pointed out that the relative status of teacher and pupil and the roles they play in accordance with their responsibilities condition their

mutual relationship. Since ignorance (avijja) is considered as the greatest impurity and since considerable sympathy and understanding are necessary on the part of one person helping another to rid himself of this impurity, the relationship between teacher and pupil is one which is very highly valued in Buddhism.

In the Mahavagga, the Buddha says :

*I prescribe a teacher; the teacher should arouse in his pupil the attitude of a son and the pupil also should arouse in his teacher the attitude of a father.*  
(Vinaya Pitaka, vol. I: 60)

Thus teacher should show his compassion on, or love for, the pupil by teaching and training them well and happily. He should look after the all round development of his pupil.

According to the Sigalovada Sutta, five duties have been clearly stated for the teacher towards his pupil as the southern quarter :

- a) The teacher trains him in the subject in which he has not been trained well.
- b) He also tries to make him hold the learning fast which has not been done so.
- c) In order to make him well-informed he should instruct him in the lore of every art.
- d) The teacher should also see that his pupil should have a good social state and therefore he should speak well of his pupil among his friends and company.
- e) The teacher should see that his pupil is safe from all side for a smooth development in the study prescribed for them. For that he should provide for his safe in every quarter.

Figuratively, these may be taken to mean the teacher's spirit of

compassion and responsibility towards his pupil, his good will by doing every thing useful for the pupil even in his ordinary life and providing for his safety in every quarter.

## Duties of the Husband towards Wife

It is generally remarked that the marriage, the living together of husband and wife forms a family which is regarded as the primary unit of society; the husband and wife are the two wheels of the cart known as social life and therefore, it is also said that when a smooth function and happiness are desired there should be happy relation between husband and wife. A couple, as adherents, are advised to establish and develop their household business in the right way. As regards this, the Buddha's emphasis is on the creation of a good personality by virtue of moral practice and through the rights and duties the couple should faithfully observe and effectively undertake. In order to make possible the Buddha has prescribed certain duties to be performed by each. By careful analysis, it is evident thereby the instructions of the Buddha are really practical, helpful and more forceful in bringing the harmony between the husband and wife and thereby in family in particular and in society in general. His suggestion like getting happiness in the present life and the life to come is more valuable for the peaceful family life. As in the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha has prescribed, *'if both husband and wife wish to behold each other both in this life and in the life to come, both should be matched in the virtues of faith, morality, generosity and insight'.* (Anguttara Nikaya, vol. 2: 62)

In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha has first prescribed the duty of husband towards his wife as Western quarter in five number as follows:

- a) The husband should show respect to his wife. He should not in any way disrespect her.

- b) Hatred in any sense is disastrous for family, the husband should not behave with his wife in the way of despising her; he should behave with her in the way that there should be harmony between the two; in the way of courteousness.
- c) A husband should have trust in his wife, he should be satisfied with her, he should not transgress the bondage of husband and wife. It means that he must not visit other women in any case, he must retrain himself from committing adultery etc.
- d) As it has been pointed out that the husband and wife are the two wheels of family, so far proper maintainance they should be vested with the authority of maintaining the proper order in family. Therefore, it has been advised by the Buddha that husband should over authority to his wife.
- e) The fifth duty as has been pointed out by the Buddha for the husband towards his wife is to provide her with adorment. The women are by their very nature desirous of having ornaments etc. and this should be the duty of husband to provide her with all facilities for adoring her. He should give ornaments as desired etc.

In the Mahamangala Sutta, the Buddha also says : '*honest to support father and mother, to cherish wife and children and to be engaged in peaceful occupation... this is the greatest blessing*'. According to these words, the protection of wife by husband is regarded as one of the mangalas. Moreover, the Buddha has pointed out that one who is seen with the other women be developing illicit connection is regarded as Vasala. Visiting other women under the dominance influence of the sex is a sign of degradation and one who is not satisfied with his own wife and visit the protitude and also commits adultery with other's wife, follows the direct way of suffering and degradation. In this connection, it has also been mentioned that marrying a young lady after passing his youth and not sleeping out of her jealousy is the sign of degradation of a man. This points out

the pious duty on the part of the husband to refrain himself from marrying the young lady when he himself is old. In the Dhaniya Sutta, the Buddha has shown the picture of the conjugal relation of the husband and wife as follows :

*Obedient is my wife, on trull,  
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya,  
Long hath she been a loving mate,  
No rumoure wrong I hear of her.*

*Obedient, the wife and I  
will fare welfare's godly life;  
yon-farers over birth-and-death,  
Enders of ill will we become. (Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists  
(Suttanta Nipata), 1945: 5)*

From above mentioned, it can easily be seen that the relationship between husband and wife is regarded as the primary unit of society and it is based on the creation of a good personality by virtue of moral practice and through the rights and duties the husband as leader of family should faithfully observe and effectively undertake for the sake of peaceful life of his family.

### **Duties for Wife towards the Husband**

Since the husband and wife are to be regarded by their children as devas, the Buddha has advised them to create a good personality by virtue of moral practice. Their married life would lead to life successfully and happily. Having prescribed the social and moral duties of the husband towards his wife, he also has advised wife to perform duties towards her husband. In the social life, wife is the keeper of the house. A good lady makes the house heaven and bad lady makes the house hell. In practical life, it is seen that the education of the children mainly depends on the house lady. Therefore, the house lady is always desired in every family.

In the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha has warned a woman not to behave herself like any of the three following kinds wives who are not moral and desirable. They are :

1. The slayer-like wife who is pitiless, corrupt in mind, who despises her husband, is passionate towards other men and bent upon murder;
2. The robber-like wife, who longs to take away her own husband has earned by his daily work.
3. The lady-like wife, who is lazy, indolent, gluttonous, harsh of speech and violent, who loves gossip, and exercises power over her industrious husband. (*Anguttara Nikaya, vol. 4: 91*)

In the Khuddaka Nikaya, there is also a mention of some modes of conduct that characterize a wicked, blameworthy wife. According to this source, a wicked wife is one of who neither approves of her husband's presence nor thinks of him after his departure nor heartily rejoices when he returns home nor says anything in praising of him at any time, but rather speaks ill of him. With undisciplined character she makes mischief against him, neglects his interests and behaves in improper ways. Her characteristics are like these : with her unpleasant nature she is lazy and often feels pain, lies down beside him with her body fully dressed and her face averted, commits evil things that she should refrain from, always gives heed to strange men's words, freely spends the family wealth and is intimate with neighbours (with men in the neighbourhood), she neither cares for nor respects her husband, and become corrupt in mind. She is fond of frequenting public places without the company of her husband, of visiting the house of relatives and others, of wearing clothes and ornaments presented to her by strange men, of drinking liquors, of looking outside and of standing before the door.

In contrast to the instances of how a wicked wife conducts as mentioned above, the Buddha has also described four types of wives that are regarded as virtuous, ideal and desirable as follows :

1. The mother-like wife, whose heart is full of sympathy, affection, love and care for her husband, just as a mother would be towards her only son, and who safeguards the family property stored up by her husband.
2. The sister-like wife, who treats her husband in the same manner as a younger sister would do with her elder brother, and serves him in the proper way, being meek of heart.
3. The companion-like wife, who rejoices in the company of her husband as if meeting him after a long time, and who is of a gracious, gentle personality, faithful to her husband.
4. The servant-like wife, who is calm and patient, endures treatments and listens humbly to her husband (*Anguttara Nikaya, vol. 4: 93*).

According to the Sigalovada Sutta, there are five main duties of wife towards her husband. They are:

- a) She should perform her duties properly.
- b) Since the entire domestic affair centre round her, she should be wise enough to show hospitality towards all family members. She should bestow affection on all the near and dear ones. All the family members should be tied with her in the bond of affection by her noble deed.
- c) The third duty of a good wife is to become faithful to her husband. The faith is the ground on which the family life can stand firmly. In absence of that the family life becomes baseless. Therefore, the wife should be such who has unwavering confidence in her husband and she should be faithful to him in all respect.
- d) The other duty of a good wife is to look after the belongings of her husband whatever things the husband brings can be utilized best watched and properly kept. A good deal of wealth can also be easily destroyed if it is not properly maintained by the house wife. Therefore,

the Buddha has very clearly suggested that the good wife should perform her duty by watching the good brought by her husband.

e) The Buddha has further suggested that a house wife should be skillful and industrious in discharging all her business. It means that she has a number of business to be performed in the house in keeping the family numbers harmoniously. In discharging them, she should be diligent, active and also wise. (*Digha Nikaya*, vol. 3: 146)

From all these descriptions, it has been shown that a wife should be obedient, faithful, sincere, kindful and generous to her husband as well as the other family members.

### **The Duties of a Friend towards a Friend**

According to Buddhism, the friend is a vital role in the life of a man. Friendship exerts a very great influence upon the life human in society; it can cause a man do experience either failure or success in life. The association of a good friend makes a man advance in all sources whereas the company of a bad friend takes one to degradation. It is also a general expression that man is known by the company he keeps. So says the Buddha :

*By association with a friend in whatever he does and practises, one becomes more or less similar to him, and therefore, both the follower and the followed, both the one who touched and the one who is touched become alike.*  
(*Itivuttaka*, 1948: 67)

*If one chooses for oneself a friend to associate with, one would emulate the way of life of that friend, and on account of the constant intercourse with a friend who one appreciates and honours whether he be good or evil, devoted to vice or to virtue, one would be affected and at the same time affect him. Such is the obvious influence of friendship and intimacy.*

(*Jataka*, vol. 4: 235)

In the Mangala Sutta, the Buddha has stated it as one of the great auspicious things (mangalas) to be in the company of the wise. He has also stated in the Khaggavisana Sutta, '*if one finds friend with whom to fare, he should fare with him joyfully and mindfully by surmounting dangers one and all'* Here he lays stress on the nature of friend who should be as wise one. In this connection, the Buddha appears to be very cautious in choosing a friend. He has always advised to select a good man and wise friend for a smooth way faring as he says :

*Therefore, for fear of contamination the wise should not establish with the wicked. Just as when a person ties up stinking fish with a bad of Kusa grass, the latter gets the putrid smell, so also is the intimacy with the fool. On the contrary, just as when one binds up myrrh with a common leaf and the leaf will get a pleasant odour, so also is the intimacy with the wise. Let one not follow the wicked but only the good, for the wicked lead one to hell, while the good lead one to heaven. (Jataka, vol. 4: 235)*

The very foundation of his order is mainly based on the noble friendship. By such friendship a man gets purity in his physical, vocal and mental action, which helps him in advancing towards the realization of his goal.

In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha has suggested set of five duties of a friend towards his friend. They are as follows :

- a) He should protect his friend when he is off his guard.
- b) He should also guard his property on such occasion.
- c) He should become a refuge in danger.
- d) He must not forsake him in trouble.
- e) He should also show consideration for his family.

## Duties of Master towards a Servant

In the Pali scriptures, we find that the system of slavery was prevalent in the society. The slaves or servants were of various types and engaged in types of works beginning from monastery upto the army. In the Samannaphala Sutta, there is a mention of condition of slavery that a slavery is he who works for the master, rises up in the morning before the master rises, when the master retires in the night he goes to sleep after him, he is keen to carry out the master's pleasure anxious to make himself agreeable in what he does and says, he is always alert in watching every look of the master receiving his command to do something. (*Digha Nikaya, vol. 1: 52*)

Therefore, the Buddha has prescribed certain duties of the master towards the servant. They are as follows :

- a) The master should assign a work according to the strength of the servant.
- b) He should supply them with food and wages.
- c) The duty of the master is in hand when the servant become ill, therefore, he should tend them in sickness.
- d) The master should share with them the delicious dishes that are prepared in the family.
- e) He should also grant leave at time.

This set of five rules appear to be very practical when the servants are treated in this way, they will experience the sense of happiness in their lives.

## Duties of the Servant towards the Master

It is seen in practical life that a good relation is reciprocal when the master treats the servants well. It also become the duty of servants to be good to their master. In the Samannaphala Sutta, the Buddha has prescribed that the servants should be keen to fulfil their duties to the master's contentment, anxious to make themselves agreeable his deed and word, faithfully waiting upon their master, eager to please him and speaking friendly words to him.

In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha has also prescribed a set of five duties for the servants. They are as follows :

- a) They should rise before him.
- b) They should go to sleep after him.
- c) They should take only what is given.
- d) They should perform their duties well.
- e) They should uphold his good name and fame.

With such behaviour of the servants towards the master, there shall be a clear understanding and happy life in the society.

### **Duties of Lay-adherent towards Monks**

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta of the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha has stated :

- a) He should be generous towards his friend and gives what else he has for the benefit of his friend.
- b) He should be very mild towards his friend, he should speak sweet words and must not use harsh words.

After Tatagata has passed away, the monks, the nuns, the laymen and the lay women live with reverence and heed for the Teacher...the Dhamma...the Sangha...they live together with reference and lead to each other--all this is the cause and reason which make the Saddhamma (Buddhism) become long lasting. (*Digha Nikaya, vol. 3: 247*)

This passage indicates that it is supremely necessary for the Buddhists, for monks, as well as lay-adherents to maintain and strengthen their relationship and faithfully fulfil their duties towards each other. so the Buddha says :

*the householder and the Brahmins, O monks, are most helpful to you, because they support you with robes, food, lodging and seat, and medicine for curing sickness. You also, O monks, are most helpful to them in that you teach them the norm and law...Therefore, O monks, this noble life is lived in mutual dependence..." (Itivuttaka, 1948: 111)*

In this respect Dr. Siddhi Butr-indr (1973: 115-6) marks his own experience of the practical life of the Buddhist Society, 'The relationship of the lay-adherent to the monk could be basically viewed under three prominent aspects : (a) the lay-adherent provides the monk with material support, not as a commercial enterprise, but with the motive of performing a meritorious deed by supporting the monk who is virtuous etc., (b) he hopes in turn that the monk will instruct him in the Dhamma; and (c) he is deeply convinced that Buddhism stands for an invaluable-spiritual treasure' which he too should share with the monks who, as the spiritual heirs of the Buddha are the promoters of moral and spiritual welfare in society. In this way, relationship between these two groups operates on the basis of mutual help and interdependence. The Buddha has mentioned seven things that never lead to the lay-adherents decline; he does not fail to see the virtuous monk, to hear his preaching to the doctrine heard, and to trust in the virtuous monk in all grades of seniority, he is not given to polemics and does not look for weak spots in the Dhamma nor seeks the gift worthy outside nor neglects favouring the virtuous monk.

In the Milindapanha, there is a mention of the ten qualities of lay adherent (dasa upasakaguna) as follows :

*He shares happiness and sorrow with the Sangha, he lives under the dominance and influence of the Dhamma, he delights in distributing gifts to the monks according to his strength, he strives for its growth if he sees a*

*decline in the religion of the Buddha, he has the right view, gives up the celebration of feasts, refuses to go to another teacher even for the sake of his livelihood, conducts himself well in action and word, delights in peace and harmony, rejoices in peace and harmony, is not envious, does not follow the religion out of hypocrisy, and he has gone to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha for guidance. (Milindapanha, 1962: 94)*

It is further said that Buddhists generally believe that it is auspicious to approach, associate, recollect and even hear of virtuous recluses or monks. Thus, on seeing a virtuous monk appear at the door of his residence, the lay adherent is advised to serve the monk with whatever is suitable for a greeting, to pay him the homage of five fold prostration if there is nothing available for a greeting, to venerate him with folded hands affectionate eyes if he cannot venerate him with folded hands. Therefore the Buddha, according to the Sigalovada Sutta, has prescribed a set of five rules for the adherent which form the duties towards the monk. They are as follows :

- a) A lay-adherent, desirous of his material and spiritual development should pay respect to monks. He should perform physical action inspired with friendliness in respect of the monk. It means his physical action towards them should be full of affection repeat with honour.
- b) The second duty in this context is the performance of vocal action full with affection. It means one should speak to them mildly, his speech should be polite, avoiding all the harshness of vocal performance.
- c) The mental action of a lay-adherent should also possess affection and respect to them.
- d) There should not be any type of restriction for the monk.
- e) A lay-adherent should also provide them with the basis requirement.

Thus, in coming into contact with the monk the lay adherent should serve him by treating him respectfully, in action, word and thought, by keeping his house open for him and invited him therein and by support him with the four kinds of available food, robe, lodging and medicine which are suitable and necessary for his life.

### **Duties of Monks (Samanabrahmana) towards the Society**

The fundamental duties of the monks towards society is to conduct themselves as the model, teacher, instructor, guide and promoter of morality and other spiritual values in society. In the Anguttara Nikaya, there is a mention of character of the monks as :

*On who develops a heart of good will (mettacitta) and cultivates a heart of good will is called a monk. Following the Master's way of living and giving advice, he does not live uselessly by consuming the arms given to him by the people. (Anguttara Nikaya, vol. I: 69)*

In this connection, the Milindapanha also speaks of the character of the monk as follows :

*The monk is virtuous, possessed of moral habit, behaves like an antidote against the poison of the defilements in man, like balm a healing for allaying the sickness of the defilements in men.....like the precious gem for giving all attainments to men like a ship for men to go beyond the four floods (of defilements), like a caravan leader for taking men across the desert of becomings, like the wind for extinguishing the fierce threefold fire in men, like a great rain-cloud for filling men with purposeful thoughts, like a teacher for making men train themselves in what is wholesome, and like a good guide for pointing out to men the path to security, (Vinaya Pitaka, vol. I: 34)*

Moreover, in the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha has prescribed in addition of the character of the monk as follows :

*The monk who is well-educated, well-disciplined, well-culture, takes the doctrine rightly and interprets it well in conformity with its theory and practice, is counted to be responsible for the spirit, welfare and happiness for the people and of the divine and human beings. (Anguttara Nikaya, vol. 1: 69)*

In the Digha Nikaya, we are informed that 'he restrains the lay-adherent from doing evil things, exhorts him to do good things, loves him with a compassionate heart, guides and teaches him what he has not learnt, corrects and purifies what he has learnt, and shows him the way to happy existence in heaven (by guiding him in performing good action). Since the lay-adherent is obliged to support the monk with some material supplies that are necessary for his maintainance, the Buddha has prescribed the duties of the monks towards the society as follows :

- a) Since the monks are worthy in ethical wisdom, they should keep the lay-adherents free from doing the demeritorious and sinful act.
- b) They should also divert them in performing the moral action, rather they direct them and point out the way leading towards moral activities.
- c) They also bestow upon the lay-adherents the loving kindness, with their consciousness full of compassion. They think about the good of lay adherents.
- d) As it has been pointed out that the monks are the persons elevated morally and intellectually, so they should teach the lay-adherents what have not learnt.
- e) They should also make clear by their exhortation what has been learnt by them before.
- f) They should reveal to them the path leading to the heaven.

The above mentioned fundamental principles constitute basic duties or social relationship of an individual to society. They should be done with understanding, without selfish motives. When all people in any society behave in his manner, such a society would be a pleasant place for one to live in. There would not be social problems like strike and quarrel, there would not be destitutes or unwanted people, and all would be able to live happily.

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