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Generally people are good when those around them are good. But being good only when others are good to you is not the true mark of a virtuous person. A virtuous person is one who is virtuous despite the behaviours of those surrounding him, whether good or evil – that is a virtuous person.

When you live in a community you must try to live in harmony with those around you. But when you are alone, do you live in harmony with your mind?

A virtuous person is one who lives with awareness, wisdom and metta (loving-kindness) towards others. When you live with awareness, wisdom and metta, you will live in harmony with everyone.

This doesn't just mean humans – even Sakka (King of Devas), who could not live thus was suffering as he neared his death in the deva world. Why?? His mind was filled with jealousy and agitated at the prospect of giving up his celestial kingdom and all his possessions to the next heir.

So the Sakka appeared before the Buddha and asked:  
All beings wish to be happy, peaceful, prosperous, and free from suffering. Yet why is it that while they want all this, they are not free from the sufferings of life?

And the Buddha replied:  
Beings seek all of these yet they are suffering because of issa (envy/jealousy) and macchhariya (stinginess/miserliness).

When one develops ill-will in seeing the good fortunes or prosperity of another, that is issa. When one is dissatisfied because of another's progress in the Dhamma, that is issa. When one is unhappy because of another's education and success in examinations, that is issa. One rejoices in the misfortunes of others - this person will never be at peace.

When one holds on tightly to one's possessions that is macchhariya. When others are well behaved, successful, educated, one should rejoice in their good fortune. Some don't see it this way – they can only find faults, see the negative side. There is jealousy when another is more successful. When another has developed greater wisdom or knowledge, there is jealousy.

This jealousy is dosa. Dying with a dosa mind will take one straight to hell.

Stinginess/miserliness is lobha. Dying with lobha will take one to the peta realm.

When one is free from jealousy/envy and stinginess/miserliness, one will experience immediate peace. Because of lobha and dosa, living beings are in their wretched state of misery.

Now one meditates to reduce lobha and dosa. Yet even in meditation, lobha and dosa arise. When one is eating, lobha/greed arises. When the mind is in a peaceful,

agreeable state, there is a liking to it. When meditation is going well, there is a liking. That is lobha.

When the mind is restless or agitated, there is a disliking. When things are not working out, there is a disliking. This is dosa.

You meditate to reduce lobha and dosa yet lobha and dosa continue to arise.

So if you cannot even live in harmony with yourself, how can you live in harmony with others?

A disagreeable situation comes up and there is no tolerance. If things are like so, one will leave the meditation centre. One is led by every whim of lobha and dosa.

But OF COURSE, there is none of that here, is there?

One cannot be even a little tolerant. Everything must be to one's tastes, one's desires. All of one's wishes must be fulfilled. If one continues to follow the whims of dosa, these wishes can be fulfilled in hell.

Take advantage of this Buddha Sasana to pay utmost importance to giving dāna, observing sīla and developing samatha and vipassana insight knowledge. Be diligent in performing only wholesome deeds. Don't let lobha or dosa in; practice diligently to eradicate these unwholesome mental states.

Any movement, movement of the arms, legs, head, mouth, etc. – whatever the action, what is important is one accrues merits.

One pays great attention to eating, sleeping and acquiring property. When something one wants does not materialize, one may protest strongly. Protesting like this is the wrong attitude. These are not the traits of a virtuous person.

When one lives with awareness and wisdom, these mental attitudes will not be present. When one lives with metta, one can be more tolerant of others; one can more easily forgive others.

A tree will provide shade to the lumberjack until it is felled.

Sandalwood continues to provide fragrance as it burns to ashes, to the one who uses it to light a fire.

Likewise, a virtuous being, until his death will continue to help his aggressor.

The Bodhisatta in his existence as the king of monkeys rescued a hunter who had fallen in a ditch. In his exhaustion after carrying the hunter out, he rested on the hunter's lap. The hunter thought, not having caught any game for the day that he would take the monkey's meat home. With a stone, the hunter hit the Bodhisatta's head, fracturing his skull. Imagine how the hunter could have such cruel intentions upon the one who saved his life! The Bodhisatta realized the hunter's intentions and escaped to the treetop. If he left the hunter behind, the hunter would surely be eaten

by a tiger. So the Bodhisatta called to the hunter to follow his trail of blood, thus leading him to safety.

A virtuous being is one who will help even his aggressor with his sweat and blood.

To become like this, you must nurture a virtuous mind for as long as you are living. Here you live among virtuous beings. A virtuous being is not virtuous only when others are upright. Whether others are good or evil, a genuinely virtuous person will live an upright life.

One meditates to become a good human being, develop wisdom and a good heart. When one develops insight knowledge, impurities, selfishness will no longer be present. One will no longer seek to break the rules of conduct. Instead one will help to promote others' welfare as much as possible.

SADHU! SADHU! SADHU!

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: IT IS HOPED THAT READERS WILL OVERLOOK ANY SHORTCOMINGS AND UNINTENTIONAL ERRORS IN THIS TRANSLATION AND INSTEAD BENEFIT FROM THE ESSENCE OF SAYADAW'S DISCOURSE.