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Patimokkha Ovada Full Moon 23 August 2002

Of the countless Buddhas that have live before, let me tell you about one gatha among the diverse Teachings of the Buddhas. You are familiar with this :-

Sabbapāpassa akaranam  
Kusalassa upasampadā  
Sacitta pariyodapanam  
Etam buddhānasāsanam

To avoid all evil / bad  
To cultivate good  
To purify the mind  
This is the Teaching of the Buddhas

(from Sayadaw's Myanmar translation)

If your mind is pure, your sila will be pure, your views will become pure then everything will be pure as the Buddha wished.

To be pure, first – what is bad or impure?

Sila-wise all actions of body, speech and mind, *kayakamma*, *vacikamma*, *manokamma* that are wrong. Thus correcting your wrong bodily behaviours, speech, attitudes and mindsets is called "avoiding evil".

For monks there are many rules; those who do not follow the rules are "doing bad", those who try to live according to those instructions are cultivating the good.

1. Monks should wear their robes neatly whether within or without the monastery.
2. Keep your eyes directed four feet in front of yourself. If you look here and there, the sila is broken, the mind is no longer pure. You only look around in case of danger.  
To maintain this training rule, which is part of the *Indriyasamvara sila*, you need to have *Sati*. Our behaviours and actions must also be gentle and restrained. Having *Sati*, doing everything with *Sati*, *Satindriya* is present.
3. When proceeding together, monks should file in neat order of seniority. If you are standing out of line, it will not look neat anymore. It's not disciplined.
4. Monks should not walk too fast or too slow. On almsround those heading the line should start off rather more slowly to allow those behind to catch up. Otherwise large gaps result in the line as those following get left behind. If the leader checks his pace, the line will be even and orderly.
5. If you have *Sati* your behaviour will be blameless. So whether you go on almsround or stay in the monastery you must live harmoniously and robe

yourself suitably. Everywhere you go should be with decorum. Do not look here and there waving your arms about as you talk etc.

6. If you look around as you walk your eyes will meet, you'll end up standing around talking. If you are careful, mindful, this will not happen. Gathering to talk, standing around beside the buildings, talking quietly amongst yourselves also comes under "doing bad".
7. In the dining-hall, eating and other behaviours should be in accordance with the Vinaya. Go neatly, sit neatly, eat moderately, don't be selfish. If you eat all you want without bothering if anyone else has eaten that's not "avoiding bad" actions.  
If you eat without Sati, the Indriyasamvara sila is broken.
8. Monks have civic duties or responsibilities like cleaning the place, going on almsround etc. These are also part of the sila.  
Only Sati makes the Indriyasamvara sila whole. If your sila is pure, you'll have happiness now and in the future – that's what the Buddha said.  
"Being heedful leads to freedom from death  
Being heedless and forgetful is the cause of death."

To be virtuous, to be free of death, to be able to avoid evil – Sati is essential, wisdom (clear comprehension) is essential.

To avoid evil, to always keep the mind pure, to always have Sati-ñāna – that is the meaning of practicing Satipatthana. When this is so, one is practicing the Teachings of the Buddhas. Then one will be happy now and in the future. So do not lose mindfulness.

9. If someone sees something amiss, someone of responsibility or those we live together with, and for the benefit of all, points it out, and in fact they should and can say so – it is good if the receiving party would be glad that the other has pointed out something for our benefit, so we may avoid wrongdoing. That's the mark of a virtuous person.

When a samanera told Ashin Sariputta that his robe was uneven, he not only carefully rearranged it, he reaffirmed that it was satisfactory and also asked the samanera to point out again if he should ever see the need. Behold! The Buddha's Great Right-Hand Disciple, titled Most Wise willingly admitted his shortcoming.

"Even if a young seven-year old samanera, freshly ordained today points something amiss I will salute and admit my shortcoming."

How worthy of emulation virtuous people are!

Pavarana is about the same thing. At the end of vassa we make this admission to each other:

"Sirs, if you see or hear or even suspect something was done wrong, please do advise me accordingly and I will correct myself."

It would be so much better if we meant it sincerely. What happens more often is we feel offended if told something. We must actually be able to accept.

10. Monks/yogis should not visit each other's rooms, talking loudly. This can be a Dhammantaraya (a danger to the Dhamma) that hinders Magga Phala – so practice restraint in talking. If you have something to ask, speak softly, make it short. Gathering to talk, making acquaintances...what have we actually come here to do? "To still the body, and still the mind"

The work of a monk is only two – if it is more than that, it's not good. Of course we must fulfill our civic responsibilities if we have any.

11. The Buddha said, "If bandits should tie you up and sever your limbs with a saw and you entertain hate in your heart, you will not be a follower of My Teachings."

His Teachings are to be able to tolerate and forgive even your enemies. One should have metta and karuna. He gives the example of the tree that gives shade to the lumberjack until it is felled and of sandalwood which continues to provide fragrance as it burns to ashes, to the one who uses it to light a fire.

The virtuous sacrifice even their lives to protect their enemy e.g. As the Bodhisatta did in his life as a monkey king. To ensure that he did not accidentally harm the hunter who had fallen down as he carried him across the water, he actually tested himself by carrying across a boulder that was about the hunter's weight! Only then, confident of the hunter's safety, he came back across and carried him over on his back. However the hunter had a wicked idea as the monkey king lay exhausted on his lap after the repeated trips across the water. Taking a stone he hit the monkey king on the head. The monkey king escaped quickly yet even towards one who so senselessly and ungratefully tried to kill him, his compassion did not waver. Knowing the hunter would lose his way in the forest and be eaten by the tigers, he called to the hunter to follow his trail of blood and led him back to the safety of his village.

Now we do not suffer such privations here. If we could just accept little things we say to each other, meaning to be helpful, to correct each other, we would benefit too. That is also the meaning of 'sovacassata' – being easy to instruct. This befits a virtuous person.

If we dislike being told what to do, get angry, we are lacking in dutifulness, we are not doing what the Buddha wanted.

If we are told of any wrong, we should remember it and avoid doing it – happily, humbly – thus you avoid evil, cultivate good, the mind is also pure. And in doing so, may you be able to practice and attain Nibbana.

SADHU! SADHU! SADHU!

TRANSLATOR: MOUSHUMI GHOSH

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 INSTRUCTIONS.