

The Accomplishment of Happiness in Buddhism

Phoonchai Punthiya¹ and Phisit Kotsupho²

¹Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,
Chiang Mai Campus Thailand.

²Chiang Mai University, Thailand.



Abstract

The accomplishment of happiness in Buddhism The Dhamma is the teaching of deverance in entirety, as discovered , realized and proclaimed by the Buddha, called in Pali the Dhamma and the Vinaya those are in one sense enumerated as 84,000 in number, which was called Dhammakhandhas, literally the Aggregates of Dhamma. The one who wills to study only one Dhammakhandha, he should spend at least a day for the discussion. If overall studying, it would take him more than two hundred years to complete them.

Keywords: Accomplishment, Happiness, Buddhism

Introduction

The Dhamma is the teaching of deverance in entirety, as discovered , realized and proclaimed by the Buddha (Ven Nyanetiloka, 1971), called in Pali the Dhamma and the Vinaya (the Norm and the Law or Discipline) those are in one sense enumerated as 84,000 in number, which was called Dhammakhandhas, literally the Aggregates of Dhamma. The one who wills to study only one Dhammakhandha, he should spend at least a day for the discussion. If overall studying, it would take him more than two hundred years to complete them. In summary, the Buddha teachings can essentially be classified under three main headings, viz. to avoid of doing any evil, to accumulate or Ovadapatimokkha.

The procedure in practicing should be elaborated in both ways such as the first part to be avoided and on the other part it should be accumulated. The former part i.e., the types of evil are classified in three forms; the physical, the verbal and the mental. The physical actions are as killing, stealing, committing sexual crime. The verbal actions are such as telling lies, insulting, setting one party against the other and gossiping. The mental actions are as covetousness, anger or ill will and the wrong idea and attitude of mind.

On the opposite side, the good aspect, there are also typically classified in three parts such as the physical, the verbal and the mental. The physical parts are as to abstain from killing, stealing, and committing sexual crimes. Verbally, there ‘are for instance, telling the truth, what is good and what is useful. Mentally, not to be overwhelmed by covetousness, nor to cherish an anger and an ill will towards any body and to have the right views and the right attitude of mind may be cited as examples

The accomplishment of happiness in Buddhism

The Target of Happiness. This is, according to the Buddha, the ultimate aim of all peoples [A: II; 69 (21/90)].

However, there are three kinds, or rather grades, of the term 'happiness.'

- a. *Ditthadhammikattha*: happiness to be obtained in the present life;
- b. *Samparàyikattha*: happiness to be obtained in the hereafter; and
- c. *Paramattha*: the ultimate happiness, to be obtained through realization of Nibbana.
- d. Happiness in the present life implies one as a result of wealth, of spending it, of being without debt and of doing honest work.

But these are the effects, the causes of which are as follows:

1) Avoidance of the great causes of ruin, which can be divided into four and six kinds viz. To indulge oneself in sexual pleasures, in intoxicating drinks, in gambling and to associate with evil persons; then, (in another sense), taking intoxicants, nigh roaming, attending shows and fairy too often, gambling, making friends with evil persons and laziness in work.

It should be noted that there were mentioned gambling and associating with evil persons in both categories of the causes of ruin. This shows how such behaviors are essentially important, in a bad way, and that was why the Buddha mentioned them in many places.

2) As against the causes of ruin, a lay disciple must be equipped with the ability by which to acquire wealth. They were mentioned as follows: 1- to be diligent in work and responsibilities; 2 – to know how to maintain and preserve the wealth acquired; 3 – to associate with virtuous persons (which is equivalent to avoiding evil persons). This topic, it should be noted, comes again indirectly, since to associate with evil persons will nullify all other good things thus accumulated; and 4 - to be moderate in modes of living i.e. to live proportionately to one's income. In other words, this is to avoid being what is called 'high – brow' or snob, but with low income and low degree of diligence [A: II; 69 (21/90)]. Such are the methods and behaviors by which wealth can be

acquired. Now, the Buddha also gave his further advice how to make the proper use of the acquired wealth viz. to take care of members of the family such as oneself, parents, offspring and wife etc.; to help other outsiders such as friends; to prevent and avoid dangers and other harmful effects; to put away part of it as tax for the government and as donations for relatives; and to make merit (as provision for the hereafter). These from the

There have been some wealthy families that cannot preserve its wealth and have finally to become poverty-ridden. This i.e. the last one shows how the head of such a family is intelligently interior to the appointed person and is thereby always in the position of being cheated or swindled by such a person. These from the

People within the same community or village are advised to adopt the following practices viz. giving or sharing the food and drinks or other things, when occasion arises, to the neighbors; speaking kind words, not uttering words of insult nor blaming, gossiping nor rude words; giving a helping hand in various activities when occasion arises; and knowing how to get along well with others. Such practices are sure to be the source of amity and unity for the people within that community.

There are, on the other side of the coin, causes of poverty and of sealing one's own fate. They were described as poverty, being in debt, paying an interest on the debt and to be asked for the payment of a loan or a debt.

In another sense, they are: being addicted to women, or to habit – forming drugs, or to drinking liquor and being ruffians; to be ruffians, bent on violent acts; night – roving; attending shows and fairs too often, gambling, associating with evil persons, and being lazy in work.

Friends. Friends are in Buddhism regarded as the most significant environment factor shaping a person's destiny. In several places did the Buddha give his advice in details showing what kind of friends should be associated with and what other kinds should not? The latter kind (i.e. ones not to be associated with) are: the swindlers, those who think only of gaining advantage over their friends; the flatterers, those who give only lip service,

never being of any real help; the fawners, those who never object or protest whether in doing good or evil, also praise in their friends' presence but blame in their friends' absence; and those who are leaders to destruction, i.e. who lead to drinking, gambling and other evil activities.

In another sense, the false friends were classified as those who tell lies, who are aggressive, who talk too much, who are vain and boastful and who are fickle in character [D: III; 186(11/199)]. These are natural that such friends will 'brainwash' anybody who make friends with them, converting that person to their evil ways. With regard to those to be associated with, besides having the characters contrary to what has been mentioned, they were enumerated by the Buddha as follows ; those who willingly give help; those who never forsake their friends; those who tell what is profitable and those who have compassion.

Good and evil persons [M: IV; 157(23/157)]. Good or virtuous persons were described by the Buddha as possessing the following qualities viz. to know the causes, the effect, to know themselves (i.e. their duties), moderation (such as in speaking, eating, spending, monetary affairs and sleeping), the proper times for different things and activities, society (i.e. how to get along with others) and other persons they come into contact with (such as to know whom to associate with and whom to avoid).

As for the evil persons, besides being already mentioned in the characteristics of evil friends, they can be known by their evil thoughts, words and deeds. [A: IV; 288(23/297)] They were also described as those who can kill women, who like to commit adultery, who do harm to their friends, who can kill a monk and who are utterly selfish.

Practices recommended for those who live together

Besides enumerating in No. 7, the Buddha also recommended other methods as follows: to be truthful to one another, to be self – restrained, to be patient or to have forbearance, to be generous or magnanimous [Vis: I; 15/16 (1/19)].

In another sense, there are: to be gentle, to be Dhamma – oriented; not to be over – confident in life, age and health; to be wise; to be humble; not to

be miserly; to be blissed with peace of mind; to be polite in words. All these are called Dhamma for the laity.

As for the Dhamma for Bhikkhus [S: I; 215/15 (1/316)], there are the practices specially prescribed viz. to observe the rules of Discipline, to be self – controlled with regard to senses, not to find food and other requisites in an improper way and to always contemplate the real purposes of eating and using other requisites. In another sense, they are: self – control with regard to words and deeds, to take delight in the Dhamma, to be stable, not fickle but always patient, not to take delight in a boisterous party and to learn to be satisfied with whatever can be rightfully obtained.

Success

Everybody wishes to be successful in whatever in attempted. The Buddha recommended 4 kinds of practice called Iddhipada [Vbh: 216; 413/16 (35/292)]. as follows : Preference, the willingness and gladness to do : Patience, the will power to exert efforts towards the aim having been set forth ; Perseverance, the undaunted courage in the face of baffling difficulties or threatening danger : and Pondering, to be able to weigh the pros and cons carefully, to consider or approach the matter in question from all angles

Duties of parents towards Offspring

The Buddha has prescribed the following practices viz. to safeguard the offspring from evil, to instruct and establish them in good conduct, to teach them arts and sciences, to provide them with suitable spouses and to bequeath to them the property acquired [D: III; 188/16 (11/203)].

Reciprocal duties of offspring towards their parents viz. to be grateful to them, supporting them in return to their kindness ; to help them in whatever is possible ; to uphold the honor of the family ; to behave in such a way as to deserve their inheritance ; and to perform religious rites for them after death [D: III; 188/16 (11/203)].

Duties of husbands towards their wives viz. to pay due respect for her, not to treat her with contempt to be faithful to her ; to allow her to manage the household affairs for him ; and to delight her with ornaments.

Reciprocal duties of wives towards husbands viz. to manage the household affairs to the best of her ability ; to be hospitable to his relatives and friends ; to be faithful to him ; to look after his property ; and to pay attention to her duties and obligations.

Duties of masters towards servants viz. To give them work that is suitable to their strength and skill; to give them food and other necessities; to nurse them in time of sickness; to grant them some extra delicacies (this can be bonuses in modern times); and to grant them an occasional leave of absence.

Reciprocal Duties of servants towards masters viz. to get up and begin work before the master ; to stop work after the master ; to take only what is given ; to try to improve the work and o praise the master to others. (In my case the servants tend to blame their masters to others)

Duties of teachers towards pupils viz. not to neglect in advising the pupils in what they ought to do ; to take care teaching them what they ought to know ; to tell them all that is to be studied and practiced ; to praise them to their friends ; and to give them protection wherever they go.

Reciprocal duties of pupils towards teacher viz. to show respect by, for instance, rising to welcome them ; to give help in the teachers' work ; to obey their orders and advice ; to be grateful to them and praise them ; and to pay attention to whatever is taught by them.

Apart from these, there were also prescribed the practices regarding the reciprocal duties of friend and friends, citizens and governments and several others. See the PLAN OF LIFE available now in English version.

Characteristics of a leader or chief of a group. In several places did the Buddha give his advice and recommendations regarding this kind of persons? They were, for instance, to be patient in both body and mind; to have forbearance while being strongly criticized; to be always on the alert, keeping abreast with the time and circumstances; i.e. not to be over – confident; to be industrious in work; to be wisely analytical, knowing how to put the right people in the right place and at the proper time; to have loving – kindness; to always study the developments of the works being done.

In another sense, they are: to be able to obtain the data concerning the matter in question; and to know how to solve the questions and problems that have occurred.

In still another sense, they are : to take pains to help the people ; to know how to make friends with other people ; to know how to speak properly ; to be generous and magnanimous ; to be able to be their leader [D: III; 188/16 (11/203)]. There are still another series of practices viz. to be clever and dignified in manner ; to be learned ; to be industrious, never neglecting what comes as responsibilities ; to be Dhamma – oriented an life and work ; to be high – minded ; to be virtuous ; to be wise enough to accept new things and ideas.

Prosperity in life was also dealt with by the Buddha. Rules of practice are as follows: to go further on the path having been trodden so far, never to lose hope and step backwards; but, in case it is a mistake, it is imperative to stop, step backwards and not to go further; always work industriously; do not harm of hurt one's own friends; and do not be under a woman's control [D: III; 188/16 (11/203)].

In another sense, they are; to associate with good persons; to pay attention to the advice of such persons; to ponder things carefully and then to follow such advice.

What are the aspects of lay people belonging to their faith? What are the minimum dedications religious laymen and monks must do to maintain their faith?

In Buddhism, the Buddha's Statement about the qualities of an excellent lay disciple, comprise,

1. To be endowed with faith,
2. To have good conduct,
3. Not to be superstitious, believe in deeds, not luck,
4. Not to seek for the gift – worthy outside of the Buddha's Teachings,
5. To do his first service in a Buddhist cause.

The endowment with faith for laymen can be observed through the following Seven conducive to the progress of a lay disciple:

1. Not to fail to see the monks,
2. Not to neglect to hear the Teachings,
3. To train oneself in higher virtue,
4. To be full of confidence in the monks, whether elder, newly ordained or midterm,
5. To listen to the Dhamma not in order to criticize,
6. Not to seek for the gift – worthy outside of the Buddha's Teachings,
7. To do his first service in a Buddhist cause such as support the religion, temples or monks.

For the monks, they have to persistently perform their monkhood's duty that is the studying of the Scriptures, comprises three main factors:

1. Pariyatti means the Scriptures or the studying of the Scriptures, which is the foundation of their practice (the theoretical study of the Scriptures).
2. Patipatti means the practice or the application of the knowledge of the Scriptures into practical use, those are the threefold Training, of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom.
3. Pativedha means comprehension or realization which refers to the effect of the practice, which is realizing or attaining the aspect or true Doctrine.

Apart from that, monks have to be in full self – control under the virtues of the Sangha that is the incomparable field of merit in the world.

Performing one's absolute or supreme effort

Buddhism teaches laymen to study and know themselves, understand their own background through previous lessons in their lives, which should be recollected and used to rectify themselves or to stimulate themselves to make greater efforts in the rightful way, Buddhism also instructs one to establish his own success with his own doing, not to plead for an assistance from any outside power or the superstition. One should be content with his own accomplishment which comes from his own exertion and furthers his creating

more success by his own ability, as in a proverb, saying, “Being born as a man, one should never fail to try until he can get what he wants.”

Being dependent on one’s own self refers to one’s doing everything regardless other people or anything’s blessing. There are many Buddhist Statements about this topic such as one’s virtues which make for perfection, those are [D: II; 22(10/357)]. .

1. Good conduct or keeping moral habits
2. Great learning
3. Good company or association with good people
4. Amenability to correction or easy admonish ability
5. Willingness to give a helping hand or diligence and skill in managing all affairs of one’s fellows in the community
6. Love of truth or be pleasant to consult and converse with or rejoice in the advanced teaching of both; the Doctrine and the Discipline
7. Energy or Effort
8. Contentment or satisfaction with whatever is one’s own
9. Mindfulness or ability to remember what one has done or spoken
10. Wisdom or insight to see things as they really are.

Path of accomplishment or the basis for success, those are [A: II; 32(21/41)],

1. Will or aspiration
2. Energy or effort or exertion
3. Thoughtfulness or active thought
4. Investigation or examination or reasoning or testing

Five Powers or Controlling Faculty, those are [Vbh: II; 119(21/160)],

1. Confidence or faith
2. Energy or effort
3. Mindfulness
4. Concentration
5. Wisdom or understanding

All of the above Statements of the Buddha suggest one realize about one's own ability or virtues that will lead one to success, with his own ability as the prime conductor.

Conclusion

The accomplishment of happiness in Buddhism The Dhamma is the teaching of deverance in entirety, as discovered , realized and proclaimed by the Buddha, called in Pali the Dhamma and the Vinaya those are in one sense enumerated as 84,000 in number, which was called Dhammakhandhas, literally the Aggregates of Dhamma. The one who wills to study only one Dhammakhandha, he should spend at least a day for the discussion. If overall studying, it would take him more than two hundred years to complete them.

The Target of Happiness. This is, according to the Buddha, the ultimate aim of all peoples. However, there are three kinds, or rather grades, of the term 'happiness.'

References

Anguttaranikaaya. Vol IV. (1997). Yangon: Department of Religious Affairs.

Bernard, Evslin. *Heroes*, (2005). *Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*. New York: Four Winds Press,

Dighanikaya, Vol. I, II. (1995). Yangon: Department of Religious Affairs,

Khudakkanikaaya, Vol. IV. (1997). Yangon: Department of Religious Affairs,

King, Sallie B. (2005). *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Llemm, David E. (1986). *Hermeneutical Inquiry*. 2 Vols. Atlanta: Scholars Press,

Lopez, Donald S. (Ed.). (1988). *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. (1996). *Mahachula Tipitaka*. Bangkok: MCU Press.

Nanamoli, Bhikkhu. (1999). *The Path of Purification*. Penang: The Penang Buddhist Association.

Ruch, Floyd L. (1958). *Psychology and Life-Fifth Edition*. NY: Scott Forceman and Company.

Ven Nyanetiloka. (1971). *The world of the Buddha*. Cylon: Buddhist publication Society.

