

14.4 Money and Monastics

Recent news about monks and money is troubling to say the least. Those who are more for the world, say it is all right to change the rules (although often we are not sure what the consequences are). Those who know the Dharma and Vinaya are not heard clearly enough.

If you are not sure, ask yourself: “Would the Buddha, or Ānanda, be doing this sort of thing?”

The doing of one kind of good (eg social work) does not cancel out other unwholesome acts done habitually. According to the (Saddha) Jāṇussoṇī Sutta (A 10.177 = [SD 2.6a](#)), those who are generous, but do not keep the precepts, will be reborn as elephants, horses, cows, or chickens (that is, as well loved pets, but still as animals!)

The Buddhist teachings are very clear on monastics and money, as expressed by a practitioner of our times:

“Obviously, the Buddha thought that the rule prohibiting the acceptance of gold or money was, indeed, a very important rule. The non-acceptance of money has always been one of the fundamental observances of those who have left the world.

Money is the measure of wealth and to most people material wealth is the goal of life. In the renunciation of money by monks and nuns, they emphatically demonstrate their complete rejection of worldly pursuits.

At one stroke they set themselves significantly apart from the vast majority of people and thus become a constant reminder to all that a life based on the struggle to accumulate money is not the only way to live.

Through giving up money they give up much of their power to manipulate the world and to satisfy their desire.”

(Brahmavamso, 1996; emphases added)

The Buddha says in the Maṇi,cūḷaka Sutta:

For whomever gold and silver are allowable, for him the five cords of sense-pleasure are allowable, too. For whomever the five cords of sense-pleasure are allowable, you can for sure consider him as one who neither has the quality of a recluse nor is he a son of the Sakya.

(S 42.10.8/4:326)

Please Join Me In This Aspiration:

My main purpose of life now is to prepare a Buddhist legacy of well-translated Suttas, a simple but effective meditation practice, and as good a personal example as possible for our young Buddhists today so that they (we) will have a bright Dharma future.

By this truth may the Dharma prosper against all odds.

By this truth, may those who have renounced the world grow in moral strength and wisdom to be inspiring examples of the Buddha's Sakya Sons and Daughters.

Together, we can make a better Dharma future possible; for, we will return to where we left off.

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