

5 The Discourse to the People of Bamboo Gate

Veḷu,dvāreyya Sutta | S 55.7

Theme: The 4 precepts, the golden rule, values, and streamwinning

Translated by Piya Tan 2012; simplified ©2016

[For full text, commentary and notes, see **SD 1.5** at <http://dharmafarer.org>.]

1 The Buddha visits Veḷu,dvāra

Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Lord, on a Dharma-tour with a large community of monks, arrived at the brahmin village of Veḷu,dvāra [Bamboo Gate] in Kosala country.

THE DHARMA TEACHING FOR SELF-APPLICATION

The brahmin householders of Veḷu,dvāra heard about the Lord's fame and virtues, the goodness of the Dharma, and wished to see such an arhat.

Then, the brahmin householders of Veḷu,dvāra went up to the Lord and greeted him, some more respectfully than others. Some just kept silent and sat down at one side.

2 A Dharma teaching for self-application

Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin householders of Veḷu,dvāra said to the Lord:

"Master Gotama, we are those who live at home, crowded with children. We adorn and dress ourselves up. We use expensive things; we use money. When we die, we want to have a good rebirth, to go to heaven.

May master Gotama teach us the Dharma specially for our benefit."

"I will teach you, householders, a **Dharma teaching for self-application**. Listen carefully, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante."

"What, householders, is the Dharma teaching for self-application?"

B. TRAINING OF BODY AND SPEECH

(1) Respect for life

"Here, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'I wish to live and do not wish to die; I want happiness and do not want suffering.

I would not happily agree if someone were to kill me.

Now, if I were to take the life of another—one who thinks and feels like me—that would be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like it done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF BODILY CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself abstains	from destroying life,
he encourages others to abstain	from destroying life, and
he praises abstaining	from destroying life.

Thus, his bodily conduct is purified in three ways.

(2) Respect for the not-given

Furthermore, house lords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to take from me what I have not given, that is, to steal from me, I would not like that. Now, if I were to take from another what he has not given, that is, to steal from him, that would be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF BODILY CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from taking the not-given,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from taking the not-given, and
he <i>praises</i> abstaining	from taking the not-given.

Thus, his bodily conduct is purified in three ways.

(3) Respect for the body

Furthermore, house lords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to have sexual intercourse with my spouse or partner, I would not like that. Now, if I were to have sexual intercourse with the spouse or partner of another, that would not be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF BODILY CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from sexual misconduct,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from sexual misconduct, and
he <i>praises</i> abstaining	from sexual misconduct.

Thus, his bodily conduct is purified in three ways.

(4) Respect for truth

Furthermore, house lords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to damage my welfare with false speech, I would not like that. Now, if I were to damage another's welfare with false speech, that would be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF VERBAL CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from false speech,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from false speech, and
he <i>praises</i> of abstaining	from false speech.

Thus, his verbal conduct is purified in three ways.

(5) Respect for harmony

Furthermore, house lords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to divide me from my friends by divisive speech, I would not like that. Now, if I were to divide someone else from his friends by divisive speech, that would be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

*What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.
How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'*

THREEFOLD PURITY OF VERBAL CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from divisive speech,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from divisive speech, and
he <i>praises</i> abstaining	from divisive speech.

Thus, his verbal conduct is purified in three ways.

(6) Respect for proper speech

Furthermore, houselords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to address me harshly, I would not like that.

Now, if I were to address another harshly, that will be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF VERBAL CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from harsh speech,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from harsh speech, and
he <i>praises</i> abstaining	from harsh speech.

Thus, his verbal conduct is purified in three ways.

(7) Respect for useful speech

Furthermore, houselords, a noble disciple reflects thus:

'If someone were to talk to me frivolously and idly, I would not like that.

Now, if I were to talk to another frivolously and idly, that would be neither desirable nor agreeable to him, too.

What I do not like done to me, others, too, do not like done to them.

How can I do to another what I myself neither desire nor agree to?'

THREEFOLD PURITY OF VERBAL CONDUCT

Having reflected thus,

he himself <i>abstains</i>	from frivolous talk and idle chatter,
he <i>encourages</i> others to abstain	from frivolous talk and idle chatter, and
he <i>praises</i> abstaining	from frivolous talk and idle chatter.

Thus, his verbal conduct is purified in three ways.

C. THE LIMBS OF A STREAMWINNER

(1) Faith in the Buddha.

He has wise faith in the Buddha, thus:

'So, too, is he the Lord: for, he is	an arhat,
	fully self-awakened one,
	accomplished in wisdom and conduct,
	well-farer,
	knower of worlds,
	peerless guide of persons to be tamed,
	teacher of gods and humans,

awakened,
blessed.'

(2) Faith in the Dharma

He has wise faith in the Dharma [the True Teaching], thus:

'Well-taught is the Lord's Dharma,
visible here and now,
having nothing to do with time,
inviting one to come and see,
accessible,
to be personally known by the wise.'

(3) Faith in the Sangha

He has wise faith in the Sangha, thus:

'The Lord's community of disciples keeps to
the good way;
the straight way;
the right way;
the proper way.

These 4 pairs of persons, the 8 individuals,
are this Lord's community of disciples:

worthy of offerings,
worthy of hospitality,
worthy of the teacher's gifts,
worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,
a supreme field of merit for the world.'

(4) Accomplishment in moral virtue

He has the virtues dear to the noble ones—fully pure and liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to mental concentration.

D. THE BENEFITS

Streamwinning

When, houselords, the noble disciple has these 7 virtuous qualities and these 4 desirable states, if he wishes he could by himself declare of himself:

'Destroyed for me is hell, the animal birth the preta realm, and the suffering states!
A streamwinner am I, no longer bound for the lower world, sure of going over to self-awakening!'"

The houselords take refuge

When this was said, the brahmin houselords of Veḷu, dvāra said:

"Excellent, master Gotama! In numerous ways, has the Dharma been made known by master Gotama.

We go to master Gotama, the Dharma and the Sangha for refuge. May master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge, from this day forth, for life."

— So it is —

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