

## SD 62.10g

## (Chakka) Arati Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Discontent | A 6.113

Theme: The bad lifestyle and the good lifestyle

Translated by Piya Tan ©2025

1 Summary and significance**1.1 SUMMARY OF A 6.113**

The **(Chakka) Arati Sutta** (A 6.113) lists the unwholesome lifestyle and the wholesome lifestyle in terms of Dharma-based training. An unwholesome lifestyle is one rooted in *discontent, violence and non-dharmafaring*. A wholesome lifestyle is one that is rooted in *gladness, non-violence, and Dharmafaring*. The unwholesome lifestyle is not to be followed; the wholesome lifestyle is the one to be cultivated with diligence.

**1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE****1.2.1 The training triads**

**1.2.1.1 The (Chakka) Arati Sutta** is a brief statement by the Buddha warning a worldly person not to fall into unwholesome ways that are at once bad for oneself and for others. In other words, one should keep to the 3 wholesome teachings for one's own happiness and for the sake of social harmony and progress. For the common happiness of self and others, one should thus keep to moral conduct (avoiding unwholesome acts) on the one hand, and cultivate the mind on the other, thus:

**immoral conduct (to be avoided)**

discontent	<i>arati</i>
violence	<i>vihiṃsa</i>
not-dharmafaring	<i>adhamma, cariyā</i>

**mental cultivation**

gladness	<i>muditā</i>
non-violence	<i>avihiṃsā</i>
dharmafaring	<i>dhamma, cariyā</i>

**1.2.1.2 Arati** (*a*, “not,” + *ratī*, “liking, lust, love, attachment”) has the senses of “dislike, discontent, aversion,”<sup>1</sup> thus having a wholly negative sense. We see in **the (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta** (A 6.114) the term **asantuṭṭhitā** (*a* + *santuṭṭhi* = *saṃ* (fully) + *tuṭṭhi*, “contented, satisfied”) + *-tā* abstract noun prefix), giving the sense, “dissatisfied,” which may be either unwholesome or wholesome, depending on the context.<sup>2</sup>

Here (in A 6.113), *arati*, “discontent” is used in the negative sense, as the opposite of the wholesome term *muditā*, “gladness.” In **A 6.114**, *asantuṭṭhitā*, “dissatisfaction,” is used in a negative sense in contrast to *santuṭṭhitā*, “satisfaction,” used in the positive sense. However, *asantuṭṭhitā* also has a positive sense, which is mentioned in the notes elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

**1.2.1.3** From the twin listings, we can see that avoiding the unwholesome conduct entails **moral training** (*sīla*). Thus, overcoming the unwholesome karma of *discontent, violence and not-dharmafaring* begins with keeping to the 5 precepts [1.2.2] to begin with. To cultivate a wholesome conduct entails **mental cultivation** (*bhāvanā*), that is, basically, cultivating the divine abodes of *lovingkindness, compass-*

<sup>1</sup> Sn 270, 436, 642, 938; Dh 418 (= *ukkaṇṭhitattam*, DhA 4:225); Thī 339 (= *ukkaṇṭhi*, ThīA 239).

<sup>2</sup> A 6.114 (SD 62.10h).

<sup>3</sup> See SD 62.10h (1.2 + Table 1.2.1).

ion, gladness and equanimity [1.2.3]. More fully, Dharmafaring thus refers to cultivating the 3 trainings of moral virtue, mental cultivation and wisdom [1.2.4].

### **1.2.2 The moral training underpinning the triads**

**1.2.2.1 The 5 moral precepts** (*pañca, sīla*) are the self-avowed training in avoiding *killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, falsehood and intoxication*. Basically, this entails respect for *life, property, freedom, truth and the mind*. These are the **5 universal values** in which the 5 precepts are respectively rooted. These values humanize us and form the bedrock for a good society characterized by harmony, progress and freedom.

**The respect for life** refers to the vision that each human is unique and capable of independent growth, creativity and wisdom; that our individual life has been possible and wholesome because of *other* lives by way of our parents, our own family, society and humanity as a whole. Humanity is rooted in society, consisting of families and individuals, such as parents, teachers, thinkers, workers, children and so on. Hence, the quality of our lives depends on our respect for life, both human and non-human.

Non-human lives are just as precious as human life for the simple reason that they have arisen by themselves just as human lives have. Every living being, human or non-human, values their lives, and dislikes pain and fear destruction just as we do. Moreover, rebirth means that there is natural mobility amongst the various lives, human and non-human; we may devolve into subhuman states and non-humans may evolve into humans or divine beings. Killing creates pain and fear, and disrupts the natural progress of life, preventing the evolution of beings into higher spiritual states.

This is the rationale for the 1<sup>st</sup> precept against killing.

**1.2.2.2 The respect for honest work** is based on the recognition that for life to be possible and wholesome, we need to have *food, clothing, shelter and health* (the 4 supports of life). To have these supports we must exert some kind of productive effort or give something in fair exchange for such supports. To have an abundance or power over such supports is called wealth. The word **wealth**—derived from “weal” (well) + the substantive suffix -th (as in “health” from “heal”)—refers to one’s well-being, both material, psychological and spiritual.

Due to the value and role of wealth in supporting life and wellbeing, wealth must be properly earned, that is, well worked for, honestly gained or freely gotten. In such texts as **the Ādiya Sutta** (A 5.41), the Buddha teaches that what is well earned or justly obtained in a lawful way should be enjoyed in the following ways:

- (1) we enjoy it happily for ourselves and our family (including dependents);
- (2) we happily share it for the happiness of friends and companions;
- (3) we secure ourselves against all misfortunes (such as by savings and having insurance);
- (4) we make offerings to relatives, guests, the departed, the authorities and deities;<sup>4</sup>
- (5) we offer support to virtuous and noble religious (as acts of merit).

The spirit of such teachings is that wealth is not just about having but should wholesomely promote one’s being (happiness and development) and that of others.<sup>5</sup>

**1.2.2.3** Keeping to the precepts is rooted in **the value of freedom**, personal and social. We must be *free to live, to labour, to love, to learn and to let go* of things and thoughts so that we wholesomely grow as individuals and social beings. The greatest freedom must be that given to the mind which should be

<sup>4</sup> In this teaching, the Buddha addresses society as a whole, incl non-Buddhists or those who look up to Buddhism beyond their personal faith. See SD 2.1 (f 2).

<sup>5</sup> A 5.41/3:45 f (SD 2.1).

free from stress and suffering. The most effective way to do this is to cultivate lovingkindness, hold happy thoughts, and enjoy wholesome work, proper exercise and good rest.

The following **wrong ways of thinking** enslave us to stress and suffering; they should be avoided:<sup>6</sup>

- **All or nothing thinking** (ANT), eg, “I failed to do this. I’m stupid. I’m giving up.” Nothing is always either black or white. There is a middle way; there is diligence (repeating the effort with patience and wisdom). Drop by drop water fills the pot (Dh 121).<sup>7</sup>
- **Rain-clouding**, eg, “I can only sit for 5 minutes. I’m a bad meditator.” Doing good cannot be measured. Even meditating for the moment it takes to draw milk from a cow’s udder-teat, one has practised the Buddha’s teaching. There is always a silver lining. (S 20.4)<sup>8</sup>
- **Mind-reading** or **fortune telling**, eg, “He didn’t say hello. He must be mad with me.” “I’m full of defilements! I’ll never learn to meditate.” When we do initiate friendship or try something new or difficult, we thus have at least 50% chance of making friends or succeeding. Before we can know someone, we have to be his or her friend. In friendship, the Buddha is said to be the one who is *the first to greet others*. (D 5,7 (18))<sup>9</sup>
- **Label sticking** or **over-generalizing**, eg, “I’m stupid. I will never learn.” “Nothing good ever happens.” Just because one has failed does not mean one will always fail! Failing means that one has not learned why or how one fails! The Buddha reminds us to ask ourselves: “What shall I do next?” (A 54.8)<sup>10</sup>
- **Measuring**, eg, “I can never have what I want like her.” Having things does not mean we are happy with them. Contentment is the greatest wealth (Dh 204).<sup>11</sup>
- **Emoting**, eg, “I feel like a failure; I must be one.” “I’m afraid I will die!” Thinking makes it so. Hence, we only need to change the thinking! (Dh 1 f)
- **Guilty prejudgement**, eg, “I should have known it was wrong.” “I’m so slow, I should have done the work already.” Things happen due to many conditions, many causes with many effects (dependent arising). (SD 5.16 (6))<sup>12</sup>
- **Extreme view** (maximizing or minimizing), eg, “I said something wrong to the monk; it’s bad karma.” We sometimes say things which may sound wrong or be taken the wrong way. It’s our real intention that counts. It may help to apologize, but we should not be doing this too often. Karma is intention. (A 6.63,11.2)<sup>13</sup>
- **Blaming**, eg, “I would have got that if it wasn’t for her.” Failure is not always due to others; we must also be accountable for our own actions or non-action, and work to make things better. One is one’s own master—who else could it be? (Dh 160)<sup>14</sup>
- **Personalizing**, blaming oneself or reacting to negative remarks as if they were true, eg, “It’s my fault she’s not happy.” “He is in a bad mood; it must be something I said.” Things happen for many reasons or any reason. Even if it is how someone feels about us, this does not define what we really are. We do not know the real reasons that someone has said or done something. When someone says hurtful

<sup>6</sup> Based on “Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) and unhelpful thinking styles,” [www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk](http://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk).

<sup>7</sup> SD 19.14 (5.1.3); SD 56.1 (7.4.2).

<sup>8</sup> **Okkha S** (S 20.4), SD 2.14; **Cūḷ’accharā S** (A 1.6,5), SD 2.13; **Velāma S** (A 9.20,5.2(10)), SD 16.6. See *Simple Joys 2* 2011: ch 10 The possibility of awakening.

<sup>9</sup> *Pubba, bhāsī* (initiates a conversation) D 5,7 (18) (SD 22.8); *Puretaram ālapitvā* (one who first speaks to another), SD 61.14 (2.1.5). See also D 4,6 (SD 30.5); SD 45.16 (2.5.3(2)).

<sup>10</sup> **Alabbhaniya Tihāna S** (A 5.48,72), SD 42.1.

<sup>11</sup> **Pasenadi Kosala V** (1) (DhA 15.6), SD 37.13(2).

<sup>12</sup> See *idap, paccayatā* (SD 5.16 (6)).

<sup>13</sup> **Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) S** (A 6.63/3:415), SD 6.11 (2.2.2); SD 48.1 (9.1.3).

<sup>14</sup> Dh 160, 380. SD 3.1 (1.4.3) self as refuge.

words to us, we're hurt only if we accept those words. The hurt remains with the speaker of hurt. (S 7.2)<sup>15</sup>

ANT<sub>2</sub> also means "Automatic Negative Thoughts." It's all in the mind. Do not let the ANTs in; do not feed the ANT<sub>2</sub>s.

**1.2.2.4** A free mind is one that is calm and clear. Breath meditation, even when briefly done as needed, can help to **calm** the mind so that one does not fall back into the stressor. One easy way to **clear** the mind is to smile inwardly, especially at the stressor or distraction. Breath meditation and inner smiling work very well together.

The freedom related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> precept is rooted in **respect for the person's person**, that is, not to violate another's body or personal space. Sex is only proper between appropriate individuals who truly love one another done with mutual consent. Sex is the grand portal to samsara—it creates life—and has to be respected. Sex, whether procreative or not, between appropriate partners is best closed with personal reflections on impermanence. The rule of celibacy should be respected when one is on retreat or one has taken up the rule. The idea of being celibate is to direct all one's energy, physical and mental, to spiritual work. Be warned: sex is the most selfish and time-consuming of human activities.<sup>16</sup>

**1.2.2.5** The 4<sup>th</sup> precept is rooted in **the respect for wholesome truth**. We keep to the precepts simply because they are based on goodness and truth. Here we may speak of 2 kinds of truth: the moral and the spiritual. Moral truth is that which is rooted in the 5 kinds of respect—for life, property, freedom, truth and the mind—in the living of a morally virtuous life.

Moral truth is a reflection of a higher, that is, spiritual truth; that all conditioned things are impermanent, unsatisfactory and nonself. Moral freedom is subsumed under spiritual truth: life is impermanent, suffering and nonself; so are property, freedom, truth and wisdom. "Truth," on the level of moral living, should be understood in the sense that it is instrumental; the truth of moral goodness serves as the basis for a deeper understanding of true reality. Similarly, the moral life conduces to giving calm and clarity to the mind so that the mind can directly see into true reality, and gain liberating wisdom, that is, the path.

**1.2.2.6** Moral living is an excellent way to begin one's spiritual life, but it is made good and purposeful as the instrument for mental cultivation. Moral conduct restrains and refines one's speech and bodily conduct, so that they conduce to the cultivation of the mind for calm and clarity for seeing directly into true reality. This brings spiritual freedom brimming with wisdom and compassion, empowering us to boundlessly benefit other beings by teaching them to be self-reliant and gain the very same awakening and freedom.

### **1.2.3 The mental cultivation triad**

**1.2.3.1 The (Chakka) Arati Sutta** (A 6.113) tells us that,

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| • having given up <u>discontent</u> , we should cultivate       | <b>gladness</b> ( <i>muditā</i> );               |
| • having given up <u>violence</u> , we should cultivate         | <b>non-violence</b> ( <i>avihiṃsā, ahimsā</i> ); |
| • having given up <u>not-dharmafaring</u> , we should cultivate | <b>dharmafaring</b> ( <i>dhamma, cariyā</i> ).   |

This is one's first step to move away from suffering and move towards awakening and freedom.

<sup>15</sup> **Akkosaka Bhāra, dvāja S** (S 7.2), SD 84.2. See also the Jeta, vana parable: Alagaddūpama S (M 22,41) & SD 3.13 (2).

<sup>16</sup> SD 31.7 (6.2); SD 32.2 (3.1.3).

While *discontent*, *violence* and *not-dharmafaring* are restrained and reduced by living the moral life, we overcome them with the cultivation of their respective opposites, *gladness*, *non-violence* and *dharmafaring*. These wholesome qualities arise by way of **mental cultivation** (*bhāvanā*). A wholesomely motivated mind is needed to inspire one with *gladness*, *non-violence* and *dharmafaring* so that these are translated into speech and action. One acts on them and speaks of them or of their benefits to others.

**1.2.3.2 Gladness** (*muditā*), says the **(Chakka) Arati Sutta**, should be cultivated in place of discontent (*arati*). Gladness, as we know, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 divine abodes: lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity.<sup>17</sup> The tetrad is also known as the 4 positive emotions, as is clearly evident here. Gladness is the positive opposite of the negative emotion of *discontent*.

**Discontent** (*arati*) [1.2.1.2] is being neither happy nor satisfied with what we have and what we are. It unrelentingly drives one to desire what others have, what they are. Yet, there are so many others; so the discontent never ends. The truth is that the abysmal emptiness is within ourselves. Lacking *love*, *compassion*, *joy* and *peace*, we are hollow beings, like a tube through which things flow, nothing stays. Everything is delightful playful deceit.

We then seek what we imagine to be something (*kiñcana*) to fill that inner abyss. We are deluded by the notion of emptiness, of nothingness; we desperately seek “something.” There is only a false sense of contentment numbed by belief and hope—like a defenceless child in the seeming safety of motherly embrace and fatherly presence.

As we mature into youth, we grow in joy with what we have and pride in what we are. We begin to get glimpses of love and goodness in others. We learn to rejoice in what others have, what others are: we learn friendship. Joy breeds joy until it seems boundless when we are in love. One then accepts the other unconditionally.

As happy adults we are moved by compassion for the wellbeing of offspring and others. As we mature with age and wisdom, we feel the peace of having loved with kindness and joy. Thus we have a sense of *love*, *compassion*, *gladness* and *peace*. Given these conditions, we begin to see we are not alone in this; anyone can cultivate these divine abodes; everyone needs them.

**1.2.3.3 Non-violence** (*avihiṃsā*, *ahiṃsā*) is the wholesome opposite of violence (*vihiṃsā*), the desire to see suffering in others, even to see the destruction of others. Non-violence is neither speaking nor acting causing others to come to harm or suffering, but to ensure that they are safe and well. It is the opposite of the power that destroys; it is the power that gives and forgives, that heals and harmonizes, that allows others to grow and prosper.

Non-violence is the courage to be kind to others, to help and heal even under the threat of pain upon oneself. On account of the deep joy that drives non-violence, one does not feel such pains or quickly see them pass. One’s mind is focused on others’ wellbeing in which one rejoices. Imbued with joy, there is only love, compassion, gladness and peace for others. This is like a good mother’s love for her only child, for whom she lives and works to give the child life, happiness and wisdom.

**1.2.3.4 Dharmafaring** (*dhamma, cariyā*) is when one walks the path every moment of one’s waking life. This is the path of the 3 trainings, in moral conduct, in mental cultivation and in insight wisdom. One’s bodily actions and speech are warmed by love and moved by compassion, dedicating oneself for the happiness and progress of others and the world. One’s joy and kindness are the stable base for one to rise above even one’s own body to cultivate the mind so that it is calm and clear in preparation to see for oneself directly into true reality that is *impermanence*, *suffering* and *nonself*.

<sup>17</sup> On the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

From this engagement with the world, one frees oneself from the world. One is no more fettered to likes and dislikes dictated by the senses, that is the world encroaching upon oneself. One's mind is able to be free and boundless with unconditional love towards all beings, one acts and speaks out of compassion, one sees the living world with gladness, and one is at peace with oneself and towards others. One is fully awakened, free from suffering.

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## (Chakka) Arati Sutta The (Sixes) Discourse on Discontent

A 6.113

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| <p><b>1</b> (Originating in Sāvatthi.)</p> <p><b>2</b> There are, bhikshus, these 3 states.<br/>What are the three?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(1) <b>Discontent</b>,<br/>(2) <b>violence</b>,<br/>(3) <b>not faring in Dharma</b> [living contrary to Dharma].</p> <p>These, bhikshus, are the 3 states.</p> <p><b>3</b> These are the 3 states, bhikshus, to be abandoned.</p> <p><b>4</b> Three (other) states are to be cultivated.<br/>What are the three?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(1) For the abandoning of <u>discontent</u><br/><b>gladness</b> should be cultivated.<br/>(2) For the abandoning of <u>violence</u><br/><b>non-violence</b> should be cultivated.<br/>(3) For the abandoning of <u>not-dharmafaring</u><br/><b>dharmafaring</b> should be cultivated.</p> <p><b>5</b> These, bhikshus, are the 3 states to be abandoned.</p> <p>These are the 3 states to be cultivated.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">(sāvatthī, nidanaṃ)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>tayo'me bhikkhave dhammā<br/>katame tayo<br/><b>arati</b><br/><b>vihiṃsā</b><br/><b>adhamma, cariyā</b><br/>ime kho bhikkhave tayo dhammā<br/>imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ<br/>dhammānaṃ pahānāya</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā<br/>katame tayo<br/>aratiyā pahānāya<br/><b>muditā</b> bhāvetabbo<br/>vihesāya pahānāya<br/><b>avihiṃsā</b> bhāvetabbo<br/>adhamma, cariyāya pahānāya<br/><b>dhamma, cariyā</b> bhāvetabbo</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ<br/>dhammānaṃ pahānāya<br/>ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā ti.</i></p> |
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