

SD 62.10h (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Satisfaction | A 6.114

Theme: Hindrances to the training and their remedies

Translated by Piya Tan ©2025

1 Sutta summary and 2 key terms

1.1 SUMMARY OF A 6.114

The **(Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta** (A 6.114) lists the hindrances to the path training and their remedies. The hindrances to spiritual life and training are *dissatisfaction, lack of clear awareness, and strong desires*, all of which should be abandoned. Their opposites are found in a life rooted in *satisfaction, clear awareness, and fewness of desires*; these are the wholesome qualities that should be cultivated.

1.2 RATI, SANTUṬṬHITĀ AND THEIR OPPOSITES

1.2.1 Comparison

We have already noted in connection with our study of the **(Chakka) Arati Sutta (A 6.113)** in SD 62.10g (1.2.1.2), the comparison between the terms *arati* and *asantuṭṭhitā*, summarized here thus:

	<u><i>arati</i></u>	<u><i>asantuṭṭhitā</i></u>
etymology	<i>a</i> , “not,” + <i>rati</i> , “liking, lust, love, attachment”	<i>a</i> , “not,” + <i>santuṭṭhitā</i> , “satisfaction, contentment”
meanings	dislike, discontent, aversion	dissatisfaction (negative and positive)
opposite	gladness (<i>muditā</i>)	satisfaction (<i>santuṭṭhitā</i>) (negative and positive)

Table 1.2.1. A comparison between *arati* and *asantuṭṭhitā*

1.2.2 Evaluation

1.2.2.1 Arati is always used in a negative sense, meaning “dislike, discontent, aversion”—as seen in the **(Chakka) Arati Sutta** (A 6.113). Thus, it is synonymous or overlaps with hatred (*dosa*), the 2nd unwholesome root. From the Sutta, it is clear that *arati* has a more restricted sense of “hatred,” and its wholesome opposite is gladness (*muditā*). In fact, *arati* in A 6.113 seems to be used contextually (as in a triad of “discontent, violence and not-dharmafaring” [SD 61.10g]), referring to *external* objects, such as people and situations.

Thus when there is **discontent** (*asantuṭṭhitā*), it may deteriorate into violence; both of which prevent one from dharmafaring, keeping to the training of moral conduct, mental cultivation and wisdom. One thus needs **gladness** to overcome discontent since it is our negative hateful attitude towards an external mental object that needs to be corrected.

1.2.2.2 Gladness is a stronger form or deeper extension of lovingkindness (*mettā*) and of compassion (*karuṇā*). Lovingkindness inspires or empowers one to keep to the 5 precepts and to save and heal *lives*, to be *generous* and charitable, to *respect* others and be contentedly self-restrained, to tell the whole-some *truth*, and to keep *the mind* calm and clear. Gladness is the joy in seeing others happy, well, and

having what they need to be well and happy. It means one has not only overcome hatred but also cultivated the quality of gladness in the wellbeing of others.

The 4th divine abode (the first 3 are lovingkindness, compassion and gladness) is **equanimity** (*upekkhā*), a clear mind and calm heart that “looks on” at the lack and imperfections of others, without blaming them or oneself, but understanding the nature of karma at work on everyone. This equanimity is the result of wisdom cultivated through dharmafaring.¹

1.2.2.3 *Asantuṭṭhitā* and *arati*, “discontent” [1.2.2.1] are near-synonyms. Very briefly, ***asantuṭṭhitā***, “dissatisfaction,” often arises as a result of seeing something unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) in others. Such an external lack or unsatisfactoriness may or may not have been the result of one’s acts, but one is unhappy at seeing or experiencing the effects of such external unsatisfactoriness. Thus *asantuṭṭhitā* is one’s own *internal* mental state, that is, one’s own natural emotional tendency. *Arati*, on the other hand, often arises as a reaction to external conditions [1.2.2.1].

One may, however, blame oneself or feel guilty for what one sees as a lack or suffering in others. However, for some reason, one is either unwilling or unable to respond wholesomely to them. One is unwilling to respond because one lacks the wholesome *motivation* or will (*cetanā*); one lacks the faith, love or the joy to do so. Or, one is unable to respond to those external unsatisfactory states because one lacks the *means* (the skill or the resources) to do so.

While in the earlier case (“unwillingness”), one lacks the faith to help or be kind to others, in the latter case (“unable”), one lacks the wisdom to do so. Either way, one may be able to respond wholesomely by way of cultivating clear awareness (*sampajaññā*) or by being inspired by another, such as a Dharma-spirited teacher or a spiritual friend—that is, by another’s voice or by wise attention.²

1.2.2.4 “By the voice of another” (*parato ghosa*) is a practical application of clear awareness. It arises from “listening to the proper Dharma” (*sappāya, dhamma, savana*), that is, listening to the teaching of the good Dharma, such as (Sāriputta) hearing the verse beginning *ye dhammā hetu-p, pabhavā ...* [Whatever things that arise from a cause ...] (V 1:40), whereby one gains spiritual penetration.

Wise attention” (*yoniso manasikāra*) is our own expedience [skill] of attention (*attano upāya, manasikāra*) (MA 43,45/2:346). Simply, ***yoniso manasikāra*** means reflecting on every sense-object or experience *as being impermanent*.³ Wise attention is said to be the “internal condition” for the cultivation of the noble eightfold path.⁴ “The voice of another” is the external condition for learning to reach the path.⁵

These 2 conditions—the voice of another and wise attention—are necessary for disciples to gain right view of insight and the right view of the supramundane path. But pratyeka-buddhas (*pacceka, buddha*) gain awakening and fully self-awakened buddhas (*sammā, sambuddha*) gain “omniscience” solely depending on wise attention without the voice of another.⁶

¹ On dharmafaring (*dhamma, cariyā*), see (Chakka) **Arati S** (A 6.113,4) + SD 62.10g (1.2.2).

² **Āsā Vg**, A 2.11.7/1:87; **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,13), SD 30.2; **Yoniso Manasikāra Sampadā S** (S 45.55) + SD 34.12 (2); **Vicikicchā**, SD 12.8 (2.1.2). As part of spiritual friendship: **Upaḍḍha S** (S 45.2) & SD 34.9 (2.1.3).

³ See **Meghiya S** (A 9.3), SD 34.2 (2.5).

⁴ See **Meghiya S** (A 9.3), SD 34.2 & **Virtue ethics**, SD 18.11 (6.4).

⁵ On practical aspects of wise attention, see **Nimitta & anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

⁶ See also **Āsā Vagga** (A 2.11.10,8/1:87); DA 1:107; MA 2:12, 346.

2 Key terms

2.1 ASANTUṬṬHITĀ AND SANTUṬṬHITĀ

2.1.1 Asantuṭṭhitā

2.1.1.1 The (Ekaka) Asantuṭṭhitā Sutta (A 1.64) speaks of **dissatisfaction** (*asantuṭṭhitā*) as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka,dhamma*) that brings about unarisen unwholesome states or brings decline to arisen wholesome states in this way, bhikshus, as **dissatisfaction** (*asantuṭṭhitā*). (A 1.64/1.7.4/1:12)

The Commentary explains that **dissatisfaction** (*asantuṭṭhitā*) “is the discontent considered as greed that arises from associating with, resorting to, and attending on people who are dissatisfied.” (AA 1:77,26-28)

2.1.2 Santuṭṭhitā

2.1.2.1 The (Ekaka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta (A 1.65) speaks of **satisfaction** (*santuṭṭhitā*) as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka,dhamma*) that brings about unarisen wholesome states or brings decline to arisen unwholesome states in this way, bhikshus, as **satisfaction** (*santuṭṭhitā*). (A 1.65/1.7.5/1:12)

2.1.2.2 The Commentaries distinguish 3 types of satisfaction:

- (1) satisfaction with what one obtains (*yathā,labha,santosa*),
- (2) being satisfied with any kind of robe (or other requisite) whether of fine or poor quality; satisfaction with one's ability (*yathā,bala,santosa*), being satisfied with what one obtains but selecting for use those things most congenial to one's health; and
- (3) satisfaction with what is appropriate (*yatha,saruppa,santosa*), keeping the most basic gains for oneself and giving away the rest. (DA 1:204,5 f = AA 1:78,56)

The 3 types of satisfaction [2.1.2.2] of a renunciant refers to his or her satisfaction with **the 4 supports** (*catu,paccaya*) which the Commentaries go on to explain in some detail, especially in the Commentary on the Sāmañña,phala Sutta (D 2).⁷

2.1.3 Contentment and satisfaction in life

2.1.3.1 In simple terms, **satisfaction** (*santuṭṭhi*) and **contentment** (*santosa*) is a state of happiness with what we have and what we are. The most valuable thing we have is life which is embodied as our 5 senses. The most favourable and desirable way that our senses will work for us, giving us happiness and satisfaction, is when we have good health.

⁷ DA 1:204-210; see also AA 1:78-80. For Eng tr of DA, see Bodhi, (tr) *The Fruits of Recluseship*, Kandy, 1989, 2008:130-134.

When we are sick or in poor health, it is difficult to enjoy our wealth (*dhāna*) or even what we have (*lābha*). On the other hand, when we are healthy, we are able to enjoy what we have (our body and wealth) and what we are (our strength and creativity). We may even create new wealth and share that wealth to gain friends and spread happiness. Hence, **health is the highest gain**.

2.1.3.2 Whether we are renunciants or the laity, when we are satisfied with what we have (health, strength, skills, support) and what we are (contented, happy), we are likely to feel no need for wanting or striving for more. This means that we are **working to live**. The renunciant's work is keeping to the precepts and training for the path. For the laity, it is living a good moral life, with a calm and clear mind that is creative, wise and compassionate, and reflecting on impermanence.

This is of course ideally speaking. Thus, we try to live as closely to these ideals as we can.

It is more difficult when we must live to work or when we blindly follow such a rule of life. We are then enslaved to our jobs and work, especially when we do not enjoy it. It can thus be said that if we truly enjoy our work in a wholesome way, then we are *working to live*, and to do so *happily*. Thus we have time for work, time for rest, time for friendship and love, and time to know ourself. We are happily contented with our lives. This is when **contentment is the greatest wealth**.⁸

*arogya, paramā lābhā
santuṭṭhi paramaṃ dhanam*

Health is the highest gain.
Contentment is the greatest wealth. (Dh 204ab)

2.2 ASAMPAJAÑÑĀ AND SAMPAJAÑÑĀ

2.2.1 Asampajañña

The 2nd unwholesome quality listed in the (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta is “lack of clear awareness” (*asampajañña*). The **(Ekaka) Asampajañña Sutta** (A 1.68) broadly speaks of **lack of clear awareness** as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka, dhamma*) that brings about unarisen unwholesome states or brings decline to arisen wholesome states in this way, bhikshus, as **lack of clear awareness** (*asampajañña*). (A 1.68/1.7.8/1:13)

The apophatic (“negative”) language here is to remind us of that which is *not* to be done to prevent the arising of unwholesome states. A key reason for the use of the term *asampajañña* is in connection with the 1st negative quality stated in the Sutta, that is dissatisfaction [§2]. We must be *clearly aware* of dissatisfaction when it arises in us.

2.2.2 Sampajañña

2.2.2.1 The (Ekaka) Sampajañña Sutta (A 1.69) speaks of **clear awareness** (*sampajañña*) as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka, dhamma*) that brings about unarisen wholesome states or brings decline to arisen unwholesome states in this way, bhikshus, as **clear awareness** (*sampajañña*). (A 1.69/1.7.9/1:13)

⁸ On the def of “wealth” here see SD 60.10g (1.2.2.2).

“Clear awareness” is often paired with “mindfulness”—as **mindfulness and full awareness** (*sati,sampajañña*)—which basically means properly directing the mind to the right state and engaging it there in a wholesome way. Thus **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) defines “**mindfulness**” as keeping in mind each of the 4 postures (standing, walking, sitting and reclining);⁹ and “**clear awareness**” as minding every gesture of each of the postures, that is, one’s personal actions (such as dressing), taking a meal, toileting, “in walking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping, in waking, in talking, or in remaining silent.”¹⁰ This, briefly, is the “contemplating of the body in the body” (*kāyānupassanā*), the 1st of the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).¹¹

2.2.2.2 The Commentaries give further details on **clear awareness** (*sampajañña*), such as having these 4 applications, that are, briefly, as follows:¹²

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| (1) clear awareness of <u>purposefulness</u>
(<i>sāttthaka,sampajañña</i>) | discerning the wholesome purpose of our actions; |
| (2) clear awareness of <u>suitability</u>
(<i>sappāya,sampajañña</i>) | discerning the proper means for our practice; |
| (3) clear awareness of <u>the resort</u>
(<i>gocara,sampajañña</i>) | being mindful of one’s meditation in daily activities; |
| (4) clear awareness as <u>non-delusion</u>
(<i>asammoha,sampajañña</i>) | seeing things as conditioned, without any abiding self.
(DA 1:183; MA 1:184, 253 f; SA 3:182-190; VbhA 347) |

By “clear awareness” here is meant that we are well keeping in mind the true **purpose** in taking up the Dharma, of our **practice** of mindfulness and meditation, of our **actions here and now**, and of **the true nature** of such activities leading to mental concentration and liberating wisdom. In other words, we are not using Buddhism for worldly gains or any self-centred agenda except for a life of outer and inner renunciation for true happiness and freedom.¹³

2.3 MAH’ICCHATĀ AND APP’ICCHATĀ

2.3.1 Mah’icchatā

2.3.1.1 Finally, **the (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta** (A 6.114) speaks of great desire (*mah’icchatā*) and its opposite, fewness of desires (*app’icchatā*). **The (Ekaka) Mah’icchatā Sutta** (A 1.62) describes great desire as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka,dhamma*) that
brings about unarisen unwholesome states or
brings decline to arisen wholesome states in this way, bhikshus,
as **great desires** (*mahi’cchatā*). (A 1.62/1.7.2/1:12)

⁹ M 10,6/1:57 (SD 13.3).

¹⁰ M 10,8/1:57 (SD 13.3).

¹¹ The other 3 focuses of mindfulness are the contemplation of feelings (*vedanā’nupassanā*), of the mind (*cittā’nupassanā*), and of realities that arise (*dhammānupassanā*) (M 10), SD 13.3.

¹² For a contemporary explanation, see Nyanaponika, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, 1962:46-57.

¹³ On the 4 phases of clear awareness, see SD 60.11 (2.2.2).

2.3.1.2 The Commentary on A 1.62 explains great desire as “strong greed” (*mahā,lobhā*) and quotes the **Vibhaṅga**:

“What is great desire? Lack of contentment, wanting excessively more of robes, almsfood, lodging, medicines, and the 5 objects of sensual pleasure. Such desire, being driven by desire, having great desire, lust, passion, a mind of passion, is called great desire.” [Vbh 351,4-7]. (AA 1:74,25-29)

2.3.2 App’icchatā

The (Ekaka) App’icchatā Sutta (A 1.63) describes **fewness of desire** (*app’icchatā*) as follows:

Bhikshus, I do not see any other single state (*eka,dhamma*) that brings about unarisen wholesome states or brings decline to arisen unwholesome states in this way, bhikshus, as **fewness of desires** (*app’icchatā*). (A 1.63/1.7.3/1:12)

The Commentary explains that

“Although literally the expression “**fewness of desires**” may suggest that there could be a residue (of desire), the meaning is that there is no such residue. For one is not called “of few desires” if one still has even slight desire; it is through the absence of desire, through a state of utter non-greed, that one is said to be *of few desires*.” (AA 1:75,2-6)

3 Asantuṭṭhita as a positive term

3.1 ASANTUṬṬHITĀ AS A NEGATIVE TERM

The word *asantuṭṭhitā*, especially in the late canonical texts and the Abhidhamma, has 2 different sense depending on the context. We have already seen its negative sense as used in **the (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta** [§2] that is, it means “dissatisfaction” [1.2].

The Puggala Paññatti, for example, in its description of “one who is immoderate in food” (*bhojane amattaññū*) speaks of “insatiability, immoderation, lack of proper reflection on food” (*asantuṭṭhitā amattaññutā appaṭisaṅkhā bhojane*, Pug 2.8/21). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī**, too, uses the same phrase to describe the one immoderate in food (Dhs §1346/231).

3.2 ASANTUṬṬHITĀ DUKA

3.2.1 The wholesome pair

3.2.1.1 The Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33) pairs *asantuṭṭhitā* with another positive quality as “dissatisfaction with wholesome states and persistence in effort” (*asantuṭṭhitā ca kusalesu dhammesu appaṭivānitā ca padhānasmim*); and the same expression is called “the dissatisfaction pair” (*asantuṭṭhitā duka*).¹⁴ The term *asantuṭṭhitā* thus has a wholesome sense here. In other words, in itself *asantuṭṭhitā* is a “neutral” term.

3.2.1.2 In fact, the phrase *asantuṭṭhitā ca kusalesu dhammesu*, “dissatisfaction with wholesome states,” refers to a person who rejoices in the thought of wholesome and meritorious consciousness, who

¹⁴ D 33,1.9(31)/3:214,6 = A 2.5/1:50,8 (Comy: *appatikkamanā anosakkanā*, “neither retreating nor hesitating”) = 2.177/1:95,6 ≈ Dhs 8,10 *mātikā*, §1367/234 (DhsA 54,24, 407,30).

maintains consistent awareness of them, who has never had enough of them, who always wants to do more of them and not be contented with the way they are.

3.2.1.3 The Aṅguttara Commentary on **Upaṇṇāta Sutta** (A 2.5) explains **asantuṭṭhitā ca kusalesu dhammesu**, “dissatisfaction with wholesome states,” in connection with the bodhisattva’s struggle for awakening, thus:

“By ‘**dissatisfaction with wholesome states**’ (*asantuṭṭhitā kusalesu dhammesu*) [the bodhisattva] shows: ‘Not being content merely with dhyana or merely with the radiant sign (of samadhi), I aroused the path of arhathood. Until that arose, I was not content. And being dissatisfied in striving, I strove on, standing firm without retreating.’

‘Persistence’ (*appaṭivānitā*) means neither turning back nor retreating. By **I strove persistently**, is meant is this: ‘When I was a bodhisattva, I strove on, not retreating, aspiring for omniscience.’” (AA 2:94,-3-14)

3.2.1.4 The phrase **appaṭivānitā ca padhānasmim** (persistence in effort) refers to the person who, after having developed an appreciable understanding of the Dharma, perseveres in practising it, helping others with it, not sparing any efforts in striving himself on the full understanding of it, not lax in it, not relinquishing his desire and determination of it, never letting go by continually practising it, day in day out and polishing the proficiency in it. The predominant consciousness and factors are the same as above in the “dissatisfaction with wholesome states.”

In this usage, *asantuṭṭhitā* has the sense of “insatiability, never having enough of” what is good and wholesome. It is thus opposite of the sense of *asantuṭṭhitā* as used in the teachings of **the (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta**.

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(Chakka) Santuṭṭhittā Sutta The (Sixes) Discourse on Satisfaction

A 6.114

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| <p>1 (Originating in Sāvatthi.)</p> <p>2 There are, bhikshus, these 3 states.
What are the three?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(1) Dissatisfaction;
(2) lack of clear awareness;
(3) great desires.</p> <p>These, bhikshus, are the 3 states.</p> <p>3 These are the 3 states, bhikshus, to be abandoned.</p> <p>4 Three (other) states are to be cultivated.
What are the three?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(1) For the abandoning of <u>dissatisfaction</u>
satisfaction should be cultivated.
(2) For the abandoning of <u>lack of clear awareness</u>
clear awareness should be cultivated.
(3) For the abandoning of <u>strong desires</u>
fewness of desires should be cultivated.</p> <p>5 These, bhikshus, are the 3 states to be abandoned.</p> <p>These are the 3 states to be cultivated.</p> | <p>(sāvatthī, nidanaṃ)</p> <p><i>tayo’me bhikkhave dhammā
katame tayo
asantuṭṭhitā [1.2]
asampajaññā [2.2.1]
mah’icchatā [2.3.1]
<i>ime kho bhikkhave tayo dhammā
imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ
dhammānaṃ pahānāya</i></i></p> <p><i>tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā
katame tayo
asantuṭṭhitā pahānāya
santuṭṭhitā bhāvetabbo [2.1]
<i>asampajaññā pahānāya
sampajaññā bhāvetabbo [2.2.2]
mah’icchatā pahānāya
app’icchatā bhāvetabbo [2.3.2]</i></i></p> <p><i>imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ
dhammānaṃ pahānāya
ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā ti.</i></p> |
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