

Contentment is the greatest wealth

Source: (Chakka) Santuṭṭhitā Sutta (A 6.114, SD 62.10h), Hindrances to the training and their remedies, translated by Piya Tan © 2025.

2.1 ASANTUṬṬHITĀ AND SANTUṬṬHITĀ

2.1.1 Asantuṭṭhitā

2.1.1.1 The (Ekaka) Asantuṭṭhitā Sutta (A 1.65) 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 1.64/1:12)

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 1.66) 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 1.64/1:12)

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).¹

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

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

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.

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), what we are (contented, happy), we 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.

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 ourselves. We are happily contented with our lives. This is when **contentment is the greatest wealth**.²

*arogya,paramā lābhā
santuṭṭhi paramaṁ dhanam*

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

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² On the def of “wealth” here see SD 60.10g (1.2.2.2).