

The 4 secrets (Part 3 of 4)

The Dhamma is the path of awakening
For a Dhamma future to be possible
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When we don't follow the Buddha's teaching, but follow the ideas of the Teachers we respect and admire, we are stuck with that Teacher. Such Teachers are not awakened; we may think they are clever because they talk well, but they are really no better than we. Many of them break the very rules they have vowed to keep. At least, we try our best to keep the 5 precepts.

In the **Vimamsaka Sutta** (M 47), the discourse on the investigator (SD 35.6), the Buddha encourages us to be **investigators**, to investigate these Teachers, monks and nuns. We should look long and deep enough at these Teachers again and again, especially when we see them: how they talk, how they treat different kinds of people, what they do or don't, where they go.

The Vinaya arose because of the laity

The lay persons in the Buddha's time were the occasions for the Buddha's introducing the Vinaya rules in the first place. Today, as a lay person, we, too, should know (with a calm and clear mind) what are right or wrong for monastics to do. When we think or say: Oh, they are venerables, you know; then, we are falsely seeing them as nobility, as we as serfs or slaves. Bad monastics like such an attitude, even encourage it.

During conferences, for example, you will notice that many of them behave very much like laymen. They take meals in the evening; they laugh and joke; they even drink and hug people.

Some Sinhala monks in the west are even claiming that it is all right to hug women! None of these monks observe the uposatha or precept day to recite the Pātimokkha (monastic code) or observe the rains-retreat properly. Yet, they ask us to offer them Kathina donations. Kathina is about the monks making robes after the rains, not about collecting money.

Don't destroy the sāsana (teaching)

The Buddha Dhamma is protected by the Vinaya, comprising rules of good conduct for monastics and for the laity. Monastics are **renunciants** who have openly **vowed**:

(1) Not to indulge in any kind of **sex** or intimacy with either sex (via any of the orifices). The 1st rule after the 4 Defeat (*pārājika*) rules is that against masturbating.

(2) Not to **take the not-given**, that is, remove anything of the minimum local currency (about US 5 cents; Singapore 5 cents; Malaysia 5 sen) depending on the location; this defeat rule includes smuggling (which is common enough with the bad monastics).

(3) Not to **kill** any life, or encourage suicide, or condone death.

(4) Not to claim any **superhuman states**, that is, any state of sainthood (ariya), knowledge or insight (which includes claims of attaining dhyana). The point is we may be wrong, or we may later lose that attainment (like dhyana) since we are not awakened.

Breaking any of these rules automatically **defeats** a monastic. If he does not give up the robes, but goes on wearing the robes, he is living under false pretences, accruing bad karma by the moment. (This also suggests that they do not understand or do not accept karma.) This includes monastics who have been charged of crimes or imprisoned as criminals.

Do not support thieves

As lay practitioners, we should simply avoid such “thieves” (*cora*) in the teaching (*sāsana*). This is to prevent them from creating more bad karma by our support, and also so that we are not confused further by them. A key part of our Dhamma practice is to make sure that the Vinaya is intact, and that the monks and nuns keep to them. Otherwise, we are foolishly supporting **wolves** taking them as Buddhist sheep. Both of us are heading for the suffering states even in this life itself.

Practice includes doing things right

The basic spirit of Buddhist practice, as taught by the Buddha, is that of **renunciation**. When we give monastics their own cars to drive around, we are making them break the Vinaya. The Buddha and the early monastics neither rode horses nor drove chariots. Theirs is a contemplative life of renunciation.

When monastics who neither keep the Vinaya nor meditate (not as a ritual but as practice), they are likely to get bored. Moreover, they often take meals in the evening (breaking another rule), which affects their health. Then, they drive around in the night. This is only the tip of this really huge dark iceberg of Māra.

When we support such Vinaya-less monastics, we are ourselves living in bad karma and creating bad karma just like them. The suttas remind us to avoid such “fools” (*asevanā ca bālāraṇ*)—this is a great blessing. These foolish monastics will also divide our community: we will often fail in doing the right things, and often work against one another in cliques, and are attracted to worldliness, power and fame. We are just using Buddhism like these “professional” priests.

We can change all this: simply by refusing to have anything to do with them. It starts now. Sadhu.

R684 Revisioning Buddhism 273

[an occasional re-look at the Buddha’s Example and Teachings]

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