SD 64.2 (Chakka) Mitta Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Friends

A 6.67

Theme: The quality of our friendship affects our spiritual life

Translated and annotated by Piya Tan 2013, ©2026

1 Sutta summary and related suttas

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND PARAPHRASE

1.1.1 Sutta summary

1.1.1.1 The (Chakka) Mitta Sutta (A 6.67) lists 4 negative effects of bad friendship on our spiritual life. We will not fulfill our common moral conduct; we will not gain the path; we will not keep to the precepts of Dharma training; and we will not be able to gain dhyana.

1.1.1.2 On the other hand, when we keep spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇa,mittatā*), we will then be able to fulfill our common conduct; we will then be able to gain the path, which means that we will fulfill moral training, and we will also not have lust for sense-objects, for the form dhyana or for the formless dhyana.

1.1.2 Sutta paraphrase

1.1.2.1 From the Sutta context—when we draw out its meaning (*neyy'attha*)—we can have a deeper and better understanding of its teaching. By **spiritual friendship** (*kalyāṇa,mittatā*)—having a wise and experienced mentor—we will then be able to fulfill our common moral conduct. We will then be able to fulfill the morality of the mundane path training (keeping to the precepts by wholesome will, *chanda*).

1.1.2.2 On account of **spiritual friends**—either by their example or their suggestion—we will be cultivating moral virtue that conduces to deep concentration so that we can attain dhyana. With this training we will neither be attached to nor distracted by dhyana (on account of truly seeing the 3 characteristics as *impermanence, suffering and nonself*). With this wisdom, we abandon sensual lust (attachment to this world), abandon lust for form (by not seeking "something"[1] or desiring the form dhyana), and abandon lust for formlessness (by not seeking "nothing"[2] or desiring the formless dhyana).

1.1.2.3 For related notes on **the (Chakka) Mitta Sutta** (A 6.67), see **SD 55.3 (2.1.4.4 f)**.[3]

1.1.3 Sikkhânisaṁsa Sutta (A 4.245)

For a related and more detailed discourse on the benefits (*ānisaṁsa*) of the training with wisdom as the goal (*uttara*), with liberation as its core (*sāra*), and with mindfulness as its authority (*ādhipateyya*), see **the Sikkhânisaṁsa Sutta** (A 4.245/2:243 f).

---

[1] On "something" (*kiñcana*), see **Go,datta S** (S 41.7) + SD 60.4 (1.2.1.4); SD 12.4 (6.3); SD 40a.10 (1.4(2)); SD 50.2 (1.1.3.3). The notion of "something" is rooted in the eternalist view (*sassata diṭṭhi*): see **S 56.11**,9.12, SD 1.1; SD 19.3 (2.2).

[2] "Nothingness" here refers to tendencies rooted in the annihilationist view (*uccheda,diṭṭhi*): SD 40a.1 (7.2.2.2).

[3] See **Spiritual friendship: A textual study**, SD 34.1; **Spiritual friendship: Stories of kindness**, SD 8.1.

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS

1.2.1 The 2 discourses on disrespect

1.2.1.1 There are at least 2 suttas with similar teachings as **the (Chakka) Mitta Sutta** (A 6.67). A comparative study of these 3 suttas may give us a better understanding of A 6.67. These 2 closely related suttas are:

- **(Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 1** A 5.21/3:14 f SD 74.20; and
- **(Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 2** A 5.22/3:15 f SD 74.21.

Other suttas with similar or related materials include:

- **(Chakka) Sāmagāma Sutta** A 6.21/3:309 f;
- **(Chakka) Aparihāniya Sutta** A 6.22/3:310; and
- **Sovacassatā Sutta 1** A 7.34/4:29-31.

1.2.1.2 Both **the Agārava Suttas** (A 5.21 f) open in the same way (abridged):

When a monastic[4] is **disrespectful, irreverent and unfriendly** towards other monastics,
(1) It is impossible for him to practise **the rules of proper common conduct** (*ābhisamācārika dhamma*);
(2) without these rules, there is ***no*** training in the mundane path as **a** "**learner**."[5]

The 2 suttas then diverge in this manner:

(Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 1 (A 5.21), SD 74.20	**(Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 2** (A 5.22), SD 74.21
(3) without fulfilling the mundane path, there is no keeping of **the moral precepts**;	without fulfilling the mundane path, there is no fulfilling of **the aggregate of moral virtue**;
(4) without keeping the moral precepts, there is no fulfilling of **right view**;	without the aggregate of moral virtue, there is no fulfilling of **the aggregate of concentration**;
(5) without right view, there is no fulfilling of **right concentration**.	without the aggregate of concentration, there is no fulfilling of **the aggregate of wisdom**. [1.2.2]

Here, "mundane path" means that one has not yet attained the path even as a streamwinner; "other monastics" refers especially to those elders and teachers who are morally virtuous, experienced and wise. The idea here is that of keeping to the spirit of fellowship in the sangha and Buddhist community.

The (Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 1 (A 5.21) describes the basic daily training of any monastic, especially a neophyte, or a lay practitioner. **The (Pañcaka) Agārava Sutta 2** (A 5.22), on the other hand, refers to the practice of a serious meditator who seeks the path of awakening, that is, by at least attaining streamwinning in this life itself.

1.2.2 Concentration and wisdom

1.2.2.1 The (Chakka) Mitta Sutta (A 6.67) teaching applies both to monastics and the laity, especially those who meditate. Technically, the Sutta's teaching is almost identical with that of **the (Pañcaka)**

[4] Here "monastic/s" or "monk/s" (*bhikkhu, bhikkhave*) refers to any meditator (M 10,3A) n, (SD 13.3) or anyone listening to the Dharma to practise it (SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1)).

[5] Here, "learner" (*sekha*) refers, not to the streamwinners etc, but simply to one who practises basic moral conduct of the Vinaya and monastic practices.

Agārava Sutta 1 (A 5.21). However, while A 5.21 ends with "right concentration," A 6.67 mentions the abandoning of "**sensual lust, lust for form, and lust for the formless**" [§2.4]. We can see that this section on the 3 kinds of lust relates to "**right view**" of A 5.21 (5).

Thus **§2.4** of A 6.67—***sensual lust, lust for form***, and ***lust for the formless***—are likely to arise and remain when one lacks moral virtue (*sīla*) or does not keep the precepts (*sīlāni*). One breaks the precepts on account of any of the 4 biases (*agati*), that is, *greed, hatred, delusion or fear*.[6] These 4 unwholesome biases or motives can only be effectively overcome with proper meditation, especially the breath meditation and the cultivation of lovingkindness.

1.2.2.2 The closing and key paragraph of **the (Chakka) Mitta Sutta** (A 6.67), which reads thus:

"Having fulfilled the moral precepts,
it is possible that he will abandon ***sensual lust, lust for form***, and ***lust for the formless***," [§2.4]

can be paraphrased as follows:

One lacks moral virtue usually because of lacking inner calm and mental joy. As a result, one is then drawn to pleasant sense-objects due to lust, and repelled by unpleasant sense-objects due to hatred. These twin dark emotions cause one to disrespect, disregard and belittle others, even when they are morally virtuous and spiritually good.

Without moral virtue, one may be intellectually astute but one lacks spiritual insight and moral courage; one is then easily or subtly drawn to worldly views due to **sensual lust** (*kāma,rāga*) or some other negative emotion. One may then reason and rationalize on how "something" must exist and is worth pursuing. On a higher level, this may take the shape of **lust for form** (*rūpa,rāga*).

Or, when one has a "materialist" life-view, one may be driven to conclude that there are only this body and this life; when the body malfunctions or life ends, there is nothing more. This is a kind of annihilationist view. In terms of the hereafter, one may then be drawn to **desire for the formless** (the formless state transcends both the sense-based and the form-based). [1.1.2.2]

— — —

(Chakka) Mitta Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Friends

A 6.67

1 Indeed, bhikshus, when a monk has a bad friend, a bad companion, a bad comrade,
when he follows, resorts to, and attends upon bad friends[7] and follows their examples,[8]
it is impossible that he will fulfill the dharma of **proper common conduct**.[9]

[6] **Sigal'ovāda S** (D 31,5), SD 4.1; **Āgati S 1** (A 4.17), SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4)n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3); SD 53.5 (2.2.1.1).

[7] All MSS *pāpa,mitte*; vl *pāpaka mitte.*

[8] The first 2 lines: *So vata bhikkhave bhikkhu pāpa,mitto pāpa,sahāyo pāpa,sampavaṅko, pāpa,mitte sevamāno bhajamāno payirupāsamāno tesañ ca diṭṭhânugatiṁ āpajjamāno.*

[9] **Sikkhânisaṁsa S** (A 4.245,1) uses the term *ābhisamācārikā sikkhā* as meaning "training in proper common conduct." Comy: "**The dharma of proper common conduct"** (*ābhisamācārikaṁ dhammaṁ*) is the name given to the

1.2 Without having fulfilled the dharma of proper common conduct,
it is impossible that he will fulfill **the dharma of a learner**.[10]

1.3 Without having fulfilled the dharma of a learner,
it is impossible that he will fulfill **the moral precepts**.[11]

1.4 Without having fulfilled the moral precepts,
it is impossible that he will abandon **sensual lust**, **lust for form**, or **lust for the formless**.[12]

2 Surely, bhikshus, when a monk has a good friend, a good companion, and a good comrade,[13]
when he follows, resorts to, and attends upon good friends and follows their example,
it is possible that he will fulfill the dharma [task] of ***proper common conduct***.[14]

2.2 Having fulfilled the dharma of proper common conduct,
it is possible that he will fulfill the dharma of ***a learner***.[15]

2.3 Having fulfilled the dharma of a learner,
it is possible that he will fulfill ***the moral precepts***.[16]

2.4 Having fulfilled the moral precepts,
it is possible that he will abandon ***sensual lust, lust for form***, and ***lust for the formless***.

— — —

090303 2601012 260731

---

highest common moral conduct prescribed by way of duties (*uttama,samācāra,bhūtaṃ vatta,vasena paññatta,-sīlaṁ*) (AA 3:228.4 f). *Ābhisamācārika sikkha* includes the latter.

[10] **The dharma of a learner** (*sekhaṁ dhammaṁ*) is the conventional moral conduct prescribed for a learner (*sekha,paṇṇatti,sīlaṁ*) (AA 3:410,14). Comys discern between natural morality (*pakati,sīla*), virtuous conduct of ethical significance, and prescriptive or conventional morality (*paṇṇatti,sīla*), monastic rules prescribing conduct and deportment that are not necessarily or intrinsically ethical, such as not eating after noon, not accepting money, to tickling another monk, etc.

[11] **Moral precepts** (*sīlāni*), says Comy, are "the 4 great precepts (*cattāri mahā,sīlāni*) (AA 3:410). Comy explains that this is a name for the 4 main types of moral conduct which are the foundation of the holy life on the path, namely: (1) restraint with regard to the monastic code (*pātimokkha,saṁvara sīla*); (2) sense-restraint (*indriya,saṁ-vara,sīla*); (3) full purification of livelihood (*ājīva,pārisuddhi sīla*); and (4) moral virtue with regard to dependence on the 4 requisites (*paccaya,sannissita sīla*) (Vism 1). Comy says that "the 4 great moralities" are the 4 rules entailing *pārājika* (PugA 219); but clearly, they incl other Vinaya rules, too.

[12] **Attha,sālinī**, Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Comy, explains *rūpa,rāga* as "desire and lust for form-existence" (*rūpa,bhave chanda,rāgo*) and *arūpa,rāga* as "desire and lust for formless-existence" (*arūpa,bhave chanda,rāgo*) (DhsA 239,25-240,2, Be §362; cf *-taṇhā* DA 3:988).

[13] "Good friends … etc," *kalyāṇa,mitto kalyāṇa,sahāyo kalyāṇa,sampavaṅko.*

[14] *Ābhisamācārikaṁ dhammaṁ paripūressatī ti ṭhānam etaṁ vijjati.*

[15] *Sekhaṁ dhammaṁ paripūressatī ti ṭhānam etaṁ vijjati.*

[16] *Sīlāni paripūretvā kāma,rāgaṁ vā rūpa,rāgaṁ vā arūpa,rāgaṁ vā pajahissatī ti ṭhānam etaṁ vijjati*.