AN 3.78 — Silabbata Sutta: Precept & Practice

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Then Ven. Ananda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Ananda, every precept & practice, every life, every holy life that is followed as of essential worth: is every one of them fruitful?"

"Lord, that is not [to be answered] with a categorical answer."

"In that case, Ananda, give an analytical answer."

"When — by following a life of precept & practice, a life, a holy life that is followed as of essential worth — one's unskillful mental qualities increase while one's skillful mental qualities decline: that sort of precept & practice, life, holy life that is followed as of essential worth is fruitless. But when — by following a life of precept & practice, a life, a holy life that is followed as of essential worth — one's unskillful mental qualities decline while one's skillful mental qualities increase: that sort of precept & practice, life, holy life that is followed as of essential worth is fruitful."

That is what Ven. Ananda said, and the Teacher approved. Then Ven. Ananda, [realizing,] "The Teacher approves of me," got up from his seat and, having bowed down to the Blessed One and circumambulating him, left.

Then not long after Ven. Ananda had left, the Blessed One said to the monks, "Monks, Ananda is still in training, but it would not be easy to find his equal in discernment."

See also: DN 16; AN 3.72; AN 4.42; AN 4.192.