MN 113 — MN 113 A Person of Integrity | Sappurisa Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

A Person of Integrity

Sappurisa Sutta (MN 113)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There he addressed the monks: “Monks!”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said, “Monks, I will teach you the quality of a person of integrity and the quality of a person of no integrity. Listen, and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: “And which is the quality of a person of no integrity?

“There is the case where a person of no integrity goes forth from a high-ranking family. He notices, ‘I have gone forth from a high-ranking family, but these other monks have not gone forth from a high-ranking family.’ He exalts himself for having a high-ranking family and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through having a high-ranking family that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through having a high-ranking family that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one has not gone forth from a high-ranking family, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for having a high-ranking family nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity goes forth from a great family… a family of great wealth… a family of extensive wealth. He notices, ‘I have gone forth from a family of extensive wealth, but these other monks have not gone forth from a family of extensive wealth.’ He exalts himself for having a family of extensive wealth and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through having a family of extensive wealth that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through having a family of extensive wealth that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one has not gone forth from a family of extensive wealth, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for having a family of extensive wealth nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity is well-known & highly regarded. He notices, ‘I am well-known & highly regarded, but these other monks are hardly known & have hardly any influence.’ He exalts himself for being well-known & highly regarded and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through being well-known & highly regarded that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through being well-known & highly regarded that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one is not well-known & highly regarded, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for being well-known nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity is one who gains robe-cloth, alms-food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick. He notices, ‘I am one who gains robe-cloth, alms-food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick, but these other monks are not ones who gain robe-cloth, alms-food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick. He exalts himself for being one who gains robe-cloth, alms-food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through gains that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through gains that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one is not one who gains robe-cloth, alms-food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for his gains nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity is learned… a master of the Vinaya… a Dhamma-speaker. He notices, ‘I am a Dhamma-speaker, but these other monks are not Dhamma-speakers. He exalts himself for being a Dhamma-speaker and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through being a Dhamma-speaker that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through being a Dhamma-speaker that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one is not a Dhamma-speaker, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for being a Dhamma-speaker nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity is a wilderness dweller.1 He notices, ‘I am a wilderness dweller, but these other monks are not wilderness dwellers.’ He exalts himself for being a wilderness dweller and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through being a wilderness dweller that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through being a wilderness dweller that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one is not a wilderness dweller, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for being a wilderness dweller nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity is one who wears robes of thrown-away rags… an alms-goer… one who dwells at the root of a tree… a cemetery dweller… one who lives in the open air… one who doesn’t lie down… one who is content with whatever dwelling is assigned to him… one who eats only one meal a day. He notices, ‘I am one who eats only one meal a day, but these other monks do not eat only one meal a day.’ He exalts himself

for being one who eats only one meal a day and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘It’s not through being one who eats only one meal a day that the quality of greed goes to its end; it’s not through being one who eats only one meal a day that the quality of aversion… the quality of delusion goes to its end. Even though one is not one who eats only one meal a day, if—practicing the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, practicing masterfully—he is one who follows the Dhamma, he is to be honored for that, praised for that.’ So, giving priority just to the practice, he neither exalts himself for being one who eats only one meal a day nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity—secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He notices, ‘I have gained the attainment of the first jhāna, but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the first jhāna.’ He exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhāna and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“But a person of integrity notices, ‘The Blessed One has spoken of non-fashioning2 even with regard to the attainment of the first jhāna, for by whatever means they suppose it, it becomes otherwise from that.’3 So, giving priority to non-fashioning, he neither exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhāna nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“And further, a person of no integrity… enters & remains in the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna… the dimension of the infinitude of space… the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness… the dimension of nothingness… the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He notices, ‘I have gained the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.’ He exalts himself for the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“A person of integrity notices, ‘The Blessed One has spoken of non-fashioning even with regard to the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, for by whatever means they suppose it, it becomes otherwise from that.’ So, giving priority to non-fashioning, he neither exalts himself for the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“A person of integrity, completely transcending the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. When he sees with discernment, his effluents are ended. This is a monk who does not suppose anything, does not suppose anywhere, does not suppose in any way.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Notes

1. The nine practices mentioned here—being a wilderness dweller, one who wears robes of thrown-away rags, an alms-goer, one who dwells at the root of a tree, a cemetery dweller, one who lives in the open air, one who doesn't lie down, one who is content with whatever dwelling is assigned to him, or one who eats only one meal a day—are among the thirteen optional ascetic (dhutaṅga) practices that monks may undertake. The other four are: possessing only one set of the triple robe, bypassing no donors on one's almsround, eating only from one's bowl, and not accepting food brought after one's almsround. All thirteen practices are listed in Thag 16:7.

2. Atammayatā. For discussions of the role of non-fashioning in the practice, see The Wings to awakening, II/B and III/G, and The Paradox of Becoming, Chapter 6.

3. In other words, whatever the condition of the ground on which one might base a state of becoming—a sense of one's self or the world one inhabits—by the time that state of becoming has taken shape, the ground has already changed. In this case, if one tries to shape a sense of self around one's attainment of jhāna, the attainment itself has already changed.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 110; SN 55:5; AN 2:31–32; AN 4:73; AN 4:192; AN 5:148; AN 8:54; Iti 17