

## MN113: Sappurisasutta - The Skilful Person

1. Thus have I heard: On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

"Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the character of a skilful person and the character of an unskilful person.

Listen and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, Venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, what is the character of an unskilful person? Here an unskilful person who has gone forth from an aristocratic family considers thus: 'I have gone forth from an aristocratic family; but these other bhikkhus have not gone forth from aristocratic families.' So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their aristocratic family. This is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'It is not because of one's aristocratic family that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not have gone forth from an aristocratic family, yet if they have entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conduct themselves according to the Dhamma, they should be honoured for that, they should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their aristocratic family. This is the character of a skilful person.

3. "Moreover, an unskilful person who has gone forth from a great family...from a wealthy family...from an influential family considers thus: 'I have gone forth from an influential family; but these other bhikkhus have not gone forth from influential families.' So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their influential family. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'It is not because of one's influential family that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not have gone forth from an influential family, yet if they have entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conduct themselves according to the Dhamma, they should be honoured for that, they should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their influential family. This too is the character of a skilful person.

4. "Moreover, an unskilful person who is well known and famous considers thus: 'I am well known and famous; but these other bhikkhus are unknown and of no account.' So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their renown. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'It is not because of one's renown that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not be well known and famous, yet if they have entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon

the proper way, and conduct themselves according to the Dhamma, they should be honoured for that, they should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their renown. This too is the character of a skilful person.

5. "Moreover, an unskilful person who gains plentiful robes, almsfood, lodgings, and requisites of medicine considers thus: 'I gain plentiful robes, almsfood, lodgings, and requisites of medicine; but these other bhikkhus do not gain these things.' So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their gain. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'It is not because of gain that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone has little or no gain, yet if they have entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conduct themselves according to the Dhamma, they should be honoured for that, they should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of gain. This too is the character of a skilful person.

6-12. "Moreover, an unskilful person who is learned...who is expert in the Discipline (Vinaya)...who is a preacher of the Dhamma...who is a forest dweller...who is a wearer of patched robes.....who eats only food given on almsround...who lives only under trees...

13. ...who lives in a cemetery...in the open-air...who never lies down...who has no regular lodging...who eats only one meal a day, considers thus: 'I eat only one meal a day; but these other bhikkhus eat many times.'

So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their being a one-meal-a-day eater. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'It is not because of eating only one meal a day that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may eat more than one meal a day, yet if they have entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conduct themselves according to the Dhamma, they should be honoured for that, they should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their being a one-meal-a-day eater. This too is the character of a skilful person.

14. "Moreover, quite secluded from the five senses, secluded from the five hindrances, an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the first Jhāna, which is accompanied by movement of the mind towards the bliss and holding the bliss, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion from the five senses. He considers thus: 'I have gained the experience of the first Jhāna; but these other bhikkhus have not gained the experience of the first Jhāna.' So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their experience of the first Jhāna. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: 'Non-ownership (*a-tam-maya-ta*, meaning: not making something out of it, such as a possession or an attainment) has been declared by

the Blessed One, even for the experience of the first Jhāna. For in whatever way they conceive it, it is always otherwise.’

So, putting non-ownership first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their experience of the first Jhāna. This too is the character of a skilful person.

15. "Moreover, with the stilling of movement of the mind towards the bliss and holding the bliss, an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the second Jhāna...With the fading away as well of rapture...they enter upon and abide in the third Jhāna...With the abandoning of pleasure and unpleasantness, both physical and mental, ...they enter upon and abide in the fourth Jhāna...

16. "Moreover, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is not defined,’ an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the base of indefinite space...

17. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of indefinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is not defined,’ an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the base of indefinite consciousness.....

18. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of indefinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing,’ an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the base of nothingness...

19. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, an unskilful person enters upon and abides in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. They consider thus: ‘I have gained the experience of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; but these other bhikkhus have not gained the experience of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’ So they praise themselves and disparage others because of their experience of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This too is the character of an unskilful person.

"But a skilful person considers thus: ‘Non-ownership has been declared by the Blessed One, even with the experience of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. For in whatever way they conceive it, it is always otherwise.’ So, putting non-ownership first, they neither praise themselves nor disparage others because of their experience of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This too is the character of a skilful person.

20. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a skilful person enters upon and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling.

And their outflowings (leaks) are destroyed by their seeing with wisdom. This bhikkhu does not conceive anything, he does not conceive in regard to anything, he does not conceive in anything.”

21. That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.