

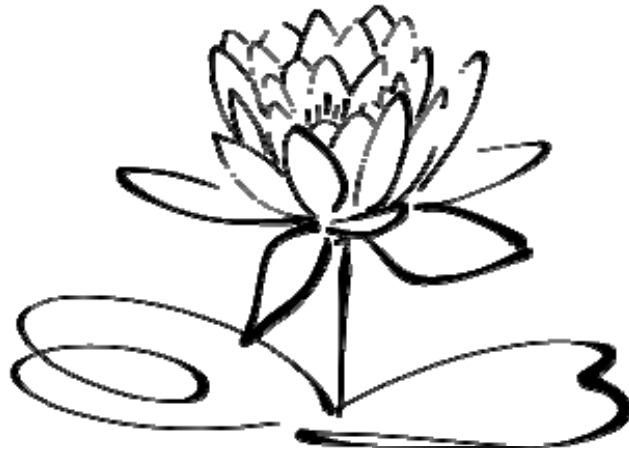
OFFERING OF REQUISITES TO MONKS AND CONDUCT
THAT IS TO BE OBSERVED BY DEVOTEES

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**“The Gift of Dhamma Excels All Other Gifts”
The Lord Buddha**

**OFFERING OF REQUISITES TO MONKS AND CONDUCT
THAT IS TO BE OBSERVED BY DEVOTEES**

By

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Type Setting	King Goh
Cover page	Dhammacakka wheel – representing Wheel of Buddha’s Doctrine, Wheel of Law, the Wheel of Truth, the Kingdom of Righteousness and the First Sermon
First Published	October, 2009 6000 copies

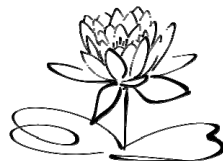


TRANSLATORS NOTE

This book is a direct English translation of a transcript of a sermon given by Phra Acharn Plien Paññāpadīpo. The use of differing personal pronouns (he, we, they) and the repetition of the text is due to the colloquial nature of sermon. In the Thai language if we wish to highlight significance of a subject being discussed the speaker will often repeat such words. Whilst reading this booklet, the reader should view it as though they are sitting before Phra Acharn Plien Paññāpadīpo.

In addition, we are very grateful for the time and dedication that Phra Acharn Plien spent in inspecting this translation of his sermon and reading it during the final stages of its editing process.

We, the translators, aim to translate to English from Thai as closely as possible. However, should the reader find any mistakes or irregularity in the translation, we wholeheartedly and humbly accept them as being ours alone.



PREFACE

To correctly carry out merit making or giving donations to a charitable cause in accordance with the Buddhist principles, the benefactor needs to be aware of the occasions for which these requisites are to be given and the time and objects that can be given at which particular event. By being informed they are then known as being *Kālaññutā*. This term is used commonly by philosophers to refer to a wise or a clever person.

There are those in the Buddhist Assembly who haven't learnt the ways of following the Buddhist principles when donating or making merits. These people will often have faith but lack the 'know how' in conducting themselves in a suitable way for the occasion. This is a matter that we Buddhists followers should come to learn and appreciate, as it is a subject on which Lord Buddha has spoken upon. There are four types of *kāliks*, these being *yāvakālik*, *yāmakālik*, *sattāhakālik* and *yāvajīvik*, all of which will be discussed later.

It is hoped that by having read this book, the reader can gain some knowledge - be it large or small, this all depends on the reader's capability to grasp the concepts. This is so they will understand the correct ways of making merit with monks in accordance with Buddhist principles and not giving reason for monks to disobey their Precepts, whilst also being able to conduct themselves correctly and not worry when they desire to make merits with monks in the future.

OFFERING OF REQUISITES TO MONKS AND CONDUCT THAT IS TO BE OBSERVED BY DEVOTEES

Sermon given by Phra Ajahn Plien Paññāpadīpo

In making merits, correctly and suitably giving donations in accordance with the Buddhist principles, the Lord Buddha has given teachings on the four types of kālik. These are yāvakālik, yāmakālik, sattāhakālik and yāvajīvik; all of which are described as follows:

1. **YĀVAKĀLIK** means all kinds of food that monks can consume, such as: rice, porridge, sweets, fruits, roots, yams, potatoes, beans, sesame seeds, various types of meats. Included in these are soya sauce, fish sauce, various types of fruit juices, and anything else that we may consider to be food. **These are known as the “five categories of food”, and can only be consumed by monks from morning to midday¹**. Irrespective of whether monks eat once or twice a day, they must not eat beyond midday, thus neither the sīla - dhamma², or vinaya³ has been contravened. Monks are prohibited from eating after midday. If monks were to consume food after midday, it is wrong by both precepts and vinaya.

For monks who are overseas, they are to take into consideration that it is from the first light of dawn, when the lines on their hands are clearly visible and they are able to see both young and old leaves on the trees, that they can consume. If it is not yet dawn, then they are not yet permitted to eat. Irrespective of which ever country that monk may be residing, they are to take into consideration the time zone for that particular country. In this way monk’s precepts will not be breached.

¹ *Morning* means the time when it is first dawn in the morning until one can clearly see the lines on the hands, and is able to see both the young and old leaves at the distance of 3 metres).

² *Sīla Dhamma* - Morality or morals.

³ *Vinaya* mean discipline; the monastic regulations; or the code of monastic disciplines.

For those who are observing the eight precepts, their conduct on the sixth precept is the same as those observed by monks. That is, they also are not permitted to eat after midday.

All of the foods that have been mentioned above are known as *yāvakāliks*.

2. YĀMAKĀLIK means nampāna, or also known as nam-*uṭṭhabān*.⁴ The Lord Buddha taught that any fruits that are to be used in the making of *nampāna* must be small sized fruits. That is, they must be fruits that are no bigger than an orange and it should contain seeds. These include jambolans, oranges, bananas, limes, grapes, plum mangoes, lychees and longans.

If these fruits are to be used in the making of *nampāna*, then one needs to extract the juice from the fruit and combine it with water. It is then strained by using at least seven layers of cloth. Straining is continued until all pulp has been removed; the only remnant is the fluid, which can be strained into a container. At the time of consumption, monks may add salt, chillies, sugar, or herbal remedies to it. There is an exception for ripened plum mango in the making of *nampāna* as ripened plum mango has a soft pulp, it is capable of being strained through cloth, by which it can then be transformed into food. The Lord Buddha thus disallowed it from being used in the making of *nampāna*. However, if the myrobalans were unripe, firm to touch and have a clear sap, then they are permitted in the making of *nampāna*.

Fruits larger than oranges are referred to as the “mahā-pol” or “great fruits”. Examples of these are pomeloes, pineapples, coconuts, and watermelons. The use of these fruits is forbidden in the making of *nampāna* as they are considered to be food. The Lord Buddha permitted only the use of fruits that are smaller than oranges to be

⁴ *nam-uṭṭhabān* – are the 8 types of fruit that is made permissible by the Lord Buddha for the making of juices that can be consume after the midday.

used in the making of nampāna, which can be offered to monks and those observing the eight precepts.

Having made the nampāna from the given fruits, we can then offer it to monks for consumption during the period of 1p.m until midnight. Once past midnight, monks are forbidden to consume juice, as nampāna will have undergone fermentation and transformed into **melai** (alcohol).

3. SATTĀHAKĀLIK refers to provisions that are to be offered to monks, and they are permitted to keep it for consumption up to a period of seven days. These foods include honey, ghee, sugar cane juice, cheese and chocolates that do not contain milk products (i.e dark chocolate). **Once monks have accepted any of these provisions the Lord Buddha has granted that he may keep it for consumption for a period of up to seven days.** Once the period of seven days has lapsed the Lord Buddha forbids consumption and they are to forego this food by donating it to novices or devotees.

Honey. After monks have accepted honey, and have already consumed it in the morning, they aren't allowed to consume the remainder of the honey after midday. It is considered that the life of that honey has expired. However, if monks were to accept the honey, but are yet to consume it, they may keep it for consuming in the afternoon; and they are permitted to keep it for consumption over the next seven days. After a period of seven days has passed they are forbidden to consume that honey since it is considered to be wrong according to the Vinaya Dhamma (Monastic Code of Conduct). In the event that monks would like to have honey in the morning and again in the afternoon, then he should ask the lay supporter to divide up the portions, one portion is for consumption whilst the other to be kept. In this way honey can be offered after midday, and can be kept up to seven days.

There are reasons why the Lord Buddha permitted that honey can only be kept for up to a period of seven days. There happened to be a monk who achieved Pāramī⁵. Devotees who came to pay visits to him brought enormous amounts of honey to offer to him. This monk then had to store the honey in his quarters until it was completely filled. Excess honey was then stored beneath his quarters until that too became filled. Visitors to the temple observed that there were many jars of honey underneath the monk's quarters. These visitors desired to have some of this honey however, the monk refused to share his honey with them. Thus these visitors decided to rob him for the honey, and in the process the monk was killed. Hence the Lord Buddha made a proclamation prohibiting the stocking up of honey, and all sattāhakālik type of food cannot be kept longer than a period of seven days.

This can be summarised as follows:-

Time of monks acceptance	Time of consumption by monks.	Life of honey
Morning	Morning to midday	Before midday
Morning	In the afternoon	Seven days
Afternoon	Anytime	Seven days

⁵ Pāramī (the ten) – Stages of spiritual perfection achieved by a Bodhisatta on his path to Buddhahood (or by those who are determined to become Pacceka – buddhas or Arahant disciples of a Buddha).

As for sugar cane juice, sugar, and block sugar, in the event that monks go on their alms round, these foods can be offered to the monks. If these foods happen to be wrapped in plastics or paper bags, he is able to keep it for consumption in the afternoon and even, keep it for a period of seven days. However, if the sugar cane juice, sugar, or block sugar has not been wrapped in a plastic or paper bag, then it cannot be kept for consumption in the afternoon. This is because the sugar cane juice, sugar, or block sugar has been contaminated by other food in that alms bowl. Therefore it is considered to be food and can only be consumed up to midday.

This can be summarised as follows:-

Method of offering into alms bowl.	Time of consumption by monk.	Life of sugar cane juice, sugar, blocked sugar.
Wrapped in plastic/paper bag	Morning to Midday	Before midday
Wrapped in plastic/paper bag	In afternoon	Seven days
Not wrapped in plastic/paper bag	Must only be consumed prior to midday	Midday (because sugar cane juice etc. touched other food in alms bowl.

4. YĀVAJĪVIK refers to all types of medicine for the purpose of treating ailments. If medicines have not been mixed with honey, sugar cane juice, and sattahagarlik food, monks are able to accept and keep them for consumption all day. Irrespective of it

being morning, afternoon, evening, or night time, he can take the medicine. Yāvajīvik, or any generalised medicine deemed to be for the treatment of ailments, can be in the form of powder, tablets or liquid, all of which have been derived from plants. Some people use leaves from plants to make medicines, and some use bark, core, and roots; the leaves are included and all types of vines are all considered to be medicine.

Fruit considered to be medicine are tamarinds, various types of myrobalan fruits, ginger, galangal, garlic, cloves, krachai, pepper, lemon grass, banana blossoms, ginseng, cotton leaves, or roots of the lotus flower (of the type that is used to decorate the Buddha shrine). Rock, gold, lead, tin, and iron are allowed to be classified as medicines. Inclusive to medicinal allowance are a certain types of animal bones. These can be the bones from black dogs, black chickens, crows, monkey, bones from the head of cobra, king cobra, vultures, and emptied shells. All of these bones can be ground down to make medicine. Therefore all of these objects, be it plants, fruits, flowers, or bones from certain types of animals are considered to be medicines, and can be consumed at any time. However, if devotees have already offered ‘yāvajīvik’ to monks, and monks have accepted, if these provisions are inadvertently touched again by devotee or novice, then these objects need to be reoffered. **However, if no one has touched the objects monks can keep these yāvajīvik forever.**

Combined kālik is kālik that has undergone a process for which the four types of kālik have been combined, and the period of expiry of the new kālik are presumed to be that of the kālik which has a smaller period to expire. For example, if a monk brings any of the food from the yāvajīvik category (i.e. garlic, ginger, galangal, lemon grass, salt, chillies, etc) and combine these with food from the yāvakālik class, or any other class of food, the resultant kālik will have a short expiry. It is to be presumed that this kālik can only be kept for consumption from a period of morning up until

midday (prior to the midday meal) and this yāvajīvik will have expired.

If monks are to combine yāvajīvik with yāmakālik or nampāna, that kālik will have a short duration of life (following that life of nampāna). That is, the monks can keep it for consumption from 1p.m up until the midnight when it will be expired.

But if one were to bring the yāvajīvik to combine with sattāhakālik, typically honey, sugar cane juice, or sugar (for example, use of honey to marinate myrobalan fruits, or tamarinds), as a monk comes to take the remedy, he will need to assume that the preparation has a short life, whereby it can only be kept for a period of up to seven days. Thus it is called a combined kālik.

The four types of kālik can be summarised as follows:

Type of kālik	Descriptions	Examples	Life of Kālik (for monks)
Yāvakālik	All types of food that monks can consume – known as the 5 types of food.	Rice, porridge, noodles, meat, sweets, fruits, roots, yams, sesame seeds, fish sauce, sauces, seasonings, and juices from fruits larger than oranges, etc...	Morning until midday.
Yāmakālik (nampāna or nam-ṭṭhabān)	Juice from fruits that are smaller than an orange and have seeds in which the juice has been extracted and strained	Oranges, bananas that have seeds, lemons, grapes, lychees, longans, (except unripened plum mango), etc.	After midday until midnight.

Sattāhakālik	Food for offering to monks which can be kept for consumption over the next seven days.	Honey, sugar cane juice, sugar, oil, cheese, chocolate without milk etc.	Seven days.
Yāvajīvik	All medicines made for the purpose of treating ailments.	Garlic, ginger, galangal, lemon grass, chilli, salt, glycyrrhiza glabra, myrobalan, cloves. Pepper, cotton flower, cotton leaves, lotus roots, stones, gold, tin, lead, minerals, animal bones such as bone from black dog, black chicken, crows, monkey, bone from head of king cobra, cobra, vulture, any of the emptied shells, etc...	No time limit.

Mixed kāliks can be summarised as follows.

Types of mixed kāliks	Examples	Age of kālik (for monks)
Yāvajīvik + Yāvakālik (has a lower age)	Ginger + Rice porridge	Morning to Midday (equal to that of lower age in Yāmakālik)
Yāvajīvik + Yāmakālik (has a lower age)	Salt + lemon juice	After Midday to midnight (equal to the lower age of yāmakālik)
Yāvajīvik +sattāhakālik (has a lower age)	Myrobalan + honey	7 days (equal to the lower age of sattāhakālik)
Sattāhakālik + yāvakālik (has a lower age)	Sugar cane juice + rice	Morning to midday (equal to lower age of yāvakālik)
Sattāhakālik + yāmakālik (has a lower age)	Honey + lemon juice	After midday to midnight (equal to the lower age of yāmakālik)
Yāmakālik +yāvakālik (has a lower age)	Ripened bananas + rice	Morning to midday (equal to the lower age of yāvajīvik)

We will now focus on **the subject of offering of food. On occasions when lay supporters bring large amounts of food to offer to the monks, these need not be offered all at once.** Some of these foods should be kept in the kitchen, otherwise allow it to be viewed by the monks. An announcement of donations can be made

by the devotees without necessarily physically making the offer. Having received the monks' blessings, food can be taken for storage in the kitchen; this is so that it can be divided and brought out by the cook gradually over the next few days to offer to the monks. **If monks were to accept all food offered, any leftover food cannot be kept for later consumption, since it is considered to be yāvakālik, and its duration is only from morning to midday.** It is for this reason that temples have a kitchen built so that food not yet offered to monks can be stored.

In regard to rice, assuming that there are one hundred bags of rice on the truck and the owner wishes to donate all of the rice, he then invites the monks to come to accept all of the rice by inviting the monks to ceremonially touch the truck. The monks, having accepted the rice cannot eat even one bag. **This is because rice is considered to be yāvakālik and can only be kept from morning to midday. Furthermore, none of the bags of rice can be given to monks from other temples for the same reason.** However, if the monk did not accept rice with his hands and devotees only made a verbal announcement of the donation, all of the bags of rice can be taken away for storage so that the cook can gradually use it. This is possible because monks have not touched the rice, or received it with their hands. Subsequently, people who have donated will now be satisfied that they have gained their merits and benefits fully.

The same applies to fruit. If devotees have brought along large amounts of fruit for donation, then it should be divided for storage in the kitchen so that the cook can gradually bring it out to offer to the monks over the next few days. However, if the host refuses and wishes to offer all of the fruit, then they must come to an agreement that any fruit left over will be subjected to further donation and will be distributed to other devotees, or the needy. Should devotees wish to offer to the monks all of these fruit, they may do so,

but monks can only consume a small amount and the fruit left over will have to be given to other devotees.

By monks receiving fruit with their hands in the morning, the Lord Buddha prohibited them from keeping the fruits over into the afternoon.

However, there are some devotees who do not understand this concept, and do not understand why the monks do not accept the fruit with their hands. They do not understand that if monks accept this fruit with their hands, and if it happens to be after midday, monks will no longer be able to eat the fruits, **because fruit are considered to be yāvakālik, and can only be kept from morning to midday.**

If all those who donate conduct themselves as outlined above they will be rewarded with many benefits and great merits. The monks would have been able to consume all of the food or fruits that have been offered to them, as well as being able to adhere to the principles instructed by the Lord Buddha. If a monk were to accept these offerings of food and fruit with his hands, then keeps them overnight to eat again the next day, a fine is imposed against his precepts for each and every mouthful that he takes of that food. For example, if a monk consumed up to twenty mouthfuls, then twenty of his precepts would be broken. Thus the Lord Buddha declared that no monk is permitted to store food or fruit in their quarters.

There was an incident during lifetime of the Lord Buddha where a monk had stored a lot of food in his quarters. This activity was observed by a thief who then came to rob the monk of his food. Had the monk not given up his food, the thief would have harmed or killed the monk.

In a situation whereby a visitor brings with him some food or fruits, and that night stays with the monk in his quarters, the man had not yet offered this food to the monk and this is acceptable. The next day the visitor can bring out this food to offer to the monk in his

hands (prakhen). The monk has not committed wrongdoing in his observance of precepts.

The reason for the Lord Buddha not allowing monks to store food and fruit in his quarters is that it will cause the monk's mind to become distracted during meditation. The monk may fear that mice, cats, or dogs might come to eat the food, or that thieves may come to steal it. The mind will not be at peace because they are worried about the food, and their thoughts will be on food that they have saved up. For this reason, the Lord Buddha disallowed monks to store food since this would give rise to defilements where they may make the monk become greedy.

Why is it that we have to make our offer into the hands of monks (prakhen)? Be it foods that are yāvakālik, yāmakālik, sattāhakālik, yāvajīvik, and irrespective of whether these foods were nampāna, honey, sugar cane juice, cheese, or medicines of any types. There is an incident that led to this practice.

On one occasion there were monks who were living at a temple, and on it an assembly hall was constructed. Nearby were some workers or farmers working around the temple, and whilst all of the monks were out on the alms round these workers left in the assembly hall their food that they had brought with them in containers. Those workers who left their lunches thought that this was a safe place. Unexpectedly, the monks who went on the alms round returned to the assembly hall and observed that there were containers of food. Monks then asked the novices to open up these containers where they then proceeded to consume the food.

Subsequently, these workers were not able to have their lunches and they went and complained to the Lord Buddha that they neither bestowed nor physically presented into the hands of the monks the food. If these monks had consumed their food then these monks would have committed wrongdoings in their observation of precepts.

Because this food had just been left there, and since its owners did not place it in the hands of the monks, therefore this food is considered to be impure. It is considered to be a wrongdoing in their precepts without intention, since workers were able to make the accusation that monks have stolen and eaten all of their food. Such incidents have occurred in the past.

Therefore, the Lord Buddha made a declaration on this very subject that everything that is brought to offer to monks must be presented directly into the hands of the monks. If the owners have not yet placed these offerings in the hands of the monk(s), and should these offerings be food, then it cannot be eaten. Similarly, an item not yet bestowed on monks cannot be used by them. However, if it was an object that devotees already physically presented to the monk(s), then the monks are fully authorised to it. If it was food, they can eat it; if it was an item, they can use it. Devotees can no longer make a complaint that a monk was a thief, because the devotee has already presented the offerings. Presenting these items is clear evidence that the monks can take the goods and can be fully entitled to make full use or consume them. However if the offerings were neither presented nor bestowed upon the monk, devotees can then make the accusation that the monk has stolen them. As a consequence, that monk may have to disrobe as he has stolen from others.

This matter is of utmost importance to monks because if they are not thorough in the protection of their vinaya, they may unintentionally commit wrongdoings in their observance of precepts. For example, if a monk making a visit to a home of some familiar laity uses their phone without asking a permission, the owner can claim that the monk has stolen for he had used a telephone without permission as each phone call costs between three to five baht. Due to this, they would be able to make such an allegation that would result in the disrobing of monk. Here is the important point where

monks must be cautious and ensure that they have first secured permission from the owners.

However, if the owner made a statement that should a monk need to make a phone call, then he may do so. If it was a public phone that uses phone cards, he can go ahead and use it because he is entitled to do so. But if it is a phone that is in a home of a devotee, if he were to use the phone without a permission he would have subsequently committed a wrong doing in the observation of precepts.

Furthermore, for all objects that are inside the home of a devotee, including amulets of different monks or even replica images of Buddha, monks are also strictly prohibited from handling them without permission from the home owner. If a monk lacks thoroughness and, without permission, handles the amulets so that the object can be viewed, or if he moves the replica statuettes from its base for the same reason the owner can make an accusation that the monk has stolen from him and, as a result, the only thing that monk can do is to disrobe. Thus, the Lord Buddha disallowed monks to do such a thing and for this reason all monks should be educated in matters such as this.

During the time that a monk makes a visit to, for example, an office, a home, municipal offices or any official residences of governmental people, if the owner invites him to take a shower before returning to his temple, and they have offered soaps, towels, etc... for the monk to use, the monk may do so because the owner has given a permission. However, if the owner did not give a permission then the monk cannot simply take a shower as the owner may accuse him of stealing the water, since each shower consumes water.

If a monk is to enter a store that sells yellow materials or Buddhist religious goods, it will be appropriate that the monk should wait for the shopkeeper to ask what he needs. They should then invite him to inspect the products before making a selection. This way, it is

acceptable for the monk to handle the objects because the shopkeeper has already given him a permission. However if the monk entered the shop and handled the goods before being given permission, or hadn't asked for a permission first, the shopkeeper could then make an accusation against that monk.

Clearly, one can appreciate the meticulousness and thoroughness required in the practice of Buddhism. All monks ought to guide and lead one another to be both composed and cautious in their demeanour. The Lord Buddha commanded that monks must be cautious and be on guard at all times, due to fears that they may commit wrongdoings in their observation of vinaya, the laws directly for monks.

On the subject of monks who have taken ill, this is also a matter which devotees should come to understand. When monks are sick or displaying symptoms of sickness, the Lord Buddha permits laity to use either boiled or sticky rice to make a rice ball then toast it. This is known as khao jee - it is then soaked in water so that the liquid can be drunk by a monk as a form of medicine. In this instance, the Lord Buddha granted a permission for it as a special circumstance, and it can be taken after midday.

In addition there is one more thing that the Lord Buddha has made an allowance for, this being pork bone that has been stripped of all meat, leaving only the bare bone. The bone is then boiled so that the fat is skimmed off from the stock and used to combine with other medicinal products similar to those seen in traditional Chinese medicines. The Lord Buddha granted his permission as a special circumstance for sick monks, allowing consumption after midday.

As mentioned above, the Lord Buddha does not permit food to be consumed after midday, even if it is rice porridge. **If a sick monk eats food at all of the meal times (breakfast, lunch and dinner) simply so that he can take his medications after the meal, then**

the monk has committed a wrong doing and his precepts have been broken, and he must admit having committed a religious offence. This is because the Lord Buddha has proclaimed that if any monk consumes food from midday onwards, a fine will be imposed as his precepts have been broken for every mouthful that he has taken - it is sinful.

A sick monk is to take food once in the morning, and once again at 11.30 a.m. From then until the evening he is to drink liquid from khao jie, or soup stock from boiled pork bone that has been mixed with medicine. Otherwise he can take sattāhakālik such as honey, sugar cane juice, sugar, chocolate not containing milk products, cheese, or oil - this is so that he has energy and strength. This should be adequate sustenance since he had already consumed two previous meals. Thus, if the sick monk eats in the afternoon, then he commits a wrong doing in his precepts. If a monk is ill for a period of one month, one does not know how many precepts he may have broken. If this afternoon he eats ten mouthfuls, then ten precepts would be broken. If the following day he eats twenty mouthfuls, a further twenty of his precepts would too been broken. It is sinful and wrong in the observance of precepts as well as being in a religious offence. The Lord Buddha warns us not to be negligent even on the slightest of all matters.

The Lord Buddha specifically gave his instructions in the Book of Discipline for Monks (Vinaya), and also made it a proclamation that the two hundred and twenty-seven precepts also have supplementary items for any wrongdoing. If a monk breaks a precept, he must admit to āpatti⁶. For example – regarding ‘**bathroom culture**’ of monks, it is stated that if a monk, is to use a toilet, be it at their own temple or at any other location, they must take care not to do the following actions:-

⁶ *Āpatti* ecclesiastical offence.

1. If a bathroom or toilet they've entered is dirty and/or covered by cobwebs, they do not endeavour to clean it or maintain its cleanliness.
2. When finished using the toilet they do not clean it.
3. If the toilet paper is depleted, they do not replace it.
4. If the water in the toilet/bathroom is finished, they do not refill it.
5. At time of defecation, they are prohibited from bearing down heavily (doing so will cause bruising to the bowel or cause haemorrhoids to develop).
6. At the time of defecation, they are **prohibited** from making too loud a noise.
7. They are not permitted to defecate as well as picking their teeth at the same time.
8. They are not permitted to stand up to urinate with the exception of sick monks.

All of the above are wrongdoings which monks can be āpatti for, and are known as **'supplementary items further to the two hundred and twenty-seven precepts'**. However, the Lord Buddha has granted that such an act is not āpatti if that monk is sick or infirm.

There is another matter in regard to **toothpicks**. If the toothpicks are the common types which are available at the shops, they are often coated with sugar or flavoured with mint at the tips, so they must first be offered to the monks. However, if they are toothpicks that monks have made by themselves, then they need not be offered.

In reference to **drinking water** - the reason that monks need to strain water prior to drinking is because the Lord Buddha would like monks to have clean drinking water. This is so that monks will not develop any sickness as well as to avoid catching any of the small animals or water borne insects that may have been in the water. Hence water must be strained until it is clean before it is drinkable, because monks may swallow tiny insects that were mixed with the

water. So if a monk comes upon a water stream or a water hole that has clear clean water, they need to use a utensil to collect that water then strain it into their flask. If that monk is to make a journey or go on a ‘**dhutanga**⁷’, he needs to prepare a flask of boiled water to take with him. Hence, the Lord Buddha has granted a permission to monks who are going on ‘**dhutanga**’ to take with them a cloth for straining water or a handkerchief so that it can be used for straining the water.

In the present, **water of all types, whether it is boiled water, mineral water or purified water, which have been brought by the devotees for donation, must first be offered to monks.** Because these types of manufactured water undergo chemical treatments to rid them of germs, as well as undergo heat treatments and manufacturing processes, the water that has been bottled and refrigerated needs to be offered first since it too has undergone a transformation (from water that is not cold to water that is cold). But water that has been strained

⁷ **Dhutanga** – there are thirteen constituents to this ascetic practice where its purpose is to remove defilements. Monks can undertake any of the thirteen constituents.

1. **Pamsukūlikaṅga (Abandoned Robes)** – this is the austerity of using any cloth found on road as material for making robes.
2. **Tecīvarikaṅga (Three Robes)** – this is the austerity of only using the three robes of bhikkhu as garments.
3. **Pindapātikaṅga (Beggard Food)** – this is the austerity of eating what one gains on alms round (pindapatta), whether it be little or a lot or even nothing at all.
4. **Sapaānacārikadāṅga (Regular Alms round)** – this is the austerity where if a bhikkhu gains tasty food from a particular house on his alms round, then he avoids that house in future.
5. **Ekāsānikaṅga (One Eating)** this is austerity to take meals only once a day.
6. **Pattapindikaṅga (Measured Food)** – this is the austerity where the bhikkhu will eat only a certain measure of food. The bhikkhu sees fault in indulging his appetite.
7. **Khalupacchā-bhattikaṅga (No food after time)** this is the austerity that once having commenced eating will not accept any other food that is offered later.
8. **Āraññikaṅga (Dwelling in a peaceful place)** this is austerity of being a forest dweller where bhikkhu avoid living in a noisy village or temple.
9. **Rukkhāmūlikaṅga (Dwelling under a tree)** this is the austerity to take up the practice of living underneath a tree or not dwelling under a roof
10. **Abbhokāsikaṅga (Dwelling in a dewy place)** austerity to take up the practice of living in the open – air only.
11. **Sosānikaṅga (Dwelling among the graves)** this is an austerity of living in a cemetery. N.B In both ancient and Modern India cemeteries often have corpses left out in the open or only partially cremated. Also places where ghosts and malevolent spirits were known to inhabit.
12. **Yathāsanthatikaṅga (Any chanced upon place)** this is the austerity of at the end of a day walking/wandering to sleep wherever bhikkhu happened to be so as it was safe.
13. **Nesajjikaṅga (Always sitting and not lying down)** this is the austerity of not sleeping stretched out. Usually the bhikkhu sleeps propped against a wall or even in the meditation posture.

Retrieved from “<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/dhutanga>”

from the water hole or rain water and put into a flask does not need to be offered, monks can use this for drinking by themselves.

In summary, there are two things that monks can use that need not be offered. These are:

1. Toothpicks which have been made by monks;
2. Pure drinking water that has no additives (such as rain water), or water that has been collected from streams, rivers or water holes (these all must be strained).

Anything else needs to be offered, even non-edible goods, cloths, robes, incense, candles or even flowers, they all need to be offered to the monks. That is, devotees must either give their permission, offer or bequeath them to the monks. If devotees do not give a permission, offer or bequeath to monks, the monks are not permitted to make use of it at all. Therefore, bhikkhus⁸ must truly study the Vinaya and be cautious, or else risk making mistakes easily.

All devotees should learn and be familiar with how to conduct themselves appropriately with the monks. This is known as **Kalaññutta. That is knowing the occasions, and which of the objects are suitable for merit making or offering to the monks.** Once devotees know the way in which to conduct themselves appropriately they truly gain merits. In making merits correctly thus not causing the ways of Buddhism to be tarnished or damaged, this is considered to be merit making that is pure. One can compare this to the robes of a monk that are not torn. The monk does not have to commit any wrongdoing in his observation of precepts whilst the person who is making merit gained merit fully without any deficiency. Both have gained pure merits.

Now, we will turn our attention to **the offering of vegetables and fruits that require devotees to firstly pronounce the word**

⁸ Bhikkhu- a Buddhist monk.

‘kappi’⁹ before it can be offered to monks. These are vegetables that use bulbs for propagation such as garlic, onion, Spanish onion, ginger, galangal, lemon grass, carrots, radishes, white radish, taros, potatoes, and yams. In addition, there are various root vegetables which have not had their roots cut off, such as morning glory, water mimosa, mints, coriander, scallions, gratin (*Leucaena leucocephala*), lettuce, Chinese broccoli, cabbages, as well as various types of tomatoes, aubergines, and Thai eggplants. **In addition to these vegetables there are various fruits that have not yet had their seeds removed.** These being water melons, nashis, rose apples, sapodilla, guavas, apples, grapes, oranges, grapefruits, pomelos, pears, peaches, longans, lychees, mangosteens, custard apples, pomegranates, kiwi, tamarinds, cherries, strawberry and raspberry.

Steps that devotees need to follow prior to announcing the word “kappi” are as follows. The monk will ask the devotee prior to offering of fruits and vegetables “kappi yang karohi”, which means “has it been destroyed yet?” The devotee then replies “kappiya bhante” which means “it has been destroyed, sir.” Simultaneously, the devotee uses a knife, fork or something sharp to cut and separate fruits or vegetables. However, if there was a large quantity of either fruits or vegetables that are required to be “kappi”, then these need to be placed on a plate and placed next to one another and the word “kappi” announced at the same time. This food can then be offered all at the same time. On occasions when devotees want to offer fruit and fresh or blanched vegetables simultaneously, then the following steps needs to be followed:

1. Place all the plates of fruit or vegetables that need to have the word “kappi” announced, next to each other.
2. Receiving monk asks devotee “kappi yang karohi”.

⁹ Kappi – means to destroy, to cut, or to chop.

3. Offerer then uses a knife to just cut open the skin of the fruit. In the case of vegetables one can just break off a small bit at the tip to separate it from stems, and at the same time announce the word “kappiya bhante”.

Note

- When using a knife or fingers to break off the tips of vegetables or cut open or peel fruits, all that is required is one single piece of fruit or vegetable, not all. However, whilst cutting this fruit or vegetable, it must not be removed from the plate, since it is important that it is placed adjacent to the remainder of the fruit or vegetables on the plate.
- For fruits with young seeds which cannot be used for further propagation, or various vegetables that have been previously mentioned; if these have been thoroughly cooked with heat pronouncing of the word “kappi” need not be made again. These foods can be offered freely to the monks.

The way one needs to be seated when making offerings to the monks should be educated in the truly correct manner in that devotees should be educated in.

Men should be kneeling with their knees at a distance of about 20cm – 60cm away from the monk - not too near. When making offerings of objects in truly correct manner these objects need to be raised. It is raised at a height where a cat can walk underneath, and with the person prostrated whilst making the offering. On the monk’s part, he too lowers his body respectfully to accept the objects being offered. Devotees need to show that they have respect for their own meritorious act, and similarly monks also need to show that they too have respect for the devotee’s meritorious act. If the devotee uses both of his hands to make his offerings to the monk, then the monks must also use both of his hands to accept offerings from devotees. However if the devotee uses only one hand to handle the object, the monk will also need to use one hand to accept the object. The Lord

Buddha gave such an instruction in his teachings, so that when it is observed by others it will appear suitably pleasing.

Female devotees should be sitting at a suitable distance away from the monks, and the monk needs to use a piece of cloth to accept their offerings - there is no touching of one another. That is because women are monks' 'opposition' (but there is not any feeling of aversion towards the female gender). As much as women may have the fondness for making merits and offering of food, are proficient at carrying out good deeds, and have interests in the dhamma¹⁰, women remain a threat (to monks' celibacy and holy life). Therefore, it becomes necessary for monks to find ways of limiting contact. Thus, when women make offerings of their various objects to a monk, the monk will subsequently use a piece of cloth to accept their offerings. Practice such as this is not only proper, but it is aesthetically pleasing as well.

Devotees asked the Lord Buddha, "Can we offer objects at a level that is lower than level at which a cat can crawl under sir?" The Lord Buddha replied that there is nothing wrong with doing that, but it is not appealing when seen by others.

Asked further; if several objects can be offered next to one another and at the same time. The Lord Buddha replied, "Yes, but it does not look orderly or appealing".

Now the devotee asked further, "If we are to lift up objects that are intended for offering to monks up high and offer them from this elevated position, will that be acceptable sir?" The Lord Buddha replied by saying "Yes, but it will not be seen as beautiful or orderly by others since the objects being offered to monks have been lifted up too high; thus it does not look beautiful."

¹⁰ Dhammas – *This can generally be taken as the teachings by the Lord of Buddha, the Law of nature or the ultimate in reality.*

Offerings of food in large containers which the devotee cannot lift up alone should be divided into bowls so that one person can lift it up to make the offer. No two people should be lifting up the container to offer because, if the container is excessively large or heavy, the monk will also be unable to lift and accept the offer alone. Since the container is to be moved or passed further on to other monks, the offering becomes difficult. Consequently if the container of food is very large, then the food should be divided into different containers so that monk can accept it adequately by himself.

If devotees are to ask further by saying, ‘If there are a lot of things which all have been arranged altogether on the one table and devotees are to make the offer to monks by touching the table, will that be acceptable sir?’ Lord Buddha replied by saying “Yes, you can but it does not look orderly”.

‘If a devotee were to touch a table that is intended for offerings of all of the food that are on the table to the monks, but however, is unable to lift the table as there is a lot of food on the table, will it then be acceptable for the monks to accept all of these food by means of touching the table or food, sir?’ The Lord Buddha replied by saying, “Yes, one can do that but it does not look neat.”

“If devotees are at a distance away from the monk at the time that the offering of the objects are made and these objects are tied down to a wooden platform that is approximately one and a half foot long in length and then offered to the monks, will that be acceptable sir?” The Lord Buddha replied “Yes, you can but it doesn’t look beautiful”.

“Supposing a monk is in a high place, such as a construction site, and he then passes down a piece of rope for the devotee to tie down a tray that holds a flask or water bottle, and monk is to retrieve it by pulling up the rope, will that be acceptable sir.” The Lord Buddha

replied by saying “Yes, you may do this, however it does not look nice or orderly.”

“Now if a monk is to be at a construction site that may be five or six metres high or even taller, and needs to take a drink. If he passes down a piece of rope so that a devotee can tie to a flask or a water bottle to this rope so that it can be offered to him, will this be acceptable, sir?” The Lord Buddha replied “Yes, six or ten metres you can do it as long as they are in close proximity of one another. The rope needs to be positioned immediately next to the monk or within **hatthapāsa**¹¹, then it is acceptable. However, it doesn’t look neat, because it is too far away.” Nevertheless, the Lord Buddha permitted monks to accept such a mode of offering.

The Lord Buddha said, “Hear me Bhikkhus and devotees, any situation that is nice and courteous or otherwise very neat and orderly, can culminate in merits that one can gain through the acts of goodness for the receiver or the donator of a multitude of articles. People who are donating have the intention to give. Therefore the receiver must have respect for the meritorious deeds of the giver. It is here that its looks the most beautiful. All should conduct themselves in such a manner, whether they are a monk, man or woman, devotees should all conduct themselves in a correct manner that is suitable to these various occasions to the best of one’s ability.”

Therefore, it can be summarised that in **offerings of objects to bhikkhus**, the Lord Buddha asked that both men and women devotees position themselves approximately eighteen inches away from monks with their body slightly prostrated when handling objects to be offered to monks. Monks will also bow down to accept these offerings. As it is being observed by others, they too will also feel a sense of confidence through the beauty and orderliness.

¹¹ Hatthapāsa – *the distance that is within a hand’s reach.*

Similarly, in presenting objects to others, whether it is a child presenting to parents, students to teachers, or from subordinates to superiors, all must be performed with an act of humbleness and respect. Therefore, irrespective of who the person may be, if they are to know the occasion in which the making of presentation, it will take on the appearance of being beautiful, no matter how large or small the objects are.

Now we focus on the subject of merit making which involves offering of the various types of kālīks. Irrespective of the type, (mixed kālīks, yāvakālīk, yāmakālīk, sattāhakālīk, or yāvajīvik) these need to be offered to monks in accordance with the Buddhist principles. **No matter how large or small an object being offered, the importance is the person's intention.** The Lord Buddha said “Hear this bhikkhus, cetanāham bhikkhave puññam”. The literal meaning of this is, “It is the intention that is the bulk of the merits, irrespective of what that act of merits will be”. In the preparation of the objects for merit making, it has to firstly commence in the mind. **Buppacedtanā** – it begins with the intention to bring objects to make merits – this is the true Buddhist principle.

This topic covers the preparation of objects that will be brought to monks in order to carry out meritorious acts by the devotees. Once a devotee has successfully sought out the objects to bring for merit making activities, then the objects are brought to be presented to the monk. Such an act is known as **Muñcanacetana** - offering with respect. Once the objects have been offered and the devotee received blessings this is known as **Apparā para cetanā**. Through one's reflection upon what has been offered, today or in the past, and what other meritorious acts or good deeds we have performed enable our minds to be happy. This is the gaining of merits. **Because gaining merits creates happiness within the mind with the knowledge that one has performed good deeds, and whenever it is being reflected upon it will always bring us happiness.** This is even though the

good deeds we have performed may have been two, five or even ten years ago. If we were to reflect upon these good deeds of ours, it will always make us happy. **Essentially, merits are the happiness of the mind. Therefore, to make merits in the way that one can gain merits fully relies upon the intention of the person who donates. This is known as the mind directs thoughts and aspirations where the mind.** has faith within itself and the conviction to make one wanting to donate.

The Lord Buddha has spoken on the subject of making donations saying that there are six different types or what is referred to as **paramatthadāna**. They are as follows:-

1. The eyes – once our eyes have seen an object (rūpa) that could be suitable for use or consumption by monks, we can then contemplate that these objects should be suitable for making merits. That in itself is merit and virtuous deeds.

2. The ears – When others suggest merit making, we then have a desire to join them. In this, there is the act of hearing others make invitations, which then causes in us a desire to join them in carrying out these good and virtuous deeds.

3. The nose – once the nose has smelled a scent, such as those of flowers, incense, food or any other scented objects, there is the desire to take the object to adorn the altar that one uses for worshipping, or else take the object for offering.

4. The tongue – once we have tasted food, which can be any type of edible food irrespective of it being yāvakālik, yāmakālik, sattāhakālik, or even the yāvajīk, we can contemplate whether this food would be suitable to offer to monks. For example - when we drink sugar cane juice, or eat honey, or any other forms of sugars, we may think to offer it. Having only to contemplate this and not yet having brought it to be offered to monks, one has already gained merits.

5. The body – once our body has felt or come into contact with any kinds of clothing or coverings, we then contemplate whether it would be good to use this material to make robes for monks or ponder if this type of monks’ mat can be used for monks’ seating, perhaps we gain merits. Only one has contemplated it and not yet brought it to offer to monks, by having thought of it has already gained us merits.

6. The mind – all of the five **dānas**¹² that have been previously mentioned can all be summed up as being **dhammārammaṇa**¹³, which exists in our mind. Once the mind has the initial intention to bring an object to make merits, we then seek out these objects so that we can take them to make merits. Even though we have not yet brought these objects to be offered to monks, merits have already been gained. As the mind has the intention first to bring whichever object they desire in order to make merits or carry out good deeds, it therefore becomes the bulk of the intention or otherwise the sixth paramatthadāna.

Giving objects for dānas in accordance with those in Phra Vinaya (Monastic Codes of Conducts) are as follows :-

1. Cīvara – Monks’ robes and coverings

2. Piṇḍapāta – Food and alms food

3. Senāsana – Lodgings, utensils and any other implements that are or can be used by monks. This includes sālā,¹⁴ vihāra,¹⁵ kuṭī¹⁶ and mosquito net intention for these are to be tools and equipments.

4. Bhesajja (medicines) – that are either for treatment or remedial, for all kinds of sicknesses.

¹²Dāna – is the act of giving inclusive of giving of alms, gifts, donation, benefaction, or charity.

¹³ Dhammārammaṇa – refers to a mind – object or a cognizable object.

¹⁴ Sālā – refers to a structure that has multi purposes and can be used in a variety of activities such as merit making activities, studying, or can be used as a public hall.

¹⁵ Vihāra - these can be either a dwelling for monks, a repository of Buddha images or a shrine hall.

¹⁶ Kuṭī – refers to a place that is an abode for monks or novices.

All of the above are dāna which is permissible under the tenet of **Phra Vinaya** (Monastic Codes of Conducts).

The Lord Buddha granted permission for robes, coverings, food, buildings of lodging, and assembly halls, or making up of travelling mosquito nets, all of which are intended for the monks' rain retreat. Even though monks may be residing up high in the jungle, there is a desire by people to construct quarters for monks. Should there be a monk who has fallen sick or beset by sickness, people will go in search of medicine for the monk to rid him of his sufferings, so that monk can pursue and continue with his daily practice. All of these danas are known as dānas in Phra Vinaya (Monastic Codes of Conducts).

Dānas in Phra Sutta ¹⁷ consist of ten different types. These are:

- 1 Annamā Pānamā
- 2 Vatthamā
- 3 Yānamā
- 4 Mālā
- 5 Gandhamā
- 6 Vilepanamā
- 7 Seyyāvasathamā
- 8 Padīpeyyamā
- 9 Dānavathu
- 10 Ime dasa

These are – food, rice, water, clothing, and vehicles – be it planes, trains or cars. As well as flowers, fragrant, cream/oils, mattresses and seating mats, inclusive of lodgings, lightings, incense, candles, electricity and torches (including any other objects which emit light).

¹⁷ Sutta – it is the discourses or the original sermons and dialogues of the Buddha.

These are the ten types of dānas from Phra Sutta all Buddhists should attempt to accumulate and to make merits and do virtuous deeds, so that it will ultimately become their refuge and support, depending on which one of the ten different types of dānas a person is able to perform. The objects a person wishes to donate depends upon their personal intention, and merits they shall gain are as follows-

Annado palado hoti, a person who donates rice, food stuffs or beverages will have strength and a strong body.

Vatthadō hoti Vaṇṇado, a person who donates clothing or adornment for the body will have a beautiful complexion.

Yānado sukhado hoti, a person who donates vehicles or have provided means of travelling – that person has given comfort to others. Result will be that they too, will be happy.

Dīpado hoti, a person who offers lighting, electricity, torches, incense or candles has given brightness. Thus it is said they have given ‘eyes’. When they are reborn into another realm of life they will not suffer any of the illnesses from childhood to adult and old age. They will not have to wear spectacles since their eyesight will be good. Some people have poor eyesight from the time that they are young as they have not performed this kind of merit making activities no incense, candles, electricity, or torches have been donated in a previous life. Hence, their eyesight is poor.

The Lord Buddha made the announcement, “**Manāpadāyī laphate manāpam aggassa dātā laphate punaggam varassa dātā varalāphi hoti seṭṭhandado seṭṭhamupeti ṭānam**”. This translates as “A person who gives an object that is pleasing will in return receive an object that is pleasing to them. A person who gives resplendent objects will in return, receive resplendent objects. A person who offers good things will receive good things in return. And,

a person who offers excellence in position will achieve that excellent position himself”.

Hence, when we are offering anything at all we must have within us contentment and satisfaction. Whether the donation is large or small, there must be contentment in performing that merit making activity. Supposing we want to donate ten baht, but someone states that ten baht is too little an amount and that twenty baht would be better. The merits were fully gained from the first ten baht but the second lot of ten baht did not bring forth the full merits since that money was influenced. Merit is in the mind. If we want to offer one hundred baht, and someone commented that one hundred baht is far too little and that it needs to be two hundred baht, only the merit from the first one hundred baht will be gained fully. The subsequent one hundred baht will not bring them the full merits, as we were not willing to give, and there was not any intention to give.

For that reason, whatever the amount we have the ability to donate is the amount we are to donate. It is important that there must be the willingness and satisfaction in giving. If there is no willingness to donate, then do not donate. Because by doing Sowithout willingness, there will be no happiness in the mind. In everything, if there is no willingness there will not be any happiness, however if there is the willingness, then there will be happiness. Even if the amount donated may have been small, the mind is happy because we have the willingness. **In giving donations, it simply needs to be that it is appropriate to our capabilities as well as our willingness to donate. To have faith also means to have the willingness; that is having the contentment and satisfaction in giving. Willingness in the giving is Paramatthadāna.**

Making of dānas that are in accordance with the in Phra Suttas and Phra Vinaya are the requisites that we need to make as savings for the future. If we are to be reborn again in the next life, we can come to depend on these requisites to be our implements and tools

which can assist us in establishing good foundations. This is akin to a person who is building a house, whereby one needs to dig holes, erect posts, construct frames and trusses, then one needs to ensure that all beams and supports are fixed and firmly in place (which is like the making of merits). Initially, one needs to have money, but thereafter one can gradually build a house. The foundation needs to be constructed well before the walls are built then follows construction of the entire house. This way the house will not crack, break, be lopsided or fallen apart.

Whether it is a house or a high rise building, we need to have a strong foundation. If we build on a foundation that is not strong, an earthquake can easily cause it to collapse. If the foundation is strong, in the event of an earthquake it will not collapse. Compare this to a person who has money. Whenever he travels, he will always have money to cover the costs of his transport, petrol, living expenses, and accommodation. He is also able to uphold his precepts well, because he is not troubled by economic woes. As he practices meditation he need not be troubled by worries about money. If one has money, the mind will be able to find peace easily. Once the mind is at peace, one can use this mind to examine and investigate all kinds of matters without fears of having to seek money to buy food for themselves – isn't that correct? Whether they are supporting a family or looking after themselves, if a person has money he is able to sit and contemplate for many long hours without fear of wasting time because his (financial) foundation is firm.

Having a good foundation is a necessary. If there is a good foundation of substance it will allow one to observe the precepts. If a person observes the precepts as his foundation, it will enable the mind to be calm in gaining concentration easily. Once there is a strong platform of concentration, it will then enable the development of wisdom and knowledge; being rid of defilements becomes easier. Good concentration will allow for the examination and investigation

of any matter, because the mind does not wander. Whatever you are observing, truly observe it well. One needs to truly scrutinise in order to understand clearly. Once, there is concentration as a foundation, the mind is able to search for what makes us happy, or what makes us miserable. Similar to making of merits, if one carries out the merit making it is one who receives happiness. One who observes precepts will have precepts. Consequently, there is no need for one to have any nervousness, or fear of police and the law because our morals are good; we have good samādhi, and good sati sampajañña. If there already is samadhi, then the knowledge and wisdom that is derived will also be good. Similar to a person who has foundations and mental discipline, whatever they wish to examine they can do it appropriately. Lack of concentration will lead to the wandering and distraction of the mind. They will be faced with difficulty as the understanding of matters becomes arduous, because of their inability to have a firm foothold.

Whenever I teach foreigners, I use a torch light so that I can point out various objects to them. I then explain that if your mind is not calm and concentrating, the image they are observing is not visible. Like when I will clearly visible. Like when I will move about the torch light around here and there. However, if one is to shine a light on an object and keep it still, the object seen will appear clear. This is similar to a mind that is already calmed and focussed. Hence I would like to teach all of you that if your mind is focussed, you will be able to understand and appreciate matters clearly, and will no longer be puzzled. This is the mind that has the concentration and mental discipline. This leads to wisdom and knowledge, and we will be able to truly understand the subject.

We need to find a method of teaching that can be comprehended by others. We only need to observe things around us, it is not

necessary for us to consider to the time of the Lord Buddha where he may have given instructions for things to be carried out in a certain manner. One should use examples that can be seen and quickly appreciated by others. It is here that is the most important point to find a method of teaching that can be understood easily by others.

If we understand matters relating to making of merits, it doesn't matter where we are making these merits. We will understand the occasion for which we are about to make merits with the monks. We will appreciate the precepts that are observed by monks, understand how they conduct themselves, and how we should conduct ourselves; so that monks' observation of precepts will not be wronged. The people making these merits will gain the merits correctly as taught according to the Buddhist principles (for Thai monks are considered to be fields of merit for which the devotees can grow and harvest their merits. It is considered that there are no greater fields for merits). We should be cautious so that monks do not commit wrongdoing in their observation of precepts, whilst the devout themselves do not carry out merit making in the wrong manner. Merits will be gained fully with both parties, if they are clean and pure.

Now that we know that **making of merits in Paramatthadana have six different types, making of merits in Phra Vinaya (Codes of Monastic Conducts) have four types, and making of merits in Phra Sutta (The Original Discourse given by Lord Buddha) there are ten different types.** Therefore, having understood how to make merits and offering objects suitable to the occasion; we should then conduct ourselves accordingly. This is so that merits can be gained fully, according to the desire that one intended.

If we do not know or do not understand, then we should first ask monks what the most correct method of making merits are. If we do not understand when we bring objects to make these merits we will want monks to accept everything. If the monks do not accept the objects offered, we may become displeased with the monks for not

accepting these objects, not appreciating the fact that if monks accept these objects their holding of precepts will be wronged. When we want to make merits we want to do it with monks who have good precepts, and well disciplined minds with good wisdom and knowledge. These are the monks who are considered to be a good ground for which the people of the world can sow their merits. Everyone wants to make merits with monks who have good conducts. Any temples that have monks with good conduct will attract people there to make merits.

If a monk teaches us, we need to listen to him since he has been previously instructed; he is considered to have precepts, a disciplined mind, and would have been taught according to the principles of Buddhism. We need to give each other opportunities. What the best or the most correct is needed to be asked from the monks. Monks will teach and give explanations so that one can understand. If that monk is not well versed, he will then suggest that you should ask another monk, or another ācariya. We would wish to see a monk who is wise, educated, steadfast, and has principles. He will explain so that one can understand completely the ways in which we need to conduct ourselves.

A monk may suggest that you seek help from others if he himself does not understand clearly himself. Perhaps he is someone who is newly ordained, an elderly monk who cannot read well, or is yet to fully comprehend well the Phra Vinaya (Code of Conducts) himself. In this regard, he will not be able to explain as he has not studied it himself. He will only have the understanding of how to observe his precepts and how to conduct himself. In so far as studying matters in the Tripitaka, if the monk has not conducted thorough research he will still not have any appreciation of how he is to conduct himself in the right manner, and he will not be able to

clearly explain to the devotees clearly what is decreed by the Lord Buddha.

The Lord Buddha was a most thorough and cautious person. There is no other monk who has the wisdom and knowledge and who knows things more clearly and proficiently, or who is wiser than him. There is no one else who has the wisdom and knowledge equal to that of Lord Buddha in this world. One can say ‘Loka vidu’ having a thorough knowledge of this world. He is the most outstanding teacher of this world, including all those in heaven and all human beings. There is no one who knows as much as the Lord Buddha.

Now we return to **matters relating to objects that have been offered to monks and that are granted under the Lord Buddha’s directives (Buddha Tikā)**. The following was said by the Lord Buddha, “If devotees invite monks to take food at their lodgings or at any other places they shall not announce the names of the five categories of food (these food being rice/potatoes/taro/ porridge, sweets, meats, fruits or vegetables.)” For example, a person may announce to a monk that they will make this type or that type of food to offer. They may have announced that they will cook rice porridge, sweets, fried bananas, noodle soup or such likes. By having announced the names of these five groups of food, monks can not eat any of these food at all because if a monk has consumed any of food that have been mentioned, then he has committed eclectic wrongdoings wrongs (Āpatti) for every mouthful that he has taken. It is an incorrect practice to invite monks to take food at their lodgings, and simultaneously make an announcement of foods to be served; this is an incorrect practice according to Phra Dhamma-Vinaya (Monastic Codes of Conducts).

The reasons for that one should not announce the five categories of food are as follows. For example, if one were to invite monks to come and eat at one’s lodgings and along with the invitation, one had given the names of the food that would be served to the monks. In

saying to monks that they will purchase a special type of bananas to offer to monks, or that they may use these special bananas to make some form of dessert or some other forms of food for monks. As they went to purchase these special types of bananas none were available for purchasing at any of the places. Consequently, the devotee becomes disheartened and upset, because they are unable to keep the sacca²² they had given to the monks. It makes devotees suffered hardship, and merits they wished to make were not fully realised. This has caused them to be miserable, because they have been unable to fulfil their promise.

If one had not mentioned any names of these five edible groups of food, then one is free to purchase bananas or any other types of fruits or food that is available, and offer it to monks with ease. The devotee will then not be distressed or miserable whilst the monks' observation of precepts will not be compromised. **Hence at the time that we invite monks to take food at home or at any other place, to make it correct and be in accordance to the Buddhist principles and that of Phra Dhamma-Vinaya (the Codes of Conduct) one should not mention the names of these five categories of edible food.** Offering of mentioned food is known as “mamisa aṭṭhi” meaning that this food has been made in dedication to the “monks; or food that devotees have said they will make in order to offer it to the monks. Once monks have heard those words and have seen the food, they will feel rejection for the food that has been brought because they have caused others distress and monks should never cause any devotees hardship.

The Lord Buddha said that a monk should conduct himself so that he is **sovacasatta that is a person who is obliging and agreeable, and be suparutta or a person who is easy to take care of.** Monk should not be a difficult person to take care of. If devotees find difficulty in cooking for the monks, or monks telling devotees

²² Saccā – an oath or a promise.

their wish to eat a certain type of food - this is not permissible; both are wrong in precepts. Whatever food devotees have offered, then that is the food they have to eat. If they are unable to eat the food, they don't eat. If eaten it results in stomach upsets or feeling unwell, or the food is unhealthy, then we need not consume the food but merely accept food that is offered. Monks should choose food that agrees with their elements and their body – if it is, then they can eat it. If monks choose to be vegetarian, they are to make food selection by themselves without instructing devotees to bring only vegetarian food. Should devotees offer food containing meat products, then they are to accept the food and select only those that agree with their body. The exception is the ten different types of meats (mamisa) that the Lord Buddha has instructed monks not to accept or to eat. These meats are: human meat, elephant meat, horse meat, yellow tigers, Bengal tigers, leopards, bears, lions, dogs, and snakes. All of these meats the Lord Buddha prohibited monks from accepting, cooked or raw. All of the above have reasons as in the following.

The reason that the Lord Buddha prohibits monks from consuming human meat is as follows.

A woman devotee by the name of Suppiya went to visit a temple paying her respect to the monks, and whilst there she came across a sick monk. She asked the sick monk “What type of food will make you feel better venerable sir?” The sick monk answered “Eating soup with meat will make me better.” Thus Suppiya makes her verbal offer (pavāraṇā) to the monk in which she said, “I will make a meat soup for you to eat tomorrow.”

Once she had returned home, she instructed her maid to go and purchase meat from the village. Coincidentally, it was the fourteenth night of the waxing moon (the night before the Buddhist Sabbath). During the Lord Buddha's time killing of animals for meat was only carried out from the period of the second night of the waxing moon until the thirteenth night. There was no killing of animals on the

fourteenth and fifteenth night of the waxing moon, nor during the first night of the waning moon.

During these three days, there was no meat available to be purchased. Being unable to purchase any meat, Suppiya was afraid that she will not be able to keep to her words (saccā) for which she had made her verbal offering (pavāraṇā) to the monk. Because Suppiya was a person who is Phra Sotāpaññā²³, being a person who has hiriottappa²⁴ as well as being a person who keeps to her words (saccā), she decided to slice off some flesh from her leg to give to her maids to cook so that it can be offered to the sick monk. Once the sick monk consumed the soup, he was overcome with extreme lethargy and exhaustion and all he wanted to do was to lie down. When fellow monks came to visit him he told them that he had eaten a meaty soup, and thereafter he felt lethargic and had no desire to sit up at all.

On the following day, the rich man who was Suppiya's husband wished to invite the Lord Buddha and his disciple monks to come and eat at his house. Once the Lord Buddha arrived and made his entrance into the house, he could not see Suppiya coming out to receive him. Only her husband came to welcome him. The Lord Buddha thus asked the whereabouts of Suppiya and why she did not come out to receive him. The rich man replied that his wife was not well and was resting. The Lord Buddha then asked servants to go in and help Suppiya to come out and see him. Once Suppiya saw the Lord Buddha standing in front of her she became overwhelmed with happiness that she forgot about the pain from the wound on her leg. She then made her composure by prostrated before the Lord Buddha to pay obeisance and exchanged greetings with him.

Once Lord Buddha had taken up the seat mat (āsana) which had been especially prepared for him, both the rich man and his wife

²³ Phra Sotāpaññā – a person who has attained the first stage of holiness.

²⁴ Hiriottappa – those who have a moral shame, moral fear (a conscience).

brought out food to offer to Lord Buddha and the disciple monks, all of whom they had invited to take food at their lodging. After all of the food had been offered, the Lord Buddha and the other monks began to eat. Suppiya paid respect to the Lord Buddha and returned to her bedroom so that she could take off the bandage to inspect her wound. She observed that the tissue around her leg had regrown to its original size as though there was no wound there, and there was no pain to the extent that it all felt normal. She then returned to take up her seat a short distance away so that she could observe whilst the Lord Buddha was taking his meal. Having finished the food the Lord Buddha then gave blessings to the husband and wife upon which he and his disciples returned to the temple.

That evening after the Lord Buddha had completed his teachings to the monks through his *nāna*²⁵ he was able to know that the sick monk had eaten human meat. He then made his announcement to the gathered group of monks that the sick monk has eaten human meat, which is not an acceptable type of meat to be consuming. He then made a proclamation that **“From now on, no monk is allowed to consume human meat, and they are not permitted to accept it, cooked or raw”**. Hence this was the account that gave rise to the Lord Buddha’s proclamation on this directive (Buddha – *Ṭikā*).

The Reason for which the Lord Buddha prohibited monks from consuming elephant meat is because of an incident that occurred when monks had gone to meditate in a jungle. Some monks who, as lay people, used to consume elephant meat and that the elephants were able to smell the odour of these monks who used to consume the elephant meat, these elephants came to attack these monks. This resulted in these monks being maimed or killed. But those monks who had not eaten elephant meat sustained no injuries as the elephants did not harm them. The monks who survived were able to come back and report the incident to the Lord Buddha. The Lord

²⁵ *Māna* – a person who insightfulness, wisdom, or knowledge.

Buddha asked “Where are your fellow monks?” The disciples replied “They have been killed by elephants, venerable sir”.

From there on, the Lord Buddha instructed monks that they are not permitted to eat elephant meat, and nor are they permitted to accept the meat, cooked or raw.

The reason the Lord Buddha has prohibited monks from consuming horse meat is because if a monk who, as a lay person, has eaten horse meat, after he becomes ordained as a monk and goes on alms rounds in the village, horses there, having smelt his odour, will use their hind legs to kick the monk. This would cause the monk to fall and his alms bowl to slip from his hands, and subsequently the monk would sustain injuries. This is the origin of the Lord Buddha’s instruction to monks whereby they are prohibited from consuming horse meat, and are not permitted to accept an offering of this meat, be it cooked or raw.

The reason that the Lord Buddha prohibited monks from consuming all types of wild animals included are yellow tiger, leopard, Bengal tiger, and lion or bear meat is because there had been monks who, as lay people, used to consume these meats. Having been ordained as monks, they set about to practice meditation in the jungle. Whilst the monks were there, some of these wild animals smelled these monks’ odour, and these beasts seized the opportunity to strike and kill the monks. However, there were some monks who had never consumed those meats, and they were left safe and alive. The monks who survived were able to return to pay their respects to the Lord Buddha, whereupon the Enlightened One asked “Where are your fellow monks?” To that the monks replied by saying “They have been killed by the wild animal venerable sir”. Consequently, the Lord Buddha instructed that no monks are allowed to consume leopard, bear, lion, Bengal or yellow tiger meat; furthermore they are not allowed to accept these meats cooked or raw.

The reasons that the Lord Buddha prohibited monks from eating dog meat is because, if a monk who as a lay person has consumed dogs' meat, when he becomes ordained as a monk, during his alms round or during his travels, dogs will bark and bite that monk. Monks who previously had never consumed dog meat will not be barked at or bitten by dogs. This was the origin of the Lord Buddha's instructions to monks that they are prohibited from eating dog meat or accepting dog meat, cooked or raw.

The reason that Lord Buddha instructed monks not to consume snake meat is because a great serpent came to pay his respect to the Lord Buddha. On that visit, the great serpent asked the Lord Buddha to prohibit monks from eating any type of snake meat since snakes were in the same clan - species as he (great serpent). If any monks that have eaten snakes' meat go to bathe in the river, the serpents that witnessed this may become angry and will attack and kill the monks. The Lord Buddha thus instructed monks that, from then on, they are not to consume snakes' meat of any type, and not to accept this meat, whether it is cooked or raw.

Apart from the meats mentioned above, the Lord Buddha did not prohibit monks from eating other types of meat, although it has to be thoroughly cooked. However any monks who develop discomfort after eating the meat should refrain from eating it. They should limit themselves to fruits and vegetables or other food that do not cause discomfort to the body.

Hence, whether monks or lay people who wish to eat vegetarian or lay people or monks who wish to eat meat that is made permissible by the Lord Buddha, the important thing is that by having consumed it, one's existence should be comfortable. When they practice meditation, their mind will be at ease. With mindfulness and wisdom, they may even be able to attain an insight into the dhammas as well. However if either monks or the lay supporters do not have

mindfulness and wisdom, then they will not be able to have insights into dhammas.

Once we appreciate all of this it should prevent us developing conceit or erroneous opinions. All human beings born into this world will usually have differing habits, characters and elements and are born into different families. Our mindfulness and wisdom are different to one another, whereby some may have more and others may have less. They are not equal to one another, and this all depends on who happens to have more of the mindfulness and wisdom.

In Buddhism, ridding oneself of all defilements relies upon one's own mindfulness and wisdom. Although that individual may have great amounts of money or gold he still is unable to make a purchase of wisdom. He simply needs to rely upon himself. **Especially being acceptance of the fact that wisdom will only develop as the consequence of one's own undertaking.** For example heat, cold, sorrow and happiness are subjects for the self only. It is one's self who makes the decisions containing cause and effect. Having been informed, one makes the decisions. It is not for others to abstain from defilements on our behalf. This wisdom and concentration (samādhi puññā) cannot be purchased or hired with any amount of money since no one can sell it to them. Therefore one needs to carry out the practice by oneself first and this will give rise to wisdom and concentration (samādhi puññā). Here is both affirmation and foundation of Buddhism according to of the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

Thus, it is the task of each and every one of us to practice and train our mindfulness and wisdom to be strong and robust. The Lord Buddha would question monks who had been absent for one, two, or three months to practice meditation and when they returned in order

to pay respect to him. The Lord Buddha would ask them “Bikkhus, are all of your five indriya²⁶ strong and robust or not as yet?”.

Monks who have attained insight into dhammas would remain still, but those who not yet attained insightfulness would reply to the Lord Buddha by saying ‘Venerable One, all of my five spiritual faculties (indriya) is not yet strong and robust’. The Enlightened One then replied “Then it is your task to ask me, because you still do not know, is that not correct?” Monks who know the five spiritual faculties (indriya), know that they consist of the followings:

1. **Saddhindriya** : Do we have full confidence in the religion for us to carry out our practice in an endeavour to rid us of defilements?

2. **Viriya-indriya** : Is our endeavour strong and vigorous enough for us to carry on the walking meditation, sitting meditation and training of our mind every minute, every hour with the exception of when we are asleep?

3. **Satindriya** : Do we have the presence of mindfulness that is cautious whilst we stand, walk, sit, lying down or in any of the other movements?

4. **Samādhindriya** : Do we have a mind that is firm with a concentration that is steadfast and unswerving?

5. **Paññindriya** : Do we have the power of knowledge and wisdom that knows matters relating to the saṃkhāra²⁷? This one is the way to gain an insight into enlightenment, so that we can be rid of all burdens and unhappiness.

Any monk who has attained an insight into the rudimentary teachings of the Lord Buddha dhamma’s will become a person who is Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahanta. The Lord Buddha would have known that they do not enquire about what it is since they already know. However, if any monks do not know or do not comprehend,

²⁶ Indriya – refers to the spiritual or controlling faculties.

²⁷ Saṃkhāra – a composition of things, thing that is of world phenomena or all of things make up by pre-existing causes.

they will need to ask. The Lord Buddha will know which of the monks has attained enlightenment into arahanta, or has practiced to which of the levels. This is because the Lord Buddha has the ability to probe into the monks' minds.

Regard to the **doing of good deeds**, there is a Buddhist proverb that the Lord Buddha taught 'Ye tattha anumodanti veyyāvaccam karoti vā na tena **dakkhiṇā** onā tepi puññassa phāgino'. That is, people of any group who either join in to rejoice in the good deeds, or partake in seeking of that object (dāna) their act of benevolence (dakkhiṇādāna) will not be blemished. These people will inevitably have a share in that merit as well.

All merits are accomplished by one's effort in carrying out the good deeds. This is making an effort to tell others to make merits, even if they themselves do not partake in it. We also have gained merits, because we have encouraged others to do good deeds. However, it is merits for the effort, as we have not donated physical objects as well.

If we were to make donations or offering of any objects, and as well as that we have invited others to join in the act, they may join in to donate ten baht, twenty baht or whatever, and with that donation they too gained the merits. Or, we may invite others to join in merit making, however being unable they have entrusted their money to us to be part of merit making, it can be ten baht, or twenty baht. They too have gained merits, however they need to rely upon us to bring along their donations so that they can succeed in their merit making. This is known as merits accomplished by one's efforts.

All merits accomplished by the act of rejoicing in the merits. This is when we observe others making merits and we then announce the word 'Sādhu, let that merit be successful, I rejoice with you', and with that we, too, will gain merits. Because it is merits accomplished by our act of rejoicing, for we are happy with merit making by others.

We too gain merits. Our mind has also gained happiness, because of the act of rejoicing, giving praise, and respecting others for their good deeds. Hence our mind too is happy, because we have not opposed or been inhospitable to them. Subsequently, they are able to make merits and gained happiness.

“Tasmā dadeappativānacitto yattha dinnam mahāpphalam”.
This is translated to mean:

“Being a human, one ought to have the mind that is not discouraged” and “Any place that gives us the most result (merits) then, one ought to give to that place.” The latter means that we should choose a place to make merits just as though we are planting crops of vegetables, fruit, rice seedlings or whatever. One needs to select a ground that is fertile, so that the plants that we have planted will yield plentiful crops. Similarly, our place of merit making is our field of merits.

“Puññāni paralokassamim patiṭṭhā honti pāṇinanti”, this is translated as:

“Merits will inevitably be a refuge that all living beings can come to depend upon in the next world”.

Hence, with the merits that we have created when we are reborn we will receive those merits. But if we are doing it now in this life time, we will have received it already in this life time. Once our merits are fulfilled, happiness is already there in this life time. This is the way of causation. Here we have to come to practice a cause. If one’s conduct has been good, one will then be granted a higher position. This occurs as a consequence of one’s conduct. As they say ‘a cause that will bring forth goodness, since a good cause will bring a good result, and subsequent to that is happiness’. If the cause is good then the person is also good; and a bad cause will thus equate to a bad person. This is referring to people having understanding of the

teachings of Buddhism according to the way that instructed by the Lord Buddha.

Once we have this understanding, whether we donate large or little depending on what we can afford, we should learn not to burden ourselves, or our family, or cause one grief as a consequence.

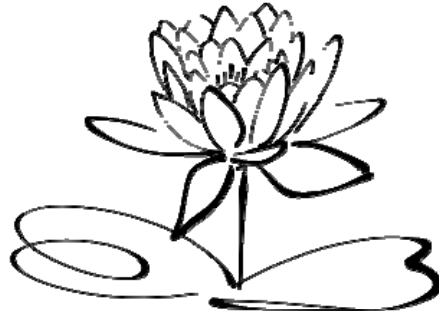
If our thoughts are good, speak with goodness. If we do good deeds the result will be happiness. This is called sammādiṭṭhi. But, if our thoughts are not good, and we speak with evilness, and do bad deeds, the result will be unhappiness and grief. This is known as micchādiṭṭhi .

Thus, it is the task of we who are Buddhists to study and learn, and to gain appreciation on matters relating to **sammādiṭṭhi**, that is in the lives of human beings. Because dhamma develops as the product of a cause, and will only cease because of a cause.

Therefore, in making of merits, it must not bring forth unhappiness or grievance, and nor should it make others unhappy as well. In doing anything, one shall not exploit oneself or others. Likewise, when talking with others one should not exploit oneself or others. In thinking, one should neither exploit oneself nor others. That is in ‘doing’, it should not be a torment to others; in ‘speaking’ it should not be a distress to others. If others are not distressed, we are not distressed, because we have been correct in our doing, our speech, and our thoughts. Our thoughts have been such that others do not suffer any distress, and for that we do not suffer any distress as well. This is known as the repercussion that comes back without any vexation. Accordingly, it is known as work that is without penalty where it is done by the body, spoken with words, thought with the mind, and jobs that do not bring penalties with them. We all ought to come to conduct ourselves for happiness.

Therefore, it is my desire to have this book as a manual for all lay people to study and to understand, so that all devotees can make merits correctly, in accordance with the principles as instructed by the Lord Buddha.





Reference Dictionary of Buddhism;
P.A Payutto, Chulalongkhon University, B.E 2546.

We are grateful to the following people whose names appear below for their generous contribution of money towards the publishing of this book -‘Offering of Requisites to monks and conduct that is to be observed by devotees’.

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