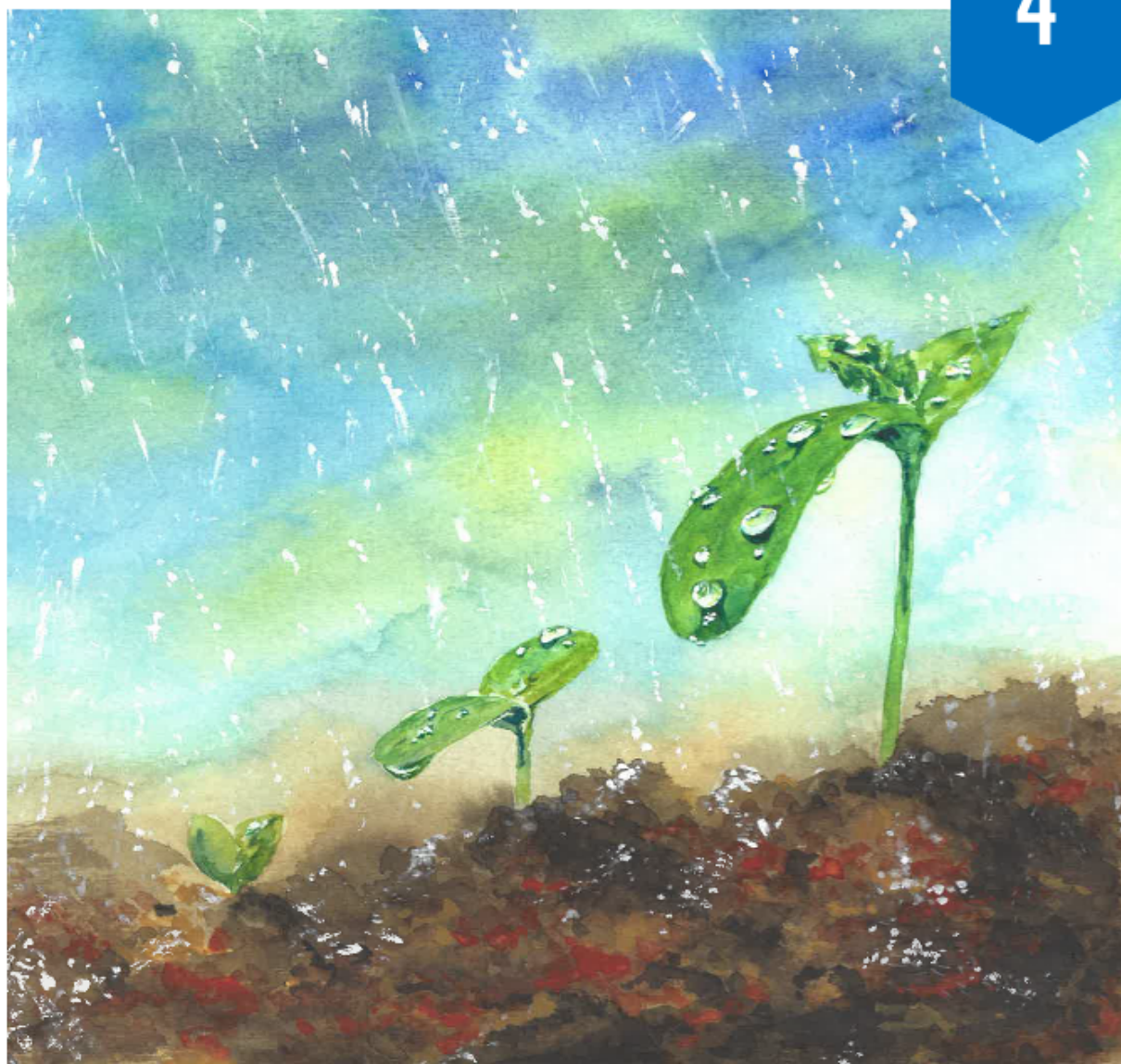


Essential Dhamma Series

4



A chapter from upcoming book

Towards the Light

GENEROSITY | CĀGA

Sylvia Bay

A Scholar and Practitioner

GENEROSITY (*CĀGA*)

by Sylvia Bay

Fourth chapter from upcoming book,
“Towards the Light”

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“If beings knew, as I know, the results of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would they allow the stain of meanness to obsess them and take root in their minds.

Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared it, if there were someone to share it with.”

- THE BUDDHA¹ -

THE AUTHOR

*"The realisation of Dhamma is like sunrise. You start out
in pitch darkness. You see nothing. You are clueless.
Your ignorance makes you blind."*

Abstract from Dawning of Dhamma

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[I] GENEROSITY

Generosity is a relatively straightforward concept. Generosity is a positive and heartwarming mental state that prompts us to set aside our desire, preferences, and self-interest to help or accommodate another. Generosity is universally praised and prized. It is often part of the moral teachings that generations of well-meaning parents would teach their little ones. It is so valued that someone with a reputation for being generous will enjoy an elevated social standing and be perceived as kind and decent. All major religions that have survived the ages have exhorted generosity as among the highest virtues that their followers should cultivate.

At a macro societal level, generosity is an invaluable glue that holds a community together. Generosity warms hearts, promotes trust, fosters cooperation, strengthens relationships and helps society grow and thrive. At a micro level, generosity makes individuals feel good about themselves, triggers joy, and gives purpose and meaning to life.

Generosity can spontaneously arise in anyone, which suggests that it is hardwired into the human psyche. A toddler, even without adult prompting, may offer his toy to comfort another crying child. That is spontaneous generosity. Someone diving into the surging flood to save a struggling animal is demonstrating phenomenal generosity; he is risking his life and making an enormous sacrifice without expectations of rewards. Charity crowdfunding can raise incredible amount of money from generous individuals moved by the plight of random strangers.

Yet very few people are always altruistically generous. It is even rarer to find someone for whom generosity is a default state of mind. We are usually selectively and conditionally generous. Our generosity springs to life with people we love, when we are in a good mood, or when we are moved by another's pain and suffering. But as soon as affection dims, mood sours, or critical, judgemental thoughts surface, generosity shrivels up. For most, generosity is often fragile, sporadic and fleeting. It comes under emotional strain easily and can dissipate swiftly.

Furthermore, our generosity often carries an expectation that we may not even realise. For instance, even as we declare that we do not expect gratitude, observe how quickly generosity dissipates in the face of perceived ingratitude. We may claim not to expect returns or benefits, but don't we all relish a word of

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thanks from the recipient, a grateful nod, or a shy smile? Most of us will be quite upset if an act of generosity leads to problems, inconvenience or further expectations.

[III] UNIQUE PLACE OF GENEROSITY (*CĀGA*) IN BUDDHISM

The word in the *Pāli* for generosity is *cāga*. For the purpose of this writing, since it is in reference to Buddha's teaching, we will use *cāga* in place of generosity. *Cāga* has been used interchangeably with another more familiar Buddhist term *dāna* but the two words are not synonymous. *Dāna* refers to a gift or offering, while *cāga* is a mental state where one experiences joy from giving or renouncing. *Dāna* is 'external', meaning an act performed by one to another and can thus be witnessed by others. *Cāga*, being a state of mind, is felt 'internally'; its presence, exact strength and intensity is known only to the person experiencing its positive qualities. One can be going through the motion of offering *dāna* without experiencing *cāga*. Also, *dāna* is only one expression of *cāga*, which is far more multifaceted. For instance, *cāga* must be present for any successful effort to give up pettiness or selfishness. *Cāga* is also present in every willingness to forgive, embrace and accommodate another. In fact, as long as we are avoiding evil and doing good, *cāga* is present.

Cāga occupies a foremost place in Dhamma practice. It is not a good-to-have virtue but a critical must-have mental condition for a happy and meaningful life as well as for spiritual growth.² The diametrical opposite of *cāga* is miserliness and selfishness which are conditions for angst, pain and suffering. The *cāga* that Buddha had prescribed is of a much higher standard than the worldly generosity which, as we have seen earlier, is random, conditional, situational and selective. Buddha had described *cāga* as, "... a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing."³ Let's further examine the features of *cāga*.

(A) "Devoid of the stain of miserliness"

'Miserliness' is experienced as an unpleasant feeling that arises at the thought of having to give up or give away something. Even though a 'stain' is no more than a mild tinge of discomfort, that unpleasant feeling is a clue that the mind is resisting the gift. Because of that, it will not properly feel joy that invariably accompanies a giving.

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(B) “Freely generous”

A truly *cāga* mind feels free and light. It does not overthink. It acts spontaneously. It sees a need and addresses that need. When the mind starts to question and overthink, e.g., the motivations of the recipient, the implications of the gift and how the giver might be perceived, and so on, the mind will feel burdened and conflicted, and *cāga* will wither.

(C) “Openhanded”

Being openhanded literally means being big-hearted and inclusive. This would probably require treating everybody fairly, equally and without discrimination. An associated mental state here is friendly kindliness (*mettā*).⁴ Unfortunately, to be completely unbiased is easier said than done. We almost cannot help being discriminating towards people based on perception and feeling. To those we are fond of and/or respect, we will happily give. We will struggle to show generosity to someone we dislike or scorn.

(D) “Delighting in relinquishment”

Our worldly experience tells us that we derive delight and pleasure from gains and accumulations. But, in *cāga*, the opposite happens; joy and happiness come from voluntarily giving and letting go. The more willing we are, the more intense the joy.

(E) “Devoted to charity”

Buddha’s choice of words here is intriguing. It implies that embedded in *cāga* is compassion (*karuṇā*).⁵ This is not just ‘feeling sorry’ for another which could be mistaken to be compassion but is in fact just passive sympathy. Genuine compassion will spur one to act to alleviate the pain and suffering. *Cāga* and compassion are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. When compassion is triggered, even the most calculating and cynical amongst us can be *cāga*. Conversely, when *cāga* is weak, ‘compassion’ is shaky. When we feel threatened, cheated or being taken advantage of, *cāga* will dissipate and so will compassion.

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(F) “Delighting in giving and sharing”

When a giving is pure and without agenda, one will spontaneously feel joy and happiness.⁶ In this giving, there is no holding back.

The *cāga* in Buddha’s teaching is thus spontaneous, joyous, altruistic and unconditional. *Cāga* is devoid of ego and self-interest. It has no expectations. It does not discriminate. It does not judge. Instead, it is powerful, joyous, uplifting, and liberating. In a beautiful analogy about a truly *cāga* person, Buddha likened him to a “great storm cloud” that rains everywhere and gives to all.⁷ Buddha said:

*“A person renowned for his bounty,
Compassionate towards all beings,
Distributes alms gladly.
“Give! Give!” he says.
Like a great storm cloud,
That thunders and rains down
Filling the levels and hollows
Saturating the earth with water,
Even so is such a person.”*

Like a storm cloud, he is ‘bursting’ to give. His generosity flows spontaneously, effusively, in all directions. One can almost visualise the liberating, joyous sensation when that “great storm cloud” bursts and drenches all alike. This stands in contrast to the stingy person whom Buddha called a “rainless cloud” that does not give to anyone (“neither to recluses nor brahmins, nor to the poor and destitute”), or the discriminating cloud that “rains locally”, i.e., gives only selectively.⁸ Both of which sound so parched, lifeless and desolate.

[III] EXPRESSIONS OF CĀGA

(A) *Dāna*

As mentioned earlier, *cāga* is usually associated with *dāna*. The two are often used interchangeably and thought to be synonymous. But there is a clear difference. To reiterate, *dāna* means offering alms or the act of giving while *cāga* is a state of mind. Nevertheless, *dāna* is still an important expression of *cāga* and a good start point to understand the nature of *cāga*.

Dāna can be both tangible or intangible. The list of tangible *dāna* is as lengthy as Man's needs and wants: from the essential such as food, water, medicine, shelter and life-saving aid (blood and bodily organs), to modern conveniences (books, computers and smart devices) and desires (cash, jewellery) and even trinkets of at best sentimental value (collectibles and keepsakes). *Dāna* can also be intangible, such as, sharing knowledge, skills and experience, giving time, company, attention, love, and offering words of encouragement and praises.

In Buddha's teaching, all acts of *dāna*, however inconsequential or random, is to be encouraged. Buddha said, "... one acquires merit even if one throws away dishwashing water in a refuse dump or cesspit with the thought: 'May the living beings here sustain themselves with this!' How much more, then, when one gives to human beings!"⁹

Sometimes we may hesitate to give because of overthinking. For instance, we may wonder if our *dāna* is 'good enough'. Or we worry that our kind intention could be misunderstood. Or we fret that an appeal for help may not be genuine and so on. That is why it is imperative that we do not overthink when performing *dāna*. The act of *dāna* is pure. Overthinking can dilute the purity. When we are hit by an urge to offer *dāna*, just do it. Then we rejoice. Give ourselves a moment to feel good about the *dāna*, and move on. We must never regret a *dāna*. Regretting a *dāna* devalues its meaning and value.

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In one discourse captured in the Anguttara Nikaya, Buddha advised that *dāna* should be offered “out of faith ... respectfully... (in a) timely (manner)... unreservedly (and)... without injuring himself or others.”¹⁰ It is worth reflecting on his guidance.

- Giving ‘out of faith’ is not about giving to only a Buddhist cause. Buddha was never territorial or chauvinistic. He once told a new convert that the latter should continue to support his former teachers of a rival school.¹¹ It means we should act with trust and faith in the goodness of the pure act of giving and not be hobbled by suspicions, wariness and petty-minded cynicism.
- To give ‘respectfully’ seems like a reminder that we should not feel proud and behave as if we are ‘dispensing favours’. Instead, we should feel humbled by the fact that we have the means and the opportunity to help another. We should also be considerate and show sensitivity to the receiver’s feelings and self-worth.
- A ‘timely’ gift suggests that we should be sensitive to the needs of the receiver so that our gift is immediately relevant and useful. This contrast with giving only at our convenience and according to our whims and fancies.
- “Unreservedly” suggests spontaneity in the giving and the holding of nothing back. It also hints of joy and a liberating feeling in the giving.
- “Without injuring himself or others” implies that the gift is of benefit and contributes to welfare as opposed to gifts that increase greed and gratify senses. Those could create more unwholesomeness and problems. For instance, it is not *dāna* if we give money to a gambler or a drug addict knowing that they will likely feed their addiction.

In another discourse, Buddha said that intention and thoughtfulness matter more than the actual value of a gift. Whether the gift is “coarse or fine” it will yield merit as long as it was given “... carefully, thoughtfully, with their own hand. They don’t give the dregs, and they give with consideration for consequences.”¹² We should not be giving away as presents things that we want to dispose. There is no *cāga* in gifting damaged goods or expired food. Instead, a good wholesome *dāna* is thoughtful, useful, beneficial and timely.

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Merit of dāna

While we should not be expecting rewards from offering *dāna*, it is still a nice and comforting thought to know that there are kammic merits when *dāna* is performed with right intent. Buddha had said:

“Because he has given a gift out of faith, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and he is handsome, attractive, graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion;

Because he has given a gift respectfully ... his sons and wives, slaves, servants and workers are obedient, lend an ear, and apply their minds to understand;

Because he has given a timely gift ... timely benefits come to him in abundance;

Because he has given a gift unreservedly ... his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five¹³ kinds of fine sensuous pleasures;

Because he has given a gift without injuring himself or others ... no damage comes to his property from any source, whether from fire, floods, kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs.”¹⁴

The same point about thoughtful gifts made with good intention yielding positive fruits was made in another discourse. “Then wherever the result of any such gift manifests, their mind inclines toward enjoyment of nice food, clothes, vehicles, or the five refined kinds of sensual stimulation. And their children, wives, bondservants, servants, and workers want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand. Why is that? Because that is the result of deeds done carefully.”¹⁵

Dhamma dāna

While all wholesome *dāna* is to be encouraged and commended, it is worth noting that Buddha once spoke about the relative value of conventional, material gifts versus gift of Dhamma. He said, “There are these two kinds of giving: the giving of material things and the giving of the Dhamma. Of these ..., the foremost (is) the giving of the Dhamma.”¹⁶ Although Buddha did not elaborate, one can offer a plausible explanation why this sentence makes sense. Most conventional *dāna* tackles only symptoms of stresses and pain of the world: hunger, thirst, desire, fear, anxiety, and so on. But so long as we are born, pain and suffering

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(*dukkha*) is unavoidable. Only when there is no more rebirth will *dukkha* completely end. Thus, most *dāna*, however pressing and needed, are ultimately only a band-aid plaster providing temporary relief but does not close for good the episodic wounds of life.

Only one with a perfect understanding of Dhamma is completely at peace and will no longer experience *dukkha*. In fact, even for us still young on the path and puzzling over the Dhamma practice, at any point when we have a momentary right intuitive understanding of Dhamma, we too will experience some mental relief from *dukkha*. The deeper and more profound the understanding, the more powerful and longer lasting the peace and bliss. Even if we conclude this life with our Dhamma understanding still incomplete, those momentary insight and relief could leave a deep enough impression for awakening in a future life when the right mental conditions are present. Right understanding with insight, joy and peace experienced in this life can be felt for lives to come until such time when we fully realise *nibbāna*. The benefits to the recipient from a gift of the true Dhamma are thus immeasurable and timeless.

Below are some examples of Dhamma *dāna* that we can all consider doing:

- Offering resources to help propagate Dhamma. These would include donating money, time or expertise for printing of Dhamma books, setting up and maintaining Dhamma websites, organising Dhamma events such as seminars, workshops and retreats;
- Supporting sincere practitioners, particularly the monks and nuns, in their practice. These include offering alms and other requisites;
- Sharing Dhamma, in whatever way one is comfortable doing. Beyond being a trainer in a formal setting, one could also be sharing informally in casual situation to when there is keen interest. But be mindful that while sharing Dhamma, one should be wholesome, honest, sincere and humble. Tread carefully because a mistake made here could have lasting damage to another's mind. Ideally, one should have both conceptual knowledge, as well as some practical and intuitive insights before sharing;
- Staying wholesome and living by the teaching in our daily life so that we can inspire others to come along the path.

(B) Neutralising mental defilements (*akusala*)

As alluded to earlier, *cāga* is a necessary mental state to overcome any *akusala* mental states. To appreciate this, let's start by first understanding the nature of *akusala*. The term '*akusala*' has been translated as 'unwholesome', 'immoral' and 'unskillful'. *Akusala* mental states are typically felt as unpleasant feeling. In other words, whenever you do not feel good, however slightly, you should assume the presence of an *akusala* mental state in your mind.

Akusala mental states are very diverse: lust, anger, regret, worry, fear, pride, jealousy, restlessness, apathy, laziness and so on, just to name a few. Yet they do share common characteristics; they are all underpinned in varying degree by the same three unwholesome roots: greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). There are no English words that can fully capture the exact meaning of the *Pāli* counterparts. *Lobha* for instance has also been translated as 'lust', 'desire', 'craving' and 'attachment'. *Dosa* has at least three other translations namely, 'ill-will', 'aversion' and 'hatred' while *moha* has four others: 'illusion', 'ignorance', 'wrong view', and 'foolishness'. The limitation of the English translation can lead to an incomplete or even flawed understanding of the concepts. So, in this writing, we will use the *Pāli* words to minimise conflicting understanding.

Akusala mental states are sticky. Once they have arisen, they are difficult to dislodge or overcome. Caught in the grip of *akusala*, we feel compelled to follow their damaging, even destructive, urges. *Akusala* hijack logical reasoning and pump emotions up. Often against our better and more sensible judgement, we follow habits and instincts and respond in destructive ways. There is a part in us that knows we should not give in to those harmful urges, but still we do. After succumbing to *akusala* compulsions, the better ones amongst us will regret and feel remorse.

The list of Man's *akusala* is lengthy and it is not possible to have an exhaustive discussion of how *cāga* can neutralise every *akusala*. Instead, we shall focus on examining how *cāga* neutralises the three *akusala* drivers of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

Lobha

When *lobha* arises, there is something that we badly want. Being *cāga* in the face of *lobha* means a willingness to set aside that wanting. For instance, after a hard day's work, we just want to sit back and relax. But *cāga* prompts us to get up and cheerfully pitch in to help with housework so that a loved one can rest

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too. We lack *cāga* when we refuse to compromise on comfort and pleasure. One who is *cāga* would not grab that last piece of delicious morsel, or play dumb when an elderly person stands struggling on public transport, or sweep the shelves of necessities during national emergencies, and so on. *Cāga* leads us to be gracious, thoughtful and considerate, empathetic and helpful.

Dosa

When *dosa* arises, there is strong disapproval of someone or something often because we perceive that our interests and pleasure had been hurt. The more we think about the loss, the more disgruntled and resentful we get. We spin destructive narratives of moral outrage, bruised ego and damaged pride. Being *cāga* in the face of *dosa* means a willingness to ‘forgive’ another for perceived transgressions, to let go of pain and hurt, and to accept ‘perceived’ losses and inconveniences. Being *cāga* means being the first to reach out to another and make peace.

Moha

Moha is a mental state that underpins all *akusala*. We are all afflicted by *moha*, which clouds our mind from seeing reality as it is. Our ‘reality’ is subjective and based on flawed assumptions sitting on incomplete facts and prejudices. Yet we cannot help but assume that what we experience and conclude is accurate and correct. We typically assume that anyone with a different view is wrong. Having *cāga* means having the humility and willingness to accept that we can be wrong. *Cāga* enables us to be open-minded, receptive and able to listen attentively. *Cāga* helps us to set aside scepticism. While some degree of critical thinking can be helpful, too much of it without firm basis may just be ego talking.

Cāga and *akusala* are polar opposite mental states that cannot coexist. *Akusala* is all about affirming the ‘I’, defending ‘my’ rights, and holding on to self-serving interests, benefits and pleasure, while *cāga* is about willingly setting aside ‘my’ narrow parochial preferences and interests for another. *Cāga* helps us to break free from the grip of *akusala*.¹⁷ When we routinely cultivate *cāga*, we are shielding our mind from being tripped and snared by *akusala*. We are also chiselling away at underlying *akusala* tendencies.

(C) Supporting wholesome and virtuous mental states (*kusala*)

Moral cultivation in Buddhism does not stop at just neutralising *akusala* mental states. It is just as critical to cultivate and consolidate *kusala* ones. An oft-cited quote from Buddha reads: “Not to do any evil. To cultivate good. To purify one’s mind. This is the Teaching of the Buddhas”.¹⁸

In contrast to the inverse relationship between *cāga* and *akusala* mental states, *cāga* and wholesome and skilful (*kusala*) mental states are synergistic and mutually supportive. *Cāga* must be present in all *kusala* and virtuous mental states. A *kusala* mental state is devoid of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. In a *kusala* frame of mind, we are more prepared to forgive or forgo whatever feelings, views, agitations, grievances, and any negative mental states that are gripping us. As a result, the mind will feel better, lighter, softer, kinder and gentler. *Kusala* mental states are always felt as pleasant, even joyous.

The list of *kusala* mental states is as lengthy as *akusala* ones. In this writing, we will focus on just a few, namely, the ones that Buddha had highlighted as important for us to be happy and to feel fulfilled, as well as for spiritual growth. They are faith (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*), and the four divine abodes (*brahmavihara*), viz., friendly kindliness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

Saddhā

Saddhā is about having faith (confidence and conviction) in the Buddha, Dhamma (his teaching) and Sangha (his disciples, the monks who are both custodians of the teaching and embodiment of the practice). Contrary to popular assumptions, the *saddhā* that Buddha had spoken of is not easy to cultivate. *Saddhā* cannot be blind as it must sit on knowledge and some right understanding. Yet it requires a trust so deep that we are prepared to set aside any reservations, so that we are completely open to hearing and internalising the Dhamma. If for whatever reasons doubt or uncertainty should arise, this *saddhā* will cause us to respectfully suspend judgement at least for the duration when mind is engaged with the Dhamma. But how do we implicitly trust the Buddha whom we have never met, Dhamma when we still do not understand it, and Sangha who could be just people we do not really know? Unfamiliarity and ignorance are natural allies of suspicions and scepticism. What then must we set aside to cultivate *saddhā* to such a degree that it is a force for awakening?

One of the biggest obstacles to *saddhā* is our ‘view’, which is fundamentally the lens through which we decipher and make sense of the world.

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View is very much tied up with our identity and ego. That is why view can be so stubborn and hard to correct. We need humility to soften view, suspend judgement and stay open-minded. The *cāga* here is thus about setting aside ego and pride in our view that stands in the way of *saddhā*. We need this *saddhā* to ensure that Dhamma is not filtered out of our consciousness. Even if we cannot totally ‘get’ it, hopefully, we will retain enough teaching in the mind for mulling over such that when the conditions are right and our Dhamma understanding has matured enough, a spiritual breakthrough happens.¹⁹

Sīla

Sīla, another essential *kusala* mental state, is about avoiding evil, doing good and purifying mind. At its most basic level, *sīla* is about observing five precepts, i.e., abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants that cause heedlessness. The *cāga* underpinning the first four precepts is about forgoing indulgence that comes at the expense of another. We choose not to inflict pain and suffering on another for gains or pleasure. The *cāga* required to keep the precepts is obvious when we are faced with a zero-sum game situation. For instance, in a life-threatening situation, who do we save? Ourselves, a loved one or that random stranger? *Cāga* must feature prominently in any form of sacrifices. Will we kill in self-defence? Or claim credit to advance our career? Or cave in to compulsions and betray a partner? Or offer a ‘white’ lie to avoid trouble? The *cāga* underpinning the fifth precept is more personal and less about another; it is about whether we can set aside instantaneous indulgence and pleasure to maintain mental clarity.²⁰

The stronger the *cāga*, the easier to step out of a ‘Self’ (Mine, I, Self) fixation, and thus the steadier *sīla* will be. When we are caught up with ‘our’ pleasure, desires, gains and interests, we can be quite indifferent to or ignorant of another’s feelings and predicament. We either do not see or care that another is suffering. As the sense of Self diminishes with *cāga* practice, empathy will strengthen. This *cāga*-empathy synergy will cause us to be more sensitive and thoughtful of another. We learn to moderate speech and action. If we put in effort and are consistent in cultivating *sīla*, over time, our words and acts will be gentler, kinder and more helpful.

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Bhāvanā

All forms of *bhāvanā* will require *cāga*. *Bhāvanā* is like a catchall term for the conscious cultivation of all forms of wholesome, skilful and beneficial mental states. For instance, the *cāga* in kindness and patience is about accepting inconveniences, be charitable in our thoughts, be empathetic and accepting. The *cāga* in humility is about abandoning pride and ego. The *cāga* in moderation and contentment is about letting go of our fixation with the desires and pleasure we derive from acquisition and accumulation. Forgiveness means the *cāga* to let go of past hurt, anger and thoughts for payback. And finally, to enter into different and deeper levels of meditative states (*samādhi*) will require a succession of letting go of attachment to sensuous delights, discursive thoughts, rapture, happiness and so on.

Brahmavihara

Brahmavihara (literally dwelling of god Brahma) is a term for four sublime mental states: *mettā* (friendly kindliness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (appreciative joy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity). In the presence of any of these four mental states, we will experience joy and happiness so profound that it feels like we are living like the gods. In our daily lives, these *brahmavihara* mental states are usually absent because we are instinctively and habitually caught up with craving (which is expressed as ‘Mine’), conceit (the notion of ‘I’) and wrong view (such as ‘Self’). Conversely, when we are more easily content, more accepting and less caught up with ourselves, *brahmavihara* states will arise more spontaneously and effortlessly. Let’s further explore the qualities of each of the *brahmavihara*.

Mettā

Mettā is a pleasant sensation where one feels warm and cordial towards another. Like all emotions, there are gradations of *metta*: from a light touch of goodwill and simple friendliness to the more profound and all-embracing and universal sense of benevolence. *Mettā* is a challenge to arouse when we have self-esteem issues, or when we feel hurt, anger or regret. That is why when we are deeply insecure and/or having a lot of pain and anger, we will struggle with *mettā* cultivation and meditation. In those angsty states, we are unfamiliar with the joyous softness and lightness of the mind which are *mettā* qualities. And we may puzzle over how to ‘arouse’ *mettā*.

To bring up *metta*, it would help if we could establish the source of our emotional angst. Once we have identified that, we tell ourselves to be *cāga* and talk our way into loosening the grip on that *akusala* state, be it hurt and/or anger.

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Kusala mental states are necessary pre-conditions for us to be able to set down unhappiness and move past it. Some examples of *kusala* mental states that bring comfort and peace are gratitude, kindness, acceptance, forgiveness and *cāga*. In the presence of any of these *kusala* states, we will feel a subtle easing of *akusala*. We will feel better and *mettā* will then arise gently. Initially, the nascent *mettā* may be weak and fleeting. But with constant practice and as one becomes more familiar with the *mettā* feeling, it will strengthen and become more enduring.

Karuṇā

Karuṇā is sometime deemed to be easier to arouse than *mettā*. That is because when the average person witnesses another's pain and distress, he will naturally empathise and feel sorry. But that sorry feeling is often passive sympathy or mundane compassion. It does not prompt him to act especially if it is inconvenient, or it threatens his interests, or his feelings are conflicted, and so on. The mundane 'compassion' is tentative, fragile and fleeting because the average person frets about being cheated or taken advantage of, or if he has something to lose. He thinks too much, questioning motives, and asking what-ifs.

In contrast, the *brahmavihara karuṇā* is altruistic and selfless. The *cāga* in *karuṇā* here is the letting go of 'Self'-interest and preferences leading to a readiness to share time, energy and resources with the sufferer. *Karuṇā* here has no agenda and no expectation of reward or recognition. Because the 'Self' is significantly muted, *karuṇā* reacts spontaneously to alleviate suffering without thinking too much. He does not judge the victim; the *cāga* embedded here causes him to drop discriminatory views on who is worthy to be helped. This selfless 'pure' *karuṇā* is light, joyous and peaceful even during pain and that will shield him from stresses and burnouts. This *karuṇā* has a deep humility from being able to help another.

Muditā

Muditā comes from the *Pali* root *√mud*, which means 'to rejoice' or 'to be happy'. For the worldly person, 'joy' comes largely from the pleasure he gets from wins and gains, accumulations and affirmations. Buddha had said that the world revolved around "eight worldly conditions": "gains and loss, disrepute and fame, blame and praise, pleasure and pain".²¹ As long as we are attached to pleasure which is so much tied up with these eight vicissitudes of life, it is hard to feel positive when another gets the things we want. Our pleasure-addicted mind almost cannot help feeling *dosa* and envious when it loses out.

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The *brahmavihara muditā* is altruistic and illimitable and sits on contentment and acceptance about life's conditions. The *cāga* here is about letting go of our fixation with those "eight worldly conditions". With contentment, there is gratitude and accordingly joy. *Muditā* is translated as appreciative joy: a soaring and powerful joy that comes from one being grateful and deeply appreciative of the blessings one has. *Muditā* can be so powerful that it overrides the innate human instinct to be jealous and makes it possible for one to rejoice and celebrate with another.

Upekkhā

Of the four *brahmavihara* mental states, *upekkhā* is arguably the most challenging to cultivate because it is an unfamiliar mental state to most people and not easily understood. *Upekkhā* is commonly translated as 'equanimous' which means being calm, composed and balanced. When one is equanimous, one is emotionally detached, and has no strong views or preferences. Sometimes equanimity has wrongly been thought of as indifference, which is also about being detached and uninterested. But the two mental states are worlds apart. In indifference, we are detached and apathetic towards others' emotional state and well-being but we remain very much invested in our own positive feeling, desires and self-interest. We are indifferent towards others but we still care about ourself. Indifference sits on *akusala* mental states such as selfishness, fear, anger, arrogance and apathy.

The *brahmavihara upekkhā* works in the reverse. One who is *upekkhā* is detached towards his own feeling and he accepts pleasant and unpleasant, pleasure and pain for what they are without preferences. His detachment sits on right view, wisdom, acceptance and contentment. He has care and concern for others because he understands their suffering. But he will help in an emotionally composed manner and seemingly detached. The *cāga* in *upekkhā* is about letting go of his own attachment to feeling, perception, preferences, and judgement. The more equanimous he is to pleasant and unpleasant feeling and perception, the more even-tempered, peaceful, balanced and unaffected. *Upekkhā* has composure and ease of mind. It accepts conditions of life as they are: the good, the bad and the ugly, without judging and preferences. Because of this, he lives life with ease and joy. The ultimate *upekkhā* is void of *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*.

[IV] IMPORTANCE OF CĀGA

It is commonly assumed that when we are being *cāga*, we are doing someone a favour, and our *cāga* is for another's benefit. But from how *cāga* is expressed (in the preceding section), we are the first beneficiary of our *cāga*. Even though we may not be expecting rewards, we will still enjoy incredible benefits. Below are examples of the benefits of being *cāga*.

(A) For happiness and meaning in this life

According to Buddha, there is a direct correlation between *cāga* and happiness.²² He said *cāga* was one of three essential conditions²³ for “long-lasting” happiness in life.²⁴ Buddha also said a “wise man” who seeks to be happy will be generous and “give gifts”.²⁵ The wise would cultivate *cāga* in its purest form, i.e., spontaneous and light-hearted giving, with no expectations and self-interests. Modern science seems to support the Buddha's teaching on *cāga* and happiness. Several recent neurological studies have shown that altruistic behaviour does lead to happiness.²⁶ One study concluded that helping another (an expression of *cāga*) is a significant predictor of positive mental health.²⁷ Another study found a neural link between generosity and happiness.²⁸

(B) For capacity to enjoy worldly pleasures

An interesting point unique to Buddha's teaching is that one needs to be *cāga* to be able to enjoy life's material comfort. A story in the *Pali* canon speaks of a man in Kosala kingdom who had lived his entire life like a pauper, eating leftover scraps and wearing discarded rags.²⁹ Upon his death, the state discovered that he had “eighty lakhs of gold”.³⁰ When the Kosalan king asked why was that man like that, Buddha replied that in a distant past life, he had offered food to a *paccekabuddha* only to regret that *dāna* shortly after. Because of those alms, he had been reborn “seven times in the heavenly worlds and seven times as a financier.” But the belated regret of the alms led to him not being able to enjoy his phenomenal wealth throughout those many wealthy lives.³¹

If we carefully study our mind, it is not difficult to see how Buddha was right. When we are upset, unhappiness traps us in negativity; we are unable to see and appreciate the positive things around us. Now imagine a habitually miserly mind obsessed with minute gains; would such a mind not find it hard to enjoy life's pleasures? It is not that he is unaware of material comforts; he just could not summon the ‘mood’ to enjoy them. In contrast, a mind filled with *cāga*

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is light and happy. Such a mind will find it easy to be grateful, content and happy with whatever is there.

(C) For social standing and success

A lay follower, Siha, once asked Buddha if there were “directly visible fruits” from being *cāga*. Buddha replied, one who is *cāga* would (1) have a “good reputation”, (2) is “dear and agreeable to many people”, (3) will attract “good persons” and (4) is socially “confident and composed”.³² That a *cāga* person is popular, well-regarded, and have friends who are decent people is to be expected. That he would also be socially confident is intriguing. Perhaps it is because the *cāga* person is friendly, easy-going, accepting and warmly welcoming to all alike. He is not prejudiced and does not discriminate. Since he is not judging, he is not worried about being judged by others. He wanders about carefree, light-hearted and thus confident.

(D) For spiritual practice

While *cāga* is much cherished, we typically do not regard it as a necessary precursor to spiritual awakening. Yet Buddha had stressed to his monks that without “abandoning miserliness”, one would not realise even the fruit of stream-entry,³³ i.e., the first stage of sainthood. In other words, it is impossible for one lacking in *cāga* to have any significant spiritual breakthrough. They may have problem even with meditation (*samādhi*). Buddha said they would not be able to still the mind if they were “miserly with regards to five things”: dwellings, families, gains, praise and Dhamma.³⁴ (These are essential for survival and mental well-being of monks which would explain why some monks are possessive about them.)

It is unsurprising that *cāga* is so critical for spiritual progress. Without *cāga*, one instinctively clings and grasps. We hold on to pleasures and seek to constantly replicate pleasant sensations while carefully avoid painful ones. We hold on to views and thoughts, and sometime that stubborn belief can cause us grief. Think back to a ferocious quarrel that you once had with a loved one. See how just by recalling that incident can trigger painful feelings? And the more you hold on to your ‘righteous’ thoughts, the angrier you feel and the more intense the painful feeling? It takes *cāga* to let go of angry thoughts and forgive; *cāga* is an essential salve for emotional wounds.

(E) For a heavenly rebirth

Cāga is a necessary condition for a heavenly rebirth. Buddha had said, “No miser go to the world of the celestial gods (*devas*).”³⁵ On another occasion, Buddha told a lay disciple that a donor “after death ... is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world ... for a long time they delight in companionship with the *devas*.”³⁶ The Pali Canon has fascinating accounts of exchanges between Buddha and recently deceased lay disciples who were reborn as *devas* on account of having been *cāga* in their human lives.³⁷ Many had gone to thank Buddha for his teaching which led to their rebirth as *devas*. One *deva* (Ugga in his human life) happily told Buddha that he had been reborn in a heaven of his choice.³⁸ Other *devas* were unanimous in their effusive praise of the importance of *cāga* as having paved their way to heaven.

How does it work? *Cāga* is a powerful uplifting mental state that makes the mind joyous, peaceful and light. The more peaceful and happier the mind at its dying moment, the lighter it is. A mind filled with *cāga* will ‘lift’ at death, thus assuring it of a heavenly rebirth.

(F) For merit and blessings in future lives

Cāga, like any *kusala* mental states, is an important source of merit. What is merit? Merit is often described as a beneficial and protective force that accumulates because of good and wholesome activities performed by body, speech or mind. Any activity performed with pure intention, i.e., without self-interest, greed or resentment, with thoughtfulness and balanced considerations, will yield merit. Buddha had described merit as “the support of living beings (where they arise in the other world).”³⁹ Merit gives rise to beneficial conditions in this and future lives. It affects emotional well-being: “If a man does what is good, he should do it again and again; he should take delight in it; the accumulation of merit leads to happiness.”⁴⁰ Merit affects rebirth destination, and conditions of future lives including physical attributes, lifespan and other life advantages. “A donor who gives food ... wherever he is reborn, he will enjoy life, physical beauty, happiness, strength and wisdom.” He would also be “long-lived and famous.”⁴¹

Below is a stanza recited by a *deva* about the importance of giving and generosity. That early compilers of the canon had included it in the canonical records shows that they had deemed it consistent with Buddha’s teaching.

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*“So when the world is ablaze
With [the fires of] aging and death,
One should take out [one’s wealth] by giving:
What is given is well salvaged.*

*What is given yields pleasant fruit,
But not so what is not given.
Thieves take it away, or kings,
It gets burnt by fire or is lost.*

*Then in the end one leaves the body
Along with one’s possessions.
Having understood this, the wise person
Should enjoy himself but also give.
Having given and enjoyed as fits his means,
Blameless he goes to the heavenly state.”⁴²*

This is a prudent reminder that our time in this life and the current set of conditions is finite. When death occurs, we will leave everything behind except for the merit that we have accumulated in this life. Merit is the only thing that follows us into future births. So even as we enjoy wealth and material blessings, we must also be generous and give unequivocally. Only the wealth that we have given out generously are “salvaged” for our future use.

Another sutta by the Buddha said,

*“Both the good and the bad
that a mortal does in this life
is what they can call their own.
That’s what they take when they go.
That’s what goes with them,
like a shadow that never leaves.*

*That’s why you should do good,
investing in the future life.
The good deeds of sentient beings
support them in the next world.”⁴³*

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Stinginess, demerit and rebirth

Just as *cāga* is meritorious, stinginess is demeritorious and can lead to a bad rebirth of deprivation and suffering. One story from the time of the Buddha tells of a wealthy scrooge who died and took rebirth in a beggar community. From the time the foetus was conceived, the community's daily alms collection plummeted. Through a careful process of elimination, they eventually figured out that the newly conceived foetus was the source of their misfortune and expelled his pregnant mother from the group. The baby was born ugly and repulsive. Even his mother resented him and abandoned him when he was still a child.⁴⁴

If, for whatever reasons, we cannot bring ourselves to be *cāga*, at least do not discourage another from being *cāga*. That would be most demeritorious. Below is a stanza attributed to Buddha about the fate of obstructors:

*“Those who are stingy here in this world,
Niggardly folk, revilers,
People who create obstacles
For others engaged in giving alms:
They might be reborn in hell,
In the animal realm or Yama’s world.*

*If they come back to the human state
They are born in a poor family
Where clothes, food, pleasures and sport
Are obtained only with difficulty.⁴⁵*

Buddha said an act to obstruct *dāna* would hurt three people: the donor from gaining merit, the recipient from receiving a gift and the obstructer would be “maimed and injured” from his unwholesome act.⁴⁶ One who obstructs another from giving might even end up in hell or be reborn in the animal realm. If the obstructer were to be reborn a human, it would be in most unfortunate circumstances.

[V] CULTIVATING *CĀGA*

Some may find it a breeze to be *cāga* while others struggle mightily. Like any mental states, *cāga* is not static. We can ‘practise’ to be *cāga*. Choose to be deliberate about being *cāga* until it is familiar and spontaneous. Below are some suggestions on how to overcome tight-fisted instincts. The list is not in any order of importance.

(A) Start simple and modest

We may find it easier to be *cāga* when the ‘sacrifice’ does not feel too onerous. Begin with a simple random and spontaneous act of kindness e.g., giving up a seat on a crowded bus, holding the lift for another, pulling out the dollar for the kid seeking donation, or just paying attention to another. Do acts of *cāga* regularly and often until it becomes a habit. Even if it was just a small act of *cāga*, do not snort at it. Buddha said, “One should not think lightly of doing good, imagining a little will not affect me. Just as a water jar is filled up by falling drops of rain, so also, the wise one is filled up with merits, by accumulating it little by little.”⁴⁷

(B) Join others for communal *cāga* events

We are social creatures and being part of a group effort on a *dāna* outing can be great fun. Perhaps that is where we start practising *cāga*. We join our family and friends to go offer alms. We go to charity funfairs and walkathons, fundraising luncheons and exhibitions and spend some money to support their causes. These are often one-off events and do not tax much of our time and resources. But they connect us to the needs out there and give us a small opportunity to help others.

(C) Cultivate empathy

We should constantly train ourselves to feel for another, to walk in their shoes, and to understand their plight and pain. Volunteer time and energy in a non-profit institution and interact directly with someone in need. Serve in a soup kitchen. Comfort the dying in hospice care. Hold the hand of someone contemplating suicide. Or support an ex-offender. Compassion will trigger joy and *cāga*.

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(D) Adopt helpful narrative

Give ourselves a good reason to be *cāga*. Point out tangible gains and benefits for ourselves. For instance, say that *cāga* is necessary for happiness in this and the next life, or that it is essential for a good rebirth. Tell ourselves that if we are serious about the spiritual practice, *cāga* is non-negotiable. Without *cāga*, we would not be able to meditate properly, let alone get to *samādhi* stillness, *nibbāna* insight and liberation. Whichever reason appeals to us, that is the one we need to keep repeating to keep us motivated on cultivating *cāga*.

(E) Observe the mind

Before, during or after the *cāga* act, if we notice an unpleasant feeling, some internal resistance and discomfort, pause and closely observe the mind. That unpleasant sensation means we have a ‘taint of stinginess’. Mindfully note that unpleasant feeling detachedly and without judging. Be patient. Observe detachedly and without adding narrative, and that tinge of unpleasant sensation will fade away naturally. As it fades, the mind will become less resistant to *cāga*. Seeing impermanence of feeling may help plant a seed for *cāga*.

(F) Always rejoice at giving

Conversely, when we feel joy or pleasure from an act of *cāga*, be sure to pay attention and remember that pleasant feeling. When the mind experiences wholesome pleasure, it will want to do more. The more we rejoice in *cāga*, the easier and more spontaneous *cāga* will be.

(G) Diminish the ego

The ego does get in the way of *cāga*. Ego frets about ‘ME’ being taken advantage of, ‘ME’ wasting resources, ‘ME’ missing out on opportunity to advance ‘MY’ interests, and so on. We need to shush that inner voice yapping about Mine, I (me) and Self. Just focus on doing what needs to be done without thinking too much. Until we are enlightened, our thinking may not be helpful because it tends to sit on moods, desires, self-interests, and so on. Random and unregulated ‘thinking’ can be an obstacle to *cāga* practice.

[VI] THE ULTIMATE *CĀGA*

As we grow on the spiritual path, our understanding of *cāga* will change. When we start off, we probably see *cāga* as a desirable mental state that we must cultivate because Buddha had emphasised its importance and benefits. Some of us may struggle to arouse *cāga*. When *cāga* does arise, it fades quickly. At that point, our *cāga* is possibly expressed as *dāna*. And we try hard to give as much as we are comfortable. We may stumble. We may regret some *dāna* or feel bad that we are not *cāga* enough to give more. We may feel unworthy that our mind is not pure enough during giving. But we are determined to cultivate *cāga* and we press on. Each *dāna* occasion is celebrated as a small victory for *cāga*, and we feel good about ourselves.

As Dhamma understanding grows and as we judiciously weave the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path into our life, we may come to realise that *cāga* is a lot more than just *dāna*. We now recognise the mind clinging on to so many things: memories, views, worries, regrets, and all forms of unwholesome and unskillful mental states. And we struggle to be *cāga* especially on issues where craving and ego (mine, I and Self) are heavily invested. With growing understanding and wisdom, we begin to appreciate the multifaceted nature of *cāga*. We realise that *cāga* is not a good-to-have but a must-have: for without *cāga*, there will be no spiritual enlightenment, no liberation and no *nibbāna*.

If we persist on the practice and grow in the Dhamma, *cāga* will become more spontaneous and liberating. *Cāga* is no longer situational but a more constant state of mind. Being *cāga* becomes a way of life. We give and forgive easily. We feel empathy for others because of the diminishing 'I' and so we help without being asked.

The ultimate *cāga* is when understanding and practice of the Dhamma is complete and where there is no attachment to anything: sense delights, identity, existence and views. *Cāga* of this nature is present only in the arahants who has let go of all taints that weigh down the mind. One has no more craving or clinging. One lives in the most blissful of abiding.

-End of Chapter 4

FOOTNOTES

¹ Translated from the Pali by Ireland, John D. “Giving” in *Itivuttaka: Section of the Ones (1-22)*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1997, reprinted 2007, pp. 127.

² Key mental states that Buddha had said are necessary for a happy and meaningful lay life include faith (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), learning (*suta*) and wisdom (*paññā*).

³ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. “Wealth” A 5:47 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012, pp. 673.

⁴ Buddha had taught four wholesome mental states which he called *brahmavihara* (divine abode): friendly kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

⁵ One of the four *brahmavihara* mentioned above.

⁶ This is arguably *muditā* or appreciative joy, the third of the four *brahmavihara* states.

⁷ Ireland, “A Rainless Cloud” in *Itivuttaka: Section of the Threes (3-26)*, op. cit., pp. 156-158.

⁸ Ibid., “A Rainless Cloud”, pp. 156-158.

⁹ Bodhi, “Vaccha” A 3:57 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli*, op. cit., pp. 255.

¹⁰ Ibid., “A Good Person” A 5:148, pp. 763.

¹¹ Ibid., “With Siha” A 8:12, pp. 1134.

¹² Translated from the Pāli by Sujato, Ajahn. “About Velāma” A 9:20 <https://suttacentral.net/an9.20/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=sidebyside&reference=none¬es=undefined&highlight=false&script=latin>

¹³ The five are form, sound, smell, taste and tactile objects.

¹⁴ Bodhi, “A Good Person” A 5:148, in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli*, op. cit., pp. 763-4.

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¹⁵ Translated from the Pāli by Sujato, “About Velāma” A 9:20, <https://suttacentral.net/an9.20/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=sidebyside&reference=none¬es=undefined&highlight=false&script=latin>

¹⁶ Ireland, “Giving” in *Itivuttaka: Section of the Threes* (3-49), *op. cit.*, pp. 178.

¹⁷ Note that the three *akusala* mental drivers should be examined collectively because they are closely interconnected. *Lobha* and *dosa* are essentially two sides of the same coin: we get upset when we can’t get what we want. The more we yearn and are denied, the angrier we get. And *moha* underpins both *lobha* and *dosa*.

¹⁸ Narada, Thera. “Do Good and Be Good” Dhp 183 in *The Dhammapada: Pāli Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*. Taipei: Buddha Educational Foundation, 1993, pp. 165.

¹⁹ For a fuller write-up on *Saddhā*, see Bay, Sylvia. *Faith (Saddhā)* chapter from upcoming book ‘Towards the Light’ in <https://dawningofdhamma.wixsite.com/dhammaroadmap/books> .

²⁰ For a fuller write-up on *Sīla*, see Bay, Morality (*Sīla*) chapter. *Ibid.*

²¹ Bodhi, “World” A 8:6 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1116.

²² Ireland, “Meritorious Deeds” in *Itivuttaka: Section of the Ones* (18-13), *op. cit.*, pp. 124. Buddha said, “*Bhikkhus*, do not fear meritorious deeds. This is an expression denoting happiness ...”

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 125. Three conditions for lasting happiness: apart from *cāga*, the other two are self-mastery and refraining (Sujato translation: self-control and restraint).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 124. Also see Ireland, “Grounds for Making Merit” in *Itivuttaka: Section of the Threes* (11-13), pp. 148. Buddha said:
“One should train in deeds of merit
That yield long-lasting happiness:
Generosity, a balanced life,
Developing a loving mind.
By cultivating these three things,
Deeds yielding happiness,
The wise person is reborn in bliss
In an untroubled happy world.”

²⁵ Bodhi, “Siha” A 5:34 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 660.

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²⁶ For a list of recent works, see

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pubmed/15901215/?i=1&from=/15901215/related>

²⁷ See Schwartz, Carolyn, Janice B. Meisenhelder, Yunsheng Ma, and George Reed. "Altruistic Social Interest Behaviors Are Associated with Better Mental Health." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65, no. 5 (2003): 778–85.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.PSY.0000079378.39062.D4>.

²⁸ See Park, Soyoung Q., Thorsten Kahnt, Azade Dogan, Sabrina Strang, Ernst Fehr, and Philippe N. Tobler. 'A Neural Link between Generosity and Happiness'. *Nature Communications* 8, no. 1 (11 July 2017): 15964.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms15964>.

²⁹ Ate "red rice along with sour gruel," clothes were "three-piece hempen garment" and went about in a "dilapidated little cart with a leaf awning." Bodhi, "Childless (1)" S 3:19, in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit.*, pp. 182.

³⁰ One lakh is a hundred thousand.

³¹ Bodhi, "Childless (2)" S 3:20, in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

³² Bodhi, "Siha" A 5:34(4) in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit.*, pp. 659-660. Here the Buddha listed four "directly visible fruit" and a fifth "pertaining to future lives". The four visible fruit are that 1) "a donor, a munificent giver, is dear and agreeable to many people." 2) "Good persons resort to a donor." 3) "a donor ... acquires a good reputation." 4) "... whatever assembly a donor ... approaches ... he approaches it confidently and composed." 5) "With the breakup of the body, after death, a donor ... is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world."

³³ *Ibid.*, "Second Jhāna, Etc." A 5:257-263, pp. 840.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, "First Jhāna" A 5:256, pp. 840. Buddha said, "...without having abandoned these five things one is incapable of entering and dwelling in the first jhāna. What five? Miserliness with regards to dwellings ... families ... gains ... praise and ... the Dhamma."

³⁵ Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro, Bhikkhu. "Generosity: dāna, cāga", *Dhammapada (Dhp)* 177, edited by Access to Insight. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition) 30 Nov 2013.

<https://www.accesstinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.13.than.html> .

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³⁶ See Bodhi, “Siha” A 5:34 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 659-660.*

³⁷ See Bodhi, the entire *Devatāsamyutta* section, S 1 in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 89-138.*

³⁸ Bodhi, “Giver of the Agreeable” A 5:44 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 669-670.*

³⁹ Bodhi, “Timely” A 5:36 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 661.*

⁴⁰ Translated from the Pali by Daw Mya Tin. “The Story of Lajadevadhita” *Dhammapada (Dhp) 118*
<http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=118> .

⁴¹ Bodhi, “Food” A 5:37 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 662.* “A donor who gives food gives the recipients five things ... life, beauty, happiness, strength and discernment. Having given life, one partakes of life, whether celestial or human. Having given beauty, one partakes of beauty ... Having given happiness, one partakes of happiness ... Having given strength, one partakes of strength ... Having given discernment, one partakes of discernment.”

⁴² Bodhi, “Ablaze” S 1:41 in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 120.*

⁴³ Translated from the Pali by Sujato, “Loved” S 3:4
<https://suttacentral.net/sn3.4/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=sidebyside&reference=none¬es=undefined&highlight=false&script=latin> .

⁴⁴ Translated from the Pali by Daw Mya Tin. “The story of Ananada, the rich man” *Dhammapada (Dhp) Aṭṭhakathā 62*
<http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=062> .

⁴⁵ Bodhi, “Stingy” S 1:49 in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 123-124.*

⁴⁶ Bodhi, “Vaccha” A 3:57 in *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya: Translated from the Pāli, op. cit., pp. 254-255.*

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⁴⁷ Translated from the Pali by Daw Mya Tin. “The story of Bilalapadaka”
Dhammapada (Dhp) verse 122
<http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=122> .