

## A STUDY OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BEING OBEDIENT OR NOT

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### Abstract

There are different mental states and beliefs of the people as the saying goes, “different minds with different people.” Some people warmly welcome to accept the advice of other with good intention. In other words they are holding the good view endowed with the attributes of *sovaccassatā*, readiness in receiving advice. Some people, however, have opposite opinion with those who obey readily the good advice. They are holding the bad perspective with the habit of looking down and belittle others. They could not accept the advice that is good and beneficial to them. Why do they act and speak like this? It depends on one’s mind and action. In this paper, the descriptive method is used with regards to the advantages and disadvantages of being obedient or not with references taken out from the Pāḷi, the Dhammapada, and the Jātaka. This paper is written with aiming for having good mental state and understanding of oneself. Moreover, the author is looking forward to the understanding and consideration for others in social dealing would be achieved by reading this paper. In this paper, the advantages of being obedience and disadvantages of difficult in obeying advice are studied comparatively. Consequently people can learn what to follow and what not to by doing so for the welfare and happiness for oneself and others will be appeared.

Keywords: obedience, attitude, mind

### Introduction

The Buddha is the one who taught not only supra mundane well-being for all beings in the world but also the instructions for having good social life for mundane well-being. Among the teachings of the Buddha, there are many instructions of do’s and don’ts relating to education, social, and economic affairs. In this paper the advantages and disadvantages of being obedient or not have been explored comparatively which is one of the many social instructions of the Buddha.

People are associating with one another in everyday life. They disagree with one another when dealing with each other. Their beliefs and opinions are different too. The individual who is wise will get many benefits as he or she obey and follow the advice of other who gave it with good intention and wants for the well-being of him or her. An individual, however, who is foolish and rude, will ruin his or her good things as he or she fails to obey and follow the good advice that has been given for his or her welfare. All these facts would be explored from the Buddhist scriptures.

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## **Materials and Method**

This paper uses the Descriptive method. Facts used in this paper were quoted from the Pāli scripture and Dhammapada, Jātaka literature.

## **Findings**

These advantages and disadvantages of being obedient or not were instructed by the Buddha and they are essential for the welfare of the world to be practiced. When these facts are followed and practiced, one can achieve success in the social society..

### **1. Mental states and characters of obedient person and non-obedient person**

In this paper the difference between the mental states and characters of obedient and non-obedient persons are studied and explained.

#### **1:1. Mental states of obedient person and non-obedient person**

When dealing with people, it is found that some are ready to accept the good advice of others having good volition but some are not. Relating with this fact, Ashin Mahā Moggallāna delivered the Anumāna Sutta while he was residing in the Tesakaṭṭhā sanctuary near Samsumāragiri of Bagga State. Oh monks, the characters of obedient person are-

1. Not accept the advice or admonishment
2. Having the nature that causes difficulty in giving the advice to him
3. Lack of tolerance
4. Not accept the advice respectfully

Those people are a kind of people who do not accept any admonishment as well.

The mental states of those who do not accept the admonishment are-

1. Having the negative view
2. Self praise and disparage others
3. Having much anger
4. Having grudge
5. Speak with anger
6. Oppose with one who blame him
7. Threaten one who blames him
8. Blames against with one who has blame him
9. Cover one's fault by speaking divert words
10. Answer insufficiently to the questions what is asking
11. Lack of gratitude
12. Vie with one another, envy, jealousy, cunning, deception, rudeness, being haughty, and believing of his wrong view as right

All mentioned facts are the characters conducted by those people who do not accept other's advice.

Characters of those who accept the admonishment are-

1. Accept what he was admonished
2. Having the nature of easy to be admonished
3. Being patient
4. Accept the admonishment with respect and humbleness

Those people accept when they are admonished.

The mental states of those who accept the admonishment are-

1. Having positive view
2. Lack of praising oneself
3. Lack of disparaging others
4. Not to be angry strongly
5. able to reasoning if having wrong view

Those mental states are the natures of those who are able to accept the admonishments.

It is found also that Ashin Mahā Moggallāna gave the simile of young man and woman in order to consider oneself in that Anumāna Sutta.

In that simile Ashin Mahā Moggallāna taught that, young man and woman see their images in the clear mirror or in the clear water and if they see a certain fault on their face they try to remove it but if they see any fault they delighted as their faces are clean and beautiful. So too people should analyze oneself and if unwholesome dhammas are still present they must try to get rid of these unwholesome dhammas. If there are any unwholesome dhammas in them they should be happy for it.

## **2. Advantages and disadvantages of being obedient and non-obedient in the Jātakas**

In this paper, the advantages of being obedient to the advice of the wise and the disadvantages of being non-obedient to the admonishment of the wise and virtuous person found in the Veḷuka Jātaka and the Rājovāda Jātaka are mentioned to emulate.

First of all, a hermit who died because of not accepting the advice of the wise is explored according to the Veḷuka Jātaka. In that Jātaka, the Buddha-to-be was born to the rich family in Kāsi State while King Brahmādatta was ruling Bārāṇasi. Having realized that the attachment to the sensual pleasures (kāmaguna) is unwholesome, the Buddha-to-be, however, went to the Mount Himavanta as a hermit and surrounded by five hundred hermit followers to practice dhammas. One day a young cobra arrived at a certain hermit's hermitage. That hermit adopted that young cobra and kept it in the hollow of the bamboo and named it as "Veḷuka." When it was known by the Buddha-to-be, he called that hermit and admonished him that there is no one to make intimacy with the cobra and it is not proper to adopt the cobra. Nevertheless, the hermit did not obey the advice of the Buddha-to-be. One day hermits went to other places in order to search for fruits. They came back after two to three days. The hermit opened the bamboo hollow with his open hand to feed his adopted cobra as it was kept inside the bamboo hollow for days. The angry cobra that was hungry because of being kept inside the bamboo hollow for two to three days bit the open hand of the hermit and the hermit passed away

because of snake bite. It is found that the hermit passed away due to the non-obedient of being advised by the wise who wanted for his benefit.

### 3. Advantages obtained by accepting the words of the wise

The words that are spoken for wishing one's benefits are the valuable words. Connecting with this it is found in the Rājovāda Jātaka. When studying this Jātaka, King Brahmadatta was ruling in Bārāṇasī. One day the king looked for the one who speaks ill of him among the men of interior and exterior, in the city and outside the city. The king went to the Mount Himavanta paid homage to the Buddha-to-be hermit and sat at the suitable place after not finding the one who speaks ill of him. At that time the hermit, the Buddha-to-be feed the ripe banyan fruits. The king asked why these ripe banyan fruits are so sweet. The hermit answered that these fruits are so sweet that the righteous king is ruling the country. The king asked the Buddha-to-be hermit as if fruits will not be sweet when unrighteous king is ruling. The Buddha-to-be hermit replied that when kings are unrighteous oil, honey, and fruit are not sweet but when kings righteously rule the country, all things become sweet and nutritious. And then the king returned to Bārāṇasī. After some times, the king went back to the hermit again. As usual the hermit gave the ripe banyan fruits to eat. At that time the ripe banyan fruits are bitter. The hermit said that the fruits are bitter because the king is not righteous. Having heard the words of the Buddha-to-be hermit, the king caused the Buddha-to-be hermit to know that he, indeed, is the king and said that he caused the ripe banyan fruits sweet again by righteously ruling his kingdom. As a result, all the fruits became sweet again as before. Therefore, it is found that one would achieve benefits for oneself and one's environment as well as a result of accepting the words of the wise.

### 4. One who delight in the admonishment of the wise and one not

Words relating to the beneficial outcome is precious even the one word. Those who follow these words will be beneficial and those who do not follow them will be unbeneficial. Regarding this it is found that, the co-existing students of Ashin Sāriputtarā Thera known as Assajipunabbasuka monks were living in the Kiṭṭagiri with the five hundred companions and planting flowering plants themselves as well as causing other to plant. Actually they were alajjī monks lacking of fear and shame as these are not proper for monks to do. Moreover, they ruined the faith of the devotees and caused virtuous monks unable to live there. When the Buddha heard about this he sent Ashin Sāriputtarā and Ashin Moggallāna ordered to expel those monks who did not obey the admonishing words and to admonish those monks who obey the advice. Therefore, the unwise and foolish people did not like the one who admonish whereas the wise like them. Relating to this the Buddha uttered the following verse.

“Ovādeyyā nusāseyya, asabbhā ca nivāraye.

sataṃ hi so piyo hoti, asataṃ hoti appiyo.”

The Buddha admonished thus, admonish at present when the affair is arising but admonish out of sight when the affair has not yet arisen. Moreover, inhibit the unwholesome deeds. Virtuous persons love and respect that kind of person but unvirtuous persons do not love nor respect.

According to the aforementioned facts, advice and admonishment should be obeyed when someone knows that one is doing wrong. One should perform right conduct and by doing so the society would be in peace and calm.

### **Discussion**

People have different mind and mental states in the world. Some have positive views, being patient, and ready to accept the advice and admonishment respectfully. Some, however, have negative outlook, self-praise and disparage other. When studying the various mind and mental states it is found that all these mind and mental states are basically arising from the two kinds of mind, namely, wholesome mind (kusala citta) and unwholesome mind (akusala citta)

It should be noted that depending on the wholesome mind (kusala citta) good mental, physical, and verbal deeds arising. Similarly based on the unwholesome mind (akusala citta) bad mental, physical, and verbal deeds would be arisen.

### **Conclusion**

To put this paper into nutshell one who obeys the advice of the wise and virtuous person would achieve good consequences and advantages but one who is difficult to obey it would confront with ruin.

According to the mentioned before, the mind and mental states of one who is easy to admonish are patient and able to reasoning if having wrong view but it is found that one who is difficult to accept admonishment are rude and elated. When comparatively study them one who is ready to accept advice and admonishment has ability to reason what is good or bad and what is cause or effect regarding with the advice. However, one who is disobedient could not see the right thing and reject the advice and admonishment because they are rude, proud, conceited and having much anger.

Therefore, one's benefits and benefits for others can be achieved when the do's and don'ts mentioned in this paper should be emulated and practiced in practical life in social field.

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