

A Lay Disciple-The Mahānāma Thread-SN55.37

The Mahānāma Thread

At one time, the auspicious one was living among the Sakyans at Kapila grounds in the Banyan park. Then, Mahānāma, the Sakyan, approached the auspicious one, having approached, he bowed and sat on one side. Having sat at one side, Mahānāma the Sakyan said this to the auspicious one:

Sir, what determines the degree to which one is a lay disciple?

It's because, Mahānāma, one has taken refuge in the Awakened One, one has taken refuge in the Quality, one has taken refuge in the Order. This determines the degree to which one is a lay disciple, Mahānāma.

Sir, what determines the degree to which a lay disciple is one complete in morality?

It's because, Mahānāma, a lay disciple is one who refrains from killing living beings, is one who refrains from taking what is not given, is one who refrains from engaging in wrong sexual behavior, is one who refrains from lying, is one who refrains from alcohol, liquor, and things that are the basis for distraction and intoxication. This determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in morality.

And, sir, what determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in belief?

Now, Mahānāma, a lay disciple is one who believes. He believes in the awakening of the one who knows things as they are.

He is auspicious, worthy, and fully and completely awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, virtuous, knower of the universe, unsurpassable trainer of men, teacher of deities and humans, awake and auspicious.

Well described by the auspicious one is the quality, visible, timeless, "come and see," progressive, to be individually experienced by the perceptive.

Well practiced is the order of disciples of the auspicious one. Rightly practiced is the order of disciples of the auspicious one. Correctly practiced is the order of disciples of the auspicious one. Properly practiced is the order of disciples of the auspicious one. That is the four pairs of men, the eight types of men. That is the order of disciples of the auspicious one who are to be made offerings, to be hosted as guests, to be given gifts, to be offered añjali, an unsurpassable field of rewards of the universe.

This determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in belief, Mahānāma.

And, sir, what determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in giving away?

Now, Mahānāma, a lay disciple with one's will free from the stain of possessiveness, lives in a household and is freely generous, open handed, delights in letting go, charitable, and enjoys giving and sharing. It is this that determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in generosity.

And, sir, what determines the degree to which a lay discipline is complete in awareness?

Now, Mahānāma, a lay disciple is aware, having the awareness of arising and passing away, penetrating, noble, correct, and leading to end of pain. It is this that determines the degree to which a lay disciple is complete in awareness.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 55.37