

An Explication of Behavioural Impediments Vis-a-Vis Meditation: A Buddhist Perspective

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Transgression of precepts, all aspects of immoral conduct, vices, wrong livelihood (*micchājīva*), irregularities in practice etc. are behavioural impediments to meditation.

Three kinds of wrong conduct – wrong conduct in body (*kāya-duccaritaṃ*), in speech (*vacī-duccaritaṃ*) and in thought (*mano-duccaritaṃ*) as mentioned in the Sangīti Sutta cause major behavioural impediments to mental development. As elaborated in the Sāleyyaka Sutta, one is made impure by bodily actions in three ways and by verbal actions in four ways. It is extremely arduous for one who is impure by evil behaviour to concentrate his or her mind because the basic mental strength or purity of the mind that is required for the initiation of concentration is absent and even the inclination for meditation may not arise in the mind which is not receptive and malleable for unification of mind (*cittassa ekaggatā*), the central requisite for meditation. All sorts of behavioral impediments occur due to the extreme noxious trio—intense greed, ill-will and delusion (*abhijjā*, *vyāpāda* and *micchādītṭhi*) which nourish the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*), the most inimical impediments to meditation.

Thus, the mind tainted by detrimental behavior impedes psychological strength such as non-remorse, joy and rapture, etc., is psychologically disturbed and inwardly agitated, cannot reinforce the outward suppression of harmful mental factors and suppress the inward malign mental factors that impede concentration and mindfulness.

Moral restraint and moral purity which establishes sound outward conditions which are conducive to inward progress avoids inimical behavioural impediments to mental development. As a whole, the absence of behavioural impediments enhances the purification of morality endowed with psychological strength, helps practitioner remain psychologically undisturbed and inwardly calm and maintain concentration during the practice.

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