

# Jivaka Sutta: Discourse To Jivaka

## (On Being a Lay Follower)

*translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu © 1997*

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Rajagaha, at Jivaka's Mango Grove. Then Jivaka Komarabhacca went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, to what extent is one a lay follower?"

"Jivaka, when one has gone to the Buddha for refuge, has gone to the Dhamma for refuge, and has gone to the Sangha for refuge, then to that extent is one a lay follower."

"And to what extent, lord, is one a virtuous lay follower?"

"Jivaka, when one abstains from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, and from fermented & distilled drinks that lead to heedlessness, then to that extent is one a virtuous lay follower."

"And to what extent, lord, is one a lay follower who practices for his own benefit but not that of others?"

"Jivaka, when a lay follower himself is consummate in conviction but does not encourage others in the consummation of conviction; when he himself is consummate in virtue but does not encourage others in the consummation of virtue; when he himself is consummate in generosity but does not encourage others in the consummation of generosity; when he himself desires to see the monks but does not encourage others to see the monks; when he himself wants to hear the true Dhamma but does not encourage others to hear the true Dhamma; when he himself habitually remembers the Dhamma he has heard but does not encourage others to remember the Dhamma they have heard; when he himself explores the meaning of the Dhamma he has heard but does not encourage others to explore the meaning of the Dhamma they have heard; when he himself, knowing both the Dhamma & its meaning, practices the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, but does not encourage others to practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma: then to that extent he is a lay follower who practices for his own benefit but not for the benefit of others."

"And to what extent, lord, is one a lay follower who practices both for his own benefit & the benefit of others?"

"Jivaka, when a lay follower himself is consummate in conviction and encourages others in the consummation of conviction; when he himself is consummate in virtue and encourages others in the consummation of virtue; when he himself is consummate in generosity and encourages others in the consummation of generosity; when he himself desires to see the monks and encourages

others to see the monks; when he himself wants to hear the true Dhamma and encourages others to hear the true Dhamma; when he himself habitually remembers the Dhamma he has heard and encourages others to remember the Dhamma they have heard; when he himself explores the meaning of the Dhamma he has heard and encourages others to explore the meaning of the Dhamma they have heard; when he himself, knowing both the Dhamma & its meaning, practices the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma and encourages others to practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma: then to that extent he is a lay follower who practices both for his own benefit and for the benefit of others."