

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattḁī in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra’s Mother. Then the brahmin Gaṅḁaka Moggallāna went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One:

2. “Master Gotama, in this Palace of Migāra’s Mother there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, down to the last step of the staircase. Among these brahmins too, there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, in study. Among archers too, there can be seen gradual training...that is, in archery. And also among accountants like us, who earn our living by accountancy, there can be seen gradual training...that is, in computation. For when we get an apprentice first we make him count: one one, two twos, three threes, four fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens; and we make him count a hundred too. Now is it also possible, Master Gotama, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline?”

3. “It is possible, brahmin, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline. Just as, brahmin, when a clever horse-trainer obtains a fine thoroughbred colt, he first makes him get used to wearing the bit, and afterwards trains him further, so when the Tathāgata obtains a person to be tamed he first disciplines him thus: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be virtuous, restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, be perfect in conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts.’

4. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is virtuous...and seeing fear in the slightest fault, trains by undertaking the training precepts, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, guard the doors of your sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, do not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye faculty, undertake the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odor with the nose...On tasting a flavor with the tongue...On touching a tangible with the body...On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, do not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the mind faculty, undertake the restraint of the mind faculty.’

5. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu guards the doors of his sense faculties, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be moderate in eating. Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: “Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arousing new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.”’

6. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is moderate in eating, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be devoted to wakefulness. During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night you should lie down on the right side in the lion’s pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states.’

7. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu is devoted to wakefulness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. Act in full awareness when going forward and returning; act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; act in full awareness when flexing and extending your limbs; act in full awareness when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; act in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.’

8. “When, brahmin, the bhikkhu possesses mindfulness and full awareness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, resort to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.’

9. “He resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest...a heap of straw. On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him. Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill will and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and remorse. Abandoning doubt, he abides

having gone beyond doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from doubt.

10. “Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. With the fading away as well of rapture, he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

11. “This is my instruction, brahmin, to those bhikkhus who are in the higher training, whose minds have not yet attained the goal, who abide aspiring to the supreme security from bondage. But these things conduce both to a pleasant abiding here and now and to mindfulness and full awareness for those bhikkhus who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge.”

12. When this was said, the brahmin Gaṅḁaka Moggallāna asked the Blessed One: “When Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, do they all attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, or do some not attain it?”

“When, brahmin, they are thus advised and instructed by me, some of my disciples attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it.”

13. “Master Gotama, since Nibbāna exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and Master Gotama is present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it?”

14. “As to that, brahmin, I will ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, brahmin? Are you familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha?”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I am familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha.”

“What do you think, brahmin? Suppose a man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: ‘Venerable sir, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the road to Rājagaha.’ Then you told him: ‘Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for awhile and you will see a certain village, go a little further and you will see a certain town, go a little further and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds.’ Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would take a wrong road and would go to the west. Then a second man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: ‘Venerable sir, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the road to Rājagaha.’ Then you told him: ‘Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for awhile...and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds.’ Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would arrive safely in Rājagaha. Now, brahmin, since Rājagaha exists and the path leading to Rājagaha exists and you are present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when those men have been thus advised and instructed by you, one man takes a wrong road and goes to the west and one arrives safely in Rājagaha?”

“What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I am one who shows the way.”

“So too, brahmin, Nibbāna exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and I am present as the guide. Yet when my disciples have been thus advised and instructed by me, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it. What can I do about that, brahmin? The Tathāgata is one who shows the way.”

15. When this was said, the brahmin Gaṅḁaka Moggallāna said to the Blessed One: “There are persons who are faithless and have gone forth from the home life into homelessness not out of faith but seeking a livelihood, who are fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, loose-spoken, unguarded in their sense faculties, immoderate in eating, undevoted to wakefulness, unconcerned with recluseship, not greatly respectful of training, luxurious, careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion, lazy, wanting in energy, unmindful, not fully aware, unconcentrated, with straying minds, devoid of wisdom, drivellers. Master Gotama does not dwell together with these.

“But there are clansmen who have gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, who are not fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, and loose-spoken; who are guarded in their sense faculties, moderate in eating, devoted to wakefulness, concerned with recluseship, greatly respectful of training, not luxurious or careless, who are keen to avoid backsliding, leaders in seclusion, energetic, resolute, established in mindfulness, fully aware, concentrated, with unified minds, possessing wisdom, not drivellers. Master Gotama dwells together with these.

16. “Just as black orris root is reckoned as the best of root perfumes and red sandalwood is reckoned as the best of wood perfumes and jasmine is reckoned as the best of flower perfumes, so too, Master Gotama’s advice is supreme among the teachings of today.

17. “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. Let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life.”

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Majjhima Nikāya 107

Part Three— The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipavāsaṅḁāsapāṇi)

The Division at Devadaha (Devadahavagga)

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