



*Ten  
Perfections*

*Ten*  
*Perfections*  
*A Study Guide*  
*Prepared by*  
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## *Abbreviations*

|             |                         |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| <i>AN</i>   | <i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i> |
| <i>Dhp</i>  | <i>Dhammapada</i>       |
| <i>DN</i>   | <i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>     |
| <i>Iti</i>  | <i>Itivuttaka</i>       |
| <i>MN</i>   | <i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>  |
| <i>SN</i>   | <i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>  |
| <i>Sn</i>   | <i>Sutta Nipāta</i>     |
| <i>Thag</i> | <i>Theragāthā</i>       |
| <i>Ud</i>   | <i>Udāna</i>            |

## Introduction

FOR PEOPLE IN THE MODERN WORLD facing the issue of how to practice the Dhamma in daily life, the ten perfections provide a useful framework for how to do it. When you view life as an opportunity to develop these ten qualities—generosity, virtue, renunciation, discernment, persistence, endurance, truth, determination, good will, and equanimity—you develop a fruitful attitude toward your daily activities so that any skillful activity or relationship, undertaken wisely and in a balanced way, becomes part of the practice.

The perfections also provide one of the few reliable ways of measuring the accomplishments of one's life. "Accomplishments" in the realm of work and relationships have a way of turning into dust, but perfections of the character, once developed, are dependable and lasting, carrying one over and beyond the vicissitudes of daily living. Thus they deserve to take high priority in the way we plan our lives. These two facts are reflected in the two etymologies offered for the word perfection (*pāramī*): They carry one across to the further shore (*param*); and they are of foremost (*parama*) importance in formulating the purpose of one's life.

The relevance of the ten perfections to lay life may be related to the fact that the list was drawn from the Jātaka tales, stories of the Buddha's previous lives in which—often as a lay person—he developed the character traits that led to his becoming a Buddha. Interest in these tales developed in the early centuries after the Buddha passed away. As Buddhism became a popular religion, the idea was formalized that there were three paths to awakening to choose from: the path to awakening as a disciple of a Buddha (*sāvaka*); the path to awakening as a private Buddha (*pacceka-buddha*), i.e., one who attained awakening on his own but was not able to teach the path of practice to others; and the path to awakening as a Rightly Self-awakened Buddha (*sammā sambuddha*). Each path was defined as consisting of perfections (*pāramī*) of character, but there was a question as to what those perfections were and how the paths differed from one another. The Theravādins, for instance, specified ten perfections, and organized their Jātaka collection so that it culminated in ten tales, each illustrating one of the

perfections. The Sarvāstivādins, on the other hand, specified six perfections, and organized their Jātaka collection accordingly.

All Buddhists agreed that the third path took by far the longest to follow, but disagreements arose as to whether the perfections developed along the different paths were quantitatively or qualitatively different. In other words, did a Buddha develop more of the same sort of perfections that an arahant developed, or did he develop perfections of a radically different sort? Those who believed that the perfections differed only quantitatively were able to take the early Buddhist canons as their guide to the path to Buddhahood, for they could simply extrapolate from the path of the arahant as described in those canons. Those seeking Buddhahood who believed that the perfections differed qualitatively, however, had to look outside the canons. People in this latter group often practiced a form of meditation aimed at inducing visions of bodhisattvas treading the path to full Buddhahood, along with Buddhas in other world-systems. These Buddhas and bodhisattvas—it was hoped—would provide an insider’s knowledge of the full Buddha’s path. The teachings that resulted from these visions were very diverse; not until the 3rd century C.E., with the development of the Yogācāra school, was a concerted effort made to collate these various teachings into a single body—what we now know as the Mahāyāna movement—but the differences among these teachings were so great that the Mahāyāna never achieved true unity.

Thus, historically, there have been two major approaches to following the path to full Buddhahood: following guidelines gleaned from the early canons, and following the traditions set in motion by the experiences of visionaries from the beginning of the common era. The materials in this study guide take the first approaches.

There’s a common misunderstanding that the Theravāda school teaches only the sāvaka path, but a glance at Theravāda history will show that many Theravādins have vowed to become bodhisattvas and have undertaken the practice of the ten perfections as set forth in the Theravādin Jātakas. Because these perfections differ only quantitatively for arahants, Theravādins who aspire to arahantship cite the perfections as qualities that they are developing as part of their practice outside of formal meditation. For example, they make donations to develop the perfection of generosity, undertake building projects to develop the perfection of endurance, and so forth.

The material in this study guide is organized under the heading of the eighth perfection—determination—for several reasons. The first reason is that determination is needed for undertaking the path of perfections to begin with, in that it gives focus, motivation, and direction to the practice. The second reason is that the four aspects of skilled determination—discernment, truth, relinquishment, and calm—when studied carefully, cover all ten of the perfections. In this way, the material gathered here illustrates the general principle that each of the perfections, when properly practiced, includes all ten. The third reason is that the four aspects of skilled determination highlight the importance of establishing wise priorities and sticking to them regardless of the temptation to sacrifice them for lesser aims. In this way, they help guard against a common problem in approaching practice in daily life: a tendency to indulge in the self-delusion that can justify any activity, as long as it's done mindfully, as part of the path.

The fourth, and perhaps most important, reason for organizing the material in this way is that skilled determination begins with discernment, the ability to make wise distinctions that help keep each of the perfections on path to the goal of ending suffering. If they are not informed by these distinctions, the perfections are simply generic virtues, common to all cultures, leading to pleasant results but not necessarily to the transcendent. Thus the material here has been chosen to highlight the need to use discernment in making important distinctions in developing the perfections in a wise and effective way.

For instance, under the theme of good will, passage §18 shows that good will is not necessarily loving-kindness: Wishing happiness for others is not necessarily a desire to become involved with them. Passages §§20-21 show that, although one should extend good will to all, one should be selective in one's friendships. Passage §22 makes the point that good will should not be practiced to the point of entanglement.

Similarly, under the theme of persistence, passage §36 points out that persistence is not simply a matter of brute force. One has to discern which type of effort is appropriate for the issue at hand. Passages §§37-38 show that the amount of effort appropriate in a particular situation has to be gauged both by the nature of the problem and by one's own level of energy. Under the theme of renunciation, passages §§56-57 teach standards for determining how much physical pleasure is compatible with progress on the path. Under the theme of endurance, passage §70 points out the need to distinguish what should and

should not be tolerated, at the same time counseling common sense in avoiding unnecessary dangers. Passages §§62-66 recommend skillful strategies for making difficult situations more tolerable: developing good will and sympathy for all, reflecting on the inspiring example of those who have endured difficulties in the past, nourishing the mind with the rapture of concentration, and depersonalizing the situation so as not to add painful narratives on top of physical and mental pain. Under the theme of equanimity, passages §§72-73 distinguish levels of equanimity on the path, making the point that—contrary to a common misunderstanding—equanimity is not the goal, but simply a means to a higher end.

Passages in this guide are drawn from the Pali Canon and from the teachings of Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo.

The four determinations:

One should not be negligent of *discernment*,  
should guard the *truth*,  
be devoted to *relinquishment*,  
and train only for *calm*. — MN 140

# I. DISCERNMENT

§ 1. Three types of discernment:

discernment that comes from listening (*sutamaya-paññā*)

discernment that comes from thinking (*cintāmaya-paññā*)

discernment that comes from developing/meditation (*bhāvanāmaya-paññā*) — [\*DN 33\*](#)

§ 2. A fool with a sense of his foolishness

is—at least to that extent—wise.

But a fool who thinks himself wise

really deserves to be called

a fool. — [\*Dhp 63\*](#)

§ 3. “Monks, these two are fools. Which two? The one who doesn’t see his transgression as a transgression, and the one who doesn’t rightfully pardon another who has confessed his transgression. These two are fools.

“These two are wise people. Which two? The one who sees his transgression as a transgression, and the one who rightfully pardons another who has confessed his transgression. These two are wise people.” — [\*AN 2:21\*](#)

§ 4. “Monks, these two are fools. Which two? The one who takes up a burden that hasn’t fallen to him, and the one who doesn’t take up a burden that has. These two are fools.” — [\*AN 2:99\*](#)

§ 5. “This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a contemplative or brahman, to ask: ‘What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?’” — [\*MN 135\*](#)

§ 6. “As for the course of action that is unpleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is profitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be

known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he doesn’t do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.

“As for the course of action that is pleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’ So he doesn’t do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.” — [AN 4:115](#)

§ 7. “And what is right view? Knowledge in terms of stress, knowledge in terms of the origination of stress, knowledge in terms of the cessation of stress, knowledge in terms of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called right view.

“And what is right resolve? Resolve aimed at renunciation, at freedom from ill will, at harmlessness: This is called right resolve.” — [SN 45:8](#)

§ 8. “And what is the right view that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is the right view that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And what is the right view that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of

discernment, analysis of qualities as a factor of Awakening, the path factor of right view in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is free from fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right view.

“[2] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And what is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. This is wrong resolve.

“And what is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right resolve, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And what is the right resolve that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on harmlessness. This is the right resolve that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And what is the right resolve that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, mental absorption, mental fixity, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right resolve.” — [\*MN 117\*](#)

§ 9. “And what is the faculty of discernment? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. He discerns, as it has come to be: ‘This is stress... This is the origination of stress...

This is the cessation of stress... This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.” — [SN 48:10](#)

§ 10. “There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities... once it has arisen.” — [SN 46:51](#)

§ 11. What does discernment come from? You might compare it with learning to become a potter, a tailor, or a basket weaver. The teacher will start out by telling you how to make a pot, sew a shirt or a pair of pants, or weave different patterns, but the proportions and beauty of the object you make will have to depend on your own powers of observation. Suppose you weave a basket and then take a good look at its proportions, to see if it's too short or too tall. If it's too short, weave another one, a little taller, and then take a good look at it to see if there's anything that still needs improving, to see if it's too thin or too fat. Then weave another one, better-looking than the last. Keep this up until you have one that's as beautiful and well-proportioned as possible, one with nothing to criticize from any angle. This last basket you can take as your standard. You can now set yourself up in business.

What you've done is to learn from your own actions. As for your previous efforts, you needn't concern yourself with them any longer. Throw them out. This is a sense of discernment that arises of its own accord, an ingenuity and sense of judgment that come not from anything your teachers have taught you, but from observing and evaluating on your own the object that you yourself have made.

The same holds true in practicing meditation. For discernment to arise, you have to be observant as you keep track of the breath and to gain a sense of how to adjust and improve it so that it's well-proportioned throughout the body—to the point where it flows evenly without faltering, so that it's comfortable in slow and out slow, in fast and out fast, long, short, heavy, or refined. Get so that both the in-breath and the out-breath are comfortable no matter what way you breathe, so that—no matter when—you immediately feel a sense of ease the moment you focus on the breath. When you can do this, physical results will appear: a sense of ease and lightness, open and spacious. The body will be

strong, the breath and blood will flow unobstructed and won't form an opening for disease to step in. The body will be healthy and awake.

As for the mind, when mindfulness and alertness are the causes, a still mind is the result. When negligence is the cause, a mind distracted and restless is the result. So we must try to make the causes good, in order to give rise to the good results we've referred to. If we use our powers of observation and evaluation in caring for the breath, and are constantly correcting and improving it, we'll develop awareness on our own, the fruit of having developed our concentration higher step by step.

— *Ajaan Lee (Inner Strength)*

§ 12. Discernment comes from observing causes and effects. If we know effects without knowing causes, that doesn't qualify as discernment. If we know causes without knowing effects, that doesn't qualify, either. We have to know both of them together with our mindfulness and alertness. This is what qualifies as all-around knowing in the full sense of the term.

The all-around knowing that arises within us comes from causes and effects, not from what we read in books, hear other people tell us, or conjecture on our own. Suppose we have some silver coins in our pocket. If all we know is that other people say it's money, we don't know its qualities. But if we experiment with it and put it in a smelter to see what it's made of and to see how it can be made into other things, that's when we'll know its true qualities. This is the kind of knowledge that comes from our own actions. This knowledge, when we meditate, comes in five forms. We find within ourselves that some things are caused by the properties of the body, some are caused by the mind, some causes come from the mind but have an effect on the body, some causes come from the body but have an effect on the mind, some causes come from the body and mind acting together.

— *Ajaan Lee (The Skill of Release)*

§ 13. The Dhamma of attainment is something cool, clean, and clear. It doesn't take birth, age, grow ill, or die. Whoever works earnestly at the Dhamma of study and practice will give rise to the Dhamma of attainment without a doubt. The Dhamma of attainment is *paccattam*: You have to know it for yourself.

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We should make a point of searching for whatever will give rise to discernment. *Sutamaya-paññā*: Listen to things that are worth listening to. *Cintāmayā-paññā*: Once you've listened, evaluate what you've learned. Don't accept it or reject it right off hand. *Bhāvanāmayā-paññā*: Once you've put what you've learned to the test, practice in line with it. This is the highest perfection of discernment—liberating insight. You know what kinds of stress and pain should be remedied and so you remedy them. You know what kinds shouldn't be remedied and so you don't.

For the most part we're really ignorant. We try to remedy the things that shouldn't be remedied, and it just doesn't work—because there's one kind of stress that should simply be observed and shouldn't be fiddled with at all. Like a rusty watch: Don't polish away any more rust than you should. If you go taking it apart, the whole thing will stop running for good. What this means is that once you've seen natural conditions for what they truly are, you have to let them be. If you see something that should be fixed, you fix it. Whatever shouldn't be fixed, you don't. This takes a load off the heart.

Ignorant people are like the old woman who lit a fire to cook her rice and, when her rice was cooked, had her meal. When she had finished her meal, she sat back and had a cigar. It so happened that when she lit her cigar with one of the embers of the fire, it burned her mouth. 'Damned fire,' she thought. 'It burned my mouth.' So she put all her matches in a pile and poured water all over them so that there wouldn't be any more fire in the house—just like a fool with no sense at all. The next day, when she wanted fire to cook her meal, there wasn't any left. At night, when she wanted light, she had to go pestering her neighbors, asking this person and that, and yet still she hated fire. We have to learn how to make use of things and to have a sense of how much is enough. If you light only a little fire, it'll be three hours before your rice is cooked. The fire isn't enough for your food. So it is with us: We see stress as something bad and so try to remedy it—keeping at it with our eyes closed, as if we were blind. No matter how much we treat it, we never get anywhere at all.

People with discernment will see that stress is of two kinds: (1) physical stress, or the inherent stress of natural conditions; and (2) mental stress, or the stress of defilement. Once there's birth, there has to be aging, illness, and death. Whoever tries to remedy aging can keep at it till they're withered and gray. When we try to remedy illness, we're usually like the old woman pouring water all over her matches. Sometimes we treat things just right, sometimes we don't

—as when the front step gets cracked, and we dismantle the house right up to the roof.

Illness is something that everyone has, in other words, the diseases that appear in the various parts of the body. Once we've treated the disease in our eyes, it'll go appear in our ears, nose, in front, in back, in our arm, our hand, our foot, etc., and then it'll sneak inside. Like a person trying to catch hold of an eel: The more you try to catch it, the more it slips off every which way. And so we keep on treating our diseases till we die. Some kinds of disease will go away whether we treat them or not. If it's a disease that goes away with treatment, then take medicine. If it's one that goes away whether we treat it or not, why bother? This is what it means to have discernment.

Ignorant people don't know which kinds of stress should be treated and which kinds shouldn't, and so they put their time and money to waste. As for intelligent people, they see what should be treated and they treat it using their own discernment. All diseases arise either from an imbalance in the physical elements or from kamma. If it's a disease that arises from the physical elements, we should treat it with food, medicine, etc. If it arises from kamma, we have to treat it with the Buddha's medicine. In other words, stress and pain that arise from the heart, if we treat them with food and medicine, won't respond. We have to treat them with the Dhamma. Whoever knows how to manage this is said to have a sense of how to observe and diagnose stress.

If we look at it in another way, we'll see that aging, illness, and death are simply the shadows of stress and not its true substance. People lacking discernment will try to do away with the shadows, which leads only to more suffering and stress. This is because they aren't acquainted with what the shadows and substance of stress come from. The essence of stress lies with the mind. Aging, illness, and death are its shadows or effects that show by way of the body. When we want to kill our enemy and so take a knife to stab his shadow, how is he going to die? In the same way, ignorant people try to destroy the shadows of stress and don't get anywhere. As for the essence of stress in the heart, they don't think of remedying it at all. This ignorance of theirs is one form of *avijjā*, or unawareness.

To look at it in still another way, both the shadows and the real thing come from *taṇhā*, craving. We're like a person who has amassed a huge fortune and then, when thieves come to break in, goes killing the thieves. He doesn't see his own wrong-doing and sees only the wrong-doing of others. Actually, once he's

piled his house full in this way, thieves can't help but break in. In the same way, people suffer from stress and so they hate it, and yet they don't make the effort to straighten themselves out.

Stress comes from the three forms of craving, so we should kill off craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for no becoming. These things are fabricated in our own heart, and we have to know them with our own mindfulness and discernment. Once we've contemplated them until we see, we'll know: 'This sort of mental state is craving for sensuality; this sort is craving for becoming; and this sort, craving for no becoming.'

People with discernment will see that these things exist in the heart in subtle, intermediate, and blatant stages, just as a person has three stages in a lifetime: youth, middle age, and old age. 'Youth' is craving for sensuality. Once this thirst arises in the heart, it wavers and moves—this is craving for becoming—and then takes shape as craving for no further becoming—a *sambhavesin* with its neck stretched out looking for its object, causing itself stress and pain. In other words, we take a liking to various sights, sounds, smells, flavors, etc., and so fix on them, which brings us stress. So we shouldn't preoccupy ourselves with sights, sounds, etc., that provoke greed, anger, or delusion (craving for sensuality), causing the mind to waver and whisk out with concepts (this is craving for becoming; when the mind sticks with its wavering, won't stop repeating its motions, that's craving for no further becoming).

When we gain discernment, we should destroy these forms of craving with *anulomika-ñāṇa*, knowledge in accordance with the four Noble Truths, knowing exactly how much ease and pleasure the mind has when cravings for sensuality, becoming, and no becoming all disappear. This is called knowing the reality of disbanding. As for the cause of stress and the path to the disbanding of stress, we'll know them as well.

Ignorant people will go ride in the shadow of a car—and they'll end up with their heads bashed in. People who don't realize what the shadows of virtue are, will end up riding only the shadows. Words and deeds are the shadows of virtue. Actual virtue is in the heart. The heart at normalcy is the substance of virtue. The substance of concentration is the mind firmly centered in a single preoccupation without any interference from concepts or mental labels. The bodily side to concentration—when our mouth, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are quiet—is just the shadow, as when the body sits still, its mouth closed and not speaking with anyone, its nose not interested in any smells, its eyes closed and

not interested in any objects, etc. If the mind is firmly centered to the level of fixed penetration, then whether we sit, stand, walk, or lie down, the mind doesn't waver.

Once the mind is trained to the level of fixed penetration, discernment will arise without our having to search for it, just like an imperial sword: When it's drawn for use, it's sharp and flashing. When it's no longer needed, it goes back in the scabbard. This is why we are taught,

*mano-pubbaṅgamā dhammā*  
*mano-seṭṭhā mano-mayā:*

The mind is the most extraordinary thing there is. The mind is the source of the Dhamma.

This is what it means to know stress, its cause, its disbanding, and the path to its disbanding. This is the substance of virtue, concentration, and discernment. Whoever can do this will reach release: *nibbāna*. Whoever can give rise to the Dhamma of study and practice within themselves will meet with the Dhamma of attainment without a doubt. This is why it's said to be *sandiṭṭhiko*, visible in the present; *akāliko*, bearing fruit no matter what the time or season. Keep working at it always.

— *Ajaan Lee (Inner Strength)*

§ 14. For the heart to go and do harm to other people, we first have to open the way for it. In other words, we start out by doing harm to ourselves, and this clears the way from inside the house for us to go out and do harm to people outside.

The intention to do harm is a heavy form of self-harm. At the very least, it uses up our time and destroys our opportunity to do good. We have to wipe it out with the intention not to do harm—or in other words, with concentration. This is like seeing that there's plenty of unused space in our property and that we aren't making enough for our living. We'll have to leap out into the open field so as to give ourselves the momentum for doing our full measure of goodness as the opportunity arises.

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*Nekkhamma-saṅkappo* (thoughts of renunciation), i.e., being at ease in quiet, solitary places. *Abyāpāda-saṅkappo* (thoughts of non-anger): We don't have to

think about our own bad points or the bad points of others. *Avihinsā-saṅkappo* (thoughts of not doing harm), not creating trouble or doing harm to ourselves, i.e., (1) not thinking about our own shortcomings, which would depress us; (2) if we think about our own shortcomings, it'll spread like wildfire to the shortcomings of others. For this reason, wise people lift their thoughts to the level of goodness so that they can feel love and good will for themselves, and so that they can then feel love and good will for others as well.

When our mind has these three forms of energy, it's like a table with three legs that can spin in all directions. To put it another way, once our mind has spun up to this high a level, we can take pictures of everything above and below us. We'll develop discernment like a bright light or like binoculars that can magnify every detail. This is called *ñāṇa*—intuitive awareness that can know everything in the world: *Lokavidū*.

The discernment here isn't ordinary knowledge or insight. It's a special cognitive skill, the skill of the Noble Path. We'll give rise to three eyes in the heart, so as to see the reds and greens, the highs and lows of the mundane world: a sport for those with wisdom. Our internal eyes will look at the Dhamma in front and behind, above and below and all around us, so as to know all the ins and outs of goodness and evil. This is discernment. We'll be at our ease, feeling pleasure with no pain interfering at all. This is called *viññā-carāṇa-sampanno*—being fully equipped with cognitive skill....

Whoever sees the world as having highs and lows doesn't yet have true intuitive discernment. Whoever has the eye of intuition will see that there are no highs, no lows, no rich, no poor. Everything is equal in terms of the three common characteristics: inconstant, stressful, and not-self. It's like the equality of democracy. Their home is the same as our home, with no differences at all. People commit burglaries and robberies these days because they don't see equality. They think that this person is good, that person isn't; this house is a good place to eat, that house isn't; this house is a good place to sleep, that house isn't, etc. It's because they don't have insight, the eye of discernment, that there's all this confusion and turmoil....

If we can get our practice on the Noble Path, we'll enter *nibbāna*. Virtue will disband, concentration will disband, discernment will disband. In other words, we won't dwell on our knowledge or discernment. If we're intelligent enough to know, we simply know, without taking intelligence as being an essential part of ourselves. On the lower level, we're not stuck on virtue, concentration, or

discernment. On a higher level, we're not stuck on the stages of stream-entry, once-returning, or non-returning. *Nibbāna* isn't stuck on the world, the world isn't stuck on *nibbāna*. Only at this point can we use the term 'arahant.'

This is where we can relax. They can say inconstant, but it's just what they say. They can say stress, but it's just what they say. They can say not-self, but it's just what they say. Whatever they say, that's the way it is. It's true for them, and they're completely right—but completely wrong. As for us, only if we can get ourselves beyond right and wrong will we be doing fine. Roads are built for people to walk on, but dogs and cats can walk on them as well. Sane people and crazy people will use the roads: They didn't build the roads for crazy people, but crazy people have every right to use them. As for the precepts, even fools and idiots can observe them. The same with concentration: Crazy or sane, they can come and sit. And discernment: We all have the right to come and talk our heads off, but it's simply a question of being right or wrong.

None of the valuables of the mundane world give any real pleasure. They're nothing but stress. They're good as far as the world is concerned, but *nibbāna* doesn't have any need for them. Right views and wrong views are an affair of the world. *Nibbāna* doesn't have any right views or wrong views. For this reason, whatever is a wrong view, we should abandon. Whatever is a right view, we should develop—until the day it can fall from our grasp. That's when we can be at our ease.

—Ajaan Lee (*Inner Strength*)

## Good Will

§ 15. “Devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful, one keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with good will, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, one keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will, just as a strong conch-trumpet blower—without any difficulty—can notify the four directions.” — [\*SN 42:8\*](#)

§ 16. Think: Happy, at rest,  
may all beings be happy at heart.

Whatever beings there may be,  
weak or strong, without exception,  
long, large,  
middling, short,  
subtle, blatant,  
seen & unseen,  
near & far,  
born & seeking birth:  
May all beings be happy at heart.  
Let no one deceive another  
or despise anyone anywhere,  
or through anger or resistance  
wish for another to suffer. — [\*Sn 1:8\*](#)

§ 17. “May these beings—free from animosity, free from oppression, and free from trouble—look after themselves with ease.” — [\*AN 10:165\*](#)

§ 18. I have good will for footless beings,  
good will for two-footed beings,  
good will for four-footed beings,  
good will for many-footed beings.  
May footless beings do me no harm.  
May two-footed beings do me no harm.  
May four-footed beings do me no harm.  
May many-footed beings do me no harm.

May all creatures,  
all breathing things,  
all beings  
—each & every one—  
meet with good fortune.  
May none of them come to any evil.

Limitless is the Buddha,  
limitless the Dhamma,  
limitless the Sangha.  
There is a limit to creeping things:  
snakes, scorpions, centipedes,

spiders, lizards, & rats.  
I have made this safeguard,  
I have made this protection.  
May the beings depart. — [AN 4:67](#)

§ 19. “For one whose release of awareness through good will is cultivated, developed, pursued, handed the reins, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken, eleven benefits can be expected. Which eleven?

“One sleeps easily, wakes easily, dreams no evil dreams. One is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings. The devas protect one. Neither fire, poison, nor weapons can touch one. One’s mind gains concentration quickly. One’s complexion is bright. One dies unconfused and—if penetrating no higher—is headed for the Brahma worlds.” — [AN 11:16](#)

§ 20. Not consorting with fools,  
consorting with the wise,  
paying homage to those worthy of homage:  
This is the highest protection. — [Sn 2:4](#)

§ 21. “And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders’ sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.” — [AN 8:54](#)

§ 22. “‘This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one who is entangled.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, when living in seclusion, is visited by monks, nuns, lay men, lay women, kings, royal ministers, sectarians & their disciples. With his mind bent on seclusion, tending toward seclusion, inclined toward seclusion, aiming at seclusion, relishing renunciation, he converses with them only as much as is necessary for them to take their leave. ‘This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one in entanglement.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.” — [AN 8:30](#)

§ 23. “Once upon a time, a bamboo acrobat, having erected a bamboo pole, addressed his assistant, Frying Pan: ‘Come, my dear Frying Pan. Climb up the bamboo pole and stand on my shoulders.’

“‘As you say, Master,’ Frying Pan answered the bamboo acrobat and, climbing the bamboo pole, stood on his shoulders.

“So then the bamboo acrobat said to his assistant, ‘Now you watch after me, my dear Frying Pan, and I’ll watch after you. Thus, protecting one another, watching after one another, we’ll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.’

“When he had said this, Frying Pan said to him, ‘But that won’t do at all, Master. You watch after yourself, and I’ll watch after myself, and thus with each of us protecting ourselves, watching after ourselves, we’ll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.’

“What Frying Pan, the assistant, said to her Master was the right way in that case.

“The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after myself.’ The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after others.’ When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.

“And how does one, when watching after oneself, watch after others? Through pursuing [the practice], through developing it, through devoting oneself to it. This is how one, when watching after oneself, watches after others.

“And how does one, when watching after others, watch after oneself? Through endurance, through harmlessness, and through a mind of kindness & sympathy. This is how one, when watching after others, watches after oneself.

“The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after myself.’ The establishing of mindfulness is to be practiced with the thought, ‘I’ll watch after others.’ When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.” — [SN 47:19](#)

§ 24. Anger. When this defilement really gets strong, it has no sense of good or evil, right or wrong, husband, wives, or children. It can drink human blood. An example we often see is when people get quarreling and one of them ends up in prison or even on death row, convicted for murder. This is even worse than your house burning down, because you have nothing left at all. For this reason, we

have to get ourselves some life insurance by observing the five or eight precepts so that we can treat and bandage our open sores—i.e., so that we can wash away the evil and unwise things in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Even if we can't wash them all away, we should try at least to relieve them somewhat. Although you may still have some fire left, let there just be enough to cook your food or light your home. Don't let there be so much that it burns your house down.

*The only way to put out these fires is to meditate and develop thoughts of good will.* The mind won't feel any anger, hatred, or ill will, and instead will feel nothing but thoughts of sympathy, seeing that everyone in the world aims at goodness, but that our goodness isn't equal. You have to use really careful discernment to consider cause and effect, and then be forgiving, with the thought that we human beings aren't equal or identical in our goodness and evil. If everyone were equal, the world would fall apart. If we were equally good or equally bad, the world would have to fall apart for sure. Suppose that all the people in the world were farmers, with no merchants or government officials. Or suppose there were only government officials, with no farmers at all: We'd all starve to death with our mouths gaping and dry. If everyone were equal and identical, the end of the world would come in only a few days' time. Consider your body: Even the different parts of your own body aren't equal. Some of your fingers are short, some are long, some small, some large. If all ten of your fingers were equal, you'd have a monster's hands. So when even your own fingers aren't equal, how can you expect people to be equal in terms of their thoughts, words, and deeds? You have to think this way and be forgiving...

When you can think in this way, your good will can spread to all people everywhere, and you'll feel sympathy for people on high levels, low levels and in between. The big ball of fire inside you will go out through the power of your good will and loving kindness.

This comes from getting life insurance: practicing tranquility meditation so as to chase the defilements away from the mind. Thoughts of sensual desire, ill will, lethargy, restlessness, and uncertainty will vanish, and the mind will be firmly centered in concentration, using its powers of directed thought to stay with its meditation word—*buddho*—and its powers of evaluation to create a sense of inner lightness and ease. When the mind fills itself with rapture—the flavor arising from concentration—it will have its own inner food and nourishment, so that whatever you do in thought, word, or deed is sure to succeed.

—Ajaan Lee (*Food for Thought*)

## II. TRUTH

§ 25. “Let an observant person come—one who is not fraudulent, not deceitful, one of a straightforward nature. I instruct him. I teach him the Dhamma. Practicing as instructed, he in no long time knows for himself, sees for himself: ‘So this is how there is the right liberation from bondage, i.e., the bondage of ignorance.’” — *MN 80*

§ 26. *A characteristic of a “thoroughbred of a monk”*: “Whatever tricks or deceits or wiles or subterfuges he has, he shows them as they actually are to the Teacher or to his knowledgeable companions in the holy life, so that the Teacher or his knowledgeable companions in the holy life can try to straighten them out.” — [\*AN 8:13\*](#)

§ 27. At that time Ven. Rāhula was staying at the Mango Stone. Then the Blessed One, arising from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to where Ven. Rāhula was staying at the Mango Stone. Ven. Rāhula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, set out a seat & water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat set out and, having sat down, washed his feet. Ven. Rāhula, bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

Then the Blessed One, having left a little bit of the remaining water in the water dipper, said to Ven. Rāhula, “Rāhula, do you see this little bit of remaining water left in the water dipper?”

“Yes sir.”

“That’s how little of a contemplative there is in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie.”

Having tossed away the little bit of remaining water, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, “Rāhula, do you see how this little bit of remaining water is tossed away?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is tossed away just like that.”

Having turned the water dipper upside down, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, “Rāhula, do you see how this water dipper is turned upside down?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is turned upside down just like that.”

Having turned the water dipper right-side up, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, “Rāhula, do you see how empty & hollow this water dipper is?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is empty & hollow just like that.

“Rāhula, it’s like a royal elephant: immense, pedigreed, accustomed to battles, its tusks like chariot poles. Having gone into battle, it uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail, but will simply hold back its trunk. The elephant trainer notices that and thinks, ‘This royal elephant has not given up its life to the king.’ But when the royal elephant... having gone into battle, uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail & his trunk, the trainer notices that and thinks, ‘This royal elephant has given up its life to the king. There is nothing it will not do.’

“In the same way, Rāhula, when anyone feels no shame in telling a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I tell you, he will not do. Thus, Rāhula, you should train yourself, ‘I will not tell a deliberate lie even in jest.’” — [\*MN 61\*](#)

§ 28. This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant, so I have heard: “For the person who transgresses in one thing, I tell you, there is no evil deed that is not to be done. Which one thing? This: telling a deliberate lie.” — [\*Iti 25\*](#)

§ 29. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels’ Sanctuary. Then Vassakāra the brahman, the minister to the king of Magadha, approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “I am of the view, of the opinion, that when anyone speaks of what he has seen, (saying,) ‘Thus have I seen,’ there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has heard, (saying,) ‘Thus have I heard,’ there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has sensed, (saying,) ‘Thus have I sensed,’ there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has cognized, (saying,) ‘Thus have I cognized,’ there is no fault in that.”

[The Blessed One responded:] “I do not say, brahman, that everything that has been seen should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been seen should not be spoken about. I do not say that everything that has been heard... everything that has been sensed... everything that has been cognized should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been cognized should not be spoken about.

“When, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful mental qualities increase and skillful mental qualities decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful mental qualities decrease and skillful mental qualities increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about.

“When, for one who speaks of what has been heard... what has been sensed... what has been cognized, unskillful mental qualities increase and skillful mental qualities decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been cognized, unskillful mental qualities decrease and skillful mental qualities increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about.”

Then Vassakāra the brahman, delighting & rejoicing in the Blessed One's words, got up from his seat and left. — [\*AN 4:183\*](#)

§ 30. So Kāpadika Bhāradvāja said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, with regard to the ancient hymns of the brahmans—passed down through oral transmission & included in their canon—the brahmans have come to the definite conclusion that “Only this is true; anything else is worthless.” What does Master Gotama have to say to this?”

“Tell me, Bhāradvāja, is there among the brahmans even one brahman who says, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And has there been among the brahmans even one teacher or teacher's teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And among the brahman seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns—those ancient hymns, sung, repeated, & collected, which brahmans at present still sing, still chant, repeating what was said,

repeating what was spoken—i.e., Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa & Bhagu: was there even one of these who said, ‘This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“So then, Bhāradvāja, it seems that there isn’t among the brahmins even one brahmin who says, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahmins even one teacher or teacher’s teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahmin seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns... even one who said, ‘This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ Suppose there were a row of blind men, each holding on to the one in front of him: the first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. In the same way, the statement of the brahmins turns out to be a row of blind men, as it were: the first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. So what do you think, Bhāradvāja: this being the case, doesn’t the conviction of the brahmins turn out to be groundless?”

“It’s not only out of conviction, Master Gotama, that the brahmins honor this. They also honor it as unbroken tradition.”

“Bhāradvāja, first you went by conviction. Now you speak of unbroken tradition. There are five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Which five? Conviction, liking, unbroken tradition, reasoning by analogy, & an agreement through pondering views. These are the five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Now some things are firmly held in conviction and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not firmly held in conviction, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistaken. Some things are well-liked... truly an unbroken tradition... well-reasoned... Some things are well-pondered and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not well-pondered, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistaken. In these cases it isn’t proper for a knowledgeable person who safeguards the truth to come to a definite conclusion, ‘Only this is true; anything else is worthless.’”

“But to what extent, Master Gotama, is there the safeguarding of the truth? To what extent does one safeguard the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the safeguarding of the truth.”

“If a person has conviction, his statement, ‘This is my conviction,’ safeguards the truth. But he doesn’t yet come to the definite conclusion that ‘Only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ To this extent, Bhāradvāja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet an awakening to the truth.

“If a person likes something... holds an unbroken tradition... has something reasoned through analogy... has something he agrees to, having pondered views, his statement, ‘This is what I agree to, having pondered views,’ safeguards the truth. But he doesn’t yet come to the definite conclusion that ‘Only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ To this extent, Bhāradvāja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet an awakening to the truth.”

“Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. We regard this as the safeguarding of the truth. But to what extent is there an awakening to the truth? To what extent does one awaken to the truth? We ask Master Gotama about awakening to the truth.”

“There is the case, Bhāradvāja, where a monk lives in dependence on a certain village or town. Then a householder or householder’s son goes to him and observes him with regard to three mental qualities—qualities based on greed, qualities based on aversion, qualities based on delusion: ‘Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on greed that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, “I know,” while not knowing, or say, “I see,” while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?’ As he observes him, he comes to know, ‘There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on greed.... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not greedy. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can’t easily be taught by a person who’s greedy.

“When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on greed, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on aversion.... based on delusion: ‘Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on delusion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, “I know,” while not knowing, or say, “I see,” while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?’ As he

observes him, he comes to know, ‘There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on delusion.... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not deluded. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can’t easily be taught by a person who’s deluded.

“When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on delusion, he places conviction in him. With the arising of conviction, he visits him & grows close to him. Growing close to him, he lends ear. Lending ear, he hears the Dhamma. Hearing the Dhamma, he remembers it. Remembering it, he penetrates the meaning of those dhammas. Penetrating the meaning, he comes to an agreement through pondering those dhammas. There being an agreement through pondering those dhammas, desire arises. With the arising of desire, he becomes willing. Willing, he contemplates [lit: “weighs,” “compares”]. Contemplating, he makes an exertion. Exerting himself, he both realizes the ultimate meaning of the truth with his body and sees by penetrating it with discernment.

“To this extent, Bhāradvāja, there is an awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. I describe this as an awakening to the truth. But it is not yet the final attainment of the truth.”

“Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is an awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. We regard this as an awakening to the truth. But to what extent is there the final attainment of the truth? To what extent does one finally attain the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final attainment of the truth.”

“The cultivation, development, & pursuit of those very same qualities: to this extent, Bhāradvāja, there is the final attainment of the truth. To this extent one finally attains the truth. I describe this as the final attainment of the truth.” — [\*MN 95\*](#)

§ 31. The Buddha saw that the ease and happiness of ordinary pleasures is nothing lasting. He wanted an ease and happiness that didn’t follow the way of the worldly pleasures that most people want. This was why he left his family and friends, and went off to live in seclusion. He said to himself, ‘I came alone when I was born and I’ll go alone when I die. No one hired me to be born and no one will hire me to die, so I’m beholden to no one. There’s no one I have to fear. In

all of my actions, if there's anything that is right from the standpoint of the world, but wrong from the standpoint of the truth—and wrong from the standpoint of my heart—there's no way I'll be willing to do it.'

So he posed himself a question: 'Now that you've been born as a human being, what is the highest thing you want in this world?' He then placed the following conditions on his answer: 'In answering, you have to be really honest and truthful with yourself. And once you've answered, you have to hold to your answer as an unalterable law on which you've affixed your seal, without ever letting a second seal be affixed on top. So what do you want, and how do you want it? You have to give an honest answer, understand? I won't accept anything false. And once you've answered, you have to keep to your answer. Don't be a traitor to yourself.'

When he was sure of his answer, he said to himself, 'I want only the highest and most certain happiness and ease: the happiness that won't change into anything else. Other than that, I don't want anything else in the world.'

Once he had given this answer, he kept to it firmly. He didn't allow anything that would have caused the least bit of pain or distraction to his heart to get stuck there as a stain on it. He kept making a persistent effort with all his might to discover the truth, without retreat, until he finally awakened to that truth: the reality of Liberation.

If we search for the truth like the Buddha—if we're true in our intent and true in what we do—there's no way the truth can escape us. But if we aren't true to ourselves, we won't find the true happiness the Buddha found. We tell ourselves that we want to be happy but we go jumping into fires. We know what things are poison, yet we go ahead and drink them anyway. This is called being a traitor to yourself....

Every person alive wants happiness—even common animals struggle to find happiness—but our actions for the most part aren't in line with our intentions. This is why we don't get to realize the happiness we want, simply because there's no truth to us. For example, when people come to the monastery: If they come to make offerings, observe the precepts, and sit in meditation for the sake of praise or a good reputation, there's no real merit to what they're doing. They don't gain any real happiness from it, so they end up disappointed and dissatisfied. Then they start saying that offerings, precepts, and meditation don't give any good results. Instead of reflecting on the fact that they weren't right and honest in doing these things, they say that there's no real good to the Buddha,

Dhamma, and Saṅgha, that the Buddha's teachings are a lot of nonsense and lies. But actually the Buddha's teachings are an affair of the truth. *If a person isn't true to the Buddha's teachings, the Buddha's teachings won't be true to that person*—and that person won't be able to know what the Buddha's true teachings are....

When we practice virtue, concentration, and discernment, it's as if we were taking the jewels and robes of royalty and the Noble Ones to dress up our heart and make it beautiful. But if we aren't true in our practice, it's like taking robes and jewels and giving them to a monkey. The monkey is bound to get them dirty and tear them to shreds because it has no sense of beauty at all. Whoever sees this kind of thing happening is sure to see right through it, that it's a monkey show. Even though the costumes are genuine, the monkey inside isn't genuine like the costumes. For instance, if you take a soldier's cap and uniform to dress it up as a soldier, it's a soldier only as far as the cap and uniform, but the monkey inside is still a monkey and not a soldier at all.

For this reason, the Buddha teaches us to be true in whatever we do—to be true in being generous, true in being virtuous, true in developing concentration and discernment. Don't play around at these things. If you're true, then these activities are sure to bear you the fruits of your own truthfulness without a doubt.

—Ajaan Lee (*Food for Thought*)

## Virtue

§ 32. “Now, there are these five gifts, five great gifts—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans. Which five?

“There is the case where a noble disciple, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from taking life. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the first gift, the first great gift—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that is not open to suspicion,

will never be open to suspicion, and is unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans.

“Furthermore, abandoning taking what is not given [stealing], the noble disciple abstains from taking what is not given. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the second gift, the second great gift....

“Furthermore, abandoning illicit sex, the noble disciple abstains from illicit sex. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the third gift, the third great gift....

“Furthermore, abandoning lying, the noble disciple abstains from lying. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the fourth gift, the fourth great gift....

“Furthermore, abandoning the use of intoxicants, the noble disciple abstains from taking intoxicants. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the fifth gift, the fifth great gift—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that is not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and is unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans.” — [AN 8:39](#)

§ 33. “And how is one made pure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from the

taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not take, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. Abandoning sensual misconduct, he abstains from sensual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made pure in three ways by bodily action.

“And how is one made pure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty, if he is asked as a witness, ‘Come & tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ Thus he doesn’t consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This is how one is made pure in four ways by verbal action.

“And how is one made pure in three ways by mental action? There is the case where a certain person is not covetous. He does not covet the belongings of others, thinking, ‘O, that what belongs to others would be mine!’ He bears no ill will and is not corrupt in the resolves of his heart. [He thinks,] ‘May these

beings be free from animosity, free from oppression, free from trouble, and may they look after themselves with ease!’ He has right view and is not warped in the way he sees things: ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is how one is made pure in three ways by mental action.” — [\*AN 10:165\*](#)

§ 34. “Monks, there are these five kinds of loss. Which five? Loss of relatives, loss of wealth, loss through disease, loss in terms of virtue, loss in terms of views. It’s not by reason of loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease that beings—with the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. It’s by reason of loss in terms of virtue and loss in terms of views that beings—with the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell.” — [\*AN 5:130\*](#)

§ 35. There are three levels of virtue—

**1. *Heṭṭhima-sīla*:** normalcy of word and deed, which consists of three kinds of bodily acts—not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct; and four kinds of speech—not lying, not speaking divisively, not saying anything coarse or abusive, not speaking idly. If we class virtue on this level according to the wording of the precepts and the groups of people who observe them, there are four—the five precepts, the eight, the ten, and the 227 precepts. All of these deal with aspects of behavior that should be abandoned, termed *pahāna-kicca*. At the same time, the Buddha directed us to develop good manners and proper conduct in the use of the four necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter, and medicine—so that our conduct in terms of thought, word, and deed will be orderly and becoming. This aspect is termed *bhāvanā-kicca*, behavior we should work at developing correctly.

Observance of these precepts or rules—dealing merely with words and deeds—forms the lower or preliminary level of virtue, which is what makes us into full-fledged human beings (*manussa-sampatti*).

**2. *Majjhima-sīla*:** the medium level of virtue, i.e., keeping watch over your words and deeds so that they cause no harm; and, in addition, keeping watch over your thoughts so as to keep your mental kamma upright in three ways—

*a. Anabbhijhā-visamalobha*: not coveting things that do not belong to you and that lie beyond your scope or powers; not focusing your thoughts on such things; not building what are called castles in the air. The Buddha taught us to tend to the wealth we already have so that it can grow on its own. The wealth we already have, if we use our intelligence and ingenuity, will draw more wealth our way without our having to waste energy by being covetous or greedy. For example, suppose we have a single banana tree: If we water it, give it fertilizer, loosen the soil around its roots, and protect it from dangers, our single banana tree will eventually give rise to an increase of other banana trees. In other words, if we're intelligent we can turn whatever wealth we have into a basis for a livelihood. But if we lack intelligence—if our hearts simply want to get, without wanting work—then even if we acquire a great deal of wealth, we won't be able to support ourselves. Thus, greed of this sort, in which we focus our desires above and beyond our capacities, is classed as a wrong kind of mental action.

*b. Abyāpāda*: abandoning thoughts of ill will, hatred, and vengeance, and developing thoughts of good will instead; thinking of the good aspects of the people who have angered us. When people make us angry, it comes from the fact that our dealings with them—in which we associate with and assist one another—sometimes lead to disappointment. This gives rise to dislike and irritation, which in turn cause us to brood, so that we develop hurt feelings that grow into anger and thoughts of retaliation. Thus we should regard such people from many angles, for ordinarily as human beings they should have *some* good to them. If they don't act well toward us, they may at least speak well to us. Or if they don't act or speak well to us, perhaps their thoughts may be well-meaning to at least some extent. Thus, when you find your thoughts heading in the direction of anger or dislike, you should sit down and think in two ways—

(1) Try to think of whatever ways that person has been good to you. When these things come to mind, they'll give rise to feelings of affection, love, and good will. This is one way.

(2) Anger is something worthless, like the scum floating on the surface of a lake. If we're stupid, we won't get to drink the clean water lying underneath; or if we drink the scum, we may catch a disease. A person who is bad to you is like someone sunk in filth. If you're stupid enough to hate or be angry with such

people, it's as if you wanted to go sit in the filth with them. Is that what you want? Think about this until any thoughts of ill will and anger disappear.

c. *Sammā-ditthi*: abandoning wrong views and mental darkness. If our minds lack the proper training and education, we may come to think that we and all other living beings are born simply as accidents of nature; that 'father' and 'mother' have no special meaning; that good and evil don't exist. Such views deviate from the truth. They can dissuade us from restraining the evil that lies within us and from searching for and fostering the good. To believe that there's no good or evil, that death is annihilation, is Wrong View—a product of short-sighted thinking and poor discernment, seeing things for what they aren't. So we should abandon such views and educate ourselves, searching for knowledge of the Dhamma and associating with people wiser than we, so that they can show us the bright path. We'll then be able to reform our views and make them Right, which is one form of mental uprightness.

Virtue on this level, when we can maintain it well, will qualify us to be heavenly beings. The qualities of heavenly beings, which grow out of human values, will turn us into human beings who are divine in our virtues, for to guard our thoughts, words, and deeds means that we qualify for heaven in this lifetime. This is one aspect of the merit developed by a person who observes the middle level of virtue.

3. *Upārima-sīla*: higher virtue, where virtue merges with the Dhamma in the area of mental activity. There are two sides to higher virtue—

a. PAHĀNA-KICCA: qualities to be abandoned, which are of five sorts—

(1) *Kāmachanda*: affection, desire, laxity, infatuation.

(2) *Byāpāda*: ill will and hatred.

(3) *Thīna-middha*: discouragement, drowsiness, sloth.

(4) *Uddhacca-kukkucca*: restlessness and anxiety.

(5) *Vicikicchā*: doubt, uncertainty, indecision.

## DISCUSSION

(1) Ill will (*byāpāda*) lies at the essence of killing (*pāṇātīpāta*), for it causes us to destroy our own goodness and that of others—and when our mind can kill off our own goodness, what's to keep us from killing other people and animals as well?

(2) Restlessness (*uddhacca*) lies at the essence of taking what isn't given (*adinnādāna*). The mind wanders about, taking hold of other people's affairs, sometimes their good points, sometimes their bad. To fasten onto their good points isn't too serious, for it can give us at least *some* nourishment. As long as we're going to steal other people's business and make it our own, we might as well take their silver and gold. Their bad points, though, are like trash they've thrown away—scraps and bones with nothing of any substance—and yet even so we let the mind feed on them. When we know that other people are possessive of their bad points and guard them well and yet we still take hold of these things to think about, it should be classed as a form of taking what isn't given.

(3) Sensual desires (*kāmachanda*) lie at the essence of sensual misconduct. The mind feels an attraction for sensual objects—thoughts of past or future sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or tactile sensations—or for sensual defilements—passion, aversion, or delusion—to the point where we forget ourselves. Mental states such as these can be said to overstep the bounds of propriety in sensual matters.

(4) Doubt (*vicikicchā*) lies at the essence of lying. In other words, our minds are unsure, with nothing reliable or true to them. We have no firm principles and so drift along under the influence of all kinds of thoughts and preoccupations.

(5) Drowsiness (*thīna-middha*) is intoxication—discouragement, dullness, forgetfulness, with no mindfulness or restraint watching over the mind. This is what it means to be drugged or drunk.

All of these unskillful qualities are things we should eliminate by training the heart along the lines of:

b. BHAVANA-KICCA: qualities to be developed—

(1) Mindfulness (*sati*): Start out by directing your thoughts to an object, such as your in-and-out breathing. Use mindfulness to steady the mind in its object throughout both the in-breath and the out-. *Vitakka*, thinking in this way, is what kills off sensual desires, in that the discipline of mindfulness keeps the mind from slipping off into external objects.

(2) *Vicāra*: Evaluate and be observant. Make yourself aware of whether or not you've received a sense of comfort and relaxation from your in- and out-breathing. If not, tend to the breath and adjust it in a variety of ways: e.g., in long and out long, in long and out short, in short and out short, in short and out long, in slow and out slow, in fast and out fast, in gently and out gently, in

strong and out strong, in throughout the body and out throughout the body. Adjust the breath until it gives good results to both body and mind, and you'll be able to kill off feelings of ill will and hatred.

(3) *Pīti*: When you get good results—for instance, when the subtle breath sensations in the body merge and flow together, permeating the entire sense of the body—the breath is like an electric wire; the various parts of the body, such as the bones, are like electricity poles; mindfulness and alertness are like a power source; and awareness is thus bright and radiant. Both body and mind feel satisfied and full. This is *pīti*, or rapture, which can kill off feelings of drowsiness.

(4) *Sukha*: Now that feelings of restlessness and anxiety have disappeared, a sense of pleasure and ease arises for both body and mind. This pleasure is what kills off restlessness.

(5) *Ekaggatā*: Doubts and uncertainty fade into the distance. The mind reaches singleness of preoccupation in a state of normalcy and equilibrium. This normalcy of mind, which is maintained through the power of the discipline of mindfulness (*sati-vinaya*), forms the essence of virtue: firmness, steadiness, stability. And the resulting flavor or nourishment of virtue is a solitary sense of calm for the mind. When freedom of this sort arises within us, this is called the development of *śīlānussati*, the mindfulness of virtue. This is virtue that attains excellence—leading to the paths, their fruitions, and *nibbāna*—and thus can be called *uparima-sīla*, higher virtue.

To summarize, there are three levels of virtue: external, intermediate, and internal. In ultimate terms, however, there are two—

**1. Mundane virtue:** virtue connected with the world, in which we maintain the principles of ordinary human morality but are as yet unable to reach the transcendent levels: stream entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship. We can't yet cut the Fetters (*saṃyojana*) that tie the heart to the influences of all the worlds. This is thus called mundane virtue.

**2. Transcendent virtue:** virtue that's constant and sure, going straight to the heart, bathing the heart with its nourishment. This arises from the practice of tranquility meditation and insight meditation. Tranquility meditation forms the cause, and insight meditation the result: discovering the true nature of the properties, aggregates (*khandhas*), and senses; seeing clearly the four Noble Truths, in proportion to our practice of the Path, and abandoning the first three of the Fetters—

a. *Sakkāya-ditṭhi* (self-identity views): views that see the body or the aggregates as in the self or as belonging to the self. Ordinarily, we may be convinced that views of this sort are mistaken, yet we can't really abandon them. But when we clearly see that they're wrong for sure, this is called Right View—seeing things as they truly are—which can eliminate such wrong views as seeing the body as belonging to the self, or the self as the five aggregates, or the five aggregates as in the self.

b. *Vicikicchā*: doubt about what's genuine and true, and what's counterfeit and false. The power of Right View allows us to see that the quality to which we awaken exists at all times and that the true qualities enabling us to awaken also exist and are made effective through the power of the practices we're following. Our knowledge is definite and true. Our doubts about the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are cleared up for good. This is called becoming a *niyata-puggala*, a person who is certain and sure.

c. *Sīlabbata-parāmāsa*: When the heart abandons this Fetter, it no longer fondles theories concerning moral virtue; it's no longer stuck merely on the level of manners and activities. *Good and evil are accomplished through the heart; activities are something separate.* Even though people who reach this level do good—taking the precepts, making gifts and offerings, or meditating in line with the good customs of the world—they're not caught up on any of these things, because their hearts have reached the nourishment of virtue. They aren't stuck on the particulars (*byañjana*), i.e., their activities; nor are they stuck on the purpose (*attha*), i.e., the meaning or intent of their various good manners. Their hearts dwell in the nourishment of virtue: tranquility, stability, normalcy of mind. Just as a person who has felt the nourishment that comes from food permeating his body isn't stuck on either the food or its flavor—because he's received the benefits of the nourishment it provides—in the same way, the hearts of people who have reached the essence of virtue are no longer stuck on activities or manners, particulars or purposes, because they've tasted virtue's nourishment.

This is thus classed as transcendent virtue, the first stage of *nibbāna*. Even though such people may be destined for further rebirth, they're special people, apart from the ordinary. Anyone whose practice reaches this level can be counted as fortunate, as having received dependable wealth, like ingots of gold. Just as gold can be used as currency all over the world because it has special value for all human beings—unlike paper currency, whose use is limited to specific countries—in the same way, a heart that has truly attained virtue has a value in this life

that will remain constant in lives to come. Thus, a person who has reached this level has received part of the Noble Wealth of those who practice the religion.

— *Ajaan Lee (The Path to Peace & Freedom)*

## Persistence

§ 36. “And what is the faculty of persistence? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. He generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This is called the faculty of persistence.” — [\*SN 48:10\*](#)

§ 37. “And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, does not load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure. He discerns that “When I exert a [physical, verbal, or mental] fabrication against this cause of stress, then from the fabrication of *exertion* there is dispassion [fading away]. When I look on with equanimity at that cause of stress, then from the development of *equanimity* there is dispassion.” So he exerts a mental fabrication against the [first] cause of stress... and develops equanimity with regard to the [second] cause of stress.... Thus the stress [coming from any cause of the first sort] is abolished... & the stress [coming from any cause of the second sort] is abolished.” — [\*MN 101\*](#)

§ 38. On that occasion Ven. Soṇa was staying near Rājagaha in the Cool Wood. Then, as Ven. Soṇa was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split & bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: “Of the Blessed One’s disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be

possible to enjoy wealth & make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?”

Then the Blessed One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Soṇa’s awareness disappeared from Vulture Peak Mountain—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—appeared in the Cool Wood right in front of Ven. Soṇa, and sat down on a prepared seat. Ven. Soṇa, after bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn’t this train of thought appear to your awareness: ‘Of the Blessed One’s disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations....What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Now what do you think, Soṇa. Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the vina?”

“Yes, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too taut, was your vina in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too loose, was your vina in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned [lit: ‘established’] to be right on pitch, was your vina in tune & playable?”

“Yes, lord.”

“In the same way, Soṇa, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there pick up your theme.”

“Yes, lord,” Ven. Soṇa answered the Blessed One. Then, having given this exhortation to Ven. Soṇa, the Blessed One—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Vulture Peak Mountain.

So after that, Ven. Soṇa determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: “Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus Ven. Soṇa became another one of the arahants. — [\*AN 6:55\*](#)

§ 39. Ven. Mātāṅgaṇḍiya:

*It's too cold,  
too hot,  
too late in the evening—*  
people who say this,  
shirking their work:  
the moment passes them by.

Whoever regards cold & heat  
as no more than grass,  
doing his manly duties,  
won't fall away  
from ease.

With my chest  
I push through wild grasses—  
spear-grass,  
ribbon-grass,  
rushes—  
cultivating a heart  
bent on seclusion. — [\*Thag 3:5\*](#)

### III. RELINQUISHMENT

§ 40. If, by forsaking  
a limited ease,  
he would see  
an abundance of ease,  
the enlightened man  
would forsake  
the limited ease  
for the sake  
of the abundant. — *Dhp 290*

§ 41. *Ven. Suppiya:*  
I'll make a trade:  
aging for the Ageless,  
burning for the Unbound:  
    the highest peace,  
    the unexcelled rest  
        from the yoke. — *Thag 1:32*

### Generosity

§ 42. “There are these four grounds for the bonds of fellowship. Which four? Giving, kind words, beneficial help, consistency. These are the four grounds for the bonds of fellowship.”

Giving, kind words, beneficial help,  
& consistency in the face of events,  
    in line with what's appropriate  
    in each case, each case.  
These bonds of fellowship [function] in the world  
    like the linchpin in a moving cart.  
Now, if these bonds of fellowship were lacking,  
a mother would not receive

the honor & respect owed by her child,  
nor would a father receive  
what his child owes him.  
But because the wise show regard  
for these bonds of fellowship,  
they achieve greatness  
and are praised. — [AN 4:32](#)

§ 43. As he was sitting to one side, King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One: “Where, lord, should a gift be given?”

“Wherever the mind feels confidence, great king.”

“But a gift given where, lord, bears great fruit?”

“This [question] is one thing, great king—‘Where should a gift be given?’—while this—‘A gift given where bears great fruit?’—is something else entirely. What is given to a virtuous person—rather than to an unvirtuous one—bears great fruit.” — [SN 3:24](#)

§ 44. “A person of integrity gives a gift with a sense of conviction. A person of integrity gives a gift attentively. A person of integrity gives a gift in season. A person of integrity gives a gift with an empathetic heart. A person of integrity gives a gift without adversely affecting himself or others.

“Having given a gift with a sense of conviction, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And he is well-built, handsome, extremely inspiring, endowed with a lotus-like complexion.

“Having given a gift attentively, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his children, wives, slaves, servants, and workers listen carefully to him, lend him their ears, and serve him with understanding hearts.

“Having given a gift in season, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his goals are fulfilled in season.

“Having given a gift with an empathetic heart, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five strings of lavish sensuality.

“Having given a gift without adversely affecting himself or others, he—wherever the result of that gift ripens—is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions. And not from anywhere does destruction come to his property—whether from fire, from water, from kings, from thieves, or from hateful heirs.

“These five are a person of integrity’s gifts.” — [\*AN 5:148\*](#)

§ 45. “Having given [a gift], not seeking one’s own profit, not with a mind attached [to the reward], not seeking to store up for oneself, nor [with the thought], ‘I’ll enjoy this after death,’

—nor with the thought, ‘Giving is good,’

—nor with the thought, ‘This was given in the past, done in the past, by my father & grandfather. It would not be right for me to let this old family custom be discontinued,’

—nor with the thought, ‘I am well-off. These are not well-off. It would not be right for me, being well-off, not to give a gift to those who are not well-off,’

—nor with the thought, ‘Just as there were the great sacrifices of the sages of the past— Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa & Bhagu—in the same way this will be my distribution of gifts,’

—nor with the thought, ‘When this gift of mine is given, it makes the mind serene. Gratification & joy arise,’ [all of the above motivations lead to various levels of heaven, but not to non-returning]

—but with the thought, ‘This is an ornament for the mind, a support for the mind’—on the break-up of the body, after death, one reappears in the company of Brahma’s Retinue. Then, having exhausted that action, that power, that status, that sovereignty, one is a non-returner and does not come back to this world.

“This, Sāriputta, is the cause, this is the reason, why a person gives a gift of a certain sort and it does not bear great fruit or great benefit, whereas another person gives a gift of the same sort and it bears great fruit and great benefit.” — [\*AN 7:49\*](#)

§ 46. “And how is a donation endowed with six factors? There is the case where there are the three factors of the donor, the three factors of the recipients.

“And which are the three factors of the donor? There is the case where the donor, before giving, is glad; while giving, his/her mind is bright & clear; and after giving is gratified. These are the three factors of the donor.

“And which are the three factors of the recipients? There is the case where the recipients are free of passion or are practicing for the subduing of passion; free of aversion or practicing for the subduing of aversion; and free of delusion or practicing for the subduing of delusion. These are the three factors of the recipients....

“Just as it is not easy to take the measure of the great ocean as ‘just this many buckets of water, just this many hundreds of buckets of water, just this many thousands of buckets of water, or just this many hundreds of thousands of buckets of water.’ It is simply reckoned as a great mass of water, incalculable, immeasurable. In the same way, it is not easy to take the measure of the merit of a donation thus endowed with six factors as ‘just this much a bonanza of merit, a bonanza of what is skillful—a nutriment of bliss, heavenly, resulting in bliss, leading to heaven—that leads to what is desirable, pleasing, charming, beneficial, pleasant.’ It is simply reckoned as a great mass of merit, incalculable, immeasurable.” — [AN 6:37](#)

§ 47. “Without abandoning these five qualities, one is incapable of entering & remaining in the first jhāna... second jhāna... the third jhāna... the fourth jhāna; incapable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry... the fruit of once-returning... the fruit of non-returning... arahantship. Which five? Stinginess as to one’s monastery [lodgings]... one’s family [of supporters]... one’s gains... one’s status, and stinginess as to the Dhamma.” — [AN 5:256-257](#)

§ 48. “One who is generous, a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large.... this is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, good people, people of integrity, admire one who is generous, a master of giving.... this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, the fine reputation of one who is generous, a master of giving, is spread far & wide.... this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, when one who is generous, a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmins, householders, or contemplatives

—he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment.... this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, at the break-up of the body, after death, one who is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world.... this is a fruit of generosity in the next life.”— [\*AN 5:34\*](#)

§ 49. Inner wealth, according to the texts, means seven things—conviction, virtue, a sense of conscience, scrupulousness, breadth of learning, generosity, and discernment—but to put it simply, inner wealth refers to the inner quality we build within ourselves. Outer wealth—money and material goods—doesn’t have any hard and fast owners. Today it may be ours, tomorrow someone else may take it away. There are times when it belongs to us, and times when it belongs to others. Even with things that are fixed in the ground, like farms or orchards, you can’t keep them from changing hands.

So when you develop yourself so as to gain the discernment that sees how worldly things are undependable and unsure, don’t let your property—your worldly possessions—sit idle. The Buddha teaches us to plant crops on our land so that we can benefit from it. If you don’t make use of your land, it’s sure to fall into other people’s hands. In other words, when we stake out a claim to a piece of property, we should plant it full of crops. Otherwise the government won’t recognize our claim, and we’ll lose our rights to it. Even if we take the case to court, we won’t have a chance to win. So once you see the weakness of an idle claim, you should hurry up and plant crops on it so that the government will recognize your claim and issue you a title to the land.

What this means is that we should make use of our material possessions by being generous with them, using them in a way that develops the inner wealth of generosity within us. This way they become the kind of wealth over which we have full rights, and that will benefit us even into future lifetimes.

— *Ajaan Lee (Food for Thought)*

§ 50. One of the important reasons why the Buddha taught the Dhamma was to teach us to let go, not to hold on to things. The more we really know the Dhamma, the more we can let go. Those who know a little can let go of a little; those who know a lot can let go of a lot.

As a first step we’re taught *dāna*—to be generous, to give donations—as a strategy for getting us to learn how to let go. The next step is *cāga*—renouncing

rights of possession—which is letting go at a higher level than *dāna*. And finally, on a more refined level, we're taught to relinquish all our *upadhi*, or the acquisition-defilements in the mind. This is the level on which we examine and explore until we can gain total release.

*Dāna* means giving away material things. If we don't give them away, they're hard to let go. For the most part, if we don't give things away, we hold rights over them and regard them as belonging to us. But if we give them away, we no longer have any rights over them. Things we hold onto are dangerous. (1) They can cause us harm. (2) They cause harm to people who steal them from us. And (3) once those people have stolen them, then *they* claim rights over them. The Buddha saw these dangers, which is why he taught us to be generous, to learn how to give things away.

People who develop the habit of being generous reap many rewards. Their act of generosity comes back to them both in the present and on into the future. They have lots of friends. Other people trust them. Their hearts are light—they aren't weighed down with worries about looking after the things they've given away. And these same results will keep coming in the future, just as when we have a bucket of rice grains: if we plant them in a field, we'll reap ten buckets of rice in return. The same holds true with the goodness we develop in this lifetime. It gives enormous returns. That's how people of discernment understand it.

*Cāga* is the next step. *Dāna* is something that even crazy people can do, but *cāga* is a type of giving that only wise people can do, because their sense of personal possession has to end immediately in the act of giving. They see that all material things are common property: things don't really belong to us, they don't really belong to other people. If you see things as belonging to you, that's addiction to sensuality (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*). If you see things as belonging to others, that's addiction to self-affliction (*attakīlamathānuyoga*). When we're born, we didn't bring anything along with us when we came. When we die, we won't take anything along when we go. So what really belongs to us? Our sense of possession has to fall away from the heart if our giving is to count as *cāga*.

The third level of letting go is relinquishing what's in the heart. Whether or not we give things away, we let go of them in the heart every day. We let go of the things we have. We let go of the things we don't have. Just as a person has to wash his mouth and hands every day after he eats if he wants to stay clean at all times. What this means is that we're not willing to let anything act as an enemy

to the heart by making us stingy or grasping. If we don't do this, we're the type of person who doesn't wash up after a meal. We're not clean. We stay asleep without ever waking up. But when we let go in this way, it's called *virāga-dhamma*, or dispassion. The lower levels of letting go are things we can do only from time to time. Dispassion is something we can develop always.

— *Ajaan Lee (Starting out Small)*

## Renunciation

§ 51. Then Ven. Ānanda, together with Tapussa the householder, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “Tapussa the householder, here, has said to me, ‘Venerable Ānanda, sir, we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensuality, enjoy sensuality, rejoice in sensuality. For us—indulging in sensuality, delighting in sensuality, enjoying sensuality, rejoicing in sensuality—renunciation seems like a sheer drop-off. Yet I’ve heard that in this doctrine & discipline the hearts of the very young monks leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace. So right here is where this doctrine & discipline is contrary to the great mass of people: i.e., [this issue of] renunciation.’”

“So it is, Ānanda. So it is. Even I myself, before my self-awakening, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta, thought: ‘Renunciation is good. Seclusion is good.’ But my heart didn’t leap up at renunciation, didn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace. The thought occurred to me: ‘What is the cause, what is the reason, why my heart doesn’t leap up at renunciation, doesn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace?’ Then the thought occurred to me: ‘I haven’t seen the drawback of sensual pleasures; I haven’t pursued [that theme]. I haven’t understood the reward of renunciation; I haven’t familiarized myself with it. That’s why my heart doesn’t leap up at renunciation, doesn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace.’

“Then the thought occurred to me: ‘If, having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I were to pursue that theme; and if, having understood the reward of renunciation, I were to familiarize myself with it, there’s the possibility that my heart would leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace.’

“So at a later time, having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of renunciation, I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at renunciation, grew confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace. Then, quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.

“As I remained there, I was beset with attention to perceptions dealing with sensuality. That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so the attention to perceptions dealing with sensuality that beset me was an affliction for me.” — [AN 9:41](#)

§ 52. “There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. But these are not sensuality. They are called strings of sensuality in the discipline of the noble ones.

The passion for his intentions is a man’s sensuality,  
not the beautiful sensual pleasures  
found in the world.

The passion for his intentions is a man’s sensuality.  
The beauties remain as they are in the world,  
while the wise, in this regard,  
subdue their desire. — [AN 6:63](#)

§ 53. “Even though a disciple of the noble ones has clearly seen as it has come to be with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, still—if he has not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that—he can be tempted by sensuality. But when he has clearly seen with right discernment as it has come to be that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and he has attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that, he cannot be tempted by sensuality.” — [MN 14](#)

§ 54. “When touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, were to shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pains of two arrows. In the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental.

“As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is resistant. Any resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he delights in sensuality. Why is that? Because the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person does not discern any escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is delighting in sensuality, any passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling....

“Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it as though joined with it. This is called an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person joined with birth, aging, & death; with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is joined, I tell you, with suffering & stress.

“Now, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones, when touched with a feeling of pain, does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. So he feels one pain: physical, but not mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, did not shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pain of only one arrow. In the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. He feels one pain: physical, but not mental.

“As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is not resistant. No resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he does not delight in sensuality. Why is that? Because the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns an escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is not delighting in sensuality, no passion-obsession with

regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He discerns, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling.

“Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. This is called a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones disjoined from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is disjoined, I tell you, from suffering & stress.” — [\*SN 36:6\*](#)

§ 55. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Āḷavī on a spread of leaves by a cattle track in a siṃsapā forest. Then Hatthaka of Āḷavī, out roaming & rambling for exercise, saw the Blessed One sitting on a spread of leaves by the cattle track in the siṃsapā forest. On seeing him, he went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, “Lord, I hope the Blessed One has slept in ease.”

“Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one.”

“But cold, lord, is the winter night. The ‘Between-the-Eights’ [a period in February] is a time of snowfall. Hard is the ground trampled by cattle hooves. Thin is the spread of leaves. Sparse are the leaves in the trees. Thin are your ochre robes. And cold blows the Veramba wind. Yet still the Blessed One says, ‘Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one.’”

“In that case, young man, I will question you in return. Answer as you see fit. Now, what do you think: Suppose a householder or householder’s son has a house with a gabled roof, plastered inside & out, draft-free, with close-fitting door & windows shut against the wind. Inside he has a horse-hair couch spread with a long-fleeced coverlet, a white wool coverlet, an embroidered coverlet, a rug of kadali-deer hide, with a canopy above, & red cushions on either side. And there a lamp would be burning, and his four wives, with their many charms, would be attending to him. Would he sleep in ease, or not? Or how does this strike you?”

“Yes, lord, he would sleep in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, he would be one.”

“But what do you think, young man. Might there arise in that householder or householder’s son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of passion so that

—burned with those passion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?”

“Yes, lord.”

“As for those passion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder’s son would sleep miserably—that passion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

[Similarly with aversion and delusion.]

“Always, always,  
he sleeps in ease:  
the brāhman totally unbound,  
who doesn’t adhere  
to sensual pleasures,  
who’s without acquisitions  
& cooled.

Having  
cut all ties  
& subdued fear in the heart,  
calmed,  
he sleeps in ease,  
having reached peace  
of awareness.” — [\*AN 3:35\*](#)

§ 56. “There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, uses the robe simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame.

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses alms food, not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification; but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, ‘Thus will I destroy old feelings [of hunger] and not create new feelings [from overeating]. I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.’

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses lodging simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for protection from the inclemencies of weather and for the enjoyment of seclusion.

“Reflecting appropriately, he uses medicinal requisites that are used for curing the sick simply to counteract any pains of illness that have arisen and for maximum freedom from disease.” — [\*MN 2\*](#)

§ 57. “And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk... notices this: ‘When I live according to my pleasure, unskillful mental qualities increase in me & skillful qualities decline. When I exert myself with stress & pain, though, unskillful qualities decline in me & skillful qualities increase. Why don’t I exert myself with stress & pain?’ So he exerts himself with stress & pain, and while he is exerting himself with stress & pain, unskillful qualities decline in him, & skillful qualities increase. Then at a later time he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain....

“Suppose that a fletcher were to heat & warm an arrow shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Then at a later time he would no longer heat & warm the shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was heating & warming the shaft.... In the same way, the monk... no longer exerts himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain.” — [\*MN 101\*](#)

§ 58. Now at that time, Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, would repeatedly exclaim, “What bliss! What bliss!” A large number of monks heard Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, repeatedly exclaim, “What bliss! What bliss!” and on hearing him, the thought occurred to them, “There’s no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha doesn’t enjoy leading the holy life, for when he was a householder he knew the bliss of kingship, so that now, on recollecting that, he is repeatedly exclaiming, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’” They went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they told him: “Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, lord, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling,

repeatedly exclaims, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’ There’s no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha doesn’t enjoy leading the holy life, for when he was a householder he knew the bliss of kingship, so that now, on recollecting that, he is repeatedly exclaiming, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’”

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, “Come, monk. In my name, call Bhaddiya, saying, ‘The Teacher calls you, my friend.’”

“As you say, lord,” the monk answered and, having gone to Ven. Bhaddiya, on arrival he said, “The Teacher calls you, my friend.”

“As you say, my friend,” Ven. Bhaddiya replied. Then he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Is it true, Bhaddiya that, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, you repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’?”

“Yes, lord.”

“What meaning do you have in mind that you repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’?”

“Before, when I was a householder, maintaining the bliss of kingship, I had guards posted within and without the royal apartments, within and without the city, within and without the countryside. But even though I was thus guarded, thus protected, I dwelled in fear—agitated, distrustful, and afraid. But now, on going alone to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident, and unafraid—unconcerned, unruffled, my wants satisfied, with my mind like a wild deer. This is the meaning I have in mind that I repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’”— [\*Ud 2:10\*](#)

## IV. CALM

§ 59. How inconstant are fabricated things!

Their nature:       to arise & pass away.

They disband       as they are arising.

Their total stilling is bliss. — *DN 16*

§ 60. “This is peace, this is exquisite—the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; Unbinding.” — *AN 9:36*

## Endurance

§ 61. Patient endurance:

the foremost austerity. — *Dhp 184*

§ 62. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha at the Maddakucchi Deer Reserve. Now at that time his foot had been pierced by a stone sliver. Excruciating were the bodily feelings that developed within him—painful, fierce, sharp, wracking, repellent, disagreeable—but he endured them mindful, alert, & unperturbed. Having had his outer robe folded in four and laid out, he lay down on his right side in the lion’s posture—with one foot placed on top of the other—mindful & alert.

Then Māra the Evil One went to the Blessed One and recited this verse in his presence:

“Are you lying there in a stupor,  
or drunk on poetry?  
Are your goals so very few?  
All alone in a secluded lodging,  
what is this dreamer, this sleepy-face?”

*The Buddha:*

“I lie here,  
not in a stupor,

nor drunk on poetry.  
My goal attained,  
I am sorrow-free.  
All alone in a secluded lodging,  
I lie down with sympathy  
for all beings.  
Even those pierced in the chest  
with an arrow,  
their hearts rapidly,  
rapidly  
beating:  
even they with their arrows  
are able to sleep.  
So why shouldn't I,  
with my arrow removed?  
I'm not awake with worry,  
nor afraid to sleep.  
Days & nights  
don't oppress me.  
I see no threat of decline  
in any world at all.  
That's why I sleep  
with sympathy  
for all beings."

Then Māra the Evil One—sad & dejected at realizing, “The Blessed One knows me; the One Well-Gone knows me”—vanished right there. — [\*SN 4:13\*](#)

§ 63. *Ven. Yasoja:*

His limbs knotted  
like a kālā plant,  
his body lean  
& lined with veins,  
knowing moderation  
in food & drink:  
the man of undaunted heart.

Touched by gnats  
& horseflies  
in the wilds,  
the great wood,  
like an elephant  
at the head of a battle:  
He, mindful,  
should stay there,  
endure. — *Thag 3:8*

§ 64. *Ven. Vakkali:*

Stricken by sharp, wind-like pains,  
you, monk, living in the forest grove  
—harsh, with limited range for alms—  
what, what will you do?

Suffusing my body  
with abundant rapture & joy,  
& enduring what's harsh,  
I'll stay in the grove....

Reflecting on those who are resolute,  
their persistence aroused,  
constantly firm in their effort,  
united in concord,  
I'll stay in the grove.

Recollecting the One Self-awakened,  
self-tamed & centered,  
untiring both day & night,  
I'll stay  
in the grove. — *Thag 5:8*

§ 65. “Once, monks, in this same Sāvattthī, there was a lady of a household named Vedehikā. This good report about Lady Vedehikā had circulated: ‘Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is calm.’ Now, Lady Vedehikā had a slave named Kālī who was diligent, deft, & neat in her work. The thought occurred to Kālī the slave: ‘This good report about my

Lady Vedehikā has circulated: “Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is calm.” Now, is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show? Why don’t I test her?

“So Kālī the slave got up after daybreak. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up after daybreak?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?’ Angered & displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: ‘Anger *is* present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it’s just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show. Why don’t I test her some more?’

“So Kālī the slave got up later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up later in the day?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?’ Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: ‘Anger *is* present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it’s just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show. Why don’t I test her some more?’

“So Kālī the slave got up even later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up even later in the day?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?’ Angered & displeased, she grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

Then Kālī the slave, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbors: ‘See, ladies, the gentle one’s handiwork? See the even-tempered one’s handiwork? See the calm one’s handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?’

After that this evil report about Lady Vedehikā circulated: ‘Lady Vedehikā is vicious. Lady Vedehikā is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is violent.’

“In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, & calm. I don’t call a monk easy to admonish if he is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only by reason of robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick. Why is that? Because if he doesn’t get robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, then he isn’t easy to admonish and doesn’t make himself easy to admonish. But if a monk is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma, then I call him easy to admonish. Thus, monks, you should train yourselves: ‘We will be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying a hoe & a basket, saying, ‘I will make this great earth be without earth.’ He would dig here & there, scatter soil here & there, spit here & there, urinate here & there, saying, ‘Be without earth. Be without earth.’ Now, what do you think—would he make this great earth be without earth?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep & enormous. It can’t easily be made to be without earth. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will equal to the great earth—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying lac, yellow orpiment, indigo, or crimson, saying, ‘I will draw pictures in space, I will make pictures appear.’ Now, what do you think—would he draw pictures in space & make pictures appear?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because space is formless & featureless. It’s not easy to draw pictures there and to make them appear. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you.... In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued

with good will equal to space—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying a burning grass torch and saying, ‘With this burning grass torch I will heat up the river Ganges and make it boil.’ Now, what do you think—would he, with that burning grass torch, heat up the river Ganges and make it boil?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because the river Ganges is deep & enormous. It’s not easy to heat it up and make it boil with a burning grass torch. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you.... In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will equal to the river Ganges—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose there were a catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and a man were to come along carrying a stick or shard and saying, ‘With this stick or shard I will take this catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and I will make it rustle & crackle.’ Now, what do you think—would he, with that stick or shard, take that catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and make it rustle & crackle?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because the catskin bag is beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling. It’s not easy to make it rustle & crackle with a stick or shard. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. In any event,

you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will equal to a catskin bag—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely into pieces with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the entire world with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Monks, if you attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw, do you see any aspects of speech, slight or gross, that you could not endure?”

“No, lord.”

“Then attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw. That will be for your long-term welfare & happiness.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words. — *MN 21*

§ 66. “Now if other people insult, malign, exasperate, & harass a monk, he discerns that ‘A painful feeling, born of ear-contact, has arisen within me. And that is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.’ And he sees that contact is inconstant, feeling is inconstant, perception is inconstant, consciousness is inconstant. His mind, with the [physical properties of the body] as its object/support, leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & released.

“And if other people attack the monk in ways that are undesirable, displeasing, & disagreeable—through contact with fists, contact with stones, contact with sticks, or contact with knives—the monk discerns that ‘This body is of such a nature contacts with fists come, contacts with stones come, contacts with sticks come, & contacts with knives come. Now the Blessed One has said,

in his exhortation of the simile of the saw [§65], “Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely into pieces with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding.” So my persistence will be aroused & untiring, my mindfulness established & unconfused, my body calm & unaroused, my mind centered & unified. And now let contact with fists come to this body, let contact with stones, with sticks, with knives come to this body, for this is how the Buddha’s bidding is done.” — [\*MN 28\*](#)

§ 67. “There is the case where the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, denies the offense, [saying,] ‘I don’t remember. I don’t remember.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—backs up and pushes the chariot back with its hindquarters. Some unruly men are like this. This is the first fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, attacks the accuser: ‘What use is there in your speaking, you inexperienced fool? Think of yourself as worthy to be spoken to.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—jumps back and hits the carriage railing, breaking the triple bar. Some unruly men are like this. This is the second fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, accuses the accuser in return: ‘You, too, have committed an offense of this name. You make amends for it first.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—kicks the chariot pole and stomps on it. Some unruly men are like this. This is the third fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, wanders from one thing to another, straying outside the topic, displaying anger, irritation, & sulkiness. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—goes off the road and makes the chariot turn over. Some unruly men are like this. This is the fourth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, speaks waving his arms around in the midst of the Sangha. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered,

and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—rears up and paws the air. Some unruly men are like this. This is the fifth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, not heeding the Sangha, not heeding his accuser, goes off where he will, still an offender. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—not heeding the goad, bites through the bit with its teeth and goes where it will. Some unruly men are like this. This is the sixth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, [after saying,] ‘I’ve neither committed an offense, nor have I committed an offense,’ vexes the Sangha by falling silent. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—goes neither forward nor back, but stands right there like a post. Some unruly men are like this. This is the seventh fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, says this: ‘Why do you venerable ones persecute me so much? I’ll disavow the training and return to the lower life.’ On having disavowed the training and returned to the lower life he says, ‘I hope you venerable ones are gratified now!’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—draws in its forefeet, draws in its hind feet, and sits down right there on its four feet. Some unruly men are like this. This is the eighth fault in a man.

“These, monks, are the eight unruly men and eight faults in men.” — [AN 8:14](#)

§ 68. “Now, a king’s elephant endowed with five qualities is worthy of a king, is a king’s asset, counts as a very limb of his king. Which five? There is the case where a king’s elephant is resilient to sights, resilient to sounds, resilient to aromas, resilient to flavors, resilient to tactile sensations.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to sights? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, sees a troop of elephants, a troop of cavalry, a troop of chariots, a troop of foot soldiers, but he doesn’t falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king’s elephant is resilient to sights.

“And how is a king’s elephant resilient to sounds? There is the case where a king’s elephant, having gone into battle, hears the sound of elephants, the sound

of cavalry, the sound of chariots, the sound of foot soldiers, the resounding din of drums, cymbals, conchs, & tom-toms, but he doesn't falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king's elephant is resilient to sounds.

"And how is a king's elephant resilient to aromas? There is the case where a king's elephant, having gone into battle, smells the stench of the urine & feces of those pedigreed royal elephants who are at home in the battlefield, but he doesn't falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king's elephant is resilient to aromas.

"And how is a king's elephant resilient to flavors? There is the case where a king's elephant, having gone into battle, goes without his ration of grass & water for one day, two days, three days, four days, five, but he doesn't falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king's elephant is resilient to flavors.

"And how is a king's elephant resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a king's elephant, having gone into battle, is pierced by a flight of arrows, two flights, three flights, four flights, five flights of arrows, but he doesn't falter or faint, he steels himself and engages in the battle. This is how a king's elephant is resilient to tactile sensations.

"Endowed with these five qualities, monks, a king's elephant is worthy of a king, is a king's asset, counts as a very limb of his king.

"In the same way, a monk endowed with five qualities is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world. Which five? There is the case where a monk is resilient to sights, resilient to sounds, resilient to aromas, resilient to flavors, resilient to tactile sensations.

"And how is a monk resilient to sights? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a sight with the eye, feels no passion for a sight that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to sights.

"And how is a monk resilient to sounds? There is the case where a monk, on hearing a sound with the ear, feels no passion for a sound that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to sounds.

"And how is a monk resilient to aromas? There is the case where a monk, on smelling an aroma with the nose, feels no passion for an aroma that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to aromas.

“And how is a monk resilient to flavors? There is the case where a monk, on tasting a flavor with the tongue, feels no passion for a flavor that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to flavors.

“And how is a monk resilient to tactile sensations? There is the case where a monk, on touching a tactile sensation with the body, feels no passion for a tactile sensation that incites passion and can center his mind. This is how a monk is resilient to tactile sensations.

“Endowed with these five qualities, a monk is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world.” — [AN 5:139](#)

§ 69. “Monks, there are these five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world. Which five?

“There is the case of a warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust [stirred up by the enemy army], falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the first type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

“Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the second type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

“Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult [of the approaching forces], he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the third type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

“Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some warriors are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

“Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, the tumult, & the hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. Some warriors are like this. This is the fifth type of warrior who can be found existing in the world.

“These are the five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world.

“In the same way, monks, there are these five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks. Which five?

[1] “There is the case of the monk who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the cloud of dust for him? There is the case of the monk who hears, ‘In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.’ On hearing this, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the cloud of dust. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the first type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[2] “Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the top of the banner for him? There is the case of the monk who not only hears that ‘In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.’ He sees for himself that in that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion. On seeing her, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the top of the banner. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the second type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[3] “Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult [of the approaching forces], he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the tumult for him? There is the case of the monk who has

gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and giggles at him, calls out to him, laughs aloud, & teases him. On being giggled at, called out to, laughed at, & teased by the woman, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the tumult. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy's banner, but on hearing the tumult he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the third type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[4] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. What is the hand-to-hand combat for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he—without renouncing the training, without declaring his weakness—engages in sexual intercourse. This, for him, is hand-to-hand combat. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some individuals are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[5] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. What is victory in the battle for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he extricates himself, frees himself, and goes off where he will.

"He resorts to a secluded dwelling place: the wilderness, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a haystack. Having gone to the wilderness, the foot of a tree, or an empty

building, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore.

“Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with an awareness devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness. Abandoning ill will & anger, he dwells with an awareness devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will & anger. Abandoning sloth & drowsiness, he dwells with an awareness devoid of sloth & drowsiness, mindful, alert, percipient of light. He cleanses his mind of sloth & drowsiness. Abandoning restlessness & anxiety, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness & anxiety. Abandoning uncertainty, he dwells having crossed over uncertainty, with no perplexity with regard to skillful mental qualities. He cleanses his mind of uncertainty.

“Having abandoned these five hindrances, corruptions of awareness that weaken discernment, then—quite withdrawn from sensual pleasures, withdrawn from unskillful qualities—he enters & remains in the first *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third *jhāna*, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joy & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth *jhāna*: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

“With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the mental fermentations. He discerns, as it has come to be, that ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.... These are (mental) fermentations.... This is the origination of fermentations.... This is the cessation of fermentations.... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations.’ His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He

discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“This, for him, is victory in the battle. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the fifth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

“These are the five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks.” — [AN 5:75](#)

§ 70. “And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by tolerating? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, endures. He tolerates cold, heat, hunger, & thirst; the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; ill-spoken, unwelcome words & bodily feelings that, when they arise, are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, displeasing, & menacing to life. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to tolerate these things do not arise for him when he tolerates them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by tolerating.

“And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by avoiding? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer. Reflecting appropriately, he avoids sitting in the sorts of unsuitable seats, wandering to the sorts of unsuitable habitats, and associating with the sorts of bad friends that would make his knowledgeable friends in the holy life suspect him of evil conduct. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to avoid these things do not arise for him when he avoids them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by avoiding.

“And what are the fermentations to be abandoned by destroying? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, does not tolerate an arisen thought of sensuality. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, & wipes it out of existence.

“Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate an arisen thought of ill will...

“Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate an arisen thought of cruelty...

“Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate arisen evil, unskillful mental qualities. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. The fermentations, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to

destroy these things do not arise for him when he destroys them. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by destroying.” — [MN 2](#)

§ 71. The important factors for anyone practicing to gain release from all stress and suffering are persistence and endurance, for every kind of goodness has to have obstacles blocking the way, always ready to destroy it. Even when the Buddha himself was putting his effort into the practice, the armies of Mara were right on his heels, pestering him all the time, trying to keep him from attaining his goal. Still, he never wavered, never got discouraged, never abandoned his efforts. He took his perfection of truthfulness and used it to drive away the forces of Mara until they were utterly defeated. He was willing to put his life on the line in order to do battle with the forces of Mara, his heart solid, unflinching, and brave. This was why he was eventually able to attain a glorious victory, realizing the unexcelled right self-awakening, becoming our Buddha. This is an important example that he as our “father” set for his descendants to see and to take to heart.

So when we’re intent on training our minds to be good, there are bound to be obstacles—the forces of Mara—just as in the case of the Buddha, but we simply have to slash our way through them, using our powers of endurance and the full extent of our abilities to fight them off. It’s only normal that when we have something good, there are going to be other people who want what we’ve got, in the same way that sweet fruit tends to have worms and insects trying to eat it. A person walking along the road empty-handed doesn’t attract anyone’s attention, but if we’re carrying something of value, there are sure to be others who will want what we’ve got, and will even try to steal it from us. If we’re carrying food in our hand, dogs or cats will try to snatch it. But if we don’t have any food in our hand, they won’t pounce on us.

It’s the same way when we practice. When we do good, we have to contend with obstacles if we want to succeed. We have to make our hearts hard and solid like diamond or rock, which don’t burn when you try to set them on fire. Even when they get smashed, the pieces maintain their hardness as diamond and rock. The Buddha made his heart so hard and solid that when his body was cremated, parts of it didn’t burn and still remain as relics for us to admire even today. This was through the power of his purity and truthfulness.

So we should set our minds on purifying our bodies and minds until they become so truly elemental that fire won’t burn them, just like the Buddha’s

relics. Even if we can't get them to be that hard, at least we should make them like tamarind seeds in their casing: even if insects bore through the casing and eat all the flesh of the tamarind fruit, they can't do anything to the seeds, which maintain their hardness as always.

— *Ajaan Lee (Starting out Small)*

## Equanimity

§ 72. “Now what is worldly equanimity? There are these five strands of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Any equanimity arising in connection with these five strands of sensuality is called worldly equanimity.

And what is unworldly equanimity? There is the case where, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—one enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called unworldly equanimity.

And what is an even more unworldly unworldly equanimity? Any equanimity that arises in one free from mental fermentation while he/she is reflecting on his/her mind that is released from greed, released from aversion, released from delusion: this is called an even more unworldly unworldly equanimity.” — [\*SN 36:31\*](#)

§ 73. “There is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity; and there is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

“And what is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity? There is equanimity with regard to forms, equanimity with regard to sounds... smells... tastes... tactile sensations [& ideas: this word appears in one of the recensions]. This is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity.

“And what is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness? There is equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of space, equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of consciousness... dependent on the sphere of nothingness... dependent on the sphere of neither

perception nor non-perception. This is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

“By depending & relying on equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, abandon & transcend equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.

“By depending & relying on non-fashioning, abandon & transcend the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.” — [\*MN 137\*](#)

§ 74. “Just as if a goldsmith or goldsmith’s apprentice were to set up a smelter. Having set up the smelter, he would fire the receptacle. Having fired the receptacle, he would take hold of some gold with his tongs and place it in the receptacle. Periodically he would blow on it, periodically sprinkle it with water, periodically examine it closely. If he were solely to blow on it, it’s possible that the gold would burn up. If he were solely to sprinkle it with water, it’s possible that the gold would grow cold. If he were solely to examine it closely, it’s possible that the gold would not come to full perfection. But when he periodically blows on it, periodically sprinkles it with water, periodically examines it closely, the gold becomes pliant, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle, and is ready to be worked. Then whatever sort of ornament he has in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—the gold would serve his purpose.

“In the same way, a monk intent on heightened mind should attend periodically to three themes: He should attend periodically to the theme of concentration; he should attend periodically to the theme of uplifted energy; he should attend periodically to the theme of equanimity. If the monk intent on heightened mind were to attend solely to the theme of concentration, it’s possible that his mind would tend to laziness. If he were to attend solely to the theme of uplifted energy, it’s possible that his mind would tend to restlessness. If he were to attend solely to the theme of equanimity, it’s possible that his mind would not be rightly concentrated for the ending of the fermentations. But when he attends periodically to the theme of concentration, attends periodically to the theme of uplifted energy, attends periodically to the theme of equanimity, his mind is pliant, malleable, luminous, and not brittle. It is rightly concentrated for the ending of the fermentations.” — [\*AN 3:103\*](#)

§ 75. To purify the heart, we have to disentangle our attachments to self, to the body, to mental phenomena, and to all the objects that come passing in through the senses. Keep the mind intent on concentration. Keep it one at all times. Don't let it become two, three, four, five, etc., because once you've made the mind one, it's easy to make it zero. Simply cut off the little 'head' and pull the two ends together. But if you let the mind become many, it's a long, difficult job to make it zero.

And another thing: If you put the zero after other numbers, they become ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, hundreds, thousands, on to infinity. But if you put the zero's first, even if you have ten thousand of them, they don't count. So it is with the heart: Once we've turned it from one to zero and put the zero first, then other people can praise or criticize us as they like but it won't count. Good doesn't count, bad doesn't count. This is something that can't be written, can't be read, that we can understand only for ourselves.

— *Ajaan Lee (Inner Strength)*

# Table of Contents

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Titlepage           | 1  |
| Copyright           | 2  |
| Abbreviations       | 3  |
| Introduction        | 4  |
| I. Discernment      | 9  |
| Good Will           | 19 |
| II. Truth           | 24 |
| Virtue              | 31 |
| Persistence         | 40 |
| III. Relinquishment | 43 |
| Generosity          | 43 |
| Renunciation        | 49 |
| IV. Calm            | 56 |
| Endurance           | 56 |
| Equanimity          | 73 |