

MN 112

The Sixfold Purity

Chabbisodhana Sutta

Dhamma Talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi

Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center

09-Oct-06

BV: Now this particular sutta is really kind of neat, because this is the sutta that has questions in it that you ask someone, if they suspect that they've become an arahat.

MN:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu makes a declaration of final knowledge thus: 'I understand: Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.'

3. "That bhikkhu's words should neither be approved nor disapproved. Without approving or disapproving, a question should be put thus: 'Friend, there are four

kinds of expression rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. What four? Telling the seen as it is seen; telling the heard as it is heard; telling the sensed as it is sensed; telling the cognized as it is cognized. These, friend, are the four kinds of expression rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. How does the venerable one know, how does he see, regarding these four kinds of expression, so that through not clinging his mind is liberated from the taints?'

4. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is one with taints destroyed, who has lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and is completely liberated through final knowledge, this is the nature of his answer:

"Friends, regarding the seen I abide unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers...

BV: Unattracted: not holding on. Unrepelled: not pushing away. Independent, detached, free, dissociated: anatta. With a mind rid of barriers: there's no more taints.

MN:

Regarding the heard...Regarding the sensed...Regarding the cognized I abide unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. It is by knowing thus, seeing thus, regarding these four kinds of expression, that through not clinging my mind is liberated from the taints.'

5. "Saying 'good' one may delight and rejoice in that bhikkhu's words. Having done so, a further question may be put thus:

"Friend, there are these five aggregates affected by clinging, rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. What five? They are the material form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging. These, friend, are the five aggregates affected by clinging, rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. How does the venerable one know, how does he see, regarding these five aggregates affected by clinging, so that through not clinging his mind is liberated from the taints?"

6. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is one with taints destroyed...and is completely liberated through final knowledge, this is the nature of his answer:

"Friends, having known material form to be feeble, fading away, and comfortless, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging regarding material form, of mental standpoints,

BV: That's all of the concepts, and imagination, and ideas, and that sort of thing.

MN:

adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding material form, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

"Friends, having known feeling to be feeble, fading away, and comfortless, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging regarding feeling, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding feeling, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

Having known perception to be feeble, fading away, and comfortless, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging regarding perception, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding perception, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

Having known formations to be feeble, fading away, and comfortless, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging regarding formations, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding formations, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

Having known consciousness to be feeble, fading away, and comfortless, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging regarding consciousness, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding consciousness, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

"It is by knowing thus, seeing thus, regarding these five aggregates affected by clinging, that through not clinging my mind is liberated from the taints.'

7. "Saying 'good,' one may delight and rejoice in that bhikkhu's words. Having done so, a further question may be put thus:

"Friend, there are these six elements rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. What six? They are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element, the space element, and the consciousness element. These, friend, are the six elements rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. How does the venerable one know, how does he see, regarding these six elements, so that through not clinging his mind is liberated from the taints?'

8. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is one with taints destroyed...and is completely liberated through final knowledge, this is the nature of his answer:

"Friends, I have treated the earth element as not self,

BV: Or impersonal.

MN:

with no self based on the earth element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the earth element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the earth element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

BV: The earth element is, a little bit different that what most people think of as the earth element, especially the vipassanā people.

MN: 62:8 {"Rāhula,} whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to, that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else

internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to: this is called the internal earth element. Now both the internal earth element and the external earth element are simply earth element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' [422]
When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the earth element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the earth element.

BV: That's a little bit different than, hardness and softness, isn't it?

MN:112

"Friends, I have treated the water element as not self, with no self based on the water element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the water element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the water element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

MN:62:9 {"What, Rāhula, is} the water element? The water element may be either internal or external. What is the internal water element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to, that is, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to: this is called the internal water element. Now both the internal water element and the external water element are simply water element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom,

BV: Proper wisdom: as part of a process.

S: Dependent Origination.

BV: Dependent Origination.

MN:62:9 one becomes disenchanted with the water element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the water element.

BV: Ok,

MN 62:9

"Friends, I have treated the fire element as not self, with no self based on the fire element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the fire element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the fire element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

MN: 62:10. "What, Rāhula, is the fire element? The fire element may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to, that is, that by which one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to: this is called the internal fire element.

MN: 62:10 Now both the internal fire element and the external fire element are simply fire element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

BV: That's the whole point of being able to see Dependent Origination, to see everything as cause and effect relationship, and there's no controller; there's nobody there, only an impersonal process, that's continually happening. So this is a very important aspect of all of these different elements, is realizing that they arise because the conditions are right for it to arise. The heat arises when the sun comes out. When you ~. Things like that.

Repeats(Now both the internal fire element and the external fire element are simply fire element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom)

MN: 62:10 When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the fire element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the fire element.

MN: 112

"Friends, I have treated the air element as not self, with no self based on the air element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the air element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the air element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

BV: And

MN: 62:11. {"What, Rāhula, is the air element?} The air element may be either internal or external. What is the internal air element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to, that is, up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the belly, winds in the bowels, winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and

out-breath, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to:

BV: Probably, eighty five per cent of the things that you feel, not see, is air element. Your breathing of course is your air element; your feeling your stomach growling and all of that is the air element, but it's also vibration, ok. Vibration is considered part of the air element. So even when your mind starts to, (hand gesture) that's because of the air element, because of the tension caused and all of that other stuff.

MN: 62:11 {this is called the internal air element.} Now both the internal air element and the external air element are simply air element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus:

BV: One of the tricky things that happens, especially for healers, is they start, owing the energy coming through them, and identifying with it: "I'm causing this to arise." Actually what you're doing is causing the conditions FOR it to arise. But it's not actually your energy. You're adjusting it. It's just vibration. Not all healers do that sort of thing, but being in California as long as I was and seeing all kind of things. We saw an awful lot of the healers that were taking credit for actually doing the healing, and it's an impersonal process, and it's just the false idea of ownership of the energy itself.

MN: 62:11 This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' [423] When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the air element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the air element.

MN:112

"Friends, I have treated the space element as not self, with no self based on the space element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the space element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the space element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

MN: 62:12 "What, {Rāhula}, is the space element? The space element may be either internal or external. What is the internal space element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is space, spatial, and clung-to, that is, the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the door of the mouth, and that [aperture] whereby what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets swallowed, and where it collects, and whereby it is excreted from below, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is space, spatial, and clung-to: this is called the internal space element. Now both the internal space element and the external space element are simply space element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is with proper wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the space element and makes the mind dispassionate towards the space element,

MN:112

"Friends, I have treated the consciousness element as not self, with no self based on the consciousness element. And with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of attraction and clinging based on the consciousness element, of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies based on the consciousness element, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

BV: Now, getting back to the other, this is called "The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula", the Buddha's son.

MN: 62:13. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people throw clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood on the earth, and the earth is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like the earth; for when you develop meditation that is like the earth, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

14. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people wash clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood in water, and the water is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, [424] Rāhula, develop meditation that is like water; for when you develop meditation that is like water, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

15. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as people burn clean things and dirty things, excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood in fire, and the fire is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like fire; for when you develop meditation that is like fire, arisen

agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

BV: That's the key part. "agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain." When it remains, that means that you got caught by the craving and clinging.

MN:62:16. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like air; for when you develop meditation that is like air, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as the air blows on clean things and dirty things, on excrement, urine, spittle, pus, and blood, and the air is not repelled, humiliated, and disgusted because of that, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like air; for when you develop meditation that is like air, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

17. "Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain. Just as space is not established anywhere, so too, Rāhula, develop meditation that is like space; for when you develop meditation that is like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain.

BV: 27:05-27:15 Then, he goes on to the four Brahma Vihāras. We go back to here.

MN: 112

"It is by knowing thus, seeing thus, regarding these six elements, that through not clinging my mind is liberated from the taints.'

9. "Saying 'good,' one may delight and rejoice in that bhikkhu's words. Having done so, a further question maybe put thus:

"But, friend, there are these six internal and external bases rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. What six? They are the eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, the tongue and flavours, the body and tangibles, the mind and mind-objects. These, friend, are the six internal and external bases rightly proclaimed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. How does the venerable one know, how does he see, regarding these six internal and external bases, so that through not clinging his mind is liberated from the taints?"

10. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is one with taints destroyed...and is completely liberated through final knowledge, this is the nature of his answer:

"Friends, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of desire, lust, delight, craving, attraction, and clinging, and of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding the eye, forms, eye-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through eye-consciousness, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

"With the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of desire, lust, delight, craving, attraction, and clinging, and of mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding the ear, sounds, ear-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through ear-consciousness...regarding the nose, odours, nose-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through nose-consciousness...regarding the tongue, flavours,

tongue-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through tongue consciousness...regarding the body, tangibles, body-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through body-consciousness...regarding the mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and things cognizable [by the mind] through mind-consciousness, I have understood that my mind is liberated.

"It is by knowing thus, seeing thus, regarding these six internal and external bases, that through not clinging my mind is liberated from the taints.'

11. "Saying 'good' one may delight and rejoice in that bhikkhu's words. Having done so, a further question may be put thus:

"But, friend, how does the venerable one know, how does he see, so that in regard to this body with its consciousness and all external signs, I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit have been eradicated in him?'

12. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is one with taints destroyed...and is completely liberated through final knowledge, this is the nature of his answer:

"Friends, formerly when I lived the home life I was ignorant. Then the Tathāgata or his disciple taught me the Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma I acquired faith in the Tathāgata. Possessing that faith, I considered thus: "Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy while living in a home to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness." On a later occasion, abandoning a small or a large fortune, abandoning a small or a large circle of relations, I shaved off my hair

and beard, put on the yellow robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

13.¹ "Having thus gone forth and possessing the bhikkhus' training and way of life, abandoning the killing of living beings, he abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, expecting only what is given, by not stealing he abides in purity. Abandoning incelibacy, he observes celibacy, living apart, abstaining from the vulgar practice of sexual intercourse.

"Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech; he speaks truth, adheres to truth, is trustworthy and reliable, one who is no deceiver of the world. Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many and agreeable to many. Abandoning gossip, he abstains from gossip; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial.

"He abstains from injuring seeds and plants. He practises eating only <one> meal a day, abstaining from eating at night and outside the proper time. He abstains from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows. He abstains from wearing garlands, smartening himself with scent, and embellishing himself with unguents. He abstains from high and large couches. He abstains from accepting gold and silver. He abstains from accepting raw grain. He abstains from accepting raw meat. He abstains from accepting women and girls. He abstains from accepting men and women slaves. He abstains from accepting goats and sheep. He abstains from accepting fowl and pigs. He abstains from accepting elephants, cattle, horses, and mares. He abstains from accepting fields and land. He abstains from going on errands and running messages. He abstains from buying and selling. He abstains from false weights, false metals, and false measures. He abstains from cheating, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery. He abstains from wounding, murdering, binding, brigandage, plunder, and violence.

14. "He becomes content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes he sets out taking only these with him. Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too, the bhikkhu becomes content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes he sets out taking only these with him. Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a bliss that is blameless.

15. "On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he

undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odour with the nose...On tasting a flavour with the tongue...On touching a tangible with the body...On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. Possessing this noble restraint of the faculties, he experiences within himself a bliss that is unsullied.

16. "He becomes one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

17. "Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, and this noble restraint of the faculties, and possessing this noble mindfulness and full awareness, he resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.

"On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him. Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill will and

hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and remorse. Abandoning doubt, he abides having gone beyond doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from doubt.

18. "Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first jhana, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, I entered upon and abided in the second jhana...With the fading away as well of rapture...I entered upon and abided in the third jhana...With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...I entered upon and abided in the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

19. "When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfections, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I directly knew as it actually is: "This is suffering"..."This is the origin of suffering"..."This is the cessation of suffering"..."This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering." I directly knew as it actually is: "These are the taints"..."This is the origin of the taints"..."This is the cessation of the taints"..."This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints."

20. "When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated there came the knowledge: "It is liberated." I directly knew: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being."

"It is by knowing thus, seeing thus, friends, that in regard to this body with its consciousness and all external signs, I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit have been eradicated in me."

21. "Saying 'good,' bhikkhus, one may delight and rejoice in that bhikkhu's words. Having done so, one should say to him: 'It is a gain for us, friend, it is a great gain for us, friend, that we see such a companion in the holy life as the venerable one.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: (Closes book, sighs) That gives you an idea of the kind of questions, and occasionally when I was in Burma, some monks had some kind of claim like that. It didn't happen very often, I mean it happened one time while I was there. They just claimed that they'd done what needed to be done, and then they got questioned and found out that there was still more to do. (Laughs).

But those are the kind of questions that need to be asked, and they need to be answered pretty precisely. And that's how you know for yourself, whether you actually experienced this or not, because your mind... An arahat doesn't have any clinging arise anymore. They don't have any craving arise anymore. They don't have any ignorance. It is, they see everything, as part of the four noble truths. So their mind is like super

clear, and that's why it's a real good thing if you happen to run across somebody that is an arahat. That's just hang around them for as long as you can, because they have a mind that's so bright and so clear you're always going to get the straight answer. And there's real advantage for that.

Now I've looked long and hard to find an arahat, and I never did. Taungpulu Sayadaw, Grainer(?) claimed that he was an arahat, and Socar(?) claimed that. And U Silananda took me off to the side and said: "No, he's not. He is a bodhisatta. He took the bodhisatta vow. If you take the bodhisatta vow, you will not be able to attain nibbāna at all until you fulfilled all of your pāramīs, and it takes a very, very, long time. Now you can renounce the bodhisatta vow any time you want to.

But the thing is, when you go to some, ah, you go to Tibetans, a lot of Mahāyāna, they will have you take a bodhisatta vow, and not tell you that you've taken a bodhisatta vow, and you have to know how to renounce it if you don't want to take the bodhisattha vow. They really try to make the bodhisatta vow into something much more than it actually is, and Bhikkhu Bodhi said, I think it was around five hundred, it might have been three hundred A.D., it's between three hundred and five hundred A.D., that the idea of the Bodhisatta vow started to really take hold. And the reason that I think that it did take hold was, the actual practice of the meditation and relaxing, had been lost. And people were getting into these very deep states of, one-pointed concentration, and they weren't experiencing arahatship, so they started pushing the idea of take a bodhisatta vow and that will kind of cover up the idea, or the truth, that nobody around us is actually an arahat. And then they start talking and re-defining what an arahat is.

And I had a Tibetan friend, he was from Austria. And I said: "How do you tell when somebody's enlightened?" He said: "Oh, you can see it on the face. The face is radiant, all the time." And I said: "Have you spent time with these people? I mean, six months, a year, two years, to see in fact they really were arahats. Because if you know what you're looking for, you can tell when somebody has greed or dissatisfaction coming up in one way or another."—" Oh, no, I'd never do that." He said: "I did two, three year, three months, three weeks, three days retreats, up on these fifteen thousand foot mountains and caves, and that's what I like doing. So he never spent any time around these guys, that he claimed were arahats.

And I can remember one time in San Diego when I went to see the Karamapa, he gave a talk, and then he said: "This is the arahat Ānanda. He's going to translate everything that I say in Tibetan" and he got up and walked out, and that arahat Ānanda, gave a discourse on, whatever he was talking about. But it really made my eyebrows go up to think the arahat Ānanda is... that they changed things so much. And they have this idea that you can renounce nibbāna, and I mean I have some real problems with that: "I can be an arahat, but I can renounce, nibbāna, until all beings, attain nibbāna.

They have some real strange ideas, and they have one Buddha being stronger than another Buddha, But that just doesn't work.(Laughingly) And it's ingrained in them to say: "You want a beginner's practice, you start out with Theravāda, and the medium practice is, the Mahāyāna, then if you want the advanced practice, come and practice Vajrayāna.

I went to a talk with Chief Reverend Gate(?) in Malaysia, and it was to all different traditions, and he spent a half an hour or forty-five minutes telling everybody that we all have to get along, and all traditions are really Buddhists, and we were all brothers, and right after he got through doing that, this Tibetan guy came up and he went through his spiel of: "Theravāda is just a beginning practice, and the Mahāyāna, and then the Vajrayāna, that's the one, and I almost stood up and shook my fist at him, you know? "How dare you?" I mean Chief Reverend gave a brilliant talk, about if we're going to be Buddhists, we have to get along. You don't put down any other... And it was really good. And then he got up and, he just went through his spiel. It's so ingrained in him.

And one of the things that's real amazing is, a lot of philosophers, when they start studying Buddhism, they really tend towards Mahāyāna than they do Theravāda. But then again, that's philosophy. So it's a real interesting, observation. The philosophers, they really get off on thinking, deep, deep, deep, wordy things.

Ok, time to, go back to work.

May suffering ones, be suffering free

And the fear struck, fearless be

May the grieving shed all grief

And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired

For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth

Devas and nagas of mighty power

Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Lord Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

Suttas text translation: (C) Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995, 2001. Reprinted from The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya with permission of Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A, www.wisdompubs.org

1. Technical note: Sections #13-17 are formula omitted from text with note: "... (as Sutta 51, §§14-19) [34, 35]..." which explains the shift in person and tense for these sections, and why the last section was not numbered.

Text last edited: 26-Feb-08