AN 3.87 — Dutiya Sikkhā Sutta (Mastering the Trainings – Part 2)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

86. Dutiya Sikkhā Sutta (Mastering the Trainings – Part 2) Bhikkhus, the one hundred and fifty training rules are to be recited every two weeks. Therefore, the sons of clansmen seeking their own good must observe them.

These training rules are categorized into three training groups. What are the three?

Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu develops and becomes complete in his practice, as he engages in training in the Higher Virtues, training in the Higher Mind, and training in Higher Wisdom.

a. Here, a Bhikkhu, while training in virtuous behavior and accomplishing mastery in it, however, is one who only develops his collectedness of mind and wisdom to a modest level, as he breaks certain minor training rules but works diligently to abstain from doing so again.

And for what reason?

Bhikkhus, while training, I say he may end up breaking those minor training rules. However, because he is dedicated to those training rules that are fundamental to living the Holy Life, conducive to the Holy life, he remains fixed and firm in his resolve, and comes back to them.

Thus, by undertaking these training rules, he is heedful and determined in their practice, and with the complete destruction of the three fetters, he limits his rebirths among the Devas or humans for no more than seven times at the most, whereby he will put a final end to suffering.

Or, with the complete destruction of the three fetters, he goes from family to family, after being reborn in good families two or three more times at the most, putting a final end to suffering.

Or, by the complete destruction of the three fetters, he becomes a “single-seeder”, as he seeks rebirth once more in the human realm, whereby he puts a final end to suffering.

Or, with the complete destruction of the three fetters, while also reducing his greed, hatred, and delusion, he becomes a “Once-Returner,” coming back only once more to existence, where he will put a final end to all suffering.

b. Next, another Bhikkhu who, although is well-trained and accomplished in his development of virtuous behavior, and in his meditation (samādhi), having mastered them both, yet still is only moderately developed in his wisdom, wherein his understanding is relatively limited.

And for what reason?

Bhikkhus, while training, I say that at times, he may be prone to breaking those minor training rules. However, because he is dedicated to those training rules that are fundamental to living the Holy Life, conducive to the Holy life, he remains fixed and firm in his resolve, and thus comes back to them.

Thus, by undertaking these training rules, he is heedful and determined in their practice, and with the destruction of the five lower fetters binding him to the sensual world, he becomes a “Non-Returner,” destined to go upstream and to only reappear in the highest of Brahma realms, in the Akaniṭṭha Pure Abodes, where he will attain Full Liberation, without ever returning from that plane of existence.

Or, through the complete destruction of the five lower fetters binding him to the sensual world, after his death in this body, he will reappear in the Akaniṭṭha Pure Abode, where he attains Final Nibbāna through exertion, by putting a final end to all suffering.

Or, by the complete destruction of the five lower fetters binding him to the sensual world, after his death at the end of this life, he would also reappear in the Pure Abodes for his next birth, where he attains Final Nibbāna but without any difficulty or exertion, and thus puts a final end to all suffering.

Or, by the complete destruction of the five lower fetters binding him to the sensual world, at the end of his human existence, he attains Final Nibbāna upon landing into the Pure Abodes, and thus puts a final end to all suffering.

Or, with the complete destruction of the five lower fetters binding him to the sensual world, at death, when this body has broken down, he attains Final Nibbāna during the interval of his reappearance into the Pure Abodes, thus putting a final end to all suffering.

c. Next, another Bhikkhu, while completing his training in virtuous behavior, also develops and completes his training in collected stability of mind, as well as his training in wisdom, mastering

them all. However, though there might come a time when he breaks certain minor training rules, he works diligently to abstain from doing so again.

And for what reason?

Bhikkhus, while training, I say he may still be prone to breaking those minor training rules. However, because he is dedicated to those training rules that are fundamental to living the spiritual life, conducive to the Holy life, he remains fixed and firm in his resolve.

Thus, by undertaking these training rules, he is heedful and determined in their practice, and with the destruction of the contaminants in this very life, he realizes for himself and through his own direct knowledge, the taintless Final Liberation of the Heart, and enters upon and dwells in this liberated state of mind through wisdom.

It is in this way, Bhikkhus, whereby through dedicating oneself partially, one attains partial results, and by dedicating oneself fully to the Holy Life, along with its three Higher Trainings to their perfection, one here and now attains Final Liberation.

I declare, therefore, that these training rules are not to be regarded as fruitless, at all.