AN 5.56 — AN 5:56 The Preceptor | Upajjhāya Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

The Preceptor

Upajjhāya Sutta (AN 5:56)

Then a certain monk went to his preceptor and, on arrival, said to him, “Venerable sir, it’s as if my body is drugged. I’ve lost my bearings. Things aren’t clear to me. My mind keeps being overwhelmed with sloth & torpor. I lead the holy life dissatisfied. I have uncertainty about the teachings.”

So that monk [the preceptor], taking his student along, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he [told the Blessed One what his student had said.]

[The Blessed One said:] "That's how it is, monk, for one who lives with his senses unguarded, knowing no moderation in food, not committed to wakefulness, with no insight into skillful qualities, and not committed to the development of the wings to awakening1 in the early & late hours of the night. It's as if his body is drugged. He's lost his bearings. Things aren't clear to him. His mind keeps being overwhelmed with sloth & torpor. He leads the holy life dissatisfied. He has uncertainty about the teachings.

"Therefore, monk, you should train yourself: 'I will have my senses guarded, know moderation in food, commit to wakefulness, gain insight into skillful qualities, and dwell committed to the development of the wings to awakening in the early & late hours of the night.' That's how you should train yourself."

Then that monk [the student], having been admonished by the Blessed One's admonishment, rose from his seat, bowed down to him, and—after circumambulating him—left.

Then—dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute—he in no long time entered & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, directly 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 so that monk became one of the arahants.

Then, having attained arahantship, he went to his preceptor and, on arrival, said to him, "Venerable sir, my body is no longer drugged and I've regained my bearings. Things are clear to me. My mind is no longer overwhelmed with sloth & torpor. I lead the holy life satisfied. I have no uncertainty about the teachings."

So that monk [the preceptor], taking his student along, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he [told the Blessed One what his student had said.]

[The Blessed One said:] "That's how it is, monk, for one who lives with his senses guarded, knowing moderation in food, committed to wakefulness, with insight into skillful qualities, and committed to the development of the wings to awakening in the early & late hours of the night. His body is no longer drugged and he's regained his bearings. Things are clear to him. His mind is no longer overwhelmed with sloth & torpor. He leads the holy life satisfied. He has no uncertainty about the teachings.

"Therefore, monks,2 you should train yourselves: 'We will have our senses guarded, know moderation in food, commit to wakefulness, gain insight into skillful qualities, and dwell committed to the development of the wings to awakening in the early & late hours of the night.' That's how you should train yourselves."

Notes

1. The four establishings of mindfulness, the four right exertions, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for awakening, and the noble eightfold path. See DN 22, MN 118, SN 47:40, SN 51:20, SN 48:10, SN 46:51, SN 45:8. See also, The Wings to Awakening.

2. Apparently other monks were present at this meeting.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 22:84; AN 4:37; AN 6:17; Dhp 29; Dhp 325; Sn 2:10; Thag 1:84; Thag 2:37