AN 8.2 — AN 8:2 Discernment | Paññā Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Eights

Discernment

Paññā Sutta (AN 8:2)

“Monks, these eight causes, these eight requisite conditions lead to the acquiring of the as-yet-unacquired discernment that is basic to the holy life, and to the increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of that which has already been acquired. Which eight?

“There is the case where a monk lives in apprenticeship to the Teacher or to a respectable companion in the holy life in whom he has established a strong sense of shame & compunction, love, & respect. This, monks, is the first cause, the first requisite condition

that leads to the acquiring of the as-yet-unacquired discernment that is basic to the holy life, and to the increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of that which has already been acquired.

"As he lives in apprenticeship under the Teacher or under a respectable companion in the holy life in whom he has established a strong sense of shame & compunction, love, & respect, he approaches him at the appropriate times to quiz & cross-question him: 'What, venerable sir, is the meaning of this statement?' He [the Teacher or the respectable companion in the holy life] reveals what is hidden, makes plain what is obscure, and dispels perplexity in many kinds of perplexing things. This is the second cause, the second requisite condition....

"Having heard the Dhamma, he [the student] achieves a twofold seclusion: seclusion in body & seclusion in mind. This is the third cause, the third requisite condition....

"He is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. This is the fourth cause, the fourth requisite condition....

"He has heard much, has retained what he has heard, has stored what he has heard. Whatever teachings are admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end, that—in their meaning & expression—proclaim the holy life that is entirely perfect, surpassingly pure: Those he has listened to often, retained, discussed, accumulated, examined with his mind, & well-penetrated in terms of his views. This is the fifth cause, the fifth requisite condition....

"He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful qualities and for taking on skillful qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities. This is the sixth cause, the sixth requisite condition....

"When he is in the midst of the Saṅgha he doesn't talk on & on about a variety of things. Either he speaks Dhamma himself or he invites another to do so, and he feels no disdain for noble silence.1 This is the seventh cause, the seventh requisite condition....

"He remains focused on arising & passing away with regard to the five aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling... Such is perception... Such are fabrications... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' This, monks, is the eighth cause, the eighth requisite condition that leads to the acquiring of the as-yet-unacquired discernment that is basic to the holy life, and to the increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of that which has already been acquired.

"When this is the case, his companions in the holy life hold him in esteem: 'This venerable one lives in apprenticeship to the Teacher or to a respectable companion in the holy life in whom he has established a strong sense of shame & compunction, love, & respect. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to

development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'As he lives in apprenticeship under the Teacher or under a respectable companion in the holy life in whom he has established a strong sense of shame & compunction, love, & respect, he approaches him at the appropriate times to quiz & cross-question him: 'What, venerable sir, is the meaning of this statement?' He [the Teacher or the respectable companion in the holy life] reveals what is hidden, makes plain what is obscure, and dispels perplexity in all kinds of perplexing things. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'Having heard the Dhamma, he [the student] achieves a twofold seclusion: seclusion in body & seclusion in mind. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'He is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'He has heard much, has retained what he has heard, has stored what he has heard. Whatever teachings are admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end, that—in their meaning & expression—proclaim the holy life that is entirely perfect, surpassingly pure: Those he has listened to often, retained, discussed, accumulated, examined with his mind, & well-penetrated in terms of his views. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful qualities and for taking on skillful qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'When he is in the midst of the Saṅgha he doesn't talk on & on about a variety of things. Either he speaks Dhamma himself or he invites another to do so, and he feels no disdain for noble silence. Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

"(They say:) 'He remains focused on arising & passing away with regard to the five aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling... Such is perception... Such are fabrications... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' Surely, knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees.' This, too, is a factor

leading to endearment, to respect, to development, to consonance, to unification (of mind).

“These, monks, are the eight causes, the eight requisite conditions that lead to the acquiring of the as-yet-unacquired discernment that is basic to the holy life, and to the increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of that which has already been acquired.”

Note

1. According to SN 21:1, “noble silence” means the second jhāna.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 6:2; SN 45:2; AN 5:114; AN 9:1; Dhp 372; Ud 4:1