AN 8.63 — A Teaching in Brief

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Text

Numbered Discourses 8.63

7. Earthquakes

A Teaching in Brief

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I've heard it, I'll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute."

"This is exactly how some futile people ask me for something. But when the teaching has been explained they think only of following me around."

"Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief! May the Holy One teach me the Dhamma in brief! Hopefully I can understand the meaning of what the Buddha says! Hopefully I can be an heir of the Buddha's teaching!"

"Well then, mendicant, you should train like this: 'My mind will be steady and well settled internally. And bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen will not occupy my mind.' That's how you should train.

When your mind is steady and well settled internally, and bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen don't occupy your mind, then you should train like this: 'I will develop the heart's release by love. I'll cultivate it, make it my vehicle and my basis, keep it up, consolidate it, and properly implement it.' That's how you should train.

When this immersion is developed and cultivated in this way, you should develop it while placing the mind and keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind, merely keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind or keeping it connected. You should develop it with rapture. You should develop it without rapture. You should develop it with pleasure. You should develop it with equanimity.

When this immersion is well developed in this way, you should train like this: 'I will develop the heart's release by compassion …' … 'I will develop the heart's release by rejoicing …' … 'I will develop the heart's release by equanimity. I'll cultivate it, make it my vehicle and my basis, keep it up, consolidate it, and properly implement it.' That's how you should train.

When this immersion is well developed in this way, you should develop it while placing the mind and keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind, merely keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind or keeping it connected. You should develop it with rapture. You should develop it without rapture. You

should develop it with pleasure. You should develop it with equanimity.

When this immersion is well developed in this way, you should train like this: 'I'll meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.' That's how you should train.

When this immersion is developed and cultivated in this way, you should develop it while placing the mind and keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind, merely keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind or keeping it connected. You should develop it with rapture. You should develop it without rapture. You should develop it with pleasure. You should develop it with equanimity.

When this immersion is well developed in this way, you should train like this: 'I'll meditate on an aspect of feelings …' … 'I'll meditate on an aspect of the mind …' … 'I'll meditate on an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.' That's how you should train.

When this immersion is developed and cultivated in this way, you should develop it while placing the mind and keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind, merely keeping it connected. You should develop it without placing the mind or keeping it connected. You should develop it with rapture. You should develop it without rapture. You should develop it with pleasure. You should develop it with equanimity.

When this immersion is well developed in this way, wherever you walk, you'll walk comfortably. Wherever you stand, you'll stand comfortably. Wherever you sit, you'll sit comfortably. Wherever you lie down, you'll lie down comfortably."

When that mendicant had been given this advice by the Buddha, he rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Then that mendicant, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And that mendicant became one of the perfected.