AN 9.1 — Sambodhi Sutta: Self-awakening

English translation by Thanissaro 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

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he said to the monks: "Monks, if wanderers who are members of other sects should ask you, 'What, friend, are the prerequisites for the development of the wings to self-awakening?' how would you answer them?"

"For us, lord, the teachings have the Blessed One as their root, their guide, & their arbitrator. It would be good if the Blessed One himself would explicate the meaning of this statement. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it."

"In that case, monks, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded.

The Blessed One said, "If wanderers who are members of other sects should ask you, 'What, friend, are the prerequisites for the development of the wings to self-awakening?' you should answer, 'There is the case where a monk has admirable friends, admirable companions, admirable comrades. This is the first prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

"'Furthermore, the monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Patimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. This is the second prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

"'Furthermore, he gets to hear at will, easily & without difficulty, talk that is truly sobering & conducive to the opening of awareness, i.e., talk on modesty, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-entanglement, on arousing persistence, on virtue, on concentration, on discernment, on release, and on the knowledge & vision of release. This is the third prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

"'Furthermore, he keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and for taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. This is the fourth prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

"'Furthermore, he is discerning, endowed with the discernment of arising & passing away — noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. This is the fifth prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.'

"Monks, when a monk has admirable friends, admirable companions, admirable comrades, it is to be expected that he will be virtuous, will dwell restrained in accordance with the Patimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity, and will train himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults.

"When a monk has admirable friends, admirable companions, admirable comrades, it is to be expected that he will get to hear at will, easily & without difficulty, talk that is truly sobering and conducive to the opening of awareness, i.e., talk on modesty, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-entanglement, on arousing persistence, on virtue, on concentration, on discernment, on release, and on the knowledge & vision of release.

"When a monk has admirable friends, admirable companions, admirable comrades, it is to be expected that he will keep his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities, and for taking on skillful mental qualities — steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities.

"When a monk has admirable friends, admirable companions, admirable comrades, it is to be expected that he will be discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away — noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

"And furthermore, monks, when the monk is established in these five qualities, there are four additional qualities he should develop: He should develop [contemplation of] the unattractive so as to abandon lust. He should develop good will so as to abandon ill will. He should develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing so as to cut off distractive thinking. He should develop the perception of inconstancy so as to uproot the conceit, 'I am.' For a monk perceiving inconstancy, the perception of not-self is made firm. One perceiving

not-self attains the uprooting of the conceit, 'I am' — Unbinding in the here & now."

See also: AN 10.69.