

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove. Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus.” -- “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. “Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the summary and exposition of ‘One Who Has Had a Single Excellent Night.’ Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.” -- “Yes, venerable sir,” the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

3. “Let not a person revive the past
Or on the future build his hopes;
For the past has been left behind
And the future has not been reached.
Instead with insight let him see
Each presently arisen state;
Let him know that and be sure of it,
Invincibly, unshakably.
Today the effort must be made;
Tomorrow Death may come. who knows?
No bargain with Mortality
Can keep him and his hordes away,
But one who dwells thus ardently,
Relentlessly, by day, by night --
It is he, the Peaceful Sage has said,
Who has had a single excellent night.”

4. “How, bhikkhus, does one revive the past? One nurtures delight there thinking, ‘I had such material form in the past.’ One nurtures delight there thinking, ‘I had such feeling in the past,’ ... ‘I had such perception in the past,’ ... ‘I had such formations in the past,’ ... ‘I had such consciousness in the past.’ That is how one revives the past.”

5. “And how, bhikkhus, does one not revive the past? One does not nurture delight there thinking, ‘I had such material form in the past.’ One does not nurture delight there thinking, ‘I had such feeling in the past,’ ... ‘I had such perception in the past,’ ... ‘I had such formations in the past,’ ... ‘I had such consciousness in the past.’ That is how one does not revive the past.”

6. “And how, bhikkhus, does one build up hope upon the future? One nurtures delight there thinking, ‘May I have such material form in the future!’ One nurtures delight there thinking, ‘May I have such feeling in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such perception in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such formations in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such consciousness in the future!’ That is how one builds up hope upon the future.”

7. “And how, bhikkhus, does one not build up hope upon the future? One does not nurture delight there thinking, ‘May I have such material form in the future!’ One does not nurture delight there thinking, ‘May I have such feeling in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such perception in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such formations in the future!’ ... ‘May I have such consciousness in the future!’ That is how does not build up hope upon the future.”

8. “And how bhikkhus, is one vanquished in regard to presently arisen states? Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled nary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self or self as in material form. He regards feeling as self ... perception as self ... formations as self ... consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how one is vanquished in regard to presently arisen states.”

9. “And how, bhikkhus, is one invincible in regard to presently arisen states? Here, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, does not regard material form as self or self as possessed of material form or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He does not regard feeling as self ... perception as self ... formations as self ... consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how one is invincible in regard to presently arisen states.”

10. “Let not a person revive the past...
Who has had a single excellent night.”

11. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the summary and exposition of ‘One Who Has Had a Single Excellent Night.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Majjhima Nikāya 131

Part Three – The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipaṭṭi āsapāṭi)

The Division of Expositions (Vibhangavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi