Five Steps on the Eightfold Path

Pascal Auclair · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Three-Month Retreat (IMS 2012) · 1:00:46

There's a story that I heard one time that I like a lot. It's the story of Moggallana and Sariputta-to-be, before they became the two main disciples of the Buddha, when they were young fellows just having regular fun, before they got into the Dharma fun.

In that story—and I'm telling it as I recall it because I don't think I've read it lately—one day they're at a festival. It's a festival going on for several days where there are people dancing in costumes, music, things happening with elephants that are adorned and decorated. There's a lot of beauty and color and music and all kinds of things happening, and they're hanging out with their friends. They're having a good time. They're there for three days sitting in the made-up estrade—here's a little Pali for you—made-up seats for people to look at the festivities during a festival.

And they're sitting there, and there's this one moment that is pivotal. Maybe it's between two shows and the staff people from the festival are preparing the next presentation. They're both just hanging out silently, looking around the crowd—seeing all the people sitting and eating and chatting, the elephants moving about, the dancers preparing themselves. And they both at the same time have the same idea cross their mind, the same insight. They both think at the very same moment: one day this is not going to be anymore. One day the elephant won't be there, the seats and the people won't be there. All this will be gone. This fun that we're having is very fleeting. Could there be something that does not have this nature of appearing and disappearing? Something that would be worth getting to know, maybe. Something deeper than this pleasure that we're having, which is fleeting.

So they have the same hit on reality, and that is the ignition of their spiritual journey toward liberation, freedom, and a connection with something that is unconditional, that does not arise from a cause, that is not unreliable, unstable, fleeting, ephemeral.

In the story, they at some point turn to each other—a "did you think what I thought?" kind of situation. And it's very beautiful. They go for a while together and at some point they say, maybe we have more chance if we split up to find an answer. So they take this commitment that when they find an answer, when they find something of value in their search, they're going to look for each other to share the news. And they go on their way. The story goes that one of them hears about a man who is teaching, a teacher—the Buddha. And anyway, they become the two main disciples of the Buddha.

I like that moment of insight. Maybe you think it's a downer that they're having fun at a festival and they just have fun. Well, it happens to us too, no? It happens to us sometimes—even not as strong—but we're somewhere doing something and suddenly we see... I don't know if the right word is vain or ephemeral.

It's going to last just for the time it lasts. It doesn't have depth.

When we get on a spiritual path, for most of them I think what's going to be the ignition is an experience of dissatisfaction, an experience of something lacking, or of there being more depth available, or a strong experience of suffering, the loss of something that was extremely meaningful, maybe. We all in here have our own story of this, but often, for many of us, what will bring us on the path is a meeting with something of the dukkha world.

Tonight I'd like to talk about the path. You know me by now—I like a number and a theme. Tonight it's going to be the... what number could it be? Eight. It's going to be the eight, and the theme is going to be fold path. I'm going to talk about the Eightfold Path. It's pretty dense, so we've got to keep it light.

There are a few books on the Noble Eightfold Path. One that is very beautiful is from Bhikkhu Bodhi, and you'll be able to purchase this at the end of your retreat. My talk tonight is based a lot on this book that I've read several times. There's another one from Bhante Gunaratana, *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness*. I want to put the full range of emotions in the talk—the laughter, the drama, all of it.

When we engage on a spiritual quest, often we go around a little bit like shopping. There's this beautiful spiritual supermarket where you can do a little of this and a little of that. It can be very good for a while, because you make discoveries, things are revealed. You can avoid what doesn't feel so good and get a lot of good stuff going. It feels great. But that can only last for a time, I think.

Because a spiritual path, as we're seeing here now, is not like a video game. Although video games are pretty complex, they have a simplicity compared to the human heart and mind, the psyche and the body. You want to find a path that you'll be able to walk maybe for a lifetime, that has depth. So the question arises: how to choose a path?

There are four questions, or four requirements we could say, that one could use to choose a path. When you're shopping, you could put these in your list of things to check. When your friends are shopping for a path, this is good criteria for evaluation.

It's good if the path really is able to... That is the suspense part of the evening.

So, if the path really is able to name the problem well, completely—the full range of the problem of being in this human predicament that we find ourselves in—it can actually name the suffering in its entirety. You might start to recognize something as I'm going along here. That would be one of the first things.

The second thing you might want to check is if this system, we could call it, goes to the heart of why we're suffering, can really go to the cause, the source of the problem.

And then the third thing you could check is if it's actually going to get rid of the problem—really and completely. That it's not just a path that says, "Oh, you'll feel better. We're going to make you feel better on this path." No, that it's actually going to look at the real deep cause and be able to eradicate it completely.

That would be the third criterion.

And the fourth criterion would be that it's actually doable. That it can be walked, realized—that it's doable.

So these could be the four criteria you have there. Sounds strangely like the Four Noble Truths. Very close to it.

And so, good. You found yourself in a good place, because apparently this is what this path is doing. It's really naming the suffering, the extent of the suffering. It's not saying the problem is the flat tire. It's also the flat tire, but it names everything.

I remember one time I went to see a show by an English company called Forced Entertainment. That was the name of the theater company. They were exploring entertainment and its edges—what is entertainment and what is not? The theater... I've been in that world for many years. Sometimes there are these things we do, research we do. The theater becomes a laboratory to investigate something.

In that play, they were looking at entertainment. One of the things I enjoyed is that the show lasted for three hours and more. It was kind of ongoing. That was one of the edges you would hit at some point—"I think I've been entertained now. I need something else."

In the show, one of the many things they did, one of the first things, is that a young woman came to the front of the stage and said, "I'm very happy you're here tonight. We're going to give you a really good show. We're going to entertain you, so just relax. Don't think about your problems at home. Please don't think about, for example—this is the worst place in the whole of Canada to park a car, this neighborhood, because they almost always get broken into. Don't think about this. And don't think about the traffic in the city and all the potholes."

She went on for a long time about transportation and all its difficulties. Then she went into the realm of disease and hospitals, and she kept going—"Do not think about work, the difficulties we sometimes have with employers, how we can't actually complain because it's so complex. Don't think about medical procedures tonight."

People actually started leaving at some point. They felt they didn't like that kind of entertainment. I was sitting there thinking, "They have to be Buddhists to name suffering so thoroughly!"

But after the show, reflecting on it, I realized they had named only the first kind of dukkha—dukkha-dukkha—that Annie spoke so well about.

They left—maybe I should have called them or told them there are two other categories: the dukkha of impermanence, those beautiful things that pass and the angst that we know it's going to pass or it could pass, and the other range of everything included—being in the body, being embodied, all the neutral stuff also.

Anyway, so this path really names everything that is suffering in it. And it goes to the very core of the clinging or desire, tanha. And then it says it's possible to actually release completely the clinging and the confusion of the mind and find complete release. And then there's the path that I'm about to start talking about.

The Four Noble Truths, you see, end with the Eightfold Path. And the Eightfold Path, we could say, both starts and ends with the Four Noble Truths. Because when you get on this path, you have an intuition that something is not quite right, and there must be another way. So that's kind of the beginning of the Four Noble Truths—there's something wrong with that way of living, there must be another way to be. So that's the start of it. The Four Noble Truths are right at the beginning of the path, and also at the end of the path is a complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths—a complete intuitive, penetrative, felt, deeply known understanding of all four aspects.

In his book, Bhikkhu Bodhi asks an interesting question. He says, what do you think is more important—the doctrine or the practice? The doctrine being the Four Noble Truths, or the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path? What is most important, the teaching or the discipline? He says, in a way it's a strange question, but just to put emphasis on what we're doing and what I'm talking about tonight, from his point of view probably the most important is actually the path, because the path reveals the teaching. And the path is what is going to make you liberated one day—feel, I want to say, aligned with the nature of things as they truly are. So the path is extremely important.

Personally, the beauty that I see on this path is that it is the means. It comes to me tonight as reconciliation with the world, and seeing through the world, and freedom in and from the world. It's the way to it, but it's also the expression of it. Tonight as I talk about all the different pieces of it, in my mind it's very clear that it's the way to free the mind and it's also an expression of a free mind.

This Eightfold Path—maybe I should name the eight aspects. I could use "right" or "wise" view. Maybe I will say wise. Wise view is the first one. Then wise intentions. Then wise speech. Wise action. Wise livelihood. Wise effort, wise mindfulness, wise concentration is the eighth one.

These can be presented as a wheel with eight spokes, and that's what we use on the path, we could say. Another way to think about it is a spiral. I like the spiral because every aspect that we bring in, that we practice with, that we become conscious of, that we engage with, is going to feed the revelation, maybe, of the others. So there's going to be a synergy that is going to help us ascend—that's the image we use—and also descend after, to be here and be of service, maybe, and be an agent of protection and freedom.

Another image that can be used is a rope with many strands, so that only one strand would break when there's tension, but the eight of them together make for a strong cord that can be of great use.

So, wise view. Wise view is—maybe I'll start with wrong view. If there is wise view, wise view is a clarity of vision, something that is aligned with reality. Wrong view is when you take something false to be true,

when there's a confusion or mistaken understanding of how things work. So wrong view is very, very important. We want to highlight this, discover what is our wrong view. That's what we're doing here.

By the way, we're walking the path already. I'm just kind of naming it. Being here, doing this, these few weeks—several weeks actually—is really completely being on the Eightfold Path. It's beautiful.

So we're clarifying the view because the way we view the world—whether we're conscious of it or not—often remains unclear to us. We don't always know what our beliefs are. We just act from them. Wrong view will bring wrong intention, which will bring wrong actions, which will result in suffering. And often we're not aware of our wrong views. But when we sit here, suddenly we become more and more aware of them.

Some of this is fire practice. We sit in it and we see that something's wrong with the view because we're all worked up. We're sitting here, nothing is asked of us—just sit your butt on the cushion for a few minutes—and it gets incredibly complex and difficult and problematic. Clearly there's something that is not aligned here.

In the interviews today, or in the last few days, twice this came up in conversation: one of the wrong views that could be in action and unnoticed is the wrong view of inadequacy. Someone corrected me on how to say it—there was kind of a wave of inadequacy. A lot of my motivations in life, my moves, might be done from a feeling of being not enough, of being inadequate. And it's unnoticed, but it makes me make the choices I make, makes me do the things I do. It makes me strive forward, makes me dream of a different self, makes me do all kinds of strange things that are difficult for this beingness here. It makes things complex. It can be very important to actually recognize that ignorance is showing up as inadequacy—this sense that I'm not enough and there's a need for correction.

One teacher once told me that one word to describe samsara, the cycle of suffering that we're in, is *correct ing*. Constantly trying to correct this reality. There's a little something missing from me, from the other one, from the situation. This correcting is the problem. Remove that and samsara, in a way, is gone.

So perhaps highlighting the feeling of inadequacy—and how it makes me want things to be a certain way or not be a certain way, how I don't want to be this one that is lacking—recognizing these wrong views, we're trying to correct here. We're really aiming at core beliefs that are unshaken by many other philosophies: the feeling of a separate self that needs to defend itself in the world, the difficulties around that separation. Or the belief in solidity, in reliability, in stability. The Buddha in one text says that when you see how shaky the world is, how unreliable it is, something switches. So this is the correcting of the view that might happen.

In terms of wise view, at this point in the evening you can choose between two wise views if you want. You'll have the option to choose the one you prefer. There's one that we could call the mundane right view—if you're interested in creating the conditions for a kind of worldly happiness, for being well, for

the conditions to improve in your world. And there's another right view or wise view that we could decide to choose also, which is called—maybe we could call it superior or supramundane right view.

So listen to me before you choose. The mundane right view is related to karma. It's an understanding that—there's an English expression I read sometimes that I like a lot—the efficacy of action. How our actions have an efficacy. They bear result. There are consequences. And there are wholesome roots that will always produce wholesome results, and unwholesome roots that will always produce unwholesome results.

In this wise view of karma, the important thing to understand is that it's actually not personal choice—"I'll make my own unwholesome wholesome." In this practice, in this doctrine, it's very clear: when actions are rooted in greed, hatred, or delusion, invariably they will produce results that are difficult, stressful, full of suffering. Invariably. When actions are rooted in metta or non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion—wisdom and metta and renunciation or generosity—invariably they will lead to good results in the future.

What I like about this teaching on karma is that in our practice, all the attention is put on being here now. All the attention is put on the emission, if I can say it that way. Not so much on the result, but on the emission.

On our practice here, what we put a lot of attention on is not asking, "Why am I in the middle of this? What is the result of what? What did I do in the past that I find myself like this?" It's not this. What we look at is how what I'm doing right now is emitting result for the future.

So the Buddha says karma is action, and for me, action is intentions. In the regular culture, when you talk about karma, where do we point? We point to result. "This is their karma. This is their karma." In this practice here, we change the object. It's not the result—it's the emission. It's what I'm putting out right now. I'm really aware of what is happening here, what I'm cultivating, what I'm abandoning. This is where I put the real attention.

There's a practice of equanimity that I've done a lot and still do sometimes. In the same way that in metta we have the phrases, there's a phrase that I've repeated a lot for myself to reestablish some of the wrong view about this and reestablish the right view and right intention. We could say—as I've said many times, probably hundreds of times—my happiness doesn't depend on the circumstances of my life. It depends on my response. My happiness doesn't depend on the circumstances of my life. It depends on my response.

How I am right now with the circumstances is going to have a tremendous impact in the future. We know that. This is what we're doing here. We put a lot of attention there. We're not asking, "Why is this happening to me?" As it's one of the imponderables, the Buddha said don't try to figure this out. It will drive you crazy. You cannot know. Because there's not only the law of karma in action—there are several laws in action.

Why something is happening—a diagnosis, just to name this. You could say, "Oh, why do I have that thing happening to me? It's karma, it's karma." Not known, because there's biology in there, there's chemistry, genes. There are many, many laws that are at play, so it's really hard to find what caused what. Sometimes there's a clarity we might have, but the attention is not so much on the result, but on the emission. That's where we have power. It's in the now.

Which I find extremely beautiful. I take care of what's happening in this mind-body because I can feel the instant karma of benevolence in the mind. It's felt immediately, the liberating aspect of it. And the rest, I have no idea about how it's going to unfold. Just what I maybe know or believe is that there is a storing that is happening—a storing of energy. When there's an intention of hatred, it's stored. It's being stored somewhere. And there's a potentiality; we say something is latent there. And when the conditions are right, it's going to ripen. It could be in this life, could be in another life. Who knows? But the emission is the point of power here. We take care of now.

So that's if, in the wise view, we're interested in a good future—either next week or next life, you choose. If we're interested in freedom from this cycle, complete freedom, not just good karma but passing through conditionality altogether, then the attention goes on the Four Noble Truths. Maybe one aspect that I'll name here is these five aggregates that I was talking about a few weeks ago.

The Buddha says in his description of dukkha—I should know the quote by heart at this point, but—birth is difficult, aging is difficult, death is difficult, being separated from what we want is difficult, being stuck with what we don't want is difficult. Then at the very end of this description, he says, "And the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha."

To understand that this experience of being alive now, of having aggregates, has been caused by a wanting to exist—this is not an easy thing to do. One will need a great deal of attention to clarify that, or even to see, to experience the wanting to be, the wanting to exist. It's a driving force that is extremely powerful. It's said to produce the next life at the moment of disintegration of the body. This core wanting is so strong that it will lash out for another body somewhere. It will be able to grab another one. It so wants to be. And so the culmination of Right View is a deep understanding of these truths.

That's number one. Number two, the second fold of the Eightfold Path, is intention itself. In a way, I've already talked about it, mixed in with what came before. If you remember, Joseph named this, and I did again after talking about the two piles: this kind of unwholesome intention, I abandon; this kind of wholesome intention, I feed. This is basically the understanding around intention—intention being the link between the way we understand the world and our actions. That's the middle link. The way we understand will make us want to do something in a certain way. So that's very important.

The third step is speech, wise speech. I'll talk about this more in two weeks—I'll do a whole talk on this before we go back to that aspect of practice being very alive. But there's one small thing I wanted to say: in wise speech, not lying is one of the aspects.

There's this little story that I really like. At some point the Buddha was with Rahula, his son. We don't know how old Rahula was then, but let's imagine he's eight or nine years old. When the Buddha was giving his teaching, often there would be an occasion for it. Why would he speak about this instead of that? Because something would happen—a question, a conversation, a situation. So in this story, we can imagine that Rahula has told a lie. And now he's with his father.

His father takes a bowl—a cup. I think I was supposed to leave a little water in there. So now, with the power of your imagination, you'll imagine a little water in this cup. The Buddha says, "Look, Rahula, you see the little water in this cup? That's as much spiritual achievement as somebody who tells lies has—just these few little drops."

Then he goes like this. He says, "You saw how easy it was to remove the water from the cup? Somebody who tells a lie, they remove all the achievements they have gained by doing that."

Then he says, "You see what I do here?" He puts the cup upside down. "It's very easy to put the cup like this and nothing can come in. Somebody who tells a lie, that's what they do with their spiritual potential. They shut it off. It's not possible to make any progress on the path when you tell a lie."

I find this very powerful. He's a good teacher, no? It's not just drop the water—it's drop the water, see how empty it is, put the cup upside down. I can imagine being eight years old and witnessing this, being right in front of it, how it could impact the mind. Like, "Wow, I have to be very careful."

If you replace "spiritual achievement" with "freedom"—this is how much freedom somebody who tells a lie has. You see how any freedom gained is lost? You see how it's not possible for somebody who tells a lie to be free. Maybe that's a better way to tell the story.

Speech. Speech is an amazing thing.

It can give freedom, talking of freedom. When we hear wise teaching, it can liberate the mind. In the texts, you read this all the time. The Buddha is speaking, and at the end of the sutta, five hundred monks and nuns understood deeply, corrected their view completely, and were freed by words.

Actually, if you were to read all the suttas, you might come up with a percentage of maybe something in the nineties—ninety-seven percent perhaps—of the descriptions of awakening for beings happened during a discourse, through true speech. Maybe because the individual awakenings in the forest are not so well recorded as the discourses of the Buddha. But still, it's just to show how powerful a tool speech is.

It can also break lives and remove freedom—by telling a lie, by covering the truth. I'm a spiritual seeker, really into the truth. I want to know reality as it is. But suddenly, in my way of talking, I promote myself in a certain way that is not exactly true. I'm defending a certain image that I care about. It's interesting to watch that. I'll talk maybe more about this later.

The fourth step on the path is right action. They show these as steps, but as I was using the example of the

wheel or the spiral, this all works together. We keep aware of this. This is all in action. I heard this beautiful talk that Temple Smith gave about right livelihood, and at some point he was saying, "We're on an eightfold path anyway." Maybe it would be a good idea, it would be wise—because you're speaking, you're having views, you're having intentions. It's all there. You don't have to do this; it's all happening. There's speaking, there's livelihood, there's putting effort into things. Is it wise? That is what we want to turn towards more and more—clarify what is wise and do it in this way. But I thought it was interesting that we're already on an eightfold path, and it's good to make it wise, as you're on one anyway.

Concerning right or wise action—and now, this week, last week, Winnie gave a talk on sīla, so I'm in this part of the path now: sīla, which has right speech, right action, and right livelihood. So this was already talked about by Winnie. Many of the things I'm discussing are aspects that were mentioned here and there.

The three very strong aspects of wise action are not killing or harming, not stealing, and being careful with our sexuality. Different frames here—it's celibacy in monastic life, it's not harming in lay life. Just there, it's interesting to see: okay, so the Buddha devised this Eightfold Path. Look at what he chose, the most powerful things in our lives—our views, our intentions, our speech, our actions, sexual energy. We know that these things are extremely powerful in our lives. So he makes them the Eightfold Path. He highlights these aspects that are extremely powerful.

Just to touch a little bit on the killing—it's something I read one time and this afternoon I was thinking, oh, maybe it would be a good idea to bring. I was reading that in terms of killing, there are many requirements for unwholesome karma to be activated. There has to be a being. There has to be the intention to kill. So if one of these conditions is not there, then it's not breaking the precept. There has to be a being. You have to know that the being is there. You have to have the intention to do it, or the plan. You have to actually do it, and then it has to work. So sometimes, if we feel like we've broken a precept, we may find out that actually we didn't know there was a being. That's an important thing, these five conditions.

Also, in how powerful the killing will be, the teaching says there are many things to look at in terms of degrees. The quality of the being itself is important in this teaching. The impact of killing an insect is not equal to killing a parent, according to this teaching. The why is also considered—whether it was to save one's life, or out of hatred. The how—whether it was premeditated or not. There are many nuances.

I know for me, eating meat—in the description of the precepts, I'm clean. I don't kill myself. It's very strange how I cannot resolve this thing, that every time I eat meat, there's something in my heart that feels it. I'm feeding that system.

I'm aware of it. I don't know how the teachings explain this. From the teachings' point of view, I'm completely clean, apparently—or anyway, the way they've been recorded and passed down, and the way I understand it or it's been explained to me. Yet I haven't found complete ease around it. To me, that's

something to consider.

Another step. How's the energy? Maybe you don't know the time—I know it's 8:20, so there's only ten minutes left of your torture.

So, the last of this *sīla* group, these three factors that form around ethics, is Right Livelihood. For a long time, it was a little unexplored for me. I'd stop at the idea that wise livelihood was around the way I was earning money, or the way people were earning money, the way they made a livelihood. Now, with the help of some teachings—and especially a talk that Temple Smith gave some time ago—suddenly the whole aspect of lifestyle... I mean, it was already in my mind, but it's been made very much clearer now: livelihood we could perhaps replace with lifestyle. This means that if you're not working, for example, you're not on a seven-fold path—there's still an eightfold path. I think this also comes from Temple; I'd like to give back the credit for any laughter that comes out.

This is very beautiful, I think—how transportation, consumption, clothes, recreational activities bring the whole shebang in there. How all of this can be invited into the process of waking up, of finding freedom and offering freedom. How our whole life can be of service to disentanglement and freedom. And so, are we also waking up in our life to all these aspects, bringing attention to all these different dimensions?

There were a few things I wanted to read to you—subtleties that came up. There's a program called the DPP offered by Spirit Rock. DPP stands for Dedicated Practitioner Program. It's a program over two years, I think. It includes five retreats and monthly homework for dedicated practitioners who want to deepen their understanding of the Dharma. On one of the retreats, there was a discussion about Right Livelihood, and some of the things I heard coming from the practitioners... On these retreats we exchange, we talk a lot about the practice. There's a similar program at BCBS also. But just the subtlety, the nuances of this.

I remember hearing somebody talking about—they were saying, "So what about working in a broken system?" They were talking about the health system in America. Maybe they were a nurse or something, and they were saying, "What's the right or wise livelihood in that? I am actually putting energy into something that is defective." Another person was saying, "What about investing money when I know—or I don't know—how the banks are using the money and what they're investing in, this whole system? What about this?" Somebody else was saying, "But what about the fact that I'm doing good work, that my livelihood is not detrimental in relationship to the teaching? I'm not in intoxicants, I'm not dealing in sexuality or weapons, I'm not dealing in the trade of human beings, I'm not working in deceitful ways—but my work is stressful. It's good service work, but it brings stress to me. What do I do with this? How does my work influence my mind states?"

And so there were these questions that came up, maybe offered by Temple. Questions we can bring: How is my—and here I would like to open it—how is my work, how is my fun time, my play time, how is my consumption impacting others, considering all of this? How is my—and again, you fill the gap here—work, free time, how is it impacting my heart-mind? And the last question was: How can I use my free time, my

way of investing money if I have the chance to even do that, my work, my studies—how can I make it in a way that serves disentangling the mind-heart? That's the way I want to put it. I could have said, "How could it serve my practice?" but that might make it a little dry. How can it serve freedom for me and others?

These are questions that please do not think about while you're here on retreat. But these are important questions.

And one thing I just want to appreciate, if that's the right word, is the complexity of the world we live in. I hear this in the questions in the hall often. What do I do in a situation like this? What do I do with ending life? What do I do with a relationship? Do I end it or do I try to salvage it? This uncertainty.

I'm thinking of somebody who told me, "I can't do this work anymore, but I'm two years from retirement and I can't do it. But if I quit now, it's going to have a whole impact on my financial situation." So what's the wise thing to do here?

What I want to say is this is the realm we're in. This is a realm of complexity, a realm of uncertainty. We do not know what our choice will bring. Is it okay to be in a realm like this? Can we accept that? That's how I want to think about it. I don't know. I don't know what this decision I'm making will bring. Can that be okay also?

The timing is perfect because there's just the last three factors remaining, which are part of what we call samādhi, the mind training: effort, mindfulness, and concentration. We'll address these another time.

How could I finish this talk now? This is Subha, a nun from the time of the Buddha:

My attention is unshaken by joy or pain, praise or blame. I know there is no happiness in anything born from a cause, and I cling to nothing. I follow the Wellfarer and travel on the great eightfold way. The arrow is out. There is no obsession in my mind. Having gone in the empty house, I rejoice.

I talked a lot about technicalities tonight. This is a way to explain what we're actually doing intuitively. It's getting in the bones. It's getting in the heart. It's getting in the mind. For some of us, we'll never be able to explain it, but we'll feel it. We'll feel that something is more right, that there is more freedom, that there is a gaining of some ground—or groundlessness. We will feel it. That is definitely more important than the actual theory.

So let's sit just for a few seconds in silence.

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