

**MN 113 The True Man** - Sappurisa Sutta  
16-Aug-07 DSMC

MN 113:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks." — "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Monks, I shall teach you the character of a true man and the character of an untrue man. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say." — "Yes, venerable sir," the monks replied. The Blessed One said this:

3. "Monks, what is the character of an untrue man? Here an untrue man who has gone forth from an aristocratic family considers thus: 'I have gone forth from an aristocratic family; but these other monks have not gone forth from aristocratic families.' So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his aristocratic family. This is the character of an untrue man.

BV: Thinks he's hot stuff because he came from a good family.

MN: "But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of one's aristocratic family that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not have gone forth from an aristocratic family, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma, he should be honored for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his aristocratic family. This is the character of a true man.

4-6. "Moreover, an untrue man who has gone forth from a great family...from a wealthy family...from an influential family considers thus: 'I have gone forth from an influential family; but these other monks have not gone forth from influential families.' So he lauds

himself and disparages others because of his influential family. This too is the character of an untrue man.

BV: Now, when I was in, Thailand there were a lot of the minor princes, that became monks, and they were, untrue men.

MN: "But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of one's influential family that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not have gone forth from an influential family, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma, he should be honored for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his influential family. This too is the character of a true man.

7. "Moreover, an untrue man who is well known and famous considers thus: 'I am well known and famous; but these other monks are unknown and of no account.' So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his renown. This too is the character of an untrue man.

"But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of one's renown that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not be well known and famous, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma,

BV: What does that mean, you conduct yourself according to Dhamma? Well, it means that one, you keep your precepts, without breaking them. And you follow the six R's. The six R's include the eight fold path. The six R's include everything. When you're practicing Loving-Kindness, you practice radiating Loving-Kindness, so you're compassionate. So you're six R-ing with Loving-Kindness. And that means that you're exactly following the path of Dhamma. You don't say anything that's not complimentary. You say things that are pleasing. You don't cause rifts to arise; you cause harmony to arise, by following the ~

MN: he should be honored for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his renown. This too is the character of a true man.

8. "Moreover, an untrue man who gains robes, almsfood, resting places, and requisites of medicine considers thus: 'I gain robes, almsfood, resting places, and requisites of medicine; but these other monks do not gain these things.' So he lauds himself and disparages others because of gain. This too is the character of an untrue man.

"But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of gain that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone has no gain, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma, he should be honoured for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of gain. This too is the character of a true man.

Monks, even in a country where they're not used to, practicing generosity like they do in Asia, if you keep your rules of discipline good, you're never without. You always have food. You always have medicine. You always have robes. And this is pretty amazing. In, in this country, nobody knows how to make robes. But people make me robes. Ah lot of people, like the idea of a monk coming and staying at their house for one or two days. They like the idea of feeding the monks, and helping them in whatever way they can. And this is very unusual kind of behavior in this country. I have a lot of robes. People give me robes when I go to different temples. You share Dhamma with people and they very much appreciate it. And then they want to give and support you in that way. So even though I'm in a country that where people don't understand generosity very well, you keep your precepts reasonably well and, all of these things will happen. And if somebody finds out I like something, I get inundated with it, like chocolate. People find out I like chocolate, all of a sudden I got chocolate coming out my ears. But now I don't eat chocolate

anymore so it's ah starting to disappear a bit, much to (Laughs)  
amazement of, of people that I was giving the chocolate to. (Laughs)

Repeats text: ("But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of gain that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone has no gain, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma, he should be honored for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of gain. This too is the character of a true man.)

One of the things that happens for monks, when they go to visit another monastery, if they like you they always wind up giving you things, and, when we went to Chicago, we had... We started out with a reasonably empty truck. And when we got back, we had a full truck. We had all kinds of things. Many sets of robes. Bowls. Requisites that, that monks need.

S: ~ rice?

BV: Much rice. Medicine. Food. All kinds of things that, that are necessary, to continue. We had a truck load. And I mean that was such a truck load that you couldn't see out the rearview mirror. I think, that, (Sighs) Lady Khema gets quite amazed (Laughs) How much stuff ~~

SK: ~~ California ~~

BV: Well we left it there because, we didn't have room to carry it. (Laughs)

SK Well ~

Both: ~

BV: It was a standing Buddha.

SK: ~~~

BV: And, a, I told ah I I'm rather familiar with the Burmese standing Buddha, and U. Silananda told me ah how to recognize certain things about the Buddha, and I said : "I think that this was made around 1890." So he took a picture of it and he sent it to an appraiser. And the appraiser said: "Yes, it was made in 1890 and it's worth, ah...

SK: ~ seven thousand ~

BV: Seven thousand dollars? Six thousand dollars? Something like that.

SK: ~

BV: Well, they did, but now they got two. (Laughs) Ah, the, the picture of the Buddha there, was a picture that I gave them, small photograph, of, this particular Buddha. This particular Buddha is at the Shwedagon Pagoda, and it's not where everybody can see it. You got to go up the stairway to another level and, very powerful feeling. It's called the Buddha with the alive eyes. And sometimes with different Buddhas, if you sit down and start looking at them, they start moving around and doing all kinds of amazing things.

Anyway.

MN: 9-20. "Moreover, an untrue man who is learned...who is expert in the Discipline... who is a preacher of the Dhamma...who is a forest dweller...who is a refuse-rag wearer...an alms-food eater...a tree-root dweller... a charnel-ground dweller...an open-air dweller...

BV: An open-air dweller, that's probably the hardest practice because you don't ever go in the shade. And what you do is you get a stick, and you take your robe and you make a little tent, and then you sit in, in tent

MN: a continual sitter...an any-bed user...a one-session eater considers thus: 'I am a one-session eater; but these other monks are

not one-session eaters." So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his being a one-session eater. This too is the character of an untrue man.

"But a true man considers thus: 'It is not because of being a one-session eater that states of greed, hatred, or delusion are destroyed. Even though someone may not be a one-session eater, yet if he has entered upon the way that accords with the Dhamma, entered upon the proper way, and conducts himself according to the Dhamma, he should be honored for that, he should be praised for that.' So, putting the practice of the way first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his being a one-session eater. This too is the character of a true man.

BV: Now there are some practices, and I told you about Taungpulu Sayadaw. When he first became, a monk, he made the determination that he was going to be a three posture monk, and he never laid down, for seventy years. More than seventy years. When was that? He died when he was ninety six, or ninety five, something like that, so seventy five years. That is a difficult practice. There are three levels to that practice. First level is, never leaning against anything. So you sit in meditation, and you keep your back straight, and you doze off for half an hour or forty minutes and if, when you get used to doing it, very difficult practice, and you get used to doing it. You wind up having so much energy, you can hardly stand it. It gives you energy. The next level is, to lean against a wall. And the next level is to sit in a chair. So all of these different things that I was talking about, the alms-food eater, the tree-root dweller, they they all have three different levels of, difficulty. But, if a monk is doing one of these kind of practices, he very reluctantly will tell anyone else, even another monk that, that's what he's doing, because other people start to make a big deal out of this, and, you can become famous because of it, and it's, that's not why you're doing it. You're doing it for a particular reason. Learning how to be content with little. Learning the quantity of food that you need every day and don't overeat. All of these different kinds of things. I they're, they're personal choices. And not to be... You don't, say: "Well I do this and this monk doesn't do that, so I'm better than he is." No. You, you keep it and don't don't indulge in those kind of thoughts at all. And,

when you do that, you always gain some kind of benefit. Eating once a day your body stays reasonably healthy. You eat breakfast and you eat lunch, and I, I've seen some places where, they would have rice gruel, right after they got up in the morning, and then they would go out on alms round and they would bring the food in and then they would have breakfast, and a couple of hours later they would eat lunch. They were doing three meals. But they were, at a monastery where they were using a lot of mental development. They were memorizing suttas and they were always out loud; they were reciting. One of the nosiest monasteries I've ever been in. That's why the Burmese, when they get together they, they recite they way they learned it, but they go to another monastery, and they got a different tune and they got a different speed of doing it, but everybody does it at the same time, so it sounds like a dull roar of, mumbles. But everybody finishes at the same time. (Laughs) It's not like the Thai. The Thai, they rather insist that everybody does it the same way, at the same speed. But doing that, and, and reciting in that way develops your concentration so that it's very good so that hearing somebody else they might be doing the same sutta, but they're doing it a little different way, it doesn't distract you. And I, I've also seen that, there can be an awful lot of pride with people that are doing that. But it only happens for a little while.

MN: 21. "Moreover, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, an untrue man enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. He considers thus: 'I have gained the attainment of the first jhāna; but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the first jhāna.' So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his attainment of the first jhāna. This too is the character of an untrue man.

BV: And that seems to happen an awful lot. Especially when people are practicing one-pointed concentration. Because it is difficult to get one-pointed concentration. It is. Takes a long time. And once you do it, you start thinking that you're pretty hot stuff. Now here, I don't make a big deal out of your getting: "Ah you got into the first jhāna!" Yeah I don't care about that. I don't even tell you what jhāna you're

in. Because it's not important. What's important is what, you're going through. And how you're seeing what you're going through. So I kind of down play the jhānas. And I've had monks complain to me that I trivialize the jhānas. But it's better to trivialize than it is to have this kind of, pride that comes up. And then it gets into: "I know and you don't know." And, ah, that's, that's just nonsense stuff and that's extremely unwholesome, so I, I try ta stay away from that as best I can.

MN: "But a true man considers thus: 'Non-identification even with the attainment of the first jhāna has been declared by the Blessed One; for in whatever way they conceive, the fact is ever other than that. So, putting non-identification first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his attainment of the first jhāna. This too is the character of a true man.

BV: And there's always at, meditation centers there's always speculation: "Well, he's been here this long, he must have at least, this attainment or that attainment.

S: ~

BV: It's all speculation, and, and that one rule, for monks, is that monks are not supposed to falsely, declare that they have some jhāna or other if they don't. And people take that to mean you're never supposed to talk about your attainments. But monks talk about what their experience in meditation is with each other all the time. No big deal. It's just that it's got to be truthful. That's all. And it doesn't stop you from speaking among yourselves about what your practice in meditation is. Right? So, I, don't discourage talk, on a retreat. But I really want you to when you're talking talk more about Dhamma than about chit chat, or stories. That way you keep your mind, well you, you're learning from each other, that way. I had this experience. If you hear somebody else, describe an experience that you had, then your confidence really starts to get good. "Ah, yeah, we must be doing it right because we did it this. We both did our own practice, and there it is . That's what the experience is.

MN: 22-24. "Moreover, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, an untrue man enters upon and abides in the second jhāna...With the fading away as well of rapture...he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna...With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna... "Moreover, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of

BV: Nope, that's not right. Bhante.

BJ: ~

BV: This particular sentence, that starts talking about infinite, ah, space. It describes it in the, in the translation: "the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact". That doesn't seem right. See, you still have contact, so I don't see how the disappearance of sensory impact can, can occur.

BJ: ~

BV: And that's not right. Because if there is contact, there's still feeling. Unless, you're practicing one-pointed concentration. What does it say with the Pali?

BJ: ~

BV: I can touch you, when you are in the infinite space and you will recognize that I touched you.

S: ~

BV: That's why I'm saying that this particular thing, this, ah, there's something not right here, with this description.

BJ: ~

BV: But it's not according to reality.

BJ: (Laughs)

BV: Unless, you're practicing one-pointed concentration. So what I'm suggesting is whoever did this in the Pali, they went according to their own experience of one-pointed concentration instead of the experience of, tranquility, vipassanā.

BJ: (Laugh)

BV: A difficult one. Because this is a set formula it goes through all of the, the suttas this way talks about jhāna, about the higher jhānas. Anyway, we'll have to let that go again first, till the next time.  
(Laughs)

Ok, and it goes back to (sigh) ah-

MN: {...}

enters upon and abides in the base of infinite space...

(partly fills out ellipsis)

BV: And then it goes back and talks about what a true man is; it's somebody that doesn't do that. Stay humble, that's the, that's the whole, point of doing ~. And, not necessarily talk about it with a lot of other people. Even among monks. Ah, they'll talk about some of the lower attainments, but they won't talk much about the ah higher attainments.

MN: 26. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite,' an untrue man enters upon and abides in the base of infinite consciousness...

BV: So what it's talking about is going through all of the arupa jhānas and, always, thinking you're hot stuff. And nobody else is as good. One of the things that ah seems to happen a fair amount at least in Thailand, is that a monk will decide that he wants to sit for a long period of time, and he might sit for three days or four days like that. And he'll sit with his legs crossed, but he might not necessarily be

meditating. And he's still, ah, going to the bathroom. He's not eating but he's still, he might take water occasionally, something like that. In Burma, when they decide to sit like that, they don't do that. There's no moving around at all. There's just sitting in that, whatever state they can get into. And, a lot of the monks in Thailand are doing one-pointed concentration, and when they get into the realm of nothingness, then they start developing some psychic abilities. And, because they have an attendant, that is they, they wipe them down, and cool cloth and that sort of thing, while they're sitting for so long, everybody knows about it as soon as they get done. And that person all of a sudden gets on a pedestal. But a lot of the ah, in in Burma there's not that much of that sort of thing happening. So. A awful lot of monks, they start thinking that they're pretty major people and they, they should be, they should be respected, because they sat for three or four days without, uncrossing their legs, and that's that's a major feat, and don't get me wrong; that's really hard. But what are they doing with their mind really? You know what I mean? Ah, the only way you can tell is by spending time with them. And there's the desire especially in Asia to have somebody that's a very advanced meditator all of a sudden become an arahat, and, that that monk will like Taungpulu, they were calling him an arahat for years and years and Taungpulu Sayadaw finally said: "I took a bodhisatta vow when I became a monk." That means he can't be an arahat. Because he renounced the bodhisatta or he he took the bodhisatta vow. So. There's an awful lot of speculation and hopes and dreams that there's still arahats around and I'm sure that there are, but you could, the only way you can tell about being around ah somebody that is an arahat is by living with them for a long period of time, and seeing how they act with, every situation. And no. I am not an arahat. Let's just get that out of the way. I don't pretend to be: I am not.

Ok-

MN:27. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing,' an untrue man enters upon and abides in the base of nothingness..."

BV: - and then he thinks he's hot stuff.

Now my students, when they start getting into these very deep states, if I hear of them, trying to, build themselves up and look down on everybody else, I come down on them pretty hard. That's not the right kind of behavior. And as a result. They keep progressing in their practice. And they don't, generally don't stop there, they're it's so interesting they want to keep going. But I try to discourage pride, a lot. Because it's, it's a one way street, ~ dead end. No sense in that.

MN: 28. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, an untrue man enters upon and abides in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. He considers thus: 'I have gained the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.' So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This too is the character of an untrue man.

"But a true man considers thus: 'Non-identification even with the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception has been declared by the Blessed One;

BV: And that's what I try to get everybody to really, really see. It's just a stage that you're going through. That's all.

MN: for in whatever way they conceive, the fact is ever other than that.

BV: In other words, it's it's different talking about the state than it is the actual experience.

MN: So, putting non-identification first, he neither lauds himself nor disparages others because of his attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This too is the character of a true man.

29. "Moreover, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a true man enters upon and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling. And his taints are destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: Got it? Know how it happens?

MN: This monk does not conceive anything, he does not conceive in regard to anything, he does not conceive in any way."

BV: There is no pride.

S: ~

BV: No pride. No mada.

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

BV: So, the whole point of doing the meditation is not to try to build yourself up because you think you're doing pretty well and you can get into this jhāna or that jhāna. They're just levels of understanding. And as you get deeper it gets more and more interesting, so there's no sense in, trying to build yourself up because you can see something that somebody else can't. They can still have insights. Somebody in the lower jhānas can still have insights that will blow your mind, even though you're in the higher jhānas. So, the idea of, what a true, a true person, is, is someone that practices not identifying and taking personally whatever arises in the meditation. Seeing it for what it is. It's only this. It's only that. That's all it is. And so far I've been reasonably lucky, with the people that I teach, that they, they take that, kind of teaching to heart. I'm incredibly lucky with the people that come and want to practice, because, almost everybody is really serious about, wanting to know how to let go of the suffering. "Now, I've had enough. I don't need any more of this. What's the way out? So. What's the way out? Can you smile? Can you laugh? Do it a lot. Don't take yourself personally. Don't take what

somebody else says personally. It's ok to have fun. Uh o, I'm really going off the deep end. Life is dukkha. (Laughs) It's ok to have fun. It's ok to smile. It's ok to laugh. Please do it as much as you can remember. And it doesn't matter if you sit in meditation or not. Have fun. That's the key. And the more you can have fun, the lighter your mind becomes. The more alert you become to how you cause yourself pain. When you become alert to that, then you go: "I don't need to do that. Why am I doing that to myself?" Let it go. That's the whole point of the meditation. And you got to do it all the time. And the forgiveness is a major key in this. Really is. Ok, anybody have any questions? (Sighs)

S: ~~ you're saying be humble.

BV: Yeah. Be huh, be humble and have fun. Don't take any of this stuff so heavily, I mean, I, I know monks that, that they really get into their strut mode. "Now I, can, I have attained this, I'm something."

S: ~

BV: Some people are absolutely ridiculous about that sort of thing, but others are, ah they just, build up in their pride and their, their, they think that what they're doing is exactly the correct way, whether it matches what the suttas say or not. And that's going to happen no matter what, so, all we can do is say: "Um, ok. Ah that that's that's for you, if that's what you want to do it that way, you can do it that way." And it's ok. I prefer to follow the way the Buddha says it. And that's ok.

Let's share some merit then.

May suffering ones, be suffering free  
And the fear struck, fearless be  
May the grieving shed all grief  
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired

For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth  
Devas and nagas of mighty power  
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Lord Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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