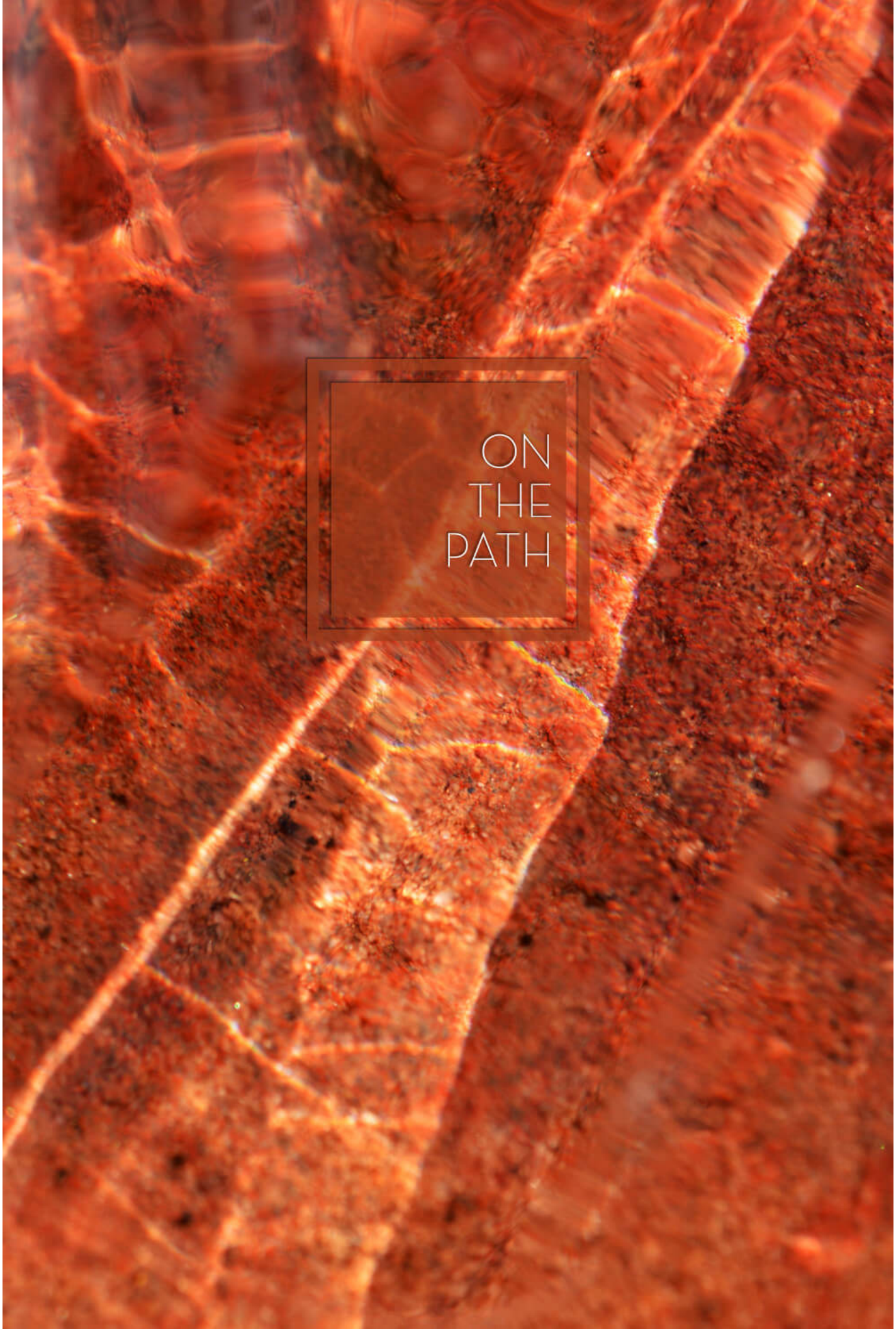
ON
THE
PATH

# *On the Path*

AN ANTHOLOGY

ON THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

DRAWN FROM THE PĀLI CANON

*Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu*

*(Geoffrey DeGraff)*

*"These eight dhammas, Nandiya, when developed & pursued, go to unbinding, have unbinding as their final end & consummation. Which eight? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration." — SN 45:10*

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# *Acknowledgements*

This book has been several years in the making. It began as a set of readings for a handful of people who were taking an introductory course on the Pāli Canon, and who asked me to provide extra readings to supplement what they were receiving from the teachers in charge of the course. From there, it grew into a much larger selection of readings for the bi-monthly study course that we provide here at the monastery. Only recently did I find the time to make the selection even more comprehensive and to provide introductory explanations. My aim is to provide a well-rounded picture of the noble eightfold path for people who are interested in taking guidance from the earliest extant records of the Buddha's teachings on how to reach the end of suffering and stress.

I could not have completed this book without the help of many individuals. In addition to the monks here at the monastery, I would like to thank Ven. Atulo Bhikkhu, Anita Basu, Michael Barber, Geoffrey Galik, Addie Onsanit, Nathaniel Osgood, Dale Schultz, and Isabella Trauttmansdorff for their valuable suggestions for improving the manuscript. Isabella Trauttmansdorff also provided the index. I would also like to thank all those who read earlier incarnations of the reading selections for their questions and comments, which helped to sharpen the focus of the explanations offered here.

Any mistakes, of course—in either the translations or the explanations—are my own responsibility.

*Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu*

METTA FOREST MONASTERY
MAY, 2017

INTRODUCTION

# *The Fire Escape*

The Buddha's teachings are like the instructions posted on a hotel room door, telling you what to do when the hotel's on fire:

— Heed the fire alarm. This corresponds to the Buddha's teachings on *saṁvega*, the sense that you're enmeshed in a dangerous situation and want to find a way out.

— Realize that your conduct will mean the difference between life and death. This corresponds to heedfulness, the attitude underlying all skillful behavior.

— Read the map, posted on the door, for finding the closest fire escape. This corresponds to right view.

— Make up your mind to follow the map. This corresponds to right resolve.

— Don't abuse any of the other people in the hotel as you try to make your escape. Don't lie to them about the escape route, don't claw your way over them, and don't cheat them out of their belongings. This corresponds to right speech, right action, and right livelihood.

— Do your best to follow the instructions on the map, and resist the temptation to stay in the comfort of your room or to wander down the wrong corridors. This corresponds to right effort.

— Keep the map in mind at all times, and check your efforts to make sure that they're in line with it. This corresponds to right mindfulness.

— Keep calm and focused, so that your emotions don't prevent you from being clearly aware of what you're doing and what needs to be done. This corresponds to right concentration.

This analogy, of course, is far from perfect. After all, in the actual practice of the Buddha's teachings, the fire is already constantly burning inside your own mind—in the form of the fires of passion, aversion, delusion, and suffering—and the escape from these fires lies, not in leaving your mind, but in going deeper into the mind to a dimension, nibbāna, where fire can't reach. Also, because both the fire and the escape lie within you, you can't pull other people to safety. The most you can do for them is to tell or show them the way to practice, which they will have to manage for themselves.

But still, the above analogy is useful for highlighting a number of important features of the Buddha's practice.

To begin with, the practice *is* essentially a practice, and not a theory to be idly discussed. Even the theoretical or philosophical aspects of the Buddha's teachings are there to be used as tools in aiding in the escape from all suffering and stress. It's because of this fact that the Buddha's primary metaphor for his teachings was a path: the noble eightfold path, composed of all the "right" factors mentioned above. It's also why right view, the theory behind the path, is part of the path, and doesn't stand outside it.

Also, because right view serves as a guide to action, it doesn't present a full picture of reality, just as a fire-escape map posted on a hotel door doesn't give complete information about the construction of the hotel. If it did, you'd have trouble figuring out which parts of the map would be useful in the event of a fire. That, in turn, would actually prevent you from making a quick escape. It's for this reason that right view leaves unanswered many questions about the cosmos and the self, and directs your attention to what needs to be *done* to escape from the ravages of suffering.

At the same time, right view labels some attitudes about suffering and its end as definitely wrong, just as certain wrong attitudes about fires and escapes would leave you trapped in a burning hotel. Suppose, for instance, that you found messages posted on the hotel room door saying that, in the case of a fire, there is no escape, or that you should wait in your room until a heavenly being saved you, that the fire won't burn you if you accept and embrace it, or maybe fire isn't really fire. You'd be wise to distrust those messages, even if they were signed by the hotel management. In the same way, if you're heedful of the dangers of the fires of the mind, you'd be wise not to fall for messages—even within the Buddhist tradition—that are at

odds with the message that it is possible to escape from the suffering that the mind creates for itself, that you can reach this escape through your own efforts, and that it's the most worthwhile thing you can do in life.

Unfortunately, we live in a time when, in the Buddha's words, the concept of True Dhamma has disappeared (SN 16:13). This doesn't mean that the True Dhamma—i.e., a Dhamma teaching a genuine escape from the fires of the mind—isn't available, simply that so many mutually exclusive versions of the Dhamma have arisen over the centuries, each claiming to be true, that it's impossible to point to any one version of the Dhamma that everyone will agree to be true. Still, there is only one version of the Dhamma that is fully in accordance with the principle that the fires of suffering are real, that escape from them is possible, and that you can achieve this escape for yourself. That's the version available in the suttas—discourses—of the Pāli Canon, along with whatever teachings are in accordance with the suttas.

Here again, though, there are many disagreements on what the suttas say, largely because very few people have read them carefully and understood their idiom. This is why I have collected this anthology of passages dealing with the factors of the noble eightfold path, drawn from the suttas and Vinaya—disciplinary rules—of the Pāli Canon, so that you can read the Canon's teachings on these topics for yourself. I have also provided introductions to the readings as an aid in comprehending the idiom in which the suttas are written, so that you can enter into the mindset of the compilers of the suttas and gain an intuitive feel for what they're getting at.

The title of this book, *On the Path*, can be taken in two ways, and both ways are relevant here: (1) This book is *about* the path and (2) it's for people who would like to *be* on the path to the end of suffering. These two aspects of the book correspond to the Buddha's teaching that there are two sources for the arising of right view: the voice of another and appropriate attention. The voice of another—and this would include written as well as spoken words—is the external source. Appropriate attention—your ability to frame your questions about the path in terms that apply specifically to solve the problem of suffering and stress, and not to any other purpose—is the internal source.

As the reader of this book, you have to supply the internal source if you're to get the most out of it. As the compiler, I've tried to be as faithful as possible in selecting and translating the passages so that they'll be of most use as the "voice of another." At the same time, because I am assuming appropriate attention on your part, I have focused the introductory material on practical issues, and have avoided the many academic controversies that have accreted on the topic of the noble eightfold path over the centuries.

Still, not all the controversies about the factors of the path are purely academic. Some have a practical bearing, and there is no getting around the need to take positions on them in your practice of the path. Although I have, by and large, avoided getting involved in polemics in the introductions to the various chapters, I would like to state at the outset the positions I have taken with regard to these practical controversies, based both on my training and on what I have found in the suttas. Some of these positions may appear to belabor the obvious, but many popular interpretations have lost sight of the obvious, so it's necessary to reaffirm that those obvious points are true.

First, with regard to the path as a whole:

• *The path is a path.* In other words, (1) it's not the goal and (2) it's not meant to lead to any of its own factors. Instead, it's meant to lead someplace beyond the path. Although some interpreters have stated that the path leads to right view or right mindfulness, in actuality—when we regard these factors in terms of the famous raft analogy (§§13–14)—they are part of the raft, and not the shore that we're using the raft to reach. And once we reach the shore, we don't pick up the twigs and branches of right view and right mindfulness to carry them on our head.

• *The path is an eightfold path.* In other words, all eight factors of the path are necessary for it to yield its intended results. This observation applies specifically to the factor of right concentration. There are interpreters who maintain that the Buddha actually taught two alternative paths—a sixfold path, which includes right mindfulness but not right effort and right concentration—and a sevenfold path, which includes right effort and right concentration but not right mindfulness. This interpretation is based on a definition of right mindfulness that is totally separate from and at odds with right effort and right concentration, but this definition has no

basis in the suttas, and can be forced on the suttas only by squeezing them out of shape. As we will see, the suttas actually teach right concentration in a way that includes right mindfulness, and right mindfulness in a way that includes right effort. In this way, the factors of the path are mutually penetrating and mutually reinforcing. In fact, they cannot complete their work unless all eight factors mature together.

• *The path is a noble path.* In the Buddha's terms, this means that it leads to a goal that is unfabricated, and therefore free from change—with no aging, illness, or death. Because the path is fabricated, the goal is not simply different from the path, it is *radically* different—so different that the final act of the path, before reaching the goal, is to abandon the path along with everything else. Although some skills developed along the path remain for those who have completed the path—their mindfulness, for instance, is constant—the calm, the pleasure, the equanimity, and even the consciousness present in the goal are radically separate from the calm, pleasure, equanimity, and consciousness developed on the path.

As for the controversies around the individual factors of the path, these tend to focus on three of the factors: right view, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The positions I have adopted on these factors are as follows:

• *Right view is defined in terms of the four noble truths,* rather than in terms of the three characteristics of inconstancy, stress, and not-self. This point would appear to be obvious when you look at the standard definition of right view, but all too often the three characteristics, interpreted as metaphysical principles, are taken as the underlying framework for right view, with the four noble truths squeezed to fit into that framework. In other words, the starting assumption is that all things are impermanent and stressful, and that therefore there's no permanent, separate self. Suffering is caused by the craving and clinging that arise when the "truth" of no self isn't realized, because all suffering comes from clinging to things that will change. However, when this "truth" *is* realized, the mind will understand that there's nothing lasting to cling to, and so—growing equanimous to all things—will stop suffering.

However, as we will see, even though the Buddha often discussed the suffering that comes from clinging to inconstant things (§123), he never

said that clinging entails suffering *only* when focused on things that are inconstant. In MN 52 and AN 9:36 (§312), for instance, he notes that it's possible to cling to the unfabricated, and that that particular clinging has to be abandoned for suffering to truly end. In other words, the suffering lies in the activity of the clinging and not in the inconstancy of the object clung to. This may seem like a subtle point, relevant only to the highest levels of the practice, but it's actually relevant to the beginning levels as well.

To begin with, the practice as a whole relies on the understanding that the problem lies not with the mind's objects, but with the mind's activities in relation to its objects. To focus on the question of when clinging is a worthwhile thing to *do*, rather than on the metaphysical status of what objects *are*, helps to keep this principle always in mind.

Also, if you're alert to the fact that suffering comes from clinging more directly than from any change in the object clung to, then when you encounter anything in the practice that seems to be unchanging—such as a state of oneness or all-pervasive luminosity—you're forewarned about the danger of clinging to it. In this way, you're less likely to fall for any premature assumptions about having reached awakening, and you're equipped to work your way free from those assumptions before they do harm.

Finally, by keeping the focus on the suffering inherent in all clinging, you can keep your practice from getting sidetracked into fruitless metaphysical arguments. Here it's important to note that the Buddha never used the term "characteristics" to describe inconstancy, stress, and not-self. Instead, he termed them "perceptions" and taught that they be applied strategically for the purpose of inducing dispassion, when and where needed, in line with the duties of the four noble truths. Rather than being metaphysical positions—for example, that there is no self—these perceptions are tools for comprehending suffering and stress, abandoning their cause, and developing the path so as to realize the cessation of suffering. At different stages of the path, they have to be applied selectively. Only at the final stage are they applied to all objects. Then, when the goal is reached, they—as perceptions—have to be abandoned, too.

By making the four noble truths the framework of right view, and having the three perceptions function strategically within that framework, the Buddha was able to make this point clear. In this way, he was also able

to avoid the "thicket of views" that grows when getting involved in the question of who or what lies behind sensory input, or whether or not there is a self (§229; SN 12:35; SN 44:10).

• *Right mindfulness is a faculty of the active memory,* and not a practice of open, non-reactive, radical acceptance of experiences as they arise and pass away of their own accord in the present moment. Some proponents of mindfulness as non-reactive acceptance have acknowledged that the Buddha defined mindfulness as a faculty of the memory, but then claim that he actually used the term in an entirely different sense—as bare attention, or non-reactive acceptance—when describing mindfulness practice. However, when we examine his instructions for mindfulness practice in context, we find that the function of right mindfulness throughout the practice is to remember the right principles to apply in shaping the present moment. In fact, instead of simply allowing things to arise and pass away, one of the prime duties of right mindfulness is to remember to *make* skillful dhammas (actions, events, mental qualities) arise and to *keep* them from passing away, at the same time making unskillful dhammas pass away and preventing them from arising again (§243). Acceptance plays a role in mindfulness practice only in the preliminary sense of being truthful to yourself about what's actually arising in your awareness so that you can be ardent most effectively in shaping the present moment in the most skillful way.

• *Right concentration consists of the four jhānas (states of mental absorption), which are states of settled, full-body awareness.* These jhānas are one-pointed in the sense that the mind is gathered around a single object or theme, but not in the sense that the mind is reduced to a single point of awareness, in which all other awareness—of the body, of the senses, and of thoughts—is blotted out. Many of the misunderstandings around jhāna come from the fact that the mind *can* be reduced to a single point of awareness, and from the subsequent assumption that that single point is what "jhāna" must mean. This assumption is then supported by translating a Pāli term used to describe concentration—*ek'aggatā*—as "one-pointedness." However, the part of this compound translated as "point"—*agga*—can also mean "gathering place." When viewed in the context of the similes for describing the jhānas, all of which emphasize a full-body awareness, it's obvious that *agga* here means "gathering place," and not "point."

Once we understand this term, we can see that the suttas' teachings on jhāna are clear and consistent: When using the words "body" and "directed thought" to describe jhāna, for example, the suttas are not engaging in an esoteric language game where "body" means "not-body," and "thought" means "not-thought." At the same time, the compilers were not blind to their own language when stating that directed thought and ekaggatā can coexist in the mind (§289).

A correct understanding of jhāna is crucial to the practice because it supports the premise stated above: that the path is an eightfold path, with right mindfulness and right concentration serving mutually supportive and interpenetrating roles. If mindfulness were an open, accepting awareness, and concentration an awareness reduced to one point, with no consciousness of anything outside the point, the two factors could not be practiced at the same time. In fact, they would be incompatible. But when we define the terms in line with their usage in the Pāli suttas, they are not only compatible, but also mutually reinforcing.

And it's because all the factors of the path are mutually reinforcing that they can deliver their goal. This fact is so important that it's the organizing principle of the discussions in this book: Even though the factors of the path are given in linear order, with each factor building on the one(s) before it, in practice the factors support not only the ones succeeding them in the list but also the ones preceding them. In particular, right view, the first factor on the path, informs all of the following factors, but it can develop from its mundane through its transcendent and onto its final level only when the other factors are put into practice. On their own, the individual factors can lead to pleasant results within the confines of the cycle of birth, aging, illness, and death, but they can't take you beyond the fires of the mind. Only when they work together can they lead beyond all fires: to the noble goal of total release from all suffering and stress.

*How to read this book*

If you are studying this book as part of a study group, I would suggest that you read each chapter in full, going through the sutta passages after reading the introduction to the chapter. If you are reading this book on your own, though, I would suggest reading the introductions for all ten chapters before delving into any of the sutta passages. That way you will have a

complete overview to inform your understanding of what the passages mean and how they connect with one another.

To keep this book from becoming unwieldy, I have had to keep the discussions terse, sometimes reducing explanations to the bare bones of their basic points. If you find the terseness daunting, you may first want to read a more introductory book on the topic, such as *The Noble Eightfold Path*, which is a collection of some of my Dhamma talks on the path-factors. If, however, you would like to pursue in greater depth any of the topics raised in the discussions here, you can consult the books listed in the appendix of suggested readings at the back of the book.

CHAPTER ONE

# *A Framework for the Frame*

The noble eightfold path was the first teaching the Buddha gave to his first disciples, and the prime teaching he gave to his last. In this way, it provides the frame for all his other teachings, not only in temporal terms, but also in terms of how those teachings should be understood. All of his teachings—including such topics as dependent co-arising, not-self, compassion, and emptiness—find their true meaning in terms of how they fit into the factors of the noble eightfold path. So an understanding of the noble eightfold path is essential to understanding everything else the Buddha taught.

The Buddha had several reasons for choosing the metaphor of a path to frame his teachings. The Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) contrasts his teachings with those of six of his contemporaries, and the contrast gives a sense of what the image of "path" implies. The other teachings fall into three sorts: four presenting maps of reality that deny the power of human choice, one focusing on the person of the teacher, and one providing a strategy of agnosticism for avoiding the pitfalls of debate. King Ajātasattu, who in this sutta is describing these teachings to the Buddha, points out that none of them offer any fruit—i.e., any visible benefit to those who adopt them.

This is precisely where they differ from the noble eightfold path. Repeatedly in the Canon, the concept of "path" is paired with "fruit": the rewards that come from following the path. Similarly, the Dhamma—one of the Buddha's names for his teachings—is often paired with *"attha,"* which carries several related meanings, such as "goal," "benefit," and "meaning." The implication here is that the Buddha's teachings are worthwhile because they are a means to a beneficial goal—and that they reveal their true meaning only when that goal is attained. The Buddha taught these teachings so that his listeners would put them into action and reap the fruit

for themselves. This point is reinforced by other metaphors that he and his disciples used to describe his teachings: a vehicle, a set of relay chariots, a raft to the further shore. The path is a means to an end, and finds its meaning and value in leading to an end that's worthwhile.

Now, to follow a path, you need a map. And although the Buddha didn't attempt to provide a map to all of reality, he did sketch enough of a map so that people could negotiate the path all the way to its goal. It's important to note, though, that the maps he provided—the various levels of right view—are part of the path itself. There is no sense in his teachings that theory is separate from practice. After all, theory is a result of the *act* of theorizing, and its maps can lead people to act on them: to adopt them as guides to action. Right theory is a part of right practice, in that properly understanding the purpose of the path and the means for achieving that purpose is a necessary step in actually reaching its end. And because the path is a series of actions inspired by right view, one of the primary functions of right view is to explain the nature of action in such a way that shows how a path of practice is possible and how to choose which path is the best to follow.

In particular, the map of right view has to explain causality to show how causes and effects work on the path, and how the path leads to its fruit. For the purpose of explaining the path, it has to show that experience is not totally determined by past actions or by outside sources, or that it's totally arbitrary. It also has to show *how* actions have consequences, *which* actions have the best consequences, and *how far* those consequences can extend. Otherwise, the idea of teaching a path would make no sense. If actions were totally determined, no listener could choose to follow the path. If actions had no results, the concept of a path of action leading anyplace would be nonsense. If there were no way to say that the results of one action would be better than another, or what those consequences might be, there would be no grounds for judging one path to be better than other alternatives. This is why the Buddha's teachings on causality, *kamma* (action), rebirth, the possible worlds into which one might be reborn, and the possibility of going beyond rebirth are all central to right view, in that they explain how a path of action can be chosen and lead to the best possible fruit.

Also, because the act of holding right view is itself an action, right view has to explain itself: how it is to be acquired and how it is to be developed

so as to reach the goal toward which it aims. The teaching of right view also has to explain the correct way of holding to right view so as not to get in the way of the rest of the path. This self-reflexive nature of right view is one of its distinctive qualities, and has important practical consequences that will become clear in the course of this book.

All correct descriptions of the path are instances of right view, and to convey them correctly is an exercise in right speech, another factor of the path. But there is more to the path than that. This means that the actual path is not encompassed in the words describing it. Instead, it consists of all the actions inspired by right view. Because these actions give rise to knowledge of a personal and individual sort, something not contained in the words of the texts, the actual knowledge acquired in the course of the path augments right view in a personal way. In fact, as we will see, this personal knowledge is what refines right view and brings it to its culmination.

Because right view is a part of the path, it, too, counts as a means, and not a goal. Here again, it's like a map: Maps are not goals to which you aim. Instead, they point beyond themselves. The purpose of the path is not to confirm or to arrive at right view. Instead, the path includes right view as one of its factors for the purpose of arriving at a goal that—although it harmonizes with right view—goes considerably beyond right view and all the other factors of the path. In this way, all the factors of the path, including right view, are not simply actions. They are also strategies that have to be employed with a sensitivity to context. One of the functions of right view is to explain not only *how* but also *in which contexts* it and all the other strategies of the path are to be adopted, together with how and in which contexts they are to be skillfully abandoned. The factors of the path are right in that they lead to a worthwhile goal that transcends them.

In depicting his teachings as a path, the Buddha was not simply indulging in a personal preference. In his understanding of the nature of conscious experience, *all* living beings are following paths of one sort or another, even if they don't realize it, in that their actions are leading to results (§3). This means that the act of teaching is also part of a path leading to a particular destination, even if the teachers are not fully aware of where the act of teaching is leading them or their listeners. One of the Buddha's claims to authority is that he is so fully acquainted with the

territory of action that he knows where various courses of action—and this includes the act of giving or adopting a teaching—will lead.

Thus, in his eyes, every teaching should be judged in terms of what end is served in the act of teaching it or adopting it. This means that a teaching is not to be judged simply in terms of how reasonable it is or what evidence can be cited to prove it. It's to be judged as an action, and evaluated as to what sort of actions it inspires—including the way it is held—and the results that those actions produce.

This is because experience at the six senses—the five physical senses and the mind—is *teleological*. In other words, each act or event of consciousness is directed toward an end, regardless of whether the individual engaged in sensory experience fully realizes it or not. Consciousness is also *active* and *intentional*—in other words, it doesn't simply react passively to stimuli. It actively seeks out stimuli and tries to shape them to its ends. Because sensory experience is active and proactive in these ways, it is a type of kamma.

The Buddha's term for the kammically purposeful and constructed nature of sensory experience is that it's *saṅkhata*, which can be translated as "fabricated," "constructed," or "put together." In this book, I will adopt the translation, "fabricated," but it should be understood in a way that includes the other possible translations as well. In other words, to say that an experience is fabricated or a fabrication *(saṅkhāra)* does not mean that it's bad or a pack of lies, simply that it's assembled with conscious intent from the raw material available to the mind.

The Buddha describes the process of fabrication in many ways in the Canon, most commonly in terms of the fabrication of five *khandhas*. "Khandha" can be translated as "heap," "mass," or—most commonly—"aggregate." The use of the term "aggregate" for *khandha* comes from a distinction, popular in eighteenth and nineteenth century European philosophy, between conglomerates of things that work together in an organic unity—called "systems"—and other types of conglomerates that are no more than random collections of things, called "aggregates." Using "aggregate" to translate *khandha* conveys the useful point that these processes, which can seem to have an organic unity, are actually shaped by discrete choices and their results. Still, it's important to bear in mind that

the mind does shape the aggregates toward purposes, and those purposes can be more or less unified—a fact that makes a path of practice possible.

The five aggregates are:

- *form:* any physical phenomenon (although the Buddha's focus here is less on the physical object in itself, and more on the *experience* of the object; in terms of one's own body, the primary focus is on how the body is sensed from within);
- *feeling:* feeling-tones of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain;
- *perception:* the act of recognizing, mentally labeling, and identifying experiences;
- *fabrication:* the intentional shaping of experience;
- *consciousness:* awareness at the six senses.

There's something of an anomaly in that the term "fabrication" covers all five aggregates and yet is listed as one of the five. SN 22:79 (§120) helps to explain why: The mental act of fabrication shapes the actual experience of all physical and mental experiences in the dimensions of space and time. It chooses among the potentials for any of the aggregates made available by past actions, and turns them into the actual experience of those aggregates in the present. "Fabrication" as a name for one of the aggregates refers specifically to this mental process. As a term for all five aggregates, "fabrication" covers both the processes of fabrication and the fabricated phenomena—physical and mental—that result.

SN 22:79 also defines the aggregates in terms of verbs—even form "deforms"—making the point that these aggregates are processes and activities, rather than solid things.

The Buddha describes the origination of the aggregates—in other words, the causal factors that give rise to them—in two different ways. In one description (§116), the causal factors are these: The origination of form (in this case, the form of one's own body) is nutriment or food; the origination of feeling, perception, and fabrication is contact; and the origination of consciousness is name-&-form, a blanket term to cover the other four aggregates. At first glance, these factors would seem to be totally impersonal and operating without purpose: Nutriment and contact on their own, for instance, have no will to cause anything. However, nutriment on

its own cannot cause form. It has to be taken, i.e., you have to eat it. The origination of form is actually in the *act* of taking nutriment, as when you feed the body to sustain it. Similarly, when the first four aggregates are listed under the heading of name-&-form (§130), "fabrication" is divided into the sub-factors of intention and attention, which in turn influence contact, showing that the driving force behind these seemingly purposeless conditions is actually willed. It's shaped by which intentions you choose to act on—in §116 the Buddha defines fabrication as "intention"—and by which ways of paying attention you choose to apply. Each of these choices, in formal terms, is teleological: It has an aim.

This point is made clear in the second description of the origination of the aggregates (§281), in which each aggregate results from the acts of relishing, welcoming, and remaining fastened. This reflects the larger view of the fabrication of experience offered in other parts of the Canon, such as the statement in §9 that desire is the root of all phenomena, and in §10 that the mind is the forerunner of all phenomena. These facts, in turn, are shaped by the observation that all beings are driven by the need to feed, both physically and mentally (§112, SN 12:63.) The aggregates, in this analysis, have their origin in desire.

This, then, is the context for understanding the fabrication of the aggregates described in SN 22:79: Fabrication takes the potentials for the aggregates and shapes them "for the sake of" the functions that the activities of the aggregates can perform. That "for the sake of" aims at the pleasure that those activities can provide and on which the mind, when it assumes the identity of a "being," can feed (§111).

Yet, even though the larger context of fabrication emphasizes the willed nature of the aggregates, the more impersonal descriptions of these processes make two crucial and connected points:

1) The first is that once these processes are set in motion, they follow laws of their own over which the mind has little control. This means that fabrications, even though they are intentional, can have unintended consequences. And as the teaching on kamma and rebirth indicates, many of these consequences can last for a long, long time—so long that we often can't trace the results of an action back to their source, which is why we're often ignorant of how causality works. Even though desire is the root of all phenomena, anyone who is ignorant of the more impersonal patterns of

causality can wind up creating conditions that are anything but desirable. People can put themselves on the paths to the lower realms, not because they want to go to those realms, but because they don't know where they're going. They don't see that their search for pleasure from the aggregates in the short term involves actions that actually lead to long-term pain. The Canon illustrates this point with the stories of people who think that their means of livelihood will lead them to heaven but will actually lead them to hell (§§190–191).

2) Because the raw material for fabricating the aggregates comes from our past fabrication of aggregates, it is not entirely malleable to our will. We have to work within the limited range of which past actions are currently ripening, and this ripening raw material follows its own causal laws. In some cases, it provides us with opportunities to fashion the aggregates that will provide the pleasure for which we hunger; in others, it doesn't.

The Buddha's twofold analysis of the origination of the aggregates provides his formal explanation for the human predicament: We find ourselves in a place that we may or may not like, and where we cannot simply rest, because we need to feed, both physically and mentally. In response to our search for food, we find that some circumstances respond to our desires and others don't. We're also in the dark about the long-term results of our choices. From experience, we've learned that even when circumstances are responsive, they don't always yield the long-term results for which we might hope. We're not even sure which results come from which actions.

It's for this reason that the Buddha, when he had found a path of action that gave totally beneficial results, felt that it would be worth teaching to others, to help them get themselves out of this predicament.

To understand what this path might accomplish, and how it goes about accomplishing its aim, it's good to return to the Buddha's first and last teachings to see how they present the goal and methods of the path. Although the path itself provides the frame for understanding the rest of the Dhamma, the first and last teachings provide a framework for understanding the frame.

The first teaching, to the five brethren (§1), makes three major points about the noble eightfold path: It leads to the end of *dukkha* (suffering,

stress), it leads to *nibbāna* (unbinding), and it functions as a middle way. The last teaching, to Subhadda (§2), makes one major point about the path: It's not simply *a* path of practice leading to unbinding and the end of suffering. It's the only one.

We will discuss these points one by one, fleshing them out with information from other suttas in the Canon.

**The end of dukkha.** *Dukkha* is a term that can mean pain, suffering, and stress. In this book, I will use these terms interchangeably, depending on which seems most appropriate for the context.

When discussing the noble eightfold path, the Buddha focused most often on the fact that following it leads to the end of suffering. This point is so important in his teachings that he twice stated, "Both formerly & now, it's only stress that I describe, and the cessation of stress" (SN 22:86; MN 22). Any question that interfered with this aim, he would put aside. The map of right view, like a fire-escape diagram that includes nothing but information needed to find the fire escape, includes only the views necessary to understand suffering and the way to put an end to it. Too much information would clutter a fire-escape map with distractions that would get in the way of its intended purpose.

To understand how the noble eightfold path works in putting an end to suffering, it's necessary to understand the Buddha's analysis of what suffering is and how it's caused.

He distinguished between two types of suffering: the suffering caused by the fact that fabrications are inconstant—in other words, they offer no steady foundation for happiness—and the suffering caused by craving and clinging, based on ignorance *(avijjā)*. His focus was on the second type of suffering, although as we will see in the next section, once the second type of suffering is ended, the first will inevitably end as well.

Suffering is felt on a level of experience that is totally immediate and personal. In fact, it's so personal that no one can directly experience another person's suffering, just as no one can enter into your experience of "blue" to see if your "blue" is the same as theirs. We may see the outward signs of another person's suffering, just as we can point to an object and agree that it's blue, but the actual stress and pain of one person's suffering is something that no one else can feel. The same holds true for the causes of

suffering: No one else can directly experience your own craving, clinging, and ignorance. And as it turns out, the crucial factors in putting an end to suffering are experienced on this same inward level as well.

This means that the Buddha's teachings deal primarily with what is totally personal in your experience. In formal terms, this is called *phenomenology:* speaking about consciousness as it's directly experienced.

However, even though the focus of the Buddha's teachings is on a problem that is immediately personal, his analysis of the problem is not subjective. In other words, even though the precise texture of your suffering is something that no one else can know, it's not so individual that it doesn't follow an objective pattern, true for all beings. The Buddha claimed—and this claim has been confirmed by many, many people from many different backgrounds over the millennia—that he found the common pattern underlying all suffering, and so was able to discover a path of practice that worked in ending all suffering.

This is one of the reasons that he called the path *"ariya,"* which we usually translate as "noble," but which can also mean "universal." The path is noble partly because it's universally true. Even though the Buddha was a member of the warrior caste in ancient India, there's nothing of his personal or cultural background contained in the path. This is because suffering is something pre-cultural: We all experience it from birth, well before culture has made any imprint on our minds. Part of the Buddha's genius was that he was able to dig deeply enough into his mind to find the pre-cultural patterns of how we all suffer and how we can all learn not to suffer. Although his teachings are expressed in an ancient language, they point to an experience prior to all languages.

The primary factor underlying every case of suffering is *avijjā,* a term that can be translated as "ignorance" or "lack of skill." Both meanings are appropriate here. On the one hand, *avijjā* means not knowing four truths about suffering: what it is, what causes it, what its cessation is, and what path of practice leads to its cessation. On the other hand, *avijjā* means not having mastered the skills appropriate to these truths. These truths are not simply four interesting facts about suffering. Instead, they are meant to be applied as a way of cutting up the pie of experience—i.e., dividing it into four categories—so that a person desiring the end of suffering can know what to do with phenomena that fall into any of the four categories:

phenomena that count as suffering should be comprehended, those that count as the cause of suffering should be abandoned, those that count as the cessation of suffering should be realized, and those that count as the path should be developed.

Information about these four truths—which are also called noble, in that they're universally true—is something that one person can give to another. This is why the Buddha saw that it was worthwhile to teach them to others. However, the skill in mastering the duties appropriate to the truths is something that no one can do for anyone else. This is why he also said, "It's for you to strive ardently. Tathāgatas simply point out the way" (§379). The path is something that each person has to master for him- or herself.

But what is suffering? Unlike later commentators in the Buddhist tradition, the Buddha did not give a formal definition of what suffering is. Instead, he simply listed many cases of suffering, so that his listeners could recognize that he was talking about something with which they were already familiar, and which they would recognize as a problem: "Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful" (§106).

This pattern of not formally defining his central terms is a distinctive feature of the Buddha's teachings. He is basically teaching a course for training the mind to end suffering and achieve true happiness, but he never gives a formal definition for "mind," "suffering," or "happiness." What he defines in detail is the course of training, because the words defining the factors of the training can be immediately put into practice. As for the other terms, when a person is on the path, his/her sense of what the mind is, and of what suffering and happiness are, will inevitably develop, so it's best that these things not be nailed down too firmly in words.

Still, for strategic purposes, the Buddha did present a way of explaining suffering that points to how it can be ended: He identified suffering with clinging to the five aggregates. Because clinging can be abandoned, this explanation gives you a handle on what to do about suffering: Drop the clinging, and suffering will end.

The word "clinging" *(upādāna)* he defined as passion and delight, and the Buddha cited four types of clinging:

- Clinging through *sensuality:* a fascination with thoughts about how to gain and enjoy sensual pleasures. This definition focuses on the fact that we tend to cling more to our fantasies about sensual pleasures than we do to the actual pleasures themselves.
- Clinging through *habits and practices:* an insistence that things have to be done a certain way, regardless of whether that way is really effective. The extreme form of this clinging is a fixation on ritual behavior: that everything depends on doing a certain ritual right.
- Clinging through *views:* an insistence that certain views are right, regardless of the effects of holding to them; or a belief that simply holding to a particular view will make us pure or better than other people.
- Clinging through *doctrines of the self:* beliefs about who we are, whether we're innately good or bad, and what we will be after death. This can also extend to beliefs about whether or not we have a true self and, if so, what that self is (§126; §229).

A bit of reflection will confirm that these four types of clinging contain all the details of how we define ourselves, both personally and culturally: in terms of the sensual pleasures we enjoy, our habitual customs and ways of doing things, our views about the world and our place in the world, and our views about who we are. This means that, to end suffering, we have to stop clinging to the way we construct our identities. This is a radical job.

*How* radical is suggested by another meaning of the word *upādāna:* feeding. We suffer in the way we feed—mentally as well as physically—on the pleasures of fabrication, in particular our fabrication of our sense of self and our place in the world.

This means that the end of suffering will require the end of feeding. And that, in turn, will mean the end of fabrication, because fabrication is driven by the need to feed. Still, the Buddha recognized that the mind cannot simply bring the process of feeding to a screeching halt, because you can't end hunger simply by willing it away. Instead, your hunger has to be retrained. In other words, the mind has to be trained to feed in new, more skillful ways that will wean it off its more unskillful ways of feeding—i.e., ways of feeding that obviously do harm—and ultimately bring it to a dimension where there is no hunger: an unfabricated dimension where

there is no need to feed at all. This is why the path to the end of suffering is also the path to nibbāna, for nibbāna is precisely that: the unfabricated.

**Nibbāna.** The word *nibbāna* literally means "unbinding." In everyday Pāli usage, this word described the going-out of a fire, and reflected what people in the Buddha's time thought was happening when a fire went out. As they saw it, fire was caused by the agitation or provocation of the fire-property, a potential that existed in a latent state everywhere in the physical world. When provoked, the fire-property would be ignited and then cling to its fuel, which was how a burning fire was sustained. The fire would go out when it let go of its fuel, and the fire-property—freed—would return to its earlier unagitated state.

The Buddha used the analogy between the freed fire and the released mind to make several points about total release:

- It is a cool state of calm and peace.
- It comes from letting go of clinging. Just as a burning fire is trapped, not by the fuel, but by its own clinging to the fuel, the mind is trapped not by the aggregates, but by its clinging to the aggregates. This is why, when it lets go, the aggregates can't keep it from gaining release.
- Just as a fire, when it has gone out, can't be said to have gone east, west, north, or south, similarly, a person fully released can't be described as existing, not existing, both, or neither. This point relates to the fact that, through the process of fabrication, you define yourself by the desires you cling to (§111). Because the released mind is free of clinging, it can't be defined and so can't be described. And because the world of your experience is defined by the desires you cling to, a released mind cannot be located in any world at all.

In fact, unbinding, in the ultimate sense, is not even a *dhamma*, i.e., an act or object of consciousness. Some texts suggest that it *is* the highest of dhammas, but they apparently are referring to the moment when unbinding is realized. Other texts, more in line with the Buddha's observation that all dhammas are rooted in desire, call unbinding the transcending of all dhammas (§351). It's a type of consciousness, but one not included in the consciousness aggregate, as it is outside of space and time. It doesn't count as a dhamma because (a) it's not an act; (b) it's

without object—or in the Buddha's words, without surface *(anidassana)* (§370); and (c) it's not the object of any other consciousness.

The analogy between a released fire and a released mind, however, is not perfect. Unlike fire, a released mind does not return to a previous latent state and so cannot be provoked to leave its released state ever again. Outside of space and time and the worlds of the six senses, it is not fabricated by anything and does not fabricate anything else. This is why release—unbinding—brings all suffering to an end.

The fact that unbinding is unfabricated means that it's not subject to aging, illness, and death. This is why it's the object of what the Buddha called the noble search. Prior to his awakening, he had identified two types of search: the ignoble search, which is devoted to finding happiness in things subject to aging, illness, and death; and the noble search, devoted to finding what does not age, grow ill, or die (§17). The fact that the eightfold path leads to the deathless is another reason why it is termed noble. And for the same reason, because the four truths about suffering are a part of such a path, they are called noble as well.

However, the fact that the path is fabricated, while its goal is not, presents a paradox: How can a fabricated path lead to something not fabricated? The solution to this paradox lies in the Buddha's analysis of the causal principle underlying fabrication, a point that will be covered in more detail in Chapter 3, on right view. Here we can simply note that the basic pattern of that causal principle is such that it creates a complex, non-linear system, and one of the features of such a system is that the factors that maintain it can be pushed in a direction where they cause the system to collapse. In the same way, the processes of fabrication can be pushed in a direction, through the factors of the path, to a point where they bring the system of fabricated experience to collapse, leaving an opening to the unfabricated. This is why the Buddha says that the path is a type of action that leads to the end of action (§58; §136)—it's a fabricated path to the unfabricated (§11).

In practical terms, this means that the factors of the path—because they are fabricated—have to be developed to a certain point, after which they're abandoned along with all other fabrications. This is one of the reasons why it's so important not to confuse the path with the goal. They are two radically different things. Some aspects of the path—such as desire, conceit,

and the need to fabricate a healthy sense of self to engage in right effort—will be totally abandoned on awakening (§12; §217; §221). Others, which harmonize with awakening, will be abandoned at the moment of awakening but afterwards will still be available for use (§§13–16). The texts describe, for instance, how the awakened are virtuous, even though they are not defined by their virtue (§164; §325), and how even the completely awakened use the contemplations of right view and the practice of right mindfulness and right concentration as pleasant abidings (§§345–347).

Still, one of the features of each factor of the path is that it allows for its own transcendence. In the case of right view, part of this potential for self-transcendence lies in its self-referential quality, which we have already noted: It describes action, and it itself is an action, so it can be used to describe itself—when, as a strategy, it is skillful and should be developed, and when it gets in the way of a higher skill and so should be dropped. This is how it provides a perspective on itself that allows for its transcendence (§132). When trained by the other factors of the path, it can then be turned around and applied to them to provide for their transcendence as well.

The Canon uses many metaphors to describe this self-transcending aspect of the path, such as the relay chariots that are abandoned on reaching their goal (§15), and the raft that is abandoned on reaching the other shore of the river (§§13–14). In fact, the metaphor of the path itself makes this point, although the clearest explanation of this aspect of the metaphor didn't appear until the *Milinda Pañhā*, a later text in the Buddhist tradition: Just as a path to a mountain doesn't cause the mountain but can still lead to the mountain, the noble eightfold path doesn't cause unbinding, but the act of following it can lead to a direct realization of the freedom of unbinding.

And although the fact is not obvious on the surface, the third main point about the path presented in the Buddha's first discourse—that it's a middle way—also implies that the path employs fabricated means that are abandoned on arriving at the goal. This implied fact becomes apparent, though, when we look at what "middle way" means.

**The middle way.** The Buddha's first statement about the path is that it's a middle way that avoids two extremes: devotion to sensual pleasure in

connection with sensuality, and devotion to self-torment. This observation probably comes from his own direct experience in finding the path after having tried both extremes and finding that they were not noble (§§27–29)—i.e., they did not lead to the unfabricated. Devotion to sensuality did not allow the mind to develop the dispassion needed to find the unfabricated. In fact, it led the mind in the opposite direction, toward further passion. Devotion to self-torment weakened the body and mind to the point where they could not support the powers of concentration needed to comprehend fabrication well enough to find the escape from it.

It's important to note, though, that the Buddha does not say that the middle way *lies between* these two extremes. In other words, it is not a middling path of neither pleasure nor pain. Instead, he says simply that it *avoids* these two extremes. It does so by utilizing both feelings of pleasure and pain as means to a higher goal, in light of the teaching on fabrication. In other words, it requires that you judge feelings of pleasure and pain as useful or not useful by measuring them both in terms of the activities that fabricate them and in terms of the states they produce. In other words, you view them as parts of a causal process, in terms of their causes and their effects. And because feelings, like other aggregates, are fabricated in the present moment from the raw material provided by past actions, a person on the path has some measure of freedom each moment to choose which potential feelings to foster.

The path takes advantage of this freedom by adopting feelings that are produced by skillful activities, and rejecting those based on unskillful activities. For instance, even though skillful activities ultimately result in pleasure, the Buddha recognizes that they may also involve some pain, and so he recommends enduring that pain (§204; §§263–264; §294). Conversely, the pleasures that come from unskillful activities are to be abandoned outright.

A similar principle applies to the feelings when gauged by the results to which they lead. The path adopts feelings of pleasure and pain whose fabrication leads to the highest *sukha*—pleasure, happiness, ease, or bliss—of unbinding, and abandons those that get in the way. However, even though unbinding is pleasant/easeful/blissful, its pleasure does not count as a feeling (§366), which means that even the feelings utilized on the path are eventually abandoned as well. This is the way in which the path, as a

middle way, uses fabrications only to transcend them at the threshold of the unfabricated.

The Buddha's general approach to feelings on the path is not to reject pleasure that accords with the goal (§21). If you find that indulging in a certain pleasure gives rise to no unskillful states in the mind, there's no need for you to avoid it. If, however, it does give rise to unskillful states, you have to renounce it and practice with pain. But the Buddha does not leave you to test every pleasure or pain for yourself. He gives some clear guidelines to begin with, and after having adopted them you are in a position to gauge feelings more objectively.

His guidelines are based on a distinction between feelings of-the-flesh *(āmisa)* and feelings not-of-the-flesh *(nirāmisa)*. Pleasures and pains of-the-flesh are those caused by contact at the five senses.

Pains not-of-the-flesh—those, at least, that the Buddha recommends for development—are of two sorts.

The first sort relates to the desire to gain awakening, coupled by the realization that you have yet to attain your goal. The texts offer two examples of how this painful realization may be expressed:

> "O when will I enter & remain in the dimension that those who are noble now enter & remain in?" — *MN 44*; *MN 137*

> "It is a loss for me, not a gain; ill-gotten for me, not well-gotten, that when I recollect the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha… equanimity based on what is skillful is not established within me." — *MN 28*

These realizations, though painful, help to maintain your motivation to stick with the path, and so they act as a useful part of the path itself, an aspect of right effort.

The second type of pain not-of-the-flesh recommended by the Buddha relates to distressing meditation topics, such as the contemplation of the foulness of the body (§25). Even though these topics are unpleasant, they are useful tools for counteracting strong passion, aversion, and delusion, and so play an important role on the path as exercises of right mindfulness.

Pleasures not-of-the-flesh relate to the practice of four states of concentration called *jhāna*, or absorption. These offer pleasure—often intense—based not on the five senses but on the internal awareness of the

form of the body. These states are so central to the path that they act as one of its factors: right concentration. They have strategic importance because, as the Buddha noted, if the mind has no alternative to pain aside from sensual pleasure, it will aim at the pleasures of sensuality as a matter of course (§22). This holds true even when it's fully aware of the long-term drawbacks of those pleasures (§295).

The pleasures of jhāna are superior to those of sensuality, both inherently and in light of their fabrication: what is needed to produce them, and the states of mind to which they lead.

Inherently, the pleasures of jhāna provide more nourishing food for the mind, as these pleasures can suffuse the entire body and be maintained for a long time. MN 54 (§150) compares the food of sensuality to a chain of bones, thoroughly scraped, that a dog would gnaw on. In contrast, AN 7:63 (§219) compares the food of jhāna to provisions for soldiers in a fortress, ranging from water, rice, and barley, to ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, molasses, and salt. In other words, the pleasures of jhāna, when compared to those of sensuality, are more flavorful and nourishing.

In terms of fabrication: The actions that produce jhāna are blameless (§30), in that—unlike sensual pleasures—they don't require taking anything from anyone else, and they don't expose you to the dangers involved in seeking sensual pleasures. Also, the mind-states they produce are much more conducive to the mental clarity required by the path. As §281 notes, it's only when the mind is concentrated that you can fully comprehend the origination and disappearance of the aggregates, and so develop dispassion for them.

There are several reasons for this observation. To begin with, the jhānas create a state of stillness that enables the mind to observe fabrication more easily and precisely. The food they offer gives the mind a point of comparison, so that it is more likely to admit the drawbacks of its passion for sensuality than it would when it hungers for pleasure. And because the jhānas are consciously fabricated—and composed of aggregates themselves (§312)—they give the mind hands-on experience in observing fabrication directly in action. It's for these reasons that MN 117 (§48) lists right concentration as the heart of the path, and the other factors as its supports.

In fact, §24 describes the practice of right concentration as a skillful "devotion to pleasure," in direct contrast to the unskillful devotion to

pleasure that the path avoids, making the point that the middle way is not characterized by a neutral feeling tone. Instead, it uses skillful pleasures not-of-the-flesh as food for the mind, to replace the mind's dependence on unskillful pleasures of-the-flesh.

With regard to the role of feelings of-the-flesh on the path, §24 lists four unskillful pleasures that monks are to avoid across the board: the pleasures that come from killing, stealing, lying, and the pursuit of the five "strings of sensuality"—sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations that are "agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked with sensual desire" (§147). From this list, it's easy to extrapolate to other pleasures to be avoided, in particular those coming from any of the unskillful forms of conduct listed in §130 and analyzed in §165: killing, stealing, illicit sex; lying, divisive tale-bearing, harsh speech, idle chatter; covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

Given that other pleasures of-the-flesh can be either innocent or detrimental for different individuals, there is no standard list anywhere in the Canon of innocent pleasures. Even with regard to acts of merit, the Buddha praises the pleasure to be found in the acts themselves, but warns of the dangers posed by some of the pleasures of-the-flesh that they can lead to, such as wealth, status, and praise (§79; DN 16; Iti 22; AN 8:6). However, a short list of innocent pleasures of-the-flesh can be gleaned from scattered passages in the suttas, including: the pleasures of seclusion (§§98–99), those of the beauties of the wilderness (Thag 18), the pleasure of independence (Ud 2:9), the pleasure of associating with wise people (Dhp 207), and the pleasure of harmony in the Saṅgha (Dhp 194).

In comparison to pleasures of-the-flesh, pains of-the-flesh are treated somewhat more systematically. MN 2 (§229) notes that although one should learn to endure sharp physical pains and harsh, hurtful words, it also advises avoiding the pains that would come from carelessly exposing oneself to dangers: "a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer." More pointedly, it also advises avoiding the pain that would come to a monk from going to places inappropriate for monks to go, and from associating with bad friends. This point can be extended to a general principle: All pains of-the-flesh that come from engaging in unskillful conduct should be avoided.

As for pains of-the-flesh to be pursued, SN 42:12 notes that some individuals will attain superior human states—a term that covers the jhānas, the psychic powers that can be developed based on them, and the noble attainments—by living in harsh conditions, but it doesn't list what those conditions might be. Thag 16:7 (§234) provides a list of ascetic practices that the later literature calls *dhutaṅga*, which can be adopted—either long term or short term—in cases where you find that they help to curb the defilements *(kilesa)* of the mind. These include eating only one meal a day, living in the wilderness, living at the foot of a tree, living in a cemetery, and not lying down.

So it's obvious that the middle way is not a middling way halfway between pleasure and pain. Instead, it uses feelings of pleasure and pain—both of-the-flesh and not-of-the-flesh, and sometimes in extreme forms—so as to understand pleasures and pains as aggregates, as processes of fabrication, bringing the mind to a point where it's ready to abandon passion for all fabrications and to realize, beyond feeling, the unfabricated bliss of unbinding.

**The only right way.** The Buddha's instructions to his last disciple, Subhadda the wanderer, focus on the point that the noble eightfold path is the only way to unbinding. This is why the Buddha, from the very beginning, prefaced each factor of path with the word *sammā*, or "right." Any version of any of the factors that deviates from them or contradicts them is *micchā*, wrong.

The Buddha's standard for judging right and wrong here is pragmatic. This point is illustrated in §18, where the right factors of the path are compared to the act of trying to get milk from a cow by pulling on its udder, whereas wrong versions of the factors are compared to the act of trying to get milk from the cow by twisting on its horn: Not only do you get no milk, but you also harass the cow.

In other words, right and wrong are determined by what does and doesn't work in reaching the noble goal. But it's not the case that each factor of the path, when right on its own, is also noble: The *interaction* of the factors is what makes them fully right and noble as an ensemble.

For instance, it's possible to practice concentration and arrive at a non-dual state of the oneness of consciousness, or at a state in which everything

glows with a white light (§335). However, these states are fabricated, and so do not count as the goal. To mistake them for the goal would be an instance of wrong view, in which case the concentration, even though right, would not be part of the noble path. This would be true even if you started out with a correct verbal knowledge of right view, looking for the unfabricated, but then mistook the fabricated for the unfabricated when actually encountering it in practice. The problem in this case would lie in the fact that alertness, one of the sub-factors of right mindfulness, was not acute enough to detect the changes in these bright, non-dual states that would signal the fact of their being fabricated.

This means that, although all the factors of the path have to be directed by noble right view in order to be noble as well as right, right view itself needs to be trained in practice by developing the other factors of the path in order to become noble. To state this in terms of the distinction made in DN 33, right view has to grow from a form of discernment based on listening and thinking *(sutamaya-paññā, cintāmaya-paññā)* into a form of discernment based on developing skillful qualities in the mind *(bhāvanāmaya-paññā)*. Only then will it be "right" enough to bear noble fruit. We will return to this point in the next chapter, and, in fact, it will be a recurring theme in the discussions of the path-factors for the remainder of this book.

Later schools of Buddhism have criticized the Pāli Canon for its insistence on the objective distinction between right and wrong forms of the path, accusing it of being dualistic, at the same time claiming that monism—the doctrine that all is One—is a higher view. However, it's important to make a distinction between dualism as a principle and dualities as a fact. Dualism as a principle would say that the universe comes down to two main underlying principles—a position that the Buddha never takes in the Pāli Canon. In fact, he refused to take a position on the question of whether the cosmos is basically a Oneness or a plurality (SN 12:48), on the grounds that the question did not conduce to the end of suffering and stress.

However, he did take a position, on the distinction—a duality—between skillful and unskillful conduct, describing in detail what counts as skillful and unskillful, and stating in clear terms that they had to be treated differently (§60). Skillful conduct should be developed; unskillful conduct,

abandoned. This is because these two types of conduct lead to two different directions: away from suffering and stress, or toward suffering and stress. The difference between suffering and not suffering is a basic duality built into the way things are. If the Buddha had not made this distinction, he would have neglected what he saw as one of his prime duties as a teacher: providing the safety that comes with having a clear sense of what should and shouldn't be done by a person who wants to avoid causing suffering and harm (§56). Any potential student refusing to admit this distinction, the Buddha would have regarded as unfit to teach.

He was so sure of this distinction, and of the objective rightness of the factors of the path to the end of suffering, that he stated in §323 that one of the signs that a person has reached the first stage of awakening is the realization that outside of the Buddha's teachings there is no accurate description of the way to unbinding.

For anyone who has yet to reach that point, this is impossible to know. You have to reach the top of the mountain to see clearly which paths lead there and which paths don't. It's for this reason that the Buddha did not force anyone to believe in his teachings without testing them, because the path is something that can be followed only voluntarily. After all, to test the path is a demanding project, in that it requires a total retraining of one's own thoughts and actions. The only compulsion in choosing whether to take on the path comes from the brute fact of suffering. When you've decided you've suffered enough, and you're prepared to look for the sources of suffering inside, then you're ready to give the path a serious try—to see if the Buddha's middle way really does lead to the end of suffering and to the unfabricated bliss of unbinding.

## Readings

### *The First Teaching*

§ 1. "These two are extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure in connection with sensuality: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathāgata

—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

"And which is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding? Precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding." — *Mv.I.6 ( = SN 56:11 )*

*The Last Teaching*

§ 2. Then Subhadda the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Master Gotama, these contemplatives & brahmans, each with his group, each with his community, each the teacher of his group, an honored leader, well-regarded by people at large—i.e., Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta, & the Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta: Do they all have direct knowledge as they themselves claim, or do they all not have direct knowledge, or do some of them have direct knowledge and some of them not?"

"Enough, Subhadda. Put this question aside: 'Do they all have direct knowledge as they themselves claim, or do they all not have direct knowledge, or do some of them have direct knowledge and some of them not?' I will teach you the Dhamma, Subhadda. Listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," Subhadda responded to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, "In any Dhamma & Vinaya where the noble eightfold path is not ascertained, no contemplative of the first… second… third… fourth order [stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, or arahant] is ascertained. But in any Dhamma & Vinaya where the noble eightfold path *is* ascertained, contemplatives of the first… second… third… fourth order *are* ascertained. The noble eightfold path is ascertained in this

Dhamma & Vinaya, and right here there are contemplatives of the first… second… third… fourth order. Other teachings are empty of knowledgeable contemplatives. And if the monks dwell rightly, this world will not be empty of arahants." — *DN 16*

*On the Word, "Path"*

§ 3. "Suppose that there were a pit of glowing embers, deeper than a man's height, full of glowing embers that were neither flaming nor smoking. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only *[ekāyana magga]* directed to that pit of glowing embers. A man with good eyes, on seeing him, would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that pit of glowing embers.' Then at a later time he would see him—having fallen into the pit of glowing embers—experiencing feelings that are exclusively painful, piercing, & racking.

"In the same way, Sāriputta, there is the case where—having thus encompassed awareness with awareness—I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will—at the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.' Then at a later time I see him—at the break-up of the body, after death—reappearing in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell, experiencing feelings that are exclusively painful, piercing, & racking.…

"Suppose that there were a cesspool, deeper than a man's height, full of excrement. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only directed to that cesspool. A man with good eyes, on seeing him, would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that cesspool.' Then at a later time he would see him—having fallen into the cesspool—experiencing feelings that are painful, piercing, & racking.

"In the same way… I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will—at the break-up of the body, after death—

reappear in the realm of the animal womb'… experiencing feelings that are painful, piercing, & racking.…

"Suppose that there were a tree growing on uneven ground, with scanty foliage providing spotty shade. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only directed to that tree. A man with good eyes, on seeing him, would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that tree.' Then at a later time he would see him sitting or lying down in the shade of that tree, experiencing feelings that are for the most part painful.

"In the same way… I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will—at the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in the realm of the hungry ghosts'… experiencing feelings that are for the most part painful.…

"Suppose that there were a tree growing on even ground, with lush foliage providing dense shade. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only directed to that tree. A man with good eyes, on seeing him, would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that tree.' Then at a later time he would see him sitting or lying down in the shade of that tree, experiencing feelings that are for the most part pleasant.

"In the same way… I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will—at the break-up of the body, after death—reappear among human beings'… experiencing feelings that are for the most part pleasant.…

"Suppose that there were a palace compound; and in it was a mansion with a gabled roof, plastered inside & out, draft-free, with close-fitting door & windows shut against the wind; and in it was a throne-like bed spread with a long-fleeced coverlet, a white wool coverlet, an embroidered coverlet, a rug of kadali-deer hide, with a canopy above, & red cushions on either side. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only directed to that palace compound. A man with good eyes, on seeing him,

would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that palace compound.' Then at a later time he would see him sitting or lying down on the throne-like bed in that mansion with a gabled roof in that palace compound, experiencing feelings that are exclusively pleasant.

"In the same way… I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will—at the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world'… experiencing feelings that are exclusively pleasant.…

"Suppose that there were a lotus pond with pristine water, pleasing water, cool water, pellucid water; with restful banks, refreshing; and not far from it was a dense forest grove. A man—scorched with heat, overcome by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty—would come along a path going one way only directed to that lotus pond. A man with good eyes, on seeing him, would say, 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will come to that lotus pond.' Then at a later time he would see him—having plunged into the lotus pond, having bathed & drunk & relieved all his disturbance, exhaustion, & fever, and having come back out—sitting or lying down in the forest grove, experiencing feelings that are exclusively pleasant.

"In the same way, Sāriputta, there is the case where—having thus encompassed awareness with awareness—I know of a certain individual: 'The way this individual has practiced, the way he conducts himself, and the path he has entered are such that he will, through the ending of the effluents, enter & remain in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized it for himself right in the here-&-now.' Then at a later time I see him, through the ending of the effluents—having entered & remaining in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized it for himself right in the here-&-now—experiencing feelings that are exclusively pleasant." — *MN 12*

§ 4. "It is just as if a man, traveling along a wilderness track, were to see an ancient path, an ancient road, traveled by people of former times. He would follow it. Following it, he would see an ancient city, an ancient

capital inhabited by people of former times, complete with parks, groves, & ponds, walled, delightful. He would go to address the king or the king's minister, saying, 'Sire, you should know that while traveling along a wilderness track I saw an ancient path… I followed it… I saw an ancient city, an ancient capital… complete with parks, groves, & ponds, walled, delightful. Sire, rebuild that city!' The king or king's minister would rebuild the city, so that at a later date the city would become powerful, rich, & well-populated, fully grown & prosperous.

"In the same way I saw an ancient path, an ancient road, traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones of former times. And what is that ancient path…? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.… I followed that path. Following it, I came to direct knowledge of aging-&-death, direct knowledge of the origination of aging-&-death, direct knowledge of the cessation of aging-&-death, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of aging-&-death. I followed that path. Following it, I came to direct knowledge of birth… becoming… clinging… craving… feeling… contact… the six sense media… name-&-form… consciousness, direct knowledge of the origination of consciousness, direct knowledge of the cessation of consciousness, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of consciousness. I followed that path.

"Following it, I came to direct knowledge of fabrications, direct knowledge of the origination of fabrications, direct knowledge of the cessation of fabrications, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of fabrications. Knowing that directly, I have revealed it to monks, nuns, male lay followers & female lay followers, so that this holy life has become powerful, rich, detailed, well-populated, wide-spread, proclaimed among devas & human beings." — *SN 12:65*

§ 5. "And what is the holy life? Just this noble eightfold path.… And what are the fruits of the holy life? The fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-returning, & the fruit of arahantship." — *SN 45:39*

§ 6. "And what is the goal of the holy life? Whatever is the ending of passion, the ending of aversion, the ending of delusion: That is called the goal of the holy life." — *SN 45:40*

§ 7. "Monks, this holy life doesn't have as its reward gain, offerings, & fame, doesn't have as its reward consummation of virtue, doesn't have as its reward consummation of concentration, doesn't have as its reward knowledge & vision, but the unprovoked awareness-release: That is the purpose of this holy life, that is its heartwood, that its final end." — *MN 29*

§ 8. As he was sitting there, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, "Just now, lord, early in the morning, I adjusted my under robe and—carrying my bowl & outer robes—went into Sāvatthī for alms. I saw the brahman Jāṇussoṇin leaving Sāvatthī in an all-white chariot drawn by mares. White were the horses yoked to it, white the ornaments, white the chariot, white the upholstery, white the reins, white the goad, white the canopy, white his turban, white his clothes, white his sandals, and with a white yak-tail fan he was fanned. Seeing him, people were saying, 'What a sublime vehicle! What a sublime-looking vehicle!' Is it possible to designate a sublime vehicle in this Dhamma-Vinaya?"

"It is possible, Ānanda," said the Blessed One. "That is a synonym for this very same noble eightfold path: 'sublime vehicle,' 'Dhamma-vehicle,' 'unexcelled victory in battle.'"

"Right view, Ānanda, when developed & pursued, has the subduing of passion as its end-point, the subduing of aversion as its end-point, the subduing of delusion as its end-point.

"Right resolve… Right speech… Right action… Right livelihood… Right effort… Right mindfulness… Right concentration, when developed & pursued, has the subduing of passion as its end-point, the subduing of aversion as its end-point, the subduing of delusion as its end-point.

"It is by this sequence of reasons that one can know how that is a synonym for this very same noble eightfold path: 'sublime vehicle,' 'Dhamma-vehicle,' 'unexcelled victory in battle.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said that, the One Well-gone, the Teacher, said further:

One with the dhammas
of conviction & discernment
always yoked to its shaft,
shame its pole, the heart its yoke-tie,
mindfulness the protective charioteer,
virtue the chariot-accessories,
jhāna the axle, persistence the wheels,
equanimity the balance of the yoke,
hungerless-ness its upholstery,
non-ill will, harmlessness, & seclusion its weapons,
patience its armor & shield:
    It rolls to security from bondage.
Coming into play
from within oneself:
    the sublime vehicle unsurpassed.
They, the enlightened, leave the world.
They, absolutely, win victory. — *SN 45:4*

§ 9. "'All phenomena *[dhammas]* are rooted in desire.'

"'All phenomena come into play through attention.'" — *AN 10:58*

§ 10. Phenomena *[dhammas]* are
preceded by the heart,
ruled by the heart,
made of the heart. — *Dhp 1*

§ 11. "Among whatever dhammas there may be, fabricated or unfabricated, dispassion—the subduing of intoxication, the elimination of thirst, the uprooting of attachment, the breaking of the round, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, the realization of unbinding—is considered supreme. Those who have confidence in the dhamma of dispassion have confidence in what is supreme; and for those with confidence in the supreme, supreme is the result.

"Among whatever fabricated dhammas there may be, the noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is considered supreme. Those who have confidence in the dhamma of the noble path have

confidence in what is supreme; and for those with confidence in the supreme, supreme is the result." — *Iti 90*

§ 12. As he was sitting there, Uṇṇabha the brahman said to Ven. Ānanda: "Master Ānanda, what is the aim of this holy life lived under Gotama the contemplative?"

"Brahman, the holy life is lived under the Blessed One with the aim of abandoning desire."

"Is there a path, is there a practice, for the abandoning of that desire?"

"Yes, there is a path, is there a practice, for the abandoning of that desire."

"What is the path, the practice, for the abandoning of that desire?"

"Brahman, there is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence… concentration founded on intent… concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion. This, brahman, is the path, this is the practice for the abandoning of that desire."

"If that's so, Master Ānanda, then it's an endless path, and not one with an end, for it's impossible that one could abandon desire by means of 178

desire."

"In that case, brahman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Didn't you first have desire, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't that particular desire allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have persistence, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't that particular persistence allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have the intent, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't that particular intent allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have [an act of] discrimination, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't that particular act of

discrimination allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"So it is with an arahant whose effluents are ended, who has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who is released through right gnosis. Whatever desire he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship that particular desire is allayed. Whatever persistence he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship that particular persistence is allayed. Whatever intent he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship that particular intent is allayed. Whatever discrimination he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship that particular discrimination is allayed. So what do you think, brahman? Is this an endless path, or one with an end?"

"You're right, Master Ānanda. This is a path with an end, and not an endless one." — *SN 51:15*

§ 13. "Suppose a man were traveling along a path. He would see a great expanse of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the far shore safe & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the other. The thought would occur to him, 'Here is this great expanse of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the far shore safe & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the far one. What if I were to gather grass, twigs, branches, & leaves and, having bound them together to make a raft, were to cross over to safety on the far shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with my hands & feet?'

"Then the man, having gathered grass, twigs, branches, & leaves, having bound them together to make a raft, would cross over to safety on the far shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with his hands & feet. Having crossed over to the far shore, he might think, 'How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the far shore. Why don't I, having hoisted it on my head or carrying it on my back, go wherever I like?' What do you think, monks? Would the man, in doing that, be doing what should be done with the raft?"

"No, lord."

"And what should the man do in order to be doing what should be done with the raft? There is the case where the man, having crossed over to the far shore, would think, 'How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the far shore. Why don't I, having dragged it on dry land or sunk it in the water, go wherever I like?' In doing this, he would be doing what should be done with the raft. In the same way, monks, I have taught the Dhamma compared to a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Understanding the Dhamma as taught compared to a raft, you should let go even of Dhammas, to say nothing of non-Dhammas." — *MN 22*

§ 14. "The great expanse of water stands for the fourfold flood: the flood of sensuality, the flood of becoming, the flood of views, & the flood of ignorance. The near shore, dubious & risky, stands for self-identity. The far shore, safe and free from risk, stands for unbinding. The raft stands for just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. Making an effort with hands & feet stands for the arousing of persistence." — *SN 35:197*

§ 15. Ven. Sāriputta: "When asked if purity in terms of virtue… mind… view… the overcoming of perplexity… knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path… knowledge & vision of the way… knowledge & vision is total unbinding through lack of clinging, you say, 'No, my friend.' But when asked if total unbinding through lack of clinging is something apart from these dhammas, you say, 'No, my friend.' Now how, my friend, is the meaning of these statements to be understood?"

Ven. Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta: "If the Blessed One had described purity in terms of virtue as total unbinding through lack of clinging, my friend, then he would have defined something still accompanied by clinging as total unbinding through lack of clinging. If he had described purity in terms of mind… view… the overcoming of perplexity… knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path… knowledge & vision of the way… knowledge & vision as total unbinding through lack of clinging, then he would have

defined something still accompanied by clinging as total unbinding through lack of clinging. But if total unbinding through lack of clinging were apart from these dhammas, then a run-of-the-mill person would be totally unbound, inasmuch as a run-of-the-mill person is apart from these dhammas.

"So, my friend, I will give you an analogy, for there are cases where it's through analogies that observant people can understand the meaning of what is being said. Suppose that while King Pasenadi Kosala was staying at Sāvatthī, some urgent business were to arise at Sāketa; and that between Sāvatthī and Sāketa seven relay chariots were made ready for him. Coming out the door of the inner palace in Sāvatthī, he would get in the first relay chariot. By means of the first relay chariot he would reach the second relay chariot. Getting out of the first relay chariot he would get in the second relay chariot. By means of the second relay chariot he would reach the third… by means of the third he would reach the fourth… by means of the fourth, the fifth… by means of the fifth, the sixth… by means of the sixth he would reach the seventh relay chariot. Getting out of the sixth relay chariot he would get in the seventh relay chariot. By means of the seventh relay chariot he would finally arrive at the door of the inner palace at Sāketa. As he arrived there, his friends & companions, relatives & kin would ask him, 'Great king, did you come from Sāvatthī to the door of the inner palace in Sāketa by means of this chariot?' Answering in what way, my friend, would King Pasenadi Kosala answer them correctly?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Answering in this way, my friend, he would answer them correctly: 'Just now, as I was staying at Sāvatthī, some urgent business arose at Sāketa; and between Sāvatthī and Sāketa seven relay chariots were made ready for me. Coming out the door of the inner palace in Sāvatthī, I got in the first relay chariot. By means of the first relay chariot I reached the second relay chariot. Getting out of the first relay chariot I got in the second relay chariot. By means of the second relay chariot I reached the third… by means of the third I reached the fourth… by means of the fourth, the fifth… by means of the fifth, the sixth… by means of the sixth I reached the seventh relay chariot. Getting out of the sixth relay chariot I got in the seventh relay chariot. By means of the seventh relay chariot I finally arrived at the door of the inner palace at Sāketa.' Answering in this way, he would answer them correctly."

Ven. Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta: "In the same way, my friend, purity in terms of virtue is simply for the sake of purity in terms of mind. Purity in terms of mind is simply for the sake of purity in terms of view. Purity in terms of view is simply for the sake of purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity. Purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision is simply for the sake of total unbinding through lack of clinging. And it's for the sake of total unbinding through lack of clinging that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One." — *MN 24*

*§ 16. Māgandiya:*

This 'inner peace':
What does it mean?
    How is it,
by the enlightened,
    proclaimed?"

*The Buddha:*

"He doesn't speak of purity
in connection with     view,
                learning,
                knowledge,
                habit or practice.
Nor is it found by a person
through lack of view,
            of learning,
            of knowledge,
            of habit or practice.
Letting these go, without grasping,
    at peace,
    independent,
one wouldn't long for becoming." — *Sn 4:9*

*On the Word, "Noble"*

§ 17. "Monks, there are these two searches: ignoble search & noble search. And which is the ignoble search? There is the case where a person, being subject himself to birth, seeks [happiness in] what is likewise subject to birth. Being subject himself to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, he seeks [happiness in] what is likewise subject to illness… death… sorrow… defilement.

"And what may be said to be subject to birth? Spouses & children are subject to birth. Men & women slaves… goats & sheep… fowl & pigs… elephants, cattle, horses, & mares… gold & silver are subject to birth. Subject to birth are these acquisitions, and one who is tied to them, infatuated with them, who has totally fallen for them, being subject to birth, seeks what is likewise subject to birth.

"And what may be said to be subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement? Spouses & children… men & women slaves… goats & sheep… fowl & pigs… elephants, cattle, horses, & mares… gold & silver are subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement. Subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement are these acquisitions, and one who is tied to them, infatuated with them, who has totally fallen for them, being subject to birth, seeks what is likewise subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement. This is ignoble search.

"And which is the noble search? There is the case where a person, himself being subject to birth, seeing the drawbacks of birth, seeks the unborn, unexcelled security from the yoke: unbinding. Himself being subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, seeing the drawbacks of aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, seeks the aging-less, illness-less, deathless, sorrow-less, undefiled, unexcelled security from the yoke: unbinding. This is the noble search." — *MN 26*

*On the Word, "Right"*

§ 18. "For any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, & wrong concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results], they are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they

are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

"Suppose a man in need of oil, looking for oil, wandering in search of oil, would pile gravel in a tub and press it, sprinkling it again & again with water. If he were to pile gravel in a tub and press it, sprinkling it again & again with water even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.…

"Suppose a man in need of milk, looking for milk, wandering in search of milk, would twist the horn of a newly-calved cow. If he were to twist the horn of a newly-calved cow even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

"In the same way, any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, & wrong concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.…

"But as for any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no

wish, they are capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

"Suppose a man in need of oil, looking for oil, wandering in search of oil, would pile sesame seeds in a tub and press them, sprinkling them again & again with water. If he were to pile sesame seeds in a tub and press them, sprinkling them again & again with water, even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.…

"Suppose a man in need of milk, looking for milk, wandering in search of milk, would pull the teat of a newly-calved cow. If he were to pull the teat of a newly-calved cow even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

"In the same way, any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results]… having made no wish… both having made a wish and having made no wish… neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results." — *MN 126*
*[See also §§202–203.]*

§ 19. Gaṇaka Moggallāna the brahman said to the Blessed One, "When Master Gotama's disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by him, do they all attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, or do some of them not?"

"Brahman, when my disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by me, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don't."

"What is the reason, what is the cause—when unbinding is there, and the path leading to unbinding is there, and Master Gotama is there as the guide—that when Master Gotama's disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by him, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don't?"

"In that case, brahman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Are you skilled in the road leading to Rājagaha?"

"Yes, sir, I am skilled in the road leading to Rājagaha."

"Now what do you think? There's the case where a man would come, wanting to go to Rājagaha. Having gone to you, he would say, 'I want to go to Rājagaha. Tell me the way to Rājagaha.' You would tell him, 'Well, my good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Go along it for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a village named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a town named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, lovely forests, lovely meadows, lovely ponds.' Having been thus exhorted & instructed by you, he would take a wrong road and arrive out west.

"Then a second man would come, wanting to go to Rājagaha. Having gone to you, he would say, 'I want to go to Rājagaha. Tell me the way to Rājagaha.' You would tell him, 'Well, my good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Go along it for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a village named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a town named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, lovely forests, lovely meadows, lovely ponds. Having been thus exhorted & instructed by you, he would arrive safely at Rājagaha. Now what is the reason, what is the cause—when Rājagaha is there, and the road leading to Rājagaha is there, and you are there as the guide—that when they are thus exhorted & instructed by you, the first man takes the wrong road and arrives out west, while the second man arrives safely at Rājagaha?"

"What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I'm the one who shows the way."

"In the same way, brahman—when unbinding is there, and the path leading to unbinding is there, and I am there as the guide—when my disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by me, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don't. What can I do about that, brahman? The Tathāgata is the one who shows the way." — *MN 107*

§ 20. Ven. Ānanda: "Suppose that there were a royal frontier city with strong ramparts, strong walls & arches, and a single gate. In it would be a wise, competent, & intelligent gatekeeper to keep out those he didn't know and to let in those he did. Walking along the path encircling the city, he wouldn't see a crack or an opening in the walls big enough for even a cat to slip through. Although he wouldn't know that 'So-&-so many creatures enter or leave the city,' he would know this: 'Whatever large creatures enter or leave the city all enter or leave it through this gate.'

"In the same way, the Tathāgata isn't concerned with whether all the cosmos or half of it or a third of it led (to release) by means of (his Dhamma). But he does know this: 'All those who have been led, are being led, or will be led (to release) from the cosmos have done so, are doing so, or will do so after having abandoned the five hindrances—those defilements of awareness that weaken discernment—having well-established their minds in the four establishings of mindfulness, and having developed, as they have come to be, the seven factors for awakening." — *AN 10:95*

*On the Middle Way*

§ 21. "And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, doesn't load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure.…

"And further, the monk notices this: 'When I live according to my pleasure, unskillful dhammas increase in me & skillful dhammas decline. When I exert myself with stress & pain, though, unskillful dhammas decline in me & skillful dhammas increase. Why don't I exert myself with stress & pain?' So he exerts himself with stress & pain, and while he is exerting himself with stress & pain, unskillful dhammas decline in him, & skillful dhammas increase. Then at a later time he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain. That is why, at a later time, he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain.

"Suppose a fletcher were to heat & warm an arrow shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Then at a later time he would no longer heat & warm the shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was

heating & warming the shaft. That is why at a later time he would no longer heat & warm the shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable.

"In the same way, the monk notices this: 'When I live according to my pleasure, unskillful dhammas increase in me & skillful dhammas decline. When I exert myself with stress & pain, though, unskillful dhammas decline in me & skillful dhammas increase. Why don't I exert myself with stress & pain?' So he exerts himself with stress & pain, and while he is exerting himself with stress & pain, unskillful dhammas decline in him, & skillful dhammas increase. Then at a later time he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain. That is why, at a later time, he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain.

"This is how striving is fruitful, how exertion is fruitful." — *MN 101*

§ 22. "When touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, were to shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pains of two arrows, in the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental.

"As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is resistant. Any resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he delights in sensuality. Why is that? Because the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person does not discern any escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is delighting in sensuality, any passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling. As he does not discern the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling, then any ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

"Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a

feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it as though joined with it. This is called an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person joined with birth, aging, & death; with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is joined, I tell you, with suffering & stress.

"Now, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones, when touched with a feeling of pain, does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. So he feels one pain: physical, but not mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, did not shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pain of only one arrow, in the same way, when touched with a feeling of pain, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. He feels one pain: physical, but not mental.

"As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is not resistant. No resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he does not delight in sensuality. Why is that? Because the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns an escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is not delighting in sensuality, no passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He discerns, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling. As he discerns the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling, no ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

"Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. This is called a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones disjoined from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is disjoined, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"This is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing factor between the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones and the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person." — *SN 36:6*

§ 23. Sister Dhammadinnā: "Passion-obsession is to be abandoned with regard to pleasant feeling. Resistance-obsession is to be abandoned with

regard to painful feeling. Ignorance-obsession is to be abandoned with regard to neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling."

Visākha: "Is passion-obsession to be abandoned with regard to all pleasant feeling? Is resistance-obsession to be abandoned with regard to all painful feeling? Is ignorance-obsession to be abandoned with regard to all neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "No.… There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With that he abandons passion. No passion-obsession gets obsessed there. There is the case where a monk considers, 'O when will I enter & remain in the dimension that those who are noble now enter & remain in?' And as he thus nurses this yearning for the unexcelled liberations, there arises within him sorrow based on that yearning. With that he abandons resistance. No resistance-obsession gets obsessed there. There is the case where a monk, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. With that he abandons ignorance. No ignorance-obsession gets obsessed there." — *MN 44*

§ 24. "There are four devotions to pleasure, Cunda, that are base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable, that do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, or unbinding. Which four?

"There is the case where a certain fool finds pleasure & rapture for himself in killing living beings… there is the case where a certain person finds pleasure & rapture for himself in taking what is not given… there is the case where a certain person finds pleasure & rapture for himself in telling lies… there is the case where a certain person goes about endowed & provided with the five strings of sensuality…

"These are the four devotions to pleasure, Cunda, that are base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable, that do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, or unbinding.

"Now, it's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'The Sakyan-son contemplatives live devoted to these four devotions to pleasure.' They are to be told, 'Not so!' They would not be speaking rightly of you. They would be slandering you with what is unfactual & untrue.

"There are four devotions to pleasure, Cunda, that lead exclusively to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, & unbinding. Which four?

"There is the case where a monk, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.…

"Further, Cunda, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, the monk enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance.…

"Further, Cunda, with the fading of rapture, the monk remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' …

"Further, Cunda, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—the monk enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.…

"These are the four devotions to pleasure that lead exclusively to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, & unbinding.

"Now, it's possible, Cunda, that wanderers of other sects might say, 'The Sakyan-son contemplatives live devoted to these four devotions to pleasure.' They are to be told, 'That is so!' They would be speaking rightly of you. They would not be slandering you with what is unfactual & untrue.

"It's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'Living devoted to these four devotions to pleasure, friends, what fruits, what rewards can be expected?'

"The wanderers of other sects saying that are to be told, 'Living devoted to these four devotions to pleasure, friends, four fruits, four rewards can be

expected. Which four?

"'Friends, there is the case where a monk, with the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, is a stream-enterer, certain, never again destined for the lower realms, headed for self-awakening. This is the first fruit, the first reward.

"'Further, friends, the monk—with the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion—is a once-returner; who, on returning only once more to this world, will make an ending to stress. This is the second fruit, the second reward.

"'Further, the monk—with the wasting away of the five lower fetters—is due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to totally unbind, destined never again to return from that world. This is the third fruit, the third reward.

"'Further, the monk—with the ending of effluents—enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized it for himself right in the here-&-now.

"'Living devoted to these four devotions to pleasure, friends, these four fruits, these four rewards can be expected.'" — *DN 29*

§ 25. "And which is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk remains focused on unattractiveness with regard to the body, percipient of loathsomeness in food, percipient of distaste for every world, (and) focused on inconstancy with regard to all fabrications. The perception of death is well established within him. He dwells in dependence on these five strengths of one in training—strength of conviction, strength of a sense of shame, strength of a sense of compunction, strength of persistence, & strength of discernment—and these five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.…

"And which is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness,

neither pleasure nor pain. He dwells in dependence on these five strengths of one in training—strength of conviction, strength of a sense of shame, strength of a sense of compunction, strength of persistence, & strength of discernment—and these five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition." — *AN 4:163*

CHAPTER TWO

# *The Arising of the Path*

In the phrase, "noble eightfold path," the Pāli word translated as "eightfold" —*aṭṭhaṅgika*—literally means "eight-factored," "eight-part," or "eight-limbed." The eight factors, parts, or limbs of the path are these: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. As we noted in the previous chapter, these factors all assist one another in becoming right to the point of forming a noble path. In other words, none of them are fully noble and right until they all are. But to reach that point, they have to help one another, even when not fully right, to approach greater rightness until they all fall into place.

It's for this reason that when the Buddha speaks of the arising of the noble eightfold path, he does so in two senses. In the ultimate sense, he is referring to the stage in the practice when all eight factors are fully right, leading immediately to the first noble attainment, a level of awakening called stream-entry because the mind is now ensured that it will inevitably reach full awakening, just as the water in a stream leading to the ocean will eventually arrive at the ocean.

In a preliminary sense, though, the Buddha also speaks of the arising of the noble eightfold path to refer to the very beginning stage in the practice, as you consciously start to develop the factors. This is the sense of the word that will be discussed in this chapter.

The texts equate the holy life taught by the Buddha with the noble eightfold path, and speak of it as containing neither lack nor excess (DN 29). But the factors of the path don't arise in a vacuum. They require supplementary factors—both within your mind and in the way you live your life—to foster their arising.

There is no single passage in the Canon listing all these supplementary factors as a set, but they can be gathered from various passages where the

Buddha describes:

• what qualities he is looking for in a student, such as truthfulness and the ability to be observant (§31);

• what internal quality necessarily underlies the arising of skillful actions in body, speech, and mind, i.e., heedfulness (§36);

• what factors give rise to right view, the first factor of the path, i.e., the voice of another and appropriate attention (§32);

• an exercise in reflection that, in engendering a sense of dismay and urgency (*saṁvega*), causes the path to arise (§38); and

• what factors signal the arising of the path (§35).

This last set of texts appears in the Magga Saṁyutta, SN 45, a section of the Canon devoted to short suttas about the path. Many of the supplementary factors listed in this set of texts seem to be referring to the arising of the path in its ultimate sense, because they are actually different ways of expressing the actual path-factors: View-consummation, for instance, obviously refers to the perfection of right view; virtue-consummation, to the perfection of right speech, right action, and right livelihood. But other supplementary factors in this set do seem to be preliminary to the initial step of embarking on the path: heedfulness, appropriate attention, and admirable friendship.

Eliminating redundancies in all the above lists, we can arrive at the following two lists of supplementary internal and external factors:

• Internal factors: truthfulness, the ability to be observant, heedfulness, urgency, and appropriate attention.

• External factors: admirable friendship and the voice of another.

*Truthfulness* is primarily the willingness to be truthful in reporting your conduct to your teachers and fellow practitioners, but it is paired with the ability to be truthful to yourself. If you can't admit your faults to yourself, you won't be able to admit them to others. And if you can't admit them to others, you tend to hide them from yourself.

*The ability to be observant* is frequently mentioned in the texts but, surprisingly, rarely explained. The few passages that depict its meaning in action point to the capacity to see the connections between your own actions and their results, and to detect subtle levels of suffering and stress in those results. In this way, the ability to be observant is connected to

appropriate attention, below, and through appropriate attention to right view.

*Heedfulness* is the ability not to remain complacent about your attainments. As long as you see that there are still sources of suffering in the mind, you exert yourself to act in whatever way necessary to ward off the dangers to which they could lead.

*Urgency (saṁvega)* is a sense of chastened dismay over the pointlessness of life as it is ordinarily lived, combined with a sense of urgency to escape from this pointlessness.

*Appropriate attention (yoniso manasikāra)* is the habit of asking yourself the right questions. On the transcendent level, this means asking questions in terms of the four noble truths and their duties—detecting, say, when there is clinging to a particular aggregate, and investigating how that fact can be comprehended. In the beginning levels, though, appropriate attention means focusing on questions concerning your own actions and their results, looking for ways to reduce the harm and suffering caused by your actions, and avoiding questions that would direct your attention elsewhere. This quality thus works hand in hand with heedfulness, in that both are based on a conviction in the efficacy of action.

*Admirable friendship* is a quality with a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to the friends you choose. In particular, you want to look for friends who embody the principles of conviction, virtue, generosity, and discernment. On the other hand, it refers to the quality of the friendship: You try to emulate those qualities in yourself (§42). To aid in emulating these qualities, the Buddha recommends that when you have found a friend who embodies them, you should treat that friend with utmost respect (§43).

*The voice of another* is rarely mentioned in the Canon, and never explained. As a result, many explanations for the term have been suggested over the centuries. Primarily, it seems to mean the voice of an admirable friend teaching Dhamma, but it could also refer to the voice of a person expressing a view that is not Dhamma: You listen to it with appropriate attention and, in detecting what's wrong with it, you articulate for yourself what would actually be right view.

These supplementary factors support one another. On the internal level, heedfulness and urgency give a sense of urgency to appropriate attention

and to your powers of observation, and inspire you to be truthful; truthfulness allows appropriate attention to be accurate in detecting areas of your actions that still need work; and appropriate attention keeps heedfulness and truthfulness focused on that task at hand, while balancing the terror of urgency with a sense of confidence that there is a way out through developing skill in your actions.

Admirable friendship as an external factor also influences your internal factors. In teaching you generosity, for instance, it helps you to overcome the stinginess that, as §34 notes, can get in the way of right concentration and the higher attainments. In teaching you discernment, it encourages appropriate attention and heedfulness.

The internal factors also play a role in making the external factors possible. Truthfulness is what allows you to detect a person of integrity who could act as an admirable friend (§44), and it—together with the ability to be observant—is what would inspire an admirable friend to develop a friendship with you. Even the Buddha, as an admirable friend, did not want to take on a student who lacked these two qualities.

As these supplementary factors develop, they not only provide the conditions to support the path, but some of them actually develop into path-factors. Appropriate attention and the ability to be observant develop into right view; the ability to be observant combined with truthfulness develops into alertness, one of the sub-factors of right mindfulness; truthfulness develops into right speech; and heedfulness and urgency become two of the motivating factors for generating the desire to engage in right effort.

Two sets of texts from the Canon are especially helpful in showing how these supplementary factors assist one another in giving rise to the path, at the same time showing some further qualities that they engender when developed together. The first set of texts consists of those in which the Buddha tells of his own quest for awakening, when he was still a Bodhisatta—a Buddha-to-be. The second set consists of two connected lines of instructions that the Buddha gave to his son, Rāhula, when the latter was still a young child.

**The Buddha's autobiography.** In telling his own story (§§26–30), the Buddha was not motivated by the desire, common at present, to simply tell

"what it felt like to be me." He gives very few details of his personal life, mentioning his luxurious and refined upbringing simply to prove that when he talks of the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, he's talking from experience. Aside from that detail, he recounts only the events and decisions of universal import. He tells his story as a way of teaching Dhamma that others can apply in their own lives, regardless of race, gender, or cultural or economic background. And the lessons in Dhamma begin with the role that many of the supplementary factors for the path played in his own search for awakening.

His original impulse to seek awakening was inspired by a sense of heedfulness, realizing that he had been complacent in his search for happiness, and that a life devoted to the pursuit of things subject to aging, illness, and death was a life wasted. Later, in reflecting on this realization, he compared the arising of heedfulness to the act of sobering up from an intoxication.

Heedfulness grew to urgency when he reflected on the pointless conflict of life around him. In this way, his movement from heedfulness to urgency parallels the contemplation in §38, where contemplating one's own mortality gives rise to heedfulness, and contemplating the universality of mortality gives rise to the terror of urgency.

This sense of urgency was followed by a quality that is not given a name in the Buddha's autobiographical accounts, but which other suttas call confidence *(pasāda):* the uplifting belief that it is possible, through developing skillfulness, to find a way to the deathless.

The way consisted of applying his powers of observation to his actions, posing questions in terms of appropriate attention, and in being truthful in answering those questions. This quality of truthfulness was particularly dramatic in his decision to abandon his austerities. Even though he had devoted six years to those austerities, enduring extreme hardship, he did not allow his pride to obscure the fact that that path had been a mistake. At the same time, he was able to use the questions of appropriate attention to understand where exactly the austerities were unskillful. As we learn from reading §30 together with SN 42:12, he realized that the problem lay, not in the pain, but in the fact that he had pursued his punishing course to the extent of weakening his body beyond the point where his mind could enter right concentration.

In this way, the Buddha's autobiographical accounts are an excellent lesson in the power of action, and in how to put his later teachings on action to good use. He frames his search for the deathless as a search for what is skillful. In other words, the very nature of an act of search means that one is convinced of the power of action, and wants to find which actions will help the search succeed. At every step where the Bodhisatta entered a new phase of his search, the impulse to change came from asking himself, in effect, "I am not getting the results I want. Why am I doing this? What if I tried doing that instead?" In some cases, "that" turned out to be a mistake—spectacularly in the case of his austerities. But he never lost his confidence that a skillful way could be found—a lesson that applies to all who follow in his footsteps.

Another lesson that can be drawn from the Bodhisatta's story is the way he uses the supplementary factors leading to the path so that they reinforce one another. His heedfulness and sense of urgency motivate the truthfulness with which he observes his actions, applying the questions of appropriate attention, which sharpen his heedfulness and force him to be ever more truthful. In fact, these factors become so mutually supportive that they begin to blend into one another and form a seamless whole.

The one supplementary factor missing in the Bodhisatta's story is that of admirable friendship. In fact, the story shows the drawbacks of not being able to find admirable friends, and of living with people who know nothing of the goal or how to reach it. His two teachers were complacent in teaching no further than the formless concentration attainments. The five brethren who attended to the Bodhisatta during his austerities encouraged him in that direction and abandoned him with disgust right at the point where he actually got on the path.

The Bodhisatta was able to compensate for this lack of admirable friendship by being exactingly truthful in observing his actions, and by developing two strong forms of heedfulness: discontent with skillful actions —i.e., an unwillingness to rest content with anything but the deathless; and the determination to reduce his body to nothing but skin, tendons, and bones if he had not reached the highest goal attainable through human striving (§26). In this way, he discovered the middle way through a level of heedfulness that was anything but moderate. And even though the Buddha later recommended that his followers develop the same degree of

heedfulness and determination, their path is considerably lightened by the fact that he survived his search, and succeeded, so that he could act as an admirable friend to give confidence and guidance to all who embark on the noble search in his wake.

**The instructions to Rāhula.** The role of admirable friendship in promoting the supplementary factors of the path is well illustrated in the Buddha's instructions to his son when—according to the Commentary—the latter was only seven years old (§45). Of the various supplementary factors we have been discussing, only saṁvega doesn't enter into the discussion, perhaps because it would have been inappropriate for a child of Rāhula's age, or perhaps because of Rāhula's personality in general. The Vinaya (Mv.I.54) tells us that one of the reasons Rāhula ordained as a young novice was that he liked being near his father. The instructions in §45 show how the Buddha made use of this emotional connection to spur Rāhula on the path.

In §45, the Buddha's most obvious role as admirable friend is as instructor, telling Rāhula how to develop the supplementary factors in practice. In essence, he is showing Rāhula how to develop the qualities that he elsewhere (§31) said he looked for in a student: truthfulness and powers of observation.

The Buddha's instructions fall into two lines of questioning. The first focuses on the issue of truthfulness, making the point that one's quality as a contemplative devoted to the training of the mind depends on being truthful, feeling a sense of shame at the idea of telling a lie, and as a result not telling a lie even in jest. This quality of truthfulness then provides the foundation for the second line of questions, which show how to develop one's powers of observation. Rāhula will have to be truthful to himself in observing his actions—and particularly his mistakes—and truthful to his teacher or another fellow contemplative in asking for counsel when he observes that he has committed a mistake in word or deed.

The Buddha recommends to Rāhula that he sharpen his powers of observation by applying appropriate attention to his actions, beginning with the stage when he is intending to act, then while he is acting, and finally when the action is done. This examination applies to actions in body, speech, and mind. The Buddha recommends heedfulness by warning

Rāhula that if, at the stage of intention, he sees that an action would harm himself or others, such an action should absolutely not be done; if, at the stage of performing the act, he sees that it is actually causing harm, he should stop then and there; and if, after the act is done, he sees that it actually caused harm, then if it was an act in word or deed, he should confess it to his teacher or to a fellow contemplative. If it was an act in thought, he should simply develop a sense of shame around the act. In both cases, he should then resolve to exercise restraint in the future—i.e., not to repeat the mistake. However, if, after reflecting on his action, he saw that it caused no harm, he should take joy in the fact—to sustain his confidence both in himself and in the path—and be heedful to continue training in skillful actions, day and night. The element of joy here is important, because it's what healthy shame and honor are for: to encourage you to taste the benefits of skillful actions. When you've tasted this joy for yourself, the standards of the wise become your own.

The reference to a wise friend to whom Rāhula can confess his misdeeds—and possibly ask for advice on how not to repeat them—shows the second role of an admirable friend in developing these supplementary qualities: someone you trust not to condemn you for your mistakes, but to give wise recommendations instead.

As for the primary elements in admirable friendship—an admirable person worth emulating on the one hand, and the desire to emulate him/her on the other—§45 doesn't portray the Buddha in terms of all the qualities to look for in an admirable friend, but it does show him exemplifying one of them: his discernment. He illustrates his points with vivid similes appropriate to Rāhula's age, and he manages to impart, in a few brief instructions on how to learn from one's mistakes, several important Dhamma lessons:

• To begin with, by telling Rāhula to gauge his actions by his intentions, the Buddha is teaching Rāhula a point that he makes elsewhere, that the action lies in the intention (§57). In other words, both skillful actions and unskillful actions are rooted in the mind, rather than in outside conditions. You are responsible for what you choose to do. Even if you try to act without care for the consequences, that doesn't escape the fact that you intended to act, and the actual consequences of the act will be influenced by the mind-state underlying the intention. Unskillful actions are rooted in

greed, aversion, or delusion; skillful actions, in intentions free of those three states of mind (§130).

• By telling Rāhula to gauge his actions not only by his intentions but also by their results, he is making the point that mere well-meaning intentions are not enough to be skillful. Skillfulness requires that they also have to be based on lack of delusion as to their consequences.

• By telling Rāhula to judge the results of his actions both while he is doing them and after they are done, he is preparing Rāhula to grasp the basic principle of causality that lies at the basis of fabrication, which states in essence that experience is comprised of a complex interaction of the results of past actions combined with present actions and their results. (See the discussion of this point in the next chapter.)

• At the same time, the Buddha teaches Rāhula the three qualities that are essential to right mindfulness: mindfulness in keeping in mind at all times the appropriate questions to ask about his actions; alertness in examining his intentions and the results of his actions; and ardency in the desire to keep training day and night in skillful qualities in body, speech, and mind.

The Buddha's skill and discernment as a teacher is displayed in the way he can convey all these lessons in the way he frames a few brief questions to his son.

As for the motivation to emulate an admirable friend, the Buddha's instructions to Rāhula highlight an emotion that is poorly understood and rarely appreciated at present: the emotion of shame. This is not the debilitating shame that's the opposite of self-esteem. Instead, it's the healthy shame that's the opposite of shamelessness and accompanies a high sense of personal honor. It's healthy in that it spurs you to act in a skillful way, and to find joy in being skillful. In this way, the shame the Buddha recommends is a corollary of high rather than low self-esteem. It's a mark of honor in the best sense of the word.

Honor is, in essence, the sense that one is worthy of respect. Like shame, it begins with the desire to look good in the eyes of others. Now, the Buddha had shown by example that the esteem of others, in general, was nothing to be trusted. In his own search for awakening, he didn't let himself get waylaid by the praise of his teachers or the criticism of the five brethren. After all, he was following a code of honor different from theirs: He was

engaged in the noble search (§17), whose standards were more stringent in aiming at nothing less than the deathless.

After his awakening, though, he realized that the problem with honor lay, not with wanting to look good in the eyes of others, but with wanting to look good in the eyes of the wrong people. A desire for the esteem of unprincipled people can lead you astray, but a desire for the esteem of those who are wise—admirable friends who are engaged in the noble search or have reached its goal—can be a spur to act wisely yourself. After all, without the Buddha as a noble friend, none of his disciples would have known of the path. And, in teaching them the path, the Buddha was training them to become admirable friends as well. In this way, admirable friendship is what keeps the path alive.

This explains why the Buddha often recommended, as a useful motivation along the path, the desire to look good in the eyes of the noble ones. In §61, the famous Kālāma Sutta, he recommends judging actions as to whether they are praised or criticized by the wise. In §217, he tells monks that if they are thinking thoughts of sensuality, ill will, or harmfulness—wrong resolves—they should remember that in the world there are human beings and devas who can read minds, and that such beings would look down on them for thinking those thoughts. This should then spur them to abandon what is unskillful and bring their minds to concentration.

In §216, he makes reference to a custom mentioned often in the Vinaya (see Pārājika 4): When a monk was on his deathbed, his fellow monks would ask him if he had attained any superior human state—the jhānas or the noble attainments—and, if so, to set his mind on that state. The reflection in §216 is meant to provoke a sense of honor and shame as a spur to practice in preparation for this event: "Do I have any such attainment so that I won't be abashed when asked at that point?" In all these passages, the Buddha recommends developing a desire to look good in the eyes of the wise to foster a sense of shame and honor that will incite the heedfulness needed to make further progress on the path.

In the instructions to Rāhula, the Buddha mentions shame explicitly in two contexts: Rāhula should develop shame at the thought of telling a deliberate lie, and he should develop shame around any unskillful mental actions in which he has engaged. But the issue of honor and shame is also

implicit in the analogies the Buddha uses to illustrate his points. This is most obvious in the image of looking in a mirror: People look into mirrors to see how they appear in the eyes of others. In this case, the Buddha tells Rāhula to look at his actions in the same way. In other words, Rāhula should be concerned, not with how his face appears to others, but with how his actions look to the wise, for that is how the wise will judge him: by the extent to which, in his thoughts, words, and deeds, he tries to avoid afflicting others as well as himself.

The image of the empty dipper expands on this point. If Rāhula tells a deliberate lie with no sense of shame, this is how he looks to the wise: empty, hollow, with his goodness thrown away.

Even the image of the elephant is a lesson in honor—in the Buddha's sense of the word. At first glance, it might seem that the elephant who doesn't protect his trunk and has given his life to the king would be a positive image. After all, that's what a king would want in an elephant, and it exemplifies the kind of behavior that's often viewed as honorable in warrior cultures. But the Buddha actually presents the image in a negative light: The elephant's willingness to risk its trunk is a sign of its servility to the king. In this way, the Buddha is telling Rāhula that being heedful to protect his truthfulness—in the same way that the other elephant protects his trunk—is a point of genuine honor: a sign that he is a servant to no one, neither to anyone outside nor to defilements inside.

This inversion of the old military sense of honor is echoed in the Buddha's comment (§185) that better than victory in battle over a thousand-thousand men is victory over one person: yourself. It is also echoed in the story of Sakka's gaining victory over Vepacitti by recommending restraint, rather than the use of force, in dealing with a fool (§186).

By prefacing his remarks on shame and honor with the principle of truthfulness, the Buddha is heading off a potential conflict between the two ideals. There might have been the danger, if Rāhula hoped to look good in the eyes of the wise, that he would not want them to see his mistakes. But given the importance of truthfulness, the Buddha is making the point that making a mistake is less shameful than making a mistake and then trying to hide it. The honorable course—and the course that leads to progress on

the path—is to be open about your mistakes, both to others and to yourself. That's how you can learn.

At the same time, the Buddha shows Rāhula that the purpose of telling the wise about his mistakes was not simply to hear their judgment of what he had done wrong, but also to get their advice on how to get it right the next time around. This means that the wise are to be known not only by the standards by which they judge your actions, but also by their motivation for judging them: to help you become more skillful in the future. This is how they express their genuine goodwill: not in trying to make you feel good about your errors, but in helping you learn how not to repeat them. That way, you'll be able to taste the joy that comes with knowing that your actions are harmless—a joy that goes deeper than mere self-acceptance, and that allows your integrity to become more self-reliant. Your need to look good in the eyes of the wise lessens as your own eyes become more and more wise.

As we will see when we discuss the factors of the noble eightfold path in detail, the standards by which the wise judge your actions relate to right view, and their purpose in judging relates to right resolve. As you internalize their values, you develop in these two path-factors as well.

The Buddha's instructions in training Rāhula to be the kind of student he wanted eventually bore fruit: Instead of taking pride in the fact that he was the Buddha's son, Rāhula showed a willingness to learn from all the monks. And after he gained awakening, the Buddha extolled him for being foremost among the monks in his desire for training. Of course, Rāhula at that point had no need for the Buddha's praise, as he had already found a deathless happiness that was beyond the reach of other people's respect. Instead, the Buddha was praising Rāhula for the sake of posterity, to show that shame and honor can be useful tools on the path.

So in the Buddha's first instructions to Rāhula, we see how admirable friendship as an external factor fosters the internal factors needed both for getting onto the path and for staying there all the way to the end. These instructions are also distinctive in highlighting the uses of a healthy sense of shame and honor: qualities that not only serve as supplementary factors in getting onto the path, but also help to internalize the factors of right view and right resolve. And as we will see in Chapter 8, they are useful attitudes for generating the desire needed to engage in right effort. In this

way, they function as part of the cluster of interacting qualities that give rise to the path and nurture its continuing development.

**The path-factors & their relationships.** Once these supplementary factors reach sufficient strength, they give rise to the proper factors of the path. As noted above, in some cases the supplementary factors blend into the path-factors themselves as, for example, appropriate attention becomes right view, heedfulness, shame, and urgency become part of right effort, and powers of observation become alertness under right mindfulness. At the same time, the dynamic among the supplementary factors—in which they are mutually reinforcing to the point of shading into one another—repeats among the path-factors themselves.

This point is not apparent from the standard exposition of the path-factors, which simply lists them, one through eight, or in the suttas setting forth a simple linear progression among the arising of the factors, with right view leading to right resolve, right resolve to right speech, and so on down the line to right concentration (§47). However, there are many other suttas that, in the course of discussing the path-factors, either show alternative relationships among them or raise questions that the standard linear exposition can't explain. Four issues, in particular, stand out:

1) Some suttas show that many of the factors, instead of leading directly to awakening, can lead simply to a good rebirth. Thus, instead of acting as transcendent kamma—neither bright nor dark, in the terms of §58—they function as bright kamma: leading to happiness on the mundane level in this life and the next. One prominent instance is the standard description of the Buddha's second knowledge on the night of his awakening, where he sees beings who act on right view gaining rebirth in good destinations (§30), rather than being unbound. Another passage is §309, which describes a person who has developed a peaceful awareness release, equivalent to right concentration, but doesn't have enough right effort or right view to work further to end the ignorance that underlies all suffering. A simple, linear understanding of the path-factors, in which one factor automatically leads to the succeeding factors, can't explain passages like these.

2) Similarly, there are other explanations of the path in which the factors occur in a different order. Prominent among these are the Dhamma talks

that the Buddha gave on the triple training in the last year of his life (§51), in which he states that concentration fostered with virtue has great fruit and great rewards, as does discernment fostered with concentration. This puts the factors in this order: virtue (right speech, right action, and right livelihood), concentration (right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration), and discernment (right view and right resolve) (§50).

This divergence from the list of factors in the standard description of the noble eightfold path, where right view and right resolve come first, can be explained by passages that insist on a mutually reinforcing relationship among the factors, saying, for example, that jhāna needs discernment just as discernment needs jhāna (§53), or that discernment and virtue need each other in order to be purified (§52). In other words, all the factors start out weak, but support one another until they all reach enough strength to lead to awakening. This is an explanation that the Buddha himself suggests by the image of the rafters of a roof being unstable until they are firmly connected by the ridge beam of discernment (SN 48:52). This explanation makes perfect practical sense, but no strict linear understanding of the factors could provide it.

3) There is also the question of how, if the factors have to arise in linear order, a person could gain awakening on listening to a Dhamma talk. There would be no opportunity for such a person to practice right speech or right livelihood, and not enough time to master right concentration, if none of these factors could exist without the right view that he or she gained on listening to the talk.

4) Finally, there is the question raised by §319, which states that the noble eightfold path is identical to the stream of stream-entry, which is the first level of awakening. If this is the case, then how does a stream-enterer's path differ from that of a person who reaches full awakening as an arahant? An explanation that limits the path-factors to eight cannot answer this question.

MN 117 (§48) provides an alternative explanation of the path-factors, however, that addresses many of these issues, giving some sense of the complexity of the relationships among the factors of the path. In fact, the picture it presents is so complex that it's easy to understand why the Buddha presented the factors more frequently in simple linear order. The simpler exposition is easier to memorize and understand; the more

complex exposition then builds on the simpler exposition to present a more nuanced portrait of the practice. Even then, though, the picture provided by MN 117 is incomplete, in that it sketches an outline that it doesn't completely fill in. Still, it provides enough information to give a more practical sense of what the path involves, at the same time offering some resolution to the above four questions.

1) To address the issue of the mundane and transcendent results of the path-factors, it divides each of the first five factors into two versions: mundane on the one hand, and noble and transcendent on the other. In the case of right resolve, right speech, right action, and right livelihood, the definition of the mundane factor is identical with the definition of that factor in the standard list (§46). At the same time, only right resolve among these factors is given a transcendent/noble version that differs appreciably from its standard definition, a point that we will discuss under question (2), below. For the other factors, the transcendent/noble version simply states that once the path as a whole becomes transcendent, these factors become transcendent as well.

In the case of right view, though, the standard definition becomes the transcendent/noble level of right view, whereas the mundane level of right view consists of right view about kamma and rebirth.

This way of recasting the factors helps to explain why the path-factors lead to mundane results in some instances, and to transcendent results in others. The deciding factor in this difference is right view. If concentration, for instance, is developed under the influence of mundane right view, the results will be mundane; if under the influence of transcendent right view, the results will be transcendent. This point is not explicitly made in MN 117, which simply defines noble right concentration as any singleness of mind equipped with the seven other factors of the path. This definition suggests, but does not state outright, that right concentration will be mundane if the other factors are mundane, and transcendent if they are transcendent.

This suggestion is made somewhat more explicit by the Canon's only other reference to noble right concentration, in AN 5:28 (§296). That sutta's explanation of noble right concentration gives it a fifth factor in addition to the four jhānas, illustrating the fifth factor with a simile indicating that it involves backing away slightly from the concentration and

observing it. AN 9:36 (§312) fleshes out the meaning of this simile by showing that the process of observation has to involve appropriate attention. In other words, you apply right view to comprehend the component factors of the concentration. AN 5:28 then concludes that when this process is mastered, concentration will lead to release. This means that if the terms of appropriate attention in that fifth factor deal in transcendent right view, the concentration will have a transcendent result.

2) To address the issue of the interrelationship among the factors, MN 117 makes two points. (a) Each right factor depends on a combination of three other factors "circling around" it: right view, right mindfulness, and right effort. Right view knows the right and wrong versions of the factor; right mindfulness—in contrast to the popular understanding of mindfulness as non-reactive acceptance—remembers to abandon the wrong version of the factor and to develop the right; and right effort actually does the work of doing what right mindfulness reminds it to do. In this way, every factor contains a cluster of other factors helping it along, and the image of "circling" suggests a feedback loop, in which the work of right effort helps to develop right view and raise it to a higher level.

(b) The transcendent version of right resolve is defined in such a way as to equate it with the first jhāna: For instance, the "verbal fabrications" listed in the definition are the factors of directed thought and evaluation present in the first jhāna. This interpretation is seconded by §164, which states that the first jhāna is where unskillful resolves cease without trace; and that the second jhāna, in which directed thought and evaluation are stilled, brings about the cessation of even skillful resolves. In this way, right resolve, which is one of the discernment factors, becomes part of right concentration, and vice versa. Their mutual support becomes so thoroughgoing that the line between them gets erased.

So these are two of the ways in which MN 117 portrays the interrelationships among the factors of the path to indicate that they need one another to develop fully.

3) The distinction between mundane and transcendent factors of the path also provides an explanation for why a person can gain awakening by listening to a Dhamma talk, for they show that it's possible for people to have developed a mundane version of all the factors while lacking simply the transcendent versions of the discernment factors. Once these people

learn transcendent right view, their minds will enter the first jhāna and—because the other factors have all been developed—reach awakening.

4) MN 117 goes on to state that, whereas the path of the stream-enterer has eight factors, the path of the arahant has ten: The two additional factors are right knowledge and right release. Unfortunately, the sutta doesn't define those two added factors, and the testimony from the rest of the Canon on these factors is sketchy. Perhaps the Buddha felt that once stream-entry was attained, the disciple would now know the path and be able to develop it for him- or herself in a way that produces the remaining two factors, as he suggests at the end of MN 117.

So MN 117 provides answers for many of the questions that other suttas in the Canon raise about the standard exposition of the path. Still, there are some areas where its explanations need further fleshing out, and a few important points about the path, as reported in other suttas, that it doesn't touch on at all.

• Although it clearly defines the wrong version of each of the first five factors of the path, it doesn't provide definitions of the wrong versions of the remaining three.

• Even though it provides an explanation of the reciprocal relationship among the factors, it only suggests that right view has something to learn from the other factors, without clearly stating that this is so. In fact, in line with the standard linear description of the path, it keeps repeating the point that right view comes first. This means that MN 117 doesn't fully make room for other versions of the practice—as outlined, for example, in the triple training or the five faculties—where discernment comes after all the other factors of the path.

• Although it clearly defines the mundane and transcendent/noble versions of right view and right resolve, it doesn't show the dynamic of how the mundane level leads to the transcendent level of each factor.

• At the same time, it doesn't provide an explanation for the handful of sutta passages indicating a level of right view that goes beyond transcendent right view on the verge of awakening when—given that even transcendent right view is fabricated—the mind executes a turn where it lets go of right view and all the other factors of the path to reach the unfabricated.

Of course, it's too much to expect any one sutta to provide a complete picture of the path. This is partly because there is only so much that can be said about the path, and far more that can be learned only by putting the path into practice. Even what *can* be said is far too extensive for any one sutta to cover it all. As the Buddha said in MN 12, even if he were questioned for 100 years just on the topic of right mindfulness, he wouldn't come to the end of the topic—and that's only one factor out of eight.

Still, there are other passages in the Canon—both in the suttas and in the Vinaya, or disciplinary rules—that help to explain the above four points, providing a detailed overview of the path that will provide added help in practice.

It's for these reasons that I have gathered these extra passages in this book. The following chapters will cover each path-factor in turn, followed by a chapter on the fruits of the path. Each chapter dealing with the path-factors will include passages from the Canon that not only flesh out the definition of the path-factor, but also:

—define the wrong version of the factor, where such passages exist;

—show what that factor has to learn from the other factors—and in particular, from right view—and how putting the factor into practice gives lessons to the other factors, including right view, helping them to advance to the transcendent level and beyond; and

—show what happens to the factor as the path approaches the point where it is so fully developed that it has to be abandoned in favor of the unfabricated.

In addition, for the factors of right view and right resolve, I will also include passages indicating how to reflect and behave in such a way as to progress from their mundane to their transcendent levels, and then from the transcendent levels to the stage where they are so fully developed that they can be abandoned as a last step in reaching the goal.

To provide a framework for understanding the passages, each chapter will begin with a discussion of the major themes surrounding the topic of the chapter. These discussions will also provide recommendations for how to read and understand some of the more obscure Canonical passages included there. Although these introductory discussions will focus primarily on the passages in the chapters they preface, they will also draw

on passages from other chapters, as a way of showing how the different path-factors are interrelated.

In discussing the interrelationships among the path-factors, the emphasis will be on the role of fabrication. On the one hand, this means pointing out the lessons that each factor receives about fabrication from right view. On the other, it means pointing out the practical lessons on the process of fabrication that the development of each factor offers to all the other factors—and in particular to right view, helping it to develop through all of its three levels: mundane, transcendent, and beyond.

This emphasis on fabrication as a key to the interconnected arising of the eight factors serves two purposes. One, in terms of interconnection, it shows how, in trying to skillfully fabricate a particular factor, you don't have to look at only the preceding factors on the path for help. Lessons can come from any direction, whether earlier or later in the standard description of the path.

Two, in terms of fabrication, the complex interrelationships among the factors illustrate the complex causal pattern that the Buddha says underlies all action, both on the external and internal levels. Although some people have complained about the complexity of the pattern, the act of trying to develop the path is where an understanding of the pattern shows its real utility. It's because of the complexity of action that the path can arise and be developed in the first place; and it's also because of the complexity of action that a fabricated path can become a noble path, by coming together in a fully developed form that leads to a noble, unfabricated goal.

## Readings

### *The Discovery of the Path*

§ 26. "Monks, I have known two dhammas through experience: discontent with regard to skillful dhammas and unrelenting exertion. Relentlessly I exerted myself, (thinking,) 'Gladly would I let the flesh & blood in my body dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if I have not attained what can be reached through human firmness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing my persistence.' From this heedfulness of mine was attained awakening. From this heedfulness of mine was attained the unexcelled freedom from bondage." — *AN 2:5*

§ 27. "Monks, I lived in refinement, utmost refinement, total refinement. My father even had lotus ponds made in our palace: one where red-lotuses bloomed, one where white lotuses bloomed, one where blue lotuses bloomed, all for my sake. I used no sandalwood that was not from Vārāṇasī. My turban was from Vārāṇasī, as were my tunic, my lower garments, & my outer cloak. A white sunshade was held over me day & night to protect me from cold, heat, dust, dirt, & dew.

"I had three palaces: one for the cold season, one for the hot season, one for the rainy season. During the four months of the rainy season I was entertained in the rainy-season palace by minstrels without a single man among them, and I did not once come down from the palace. Whereas the servants, workers, & retainers in other people's homes are fed meals of lentil soup & broken rice, in my father's home the servants, workers, & retainers were fed wheat, rice, & meat.

"Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: 'When an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to aging, not beyond aging, sees another who is aged, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to aging, not beyond aging. If I—who am subject to aging, not beyond aging—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is aged, that would not be fitting for me.' As I noticed this, the (typical) young person's intoxication with youth entirely dropped away.

"Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: 'When an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to illness, not beyond illness, sees another who is ill, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to illness, not beyond illness. And if I—who am subject to illness, not beyond illness—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is ill, that would not be fitting for me.' As I noticed this, the healthy person's intoxication with health entirely dropped away.

"Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: 'When an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to death, not beyond death, sees another who is dead, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to death, not beyond death. And if I—who am subject to death,

not beyond death—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is dead, that would not be fitting for me.' As I noticed this, the living person's intoxication with life entirely dropped away." — *AN 3:39*

§ 28. Look at people in strife.
I will tell how
I experienced
terror:
Seeing people floundering
like fish in small puddles,
competing with one another—
as I saw this,
fear came into me.
The world was entirely
without substance.
All the directions
were knocked out of line.
Wanting a haven for myself,
I saw nothing that wasn't laid claim to.
Seeing nothing in the end
but competition,
I felt discontent. — *Sn 4:15*

§ 29. "I, too, monks, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta, being subject myself to birth, sought what was likewise subject to birth. Being subject myself to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, sought (happiness in) what was likewise subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement. The thought occurred to me, 'Why do I, being subject myself to birth, seek what is likewise subject to birth? Being subject myself to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, why do I seek what is likewise subject to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement? What if I, being subject myself to birth, seeing the drawbacks of birth, were to seek the unborn, unexcelled rest from the yoke: unbinding? What if I, being subject myself to aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, seeing the drawbacks of aging… illness… death… sorrow… defilement, were to seek the aging-less, illness-less, deathless, sorrow-less, unexcelled rest from the yoke: unbinding?'

"So, at a later time, while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—and while my parents, unwilling, were crying with tears streaming down their faces—I shaved off my hair & beard, put on the ochre robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

"Having thus gone forth in search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I went to Āḷāra Kālāma and, on arrival, said to him: 'Friend Kālāma, I want to practice in this Dhamma & discipline.'

"When this was said, he replied to me, 'You may stay here, my friend. This Dhamma is such that an observant person can soon enter & dwell in his own teacher's knowledge, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge.'

"It was not long before I quickly learned that Dhamma. As far as mere lip-reciting & repetition, I could speak the words of knowledge, the words of the elders, and I could affirm that I knew & saw—I, along with others.

"I thought: 'It isn't through mere conviction alone that Āḷāra Kālāma declares, "I have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge." Certainly he dwells knowing & seeing this Dhamma.' So I went to him and said, 'To what extent do you declare that you have entered & dwell in this Dhamma?' When this was said, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

"I thought: 'Not only does Āḷāra Kālāma have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. I, too, have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. What if I were to endeavor to realize for myself the Dhamma that Āḷāra Kālāma declares he has entered & dwells in, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge.' So it was not long before I quickly entered & dwelled in that Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge. I went to him and said, 'Friend Kālāma, is this the extent to which you have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge?'

"'Yes, my friend.…'

"'This, friend, is the extent to which I, too, have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.'

"'It is a gain for us, my friend, a great gain for us, that we have such a companion in the holy life. So the Dhamma I declare I have entered & dwell in, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge. And the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma I declare I have entered & dwell in, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge. The Dhamma I know is the Dhamma you know; the Dhamma you know is the Dhamma I know. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come friend, let us now lead this community together.'

"In this way did Āḷāra Kālāma, my teacher, place me, his pupil, on the same level with himself and pay me great honor. But the thought occurred to me, 'This Dhamma leads not to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, nor to unbinding, but only to reappearance in the dimension of nothingness.' So, dissatisfied with that Dhamma, I left."

[The Bodhisatta then went to study with Uddaka Rāmaputta, who taught the next higher level of formless concentration: the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. The Bodhisatta attained that level of concentration, and Uddaka offered him the sole position as teacher. But again, seeing that the this attainment was not the deathless, the Bodhisatta left.] — *MN 26*

§ 30. "In search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I wandered by stages in the Magadhan country and came to the military town of Uruvelā. There I saw some delightful countryside, with an inspiring forest grove, a clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. The thought occurred to me: 'How delightful is this countryside, with its inspiring forest grove, clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. This is just right for the striving of a clansman intent on striving.' So I sat down right there, thinking, 'This is just right for striving.'

"Then these three similes—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying in the water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll

produce fire. I'll make heat appear.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying in the water?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, and besides it is lying in the water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment."

"So it is with any contemplative or brahman who does not live withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving (for awakening), he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the first simile—spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

"Then a second simile—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll produce fire. I'll make heat appear.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying on land far from water?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, even though it is lying on land far from water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment."

"So it is with any contemplative or brahman who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body only, but whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the second simile—spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

"Then a third simile—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a dry, sapless piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll produce fire. I'll make heat appear.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the dry, sapless timber lying on land?"

"Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is dry & sapless, and besides it is lying on land far from water."

"So it is with any contemplative or brahman who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is capable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the third simile —spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

"I thought: 'What if I, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, were to beat down, constrain, & crush my mind with my awareness?' So, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrained, & crushed my mind with my awareness. Just as a strong man, seizing a weaker man by the head or the throat or the shoulders, would beat him down, constrain, & crush him, in the same way I beat down, constrained, & crushed my mind with my awareness. As I did so, sweat poured from my armpits. And although tireless persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established, my body was aroused & uncalm because of the painful exertion. But the painful feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"I thought: 'What if I were to become absorbed in the trance of non-breathing?' So I stopped the in-breaths & out-breaths in my nose & mouth. As I did so, there was a loud roaring of winds coming out my earholes, just like the loud roar of winds coming out of a smith's bellows.… So I stopped the in-breaths & out-breaths in my nose & mouth & ears. As I did so, extreme forces sliced through my head, just as if a strong man were slicing my head open with a sharp sword.… Extreme pains arose in my head, just as if a strong man were tightening a turban made of tough leather straps around my head.… Extreme forces carved up my stomach cavity, just as if a butcher or his apprentice were to carve up the stomach cavity of an ox.… There was an extreme burning in my body, just as if two strong men, grabbing a weaker man by the arms, were to roast & broil him over a pit of hot embers. And although tireless persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established, my body was aroused & uncalm because of the painful exertion. But the painful feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"Devas, on seeing me, said, 'Gotama the contemplative is dead.' Other devas said, 'He isn't dead, he's dying.' Others said, 'He's neither dead nor

dying, he's an arahant, for this is the way arahants live.'

"I thought: 'What if I were to practice going altogether without food?' Then devas came to me and said, 'Dear sir, please don't practice going altogether without food. If you go altogether without food, we'll infuse divine nourishment in through your pores, and you will survive on that.' I thought, 'If I were to claim to be completely fasting while these devas are infusing divine nourishment in through my pores, I would be lying.' So I dismissed them, saying, 'Enough.'

"I thought: 'What if I were to take only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup?' So I took only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup. My body became extremely emaciated. Simply from my eating so little, my limbs became like the jointed segments of vine stems or bamboo stems.… My backside became like a camel's hoof.… My spine stood out like a string of beads.… My ribs jutted out like the jutting rafters of an old, run-down barn.… The gleam of my eyes appeared to be sunk deep in my eye sockets like the gleam of water deep in a well.… My scalp shriveled & withered like a green bitter gourd, shriveled & withered in the heat & the wind.… The skin of my belly became so stuck to my spine that when I thought of touching my belly, I grabbed hold of my spine as well; and when I thought of touching my spine, I grabbed hold of the skin of my belly as well.… If I urinated or defecated, I fell over on my face right there.… Simply from my eating so little, if I tried to ease my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair—rotted at its roots—fell from my body as I rubbed, simply from eating so little.

"People on seeing me would say, 'Gotama the contemplative is black. Other people would say, 'Gotama the contemplative isn't black, he's brown.' Others would say, 'Gotama the contemplative is neither black nor brown, he's golden-skinned.' So much had the clear, bright color of my skin deteriorated, simply from eating so little.

"I thought: 'Whatever contemplatives or brahmans in the past have felt painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None have been greater than this. Whatever contemplatives or brahmans in the future will feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None will be greater than this. Whatever contemplatives or brahmans in the present are feeling painful, racking, piercing feelings

due to their striving, this is the utmost. None is greater than this. But with this racking practice of austerities I haven't attained any superior human state, any distinction in knowledge or vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to awakening?'

"I thought: 'I recall once, when my father the Sakyan was working, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Could that be the path to awakening?' Then there was the consciousness following on that memory *[sat'anusari-viññāṇa]:* 'That is the path to awakening.' I thought: 'So why am I afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful dhammas?' I thought: 'I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful dhammas, but that pleasure is not easy to achieve with a body so extremely emaciated. Suppose I were to take some solid food: some rice & porridge.' So I took some solid food: some rice & porridge. Now, five monks had been attending on me, thinking, 'If Gotama, our contemplative, achieves some higher state, he will tell us.' But when they saw me taking some solid food—some rice & porridge—they were disgusted and left me, thinking, 'Gotama the contemplative is living luxuriously. He has abandoned his exertion and is backsliding into abundance.'

"So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the fading of rapture I remained in equanimity, mindful & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the

earlier disappearance of joy & distress—I entered & remained in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two… five, ten… fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion: 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.

"This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings. I saw—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, & mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech & mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destinations, a heavenly world.' Thus—by means of the divine eye,

purified & surpassing the human—I saw beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma.

"This was the second knowledge I attained in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the ending of effluents. I discerned, as it had come to be, that *'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the way leading to the cessation of stress… These are effluents… This is the origination of effluents… This is the cessation of effluents… This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.'* My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there was the knowledge, 'Released.' I discerned that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.

"This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.'" — *MN 36*

*Supplementary Factors*

§ 31. "Let an observant person come—one who is not fraudulent, not deceitful, one of a straightforward nature. I instruct him. I teach him the Dhamma. Practicing as instructed, he in no long time knows for himself, sees for himself: 'So this is how there is the right liberation from bondage, i.e., the bondage of ignorance.'" — *MN 80 [See also §45.]*

§ 32. "Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of wrong view. Which two? The voice of another and inappropriate attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of wrong view."

"Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of right view. Which two? The voice of another and appropriate attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of right view." — *AN 2:123–124*

§ 33. "Monks, when right view is supported by five factors, it has awareness-release as its fruit, awareness-release as its reward; has discernment-release as its fruit, discernment-release as its reward. Which five?

"There is the case where right view is supported by virtue, supported by learning, supported by discussion, supported by tranquility, supported by insight.

"When supported by these five factors, right view has awareness-release as its fruit, awareness-release as its reward; has discernment-release as its fruit, discernment-release as its reward." — *AN 5:25*

§ 34. "Without abandoning these five dhammas, one is incapable of entering & remaining in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna; incapable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry… the fruit of once-returning… the fruit of non-returning… arahantship. Which five? Stinginess as to one's monastery (lodgings)… one's family (of supporters)… one's gains… one's status, and stinginess as to the Dhamma. Without abandoning these five dhammas, one is incapable of entering & remaining in the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna; one is incapable realizing the fruit of stream-entry… the fruit of once-returning… the fruit of non-returning… arahantship.

"With the abandoning of these five dhammas, one is capable of entering & remaining in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna; capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry… the fruit of once-returning… the fruit of non-returning… arahantship. Which five? Stinginess as to one's monastery (lodgings)… one's family (of supporters)… one's gains… one's status, and stinginess as to the Dhamma. With the abandoning of these five dhammas, one is capable of entering & remaining in the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna; capable realizing the fruit of stream-entry… the fruit of once-returning… the fruit of non-returning… arahantship." — *AN 5:256–257*

§ 35. "Monks, this is the forerunner, the harbinger of the rising of the sun, i.e., dawnrise. In the same way, this is the forerunner, the harbinger of the arising of the noble eightfold path in a monk, i.e., admirable friendship. It can be expected of a monk who has an admirable friend that he will develop the noble eightfold path, that he will pursue the noble eightfold path.…

"Monks, this is the forerunner, the harbinger of the rising of the sun, i.e., dawnrise. In the same way, this is the forerunner, the harbinger of the arising of the noble eightfold path in a monk, i.e., virtue-consummation… desire-consummation… self-consummation [according to the Commentary, this means being consummate in the training of the mind]… view-consummation… heedfulness-consummation… appropriate attention. It can be expected of a monk who has appropriate attention that he will develop the noble eightfold path, that he will pursue the noble eightfold path." — *SN 45:56–62*

§ 36. **Heedfulness.** "Just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant's footprint is reckoned the foremost among them in terms of size; in the same way, all skillful dhammas are rooted in heedfulness, converge in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned the foremost among them." — *AN 10:15*

§ 37. Heedfulness:
the path to the Deathless.
Heedlessness:
the path to death.
The heedful do not die.
The heedless are as if
already dead.

Knowing this as a true distinction,
those wise
in heedfulness
rejoice
in heedfulness,
enjoying the range of the noble ones. — *Dhp 21–22*

§ 38. "There are these five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. Which five?

"'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' This is the first fact that one should reflect on often.…

"'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.' …

"'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.' …

"'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear & appealing to me.' …

"'I am the owner of my actions *[kamma]*, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.' …

"These are the five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect… that 'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] youth's intoxication with youth. Because of that intoxication with youth, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body…in speech…and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that youth's intoxication with youth will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker.…

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect… that 'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] healthy person's intoxication with health. Because of that intoxication with health, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body…in speech…and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that healthy person's intoxication with health will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker.…

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect… that 'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] living person's intoxication with life. Because of that intoxication with life, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body…in speech…and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that living person's intoxication with life will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker.…

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect… that 'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear & appealing to me'? There are beings who feel desire & passion for the things they find dear & appealing. Because of that passion, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body…in speech…and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that desire & passion for the things they find dear & appealing will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker.…

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect… that 'I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir'? There are beings who conduct themselves in a bad way in body…in speech…and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that bad conduct in body, speech, & mind will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker.…

"Now, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'I am not the only one subject to aging, who has not gone beyond aging. To the extent that there are beings—past & future, passing away & re-arising—all beings are subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' When he/she often reflects on this, the path takes birth. He/she sticks with that path, develops it, cultivates it. As he/she sticks with that path, develops it, & cultivates it, the fetters are abandoned, the obsessions destroyed.

"And further, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'I am not the only one subject to illness, who has not gone beyond illness'.… 'I am not the only one subject to death, who has not gone beyond death'.… 'I am not the only one who will grow different, separate from all that is dear & appealing to me'.…

"And further, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: "I am not the only one who is owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, who has my actions as my arbitrator; who—whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir. To the extent that there are beings—past & future, passing away & re-arising—all beings are owner of their actions, heir to their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and have their actions as their arbitrator. Whatever they do, for good or for evil, to that will they fall heir.' When he/she often reflects on this, the path takes birth. He/she sticks with that path, develops

it, cultivates it. As he/she sticks with that path, develops it, & cultivates it, the fetters are abandoned, the obsessions destroyed." — *AN 5:57*

§ 39. **Appropriate attention.** "With regard to internal factors, I don't envision any other single factor like appropriate attention as doing so much for a monk in training, who has not attained the heart's goal but remains intent on the unsurpassed safety from the yoke. A monk who attends appropriately abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful." — *Iti 16 [See also §229, under Right Effort; and §269, under Right Mindfulness.]*

§ 40. **Admirable friendship.** "With regard to external factors, I don't envision any other single factor like friendship with admirable people as doing so much for a monk in training, who has not attained the heart's goal but remains intent on the unsurpassed safety from the yoke. A monk who is a friend with admirable people abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful." — *Iti 17*

§ 41. As he was seated to one side, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, "This is half of the holy life, lord: having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues."

"Don't say that, Ānanda. Don't say that. Having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, he can be expected to develop & pursue the noble eightfold path.

"And how does a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develop & pursue the noble eightfold path? There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops right resolve… right speech… right action… right livelihood… right effort… right mindfulness… right concentration dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in letting go. This is how a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develops & pursues the noble eightfold path.

"And through this line of reasoning one may know how having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the

whole of the holy life: It is in dependence on me as an admirable friend that beings subject to birth have gained release from birth, that beings subject to aging have gained release from aging, that beings subject to death have gained release from death, that beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair have gained release from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair." — *SN 45:2*

§ 42. "And what does it mean to have admirable people as friends? There is the case where a layperson, in whatever town or village he may dwell, associates with householders or householders' sons, young or old, who are consummate in conviction, consummate in virtue, consummate in generosity, consummate in discernment. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called having admirable people as friends.…

"And what does it mean to be consummate in conviction? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's awakening: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' This is called being consummate in conviction.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in virtue? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking life, abstains from stealing, abstains from sexual misconduct, abstains from lying, abstains from taking intoxicants that cause heedlessness. This is called being consummate in virtue.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in generosity? There is the case of a disciple of the noble ones, his awareness cleansed of the stain of miserliness, living at home, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called being consummate in generosity.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in discernment? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising and passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. This is called being consummate in discernment." — *AN 8:54*

§ 43. "For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, what accords with the Dhamma is this: 'The Blessed One is the Teacher, I am a disciple. He is the one who knows, not I.' For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, the Teacher's message is healing & nourishing. For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, what accords with the Dhamma is this: 'Gladly would I let the flesh & blood in my body dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if I have not attained what can be reached through human firmness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing my persistence.' For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, one of two fruits can be expected: either gnosis here-&-now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging/sustenance—non-return." — *MN 70*

§ 44. "Monks, could a person of no integrity know of a person of no integrity: 'This is a person of no integrity'?"

"No, lord."

"Good, monks. It's impossible, there's no way, that a person of no integrity would know of a person of no integrity: 'This is a person of no integrity.'

"Could a person of no integrity know of a person of integrity: 'This is a person of integrity'?"

"No, lord."

"Good, monks. It's impossible, there's no way, that a person of no integrity would know of a person of integrity: 'This is a person of integrity.'

"A person of no integrity is endowed with dhammas of no integrity; he is a person of no integrity in his friendship, in the way he wills, the way he gives advice, the way he speaks, the way he acts, the views he holds, & the way he gives a gift.

"And how is a person of no integrity endowed with dhammas of no integrity? There is the case where a person of no integrity is lacking in conviction, lacking in shame, lacking in compunction; he is unlearned, lazy, of muddled mindfulness, & poor discernment. This is how a person of no integrity is endowed with dhammas of no integrity."

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in his friendship? There is the case where a person of no integrity has, as his friends & companions, those contemplatives & brahmans who are lacking in conviction, lacking in shame, lacking in compunction, unlearned, lazy, of muddled mindfulness, & poor discernment. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in his friendship.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he wills? There is the case where a person of no integrity wills for his own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he wills.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he gives advice? There is the case where a person of no integrity gives advice for his own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he gives advice.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he speaks? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who tells lies, engages in divisive speech, engages in harsh speech, engages in idle chatter. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he speaks.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he acts? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who takes life, steals, engages in sexual misconduct. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he acts.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the views he holds? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who holds a view like this: 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for

themselves.' This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the views he holds.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he gives a gift? There is the case where a person of no integrity gives a gift inattentively, not with his own hand, disrespectfully, as if throwing it away, with the view that nothing will come of it. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he gives a gift…

"Now, monks, could a person of integrity know of a person of no integrity: 'This is a person of no integrity'?"

"Yes, lord."

"Good, monks. It is possible that a person of integrity would know of a person of no integrity: 'This is a person of no integrity.'

"Could a person of integrity know of a person of integrity: 'This is a person of integrity'?"

"Yes, lord."

"Good, monks. It is possible that a person of integrity would know of a person of integrity: 'This is a person of integrity.'

"A person of integrity is endowed with dhammas of integrity; he is a person of integrity in his friendship, in the way he wills, the way he gives advice, the way he speaks, the way he acts, the views he holds, & the way he gives a gift.

"[These are the opposite of the corresponding attributes of the person of no integrity.]" — *MN 110*

§ 45. At that time Ven. Rāhula was staying at the Mango Stone. Then the Blessed One, arising from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to where Ven. Rāhula was staying at the Mango Stone. Ven. Rāhula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, set out a seat & water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat set out and, having sat down, washed his feet. Ven. Rāhula, bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

Then the Blessed One, having left a little bit of the remaining water in the water dipper, said to Ven. Rāhula, "Rāhula, do you see this little bit of remaining water left in the water dipper?"

"Yes sir."

"That's how little of a contemplative there is in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie."

Having tossed away the little bit of remaining water, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, "Rāhula, do you see how this little bit of remaining water is tossed away?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is tossed away just like that."

Having turned the water dipper upside down, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, "Rāhula, do you see how this water dipper is turned upside down?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is turned upside down just like that."

Having turned the water dipper right-side up, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rāhula, "Rāhula, do you see how empty & hollow this water dipper is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rāhula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is empty & hollow just like that.

"Rāhula, it's like a royal elephant: immense, pedigreed, accustomed to battles, its tusks like chariot poles. Having gone into battle, it uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail, but will simply hold back its trunk. The elephant trainer notices that and thinks, 'This royal elephant has not given up its life to the king.' But when the royal elephant… having gone into battle, uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail & his trunk, the trainer notices that and thinks, 'This royal elephant has given up its life to the king. There is nothing it will not do.'

"In the same way, Rāhula, when anyone feels no shame in telling a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I tell you, he will not do. Thus, Rāhula, you should train yourself, 'I will not tell a deliberate lie even in jest.'

"What do you think, Rāhula? What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection, sir."

"In the same way, Rāhula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, Rāhula, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I want to do—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction… it would be a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do. [Similarly with verbal and mental actions.]

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to affliction of others, or both… you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not… you may continue with it. [Similarly with verbal and mental actions.]

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done—did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it… you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction… it was a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful dhammas. [Similarly with verbal actions.]

"Having done a mental action, you should reflect on it: 'This mental action I have done—did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to

the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling distressed… you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction… it was a skillful mental action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful dhammas." — *MN 61*

*The Path-factors & their Relationships*

§ 46. The Blessed One said, "Now what, monks, is the noble eightfold path? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"And what, monks, is right view? Knowledge with regard to [or: in terms of] stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This, monks, is called right view.

"And what, monks, is right resolve? Resolve for renunciation, resolve for non-ill will, resolve for harmlessness: This, monks, is called right resolve.

"And what, monks, is right speech? Abstaining from lying, abstaining from divisive speech, abstaining from harsh speech, abstaining from idle chatter: This, monks, is called right speech.

"And what, monks, is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from sexual intercourse: This, monks, is called right action. *[DN 22 & MN 141 define this factor in this way: "And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, from stealing, & from sexual misconduct: This is called right action."]*

"And what, monks, is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This, monks, is called right livelihood.

"And what, monks, is right effort? (i) There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful dhammas that have not yet arisen. (ii) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen. (iii) He generates desire, endeavors,

activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the arising of skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen. (iv) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful dhammas that have arisen: This, monks, is called right effort.

"And what, monks, is right mindfulness? (i) There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (ii) He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (iii) He remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (iv) He remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This, monks, is called right mindfulness.

"And what, monks, is right concentration? (i) There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. (ii) With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. (iii) With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' (iv) With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This, monks, is called right concentration." — *SN 45:8*

§ 47. "Monks, ignorance is the leader in the attainment of unskillful dhammas, followed by lack of shame & lack of compunction. In an unknowledgeable person, immersed in ignorance, wrong view arises. In one of wrong view, wrong resolve arises. In one of wrong resolve, wrong speech.… In one of wrong speech, wrong action.… In one of wrong action,

wrong livelihood.… In one of wrong livelihood, wrong effort.… In one of wrong effort, wrong mindfulness.… In one of wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration arises.

"Clear knowing is the leader in the attainment of skillful dhammas, followed by shame & compunction. In a knowledgeable person, immersed in clear knowing, right view arises. In one of right view, right resolve arises. In one of right resolve, right speech.… In one of right speech, right action.… In one of right action, right livelihood.… In one of right livelihood, right effort.… In one of right effort, right mindfulness.… In one of right mindfulness, right concentration arises." — *SN 45:1*

§ 48. The Blessed One said: "Now what, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness—is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions.

[1] "Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong view as wrong view, and right view as right view. This is one's right view. And what is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no brahmans or contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is wrong view.

"And what is right view? Right view, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? 'There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly

known & realized it for themselves.' This is the right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

"And what is the right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of discernment, analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, the path-factor of right view of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three dhammas—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right view.

[2] "Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And what is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. This is wrong resolve.

"And what is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on harmlessness. This is the right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

"And what is the right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, (mental) fixity, transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three

dhammas—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right resolve.

[3] "Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong speech as wrong speech, and right speech as right speech. And what is wrong speech? Lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, & idle chatter. This is wrong speech.

"And what is right speech? Right speech, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right speech with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right speech that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right speech with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from harsh speech, & from idle chatter. This is the right speech with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

"And what is the right speech that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the four forms of verbal misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right speech that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong speech & to enter into right speech: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong speech & to enter & remain in right speech: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three dhammas—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right speech.

[4] "Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong action as wrong action, and right action as right action. And what is wrong action? Killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct. This is wrong action.

"And what is right action? Right action, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right action with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right action that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right action with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? Abstaining from killing, from taking what is not given, &

from sexual misconduct. This is the right action with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

"And what is the right action that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the three forms of bodily misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right action that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One tries to abandon wrong action & to enter into right action: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong action & to enter & remain in right action: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three dhammas—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right action.

[5] "Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood, and right livelihood as right livelihood. And what is wrong livelihood? Scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, & pursuing gain with gain. This is wrong livelihood.

"And what is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right livelihood with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right livelihood that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"And what is the right livelihood with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abandons wrong livelihood and maintains his life with right livelihood. This is the right livelihood with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

"And what is the right livelihood that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of wrong livelihood of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right livelihood that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort for the abandoning of wrong livelihood & for entering into right livelihood: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter & remain in right livelihood: This is

one's right mindfulness. Thus these three dhammas—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right livelihood.

"Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, right resolve comes to be. In one of right resolve, right speech comes to be. In one of right speech, right action.… In one of right action, right livelihood.… In one of right livelihood, right effort.… In one of right effort, right mindfulness.… In one of right mindfulness, right concentration.… In one of right concentration, right knowledge.… In one of right knowledge, right release comes to be. Thus the learner is endowed with eight factors, and the arahant with ten." — *MN 117*

§ 49. "I do not envision any one other dhamma by which unarisen unskillful dhammas arise, and arisen unskillful dhammas go to growth & proliferation, like wrong view. When a person has wrong view, unarisen unskillful dhammas arise, and arisen unskillful dhammas go to growth & proliferation.

"I do not envision any one other dhamma by which unarisen skillful dhammas arise, and arisen skillful dhammas go to growth & proliferation, like right view. When a person has right view, unarisen skillful dhammas arise, and arisen skillful dhammas go to growth & proliferation.

"Just as when a nimb-tree seed, a bitter creeper seed, or a bitter melon seed is placed in moist soil, whatever nutriment it takes from the soil & the water, all conduces to its bitterness, acridity, & distastefulness. Why is that? Because of the evil nature of the seed.

"In the same way, when a person has wrong view, whatever bodily deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever verbal deeds… whatever mental deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever intentions, whatever determinations, whatever vows, whatever fabrications, all lead to what is disagreeable, unpleasing, unappealing, unprofitable, & stressful. Why is that? Because of the evil nature of the view.…

"Just as when a sugar cane seed, a rice grain, or a grape seed is placed in moist soil, whatever nutriment it takes from the soil & the water, all conduces to its sweetness, tastiness, & unalloyed delectability. Why is that? Because of the auspicious nature of the seed.

"In the same way, when a person has right view, whatever bodily deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever verbal deeds… whatever mental deeds he undertakes in line with that view, whatever intentions, whatever vows, whatever determinations, whatever fabrications, all lead to what is agreeable, pleasing, charming, profitable, & easeful. Why is that? Because of the auspicious nature of the view." — *AN 1:181–82, 189–90*

§ 50. Visākha: "Is the noble eightfold path fabricated or unfabricated?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "The noble eightfold path is fabricated."

Visākha: "And are the three aggregates [of virtue, concentration, & discernment] included under the noble eightfold path, lady, or is the noble eightfold path included under the three aggregates?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "The three aggregates are not included under the noble eightfold path, friend Visākha, but the noble eightfold path is included under the three aggregates.[1] Right speech, right action, & right livelihood come under the aggregate of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration come under the aggregate of concentration. Right view & right resolve come under the aggregate of discernment." — *MN 44*

### Note

1. In other words, not every instance of discernment, say, would count as right view, even though right view counts as a form of discernment, and similarly with the other path-factors and aggregates.

§ 51. "Concentration nurtured with virtue is of great fruit, great reward. Discernment nurtured with concentration is of great fruit, great reward. The mind nurtured with discernment is rightly released from the effluents, i.e., the effluent of sensuality, the effluent of becoming, the effluent of ignorance." — *DN 16*

§ 52. "Brahman, just as one hand would wash the other hand, or one foot would wash the other foot, in the same way, discernment is well-washed by virtue, virtue is well-washed by discernment. Where there is virtue, there is discernment. Where there is discernment, there is virtue. A virtuous person

has discernment; a discerning person, virtue. And further, virtue & discernment are reckoned as supreme in the world.

[The passage goes on to define virtue with a long list of virtues, sense restraint, mindfulness & alertness in one's activities, contentment, and the abandoning of the hindrances. It defines discernment as the practice of jhāna together with the direct knowledges based on jhāna, culminating in the knowledge of the ending of the effluents.] — *DN 4*

§ 53. There's
no jhana
for one with
no discernment,
no discernment
for one with
no jhana.
But one with
both jhana
& discernment:
he's on the verge
of Unbinding. — *Dhp 372*

CHAPTER THREE

# *Right View*

Right view is the first factor of the path. The Pāli term for right view—*sammā-diṭṭhi*—can also be translated as "right opinion." Right view consists of the views and opinions needed to guide your progress on the path—to understand what to do and why to do it. In this sense, right view is a series of working hypotheses that guide the path and, at the same time, will be put to the test as the path progresses.

The reason why the path starts with right view rather than with right knowledge is indicated by the Buddha's analogy in §3: He sees people who don't know where they're going, taking paths that lead to different destinations. From his perspective, he knows from direct experience where the paths go, but he can't share that direct experience with others, nor can he show them what's at the end of the paths without their reaching those destinations on their own. For them, the information they learn from him about the paths is, until they reach the end of the paths themselves, simply a matter of opinion.

This is why, as a first step on the noble eightfold path, right view has to be taken on conviction. This fact is included in the definition of mundane right view—the conviction that there are those who know through direct knowledge the truths about kamma and rebirth (§48)—but it underlies the more advanced levels of right view as well. On the transcendent level of right view, for instance, many of the principles of the four noble truths—such as the principle that suffering is inherent in the mind's feeding habits—are counterintuitive. Even the value judgment implicit in the four noble truths—that the suffering caused by clinging is *the* important spiritual problem—is something that can't be proven until you've solved the problem for yourself. This is why these truths have to be taken on faith before they can be put to use.

Similarly with the ultimate level of right view: The judgment that eventually you have to abandon even the most skillful qualities of the mind goes against the grain when you've put so much effort into developing them, so the wisdom of this judgment, too, has to be taken on faith.

But in every case, the faith required is not a blind faith in unreasonable ideas. Instead, the reasonableness of the Buddha's teachings is presented as one of the signs that it is worthy of faith, as is the fact that each person is invited to test the teachings in practice for him- or herself. But to test them, you have to trust that they are worth the time and effort needed to give them a fair try.

When the texts define conviction, they frame it as a matter of having conviction in the Buddha's awakening (§55). In fact, the three levels of right view follow the pattern of the Buddha's three knowledges on the night of his awakening (§30): Mundane right view accepts the content of the first two knowledges, on kamma and rebirth. Transcendent right view accepts the third knowledge, in which the Buddha's discovery of the four noble truths led to his awakening. The final level of right view, which lies beyond the transcendent, accepts a step that isn't mentioned in the standard description of the third knowledge, but which the Buddha elsewhere states was a crucial stage on the path: the total abandoning of the path itself. To accept the Buddha's awakening on conviction is to accept the validity of the working hypotheses that he presents as right view.

To call right view a series of *working hypotheses* implies two things: On the one hand, it implies that these views are not simply idle theories, maps of reality to be merely contemplated or argued about. To be properly used, they have to be put into practice. This is reflected in the fact that each level of right view entails its own duties. This is one of the reasons why the Buddha warns about grasping right view wrongly—say, for the purpose of simply holding onto it, or for getting into useless debates—because those acts would put you on a different path from the one for which right view was intended.

On the other hand, calling right view a series of working hypotheses implies that the duties they entail are not simply bald imperatives, such as, "Do this!" or "Drink me!" Instead, these views provide explanations for why the duties should be done, so that they can be followed with at least some measure of understanding and a conviction that the duties are actually

beneficial to attempt. At the same time, these explanations are meant to convey, not an entire map of reality, but enough of a map to keep you on the path. Too extensive a map would risk pulling your attention into side roads that lead away from the goal, which is why the Buddha was very clear about which issues he would discuss as part of right view, and which he would put aside.

In presenting these working hypotheses on differing levels, the Buddha took on a corresponding set of standards for how he should speak: He would say only things that were true, beneficial, and appropriate for the time and place. In §175, where he presents these standards, he defines "appropriate for time and place" in terms of when it was appropriate to speak in a pleasing way and when to speak in a disagreeable way, but other suttas show that he would vary his teachings in response to the needs of the listener(s) in other ways as well. In particular, he would gauge which level of right view was most appropriate to discuss at that particular time to that particular person. Just as the path is strategic, his way of teaching it was strategic, too.

**Three levels of right view.** As we have mentioned several times, right view has three levels. The first two—mundane and transcendent—are presented in MN 117. The third level is nowhere named in the Canon, but a handful of suttas describe it in enough detail to show that, although it represents the final working out of transcendent right view, it forms a separate level that goes beyond it in several important respects. For the purposes of discussion, we will term it final right view.

Here, for each level of right view, we will first discuss the content of that level and the duties appropriate to it. Then we will contrast it with the wrong views that the Buddha criticized as deviating from it. This contrast helps to highlight where the line between right view and wrong view lies. We will also discuss how the Buddha taught people to progress from one level of right view to the next. Finally, we will discuss the causal principle that underlies all three levels of right view. This principle explains not only how right view is supposed to work, but how and why it works together with the other factors of the path.

## Mundane Right View

Mundane right view centers on the issues of kamma and rebirth. MN 117's definition of this level of right view is actually a negation of a set of tenets that DN 2 attributes to one of the Buddha's contemporaries, a teacher named Ajita Kesakambalin. Ajita taught a materialist doctrine that DN 2 calls annihilationism: the belief that a person is simply a combination of material elements which are annihilated at death, and that good deeds such as generosity and gratitude to one's parents are a waste of time because everything ends up in annihilation anyhow.

So the first implication of mundane right view is that generosity *does* matter, gratitude to one's parents *is* a virtue, and that death is not annihilation. MN 117 states these positions in very simple terms: "There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world.… There are spontaneously reborn beings [this is a reference to beings born in heaven or in hell, with no need for mother or father]."

Other suttas expand considerably on these points. To begin with, on the topic of action: The Buddha defines the word for action, *kamma*, in two senses. On the one hand, it is the intention underlying the act (§57). On the other, it can also refer to the results of the act that return to the person who intentionally committed the act and that are experienced in the form of the six senses (§62). These results tend to be painful or pleasant depending on whether the intention informing the act was unskillful—based on greed, aversion, or delusion—or skillful—based on a mind-state free of those defilements.

There is an apparent discrepancy in the suttas as to how completely old kamma shapes sensory experience. In SN 35:145 (§62), the Buddha, when talking to the monks, states that all six sense media should be regarded as old kamma. However, in SN 36:21 (§66), when talking to Moḷiyasivaka, a wanderer of another sect, he states that not all feelings are the result of old kamma, and then he offers a list of other sources for feelings—a list apparently drawn from the medical beliefs of the times. The fact that the second sutta is addressed to a member of another sect, however, leaves open the possibility that the Buddha chose this list to appeal to concepts that were not specifically Buddhist and instead were common in non-Buddhist circles. And when we compare the discussion in SN 36:21 with that in SN 35:145, we see that the alternative causes listed in SN 36:21 all

fall under the headings of new or old kamma listed in SN 35:145. Because SN 35:145, addressed to monks, is the more authoritative of the two suttas, this suggests that the list in SN 36:21 was simply meant as a refutation of fatalism (see below), and that if Moḷiyasivaka continued to pursue the issue he might at a later point be more receptive to the Buddha's full-scale explanation of how kammic tendencies worked. And part of that explanation would have been that the input of the six senses should all be viewed as a form of past kamma.

The results of actions can return either immediately, later in this lifetime, in the next lifetime, or even in lifetimes after that (§57). In particular, these results tend to influence the level of one's rebirth, which can happen on one of many different levels: in hell, in the realm of common animals, in the realm of the hungry ghosts, in the human world, or in the world of the devas. Rebirth on these levels is not permanent. Once the actions creating the conditions for a particular level of rebirth have run out, one will take rebirth on another level created by other actions. This is in line with the principle that a temporary cause cannot form the basis for a permanent result.

The obverse principle is also true: A permanent cause cannot create a temporary result, which means that the Buddhist cosmos has no unmoved mover as first cause. In the Buddha's terms, the cosmos has an inconceivable beginning, and he discouraged speculation about the origin of the cosmos, saying that such speculation gets in the way of the issue at hand: putting an end to suffering. Similarly, the cosmos has no preordained end. It has the potential to continue indefinitely as long as the beings in the cosmos keep making the choices leading to further rebirth. As the Buddha explained in many suttas, such as DN 1 and DN 27, the cosmos has already gone through countless rounds of evolution and devolution, and has the potential to go through countless more. This realization, during the night of his awakening, is what intensified his sense of terror and urgency over the potentials of kamma, but it also proved to be liberating: When there is no ordained purpose for the cosmos that would impose duties on anyone, beings are all free to choose the path to the end of suffering.

**The complexity of kamma.** Although the basic principle underlying actions and their results is fairly simple, the way in which those results work out can often be complex. This is partly because a person can perform

many types of action in a single day, not to mention a lifetime. The image the Buddha used to illustrate the principle of kamma was of a field planted with seeds. Some seeds are ready to sprout; others are not. Where and what you are at the present moment is simply a measure of which seeds are currently sprouting. It's possible that you have many other seeds, potentially better, potentially worse, simply waiting for the opportunity to sprout. This means that a person's current position in life is not an accurate measure of all the seeds in his/her kammic background.

Another reason for the complexity of kammic consequences is that it's possible to have a major change of heart in life that, if skillful, will soften the effects of your past unskillful actions or, if unskillful, will weaken the effects of your past skillful actions. In terms of the field image, this would be like watering many good seeds to crowd out the bad seeds, or bad seeds to crowd out the good.

A third reason for the complexity of kammic consequences is that the actual experience of the results of actions will depend on your mind-state at the time when they ripen. If you are small-hearted, lacking in virtue and discernment, and if pleasure and pain can invade your mind and remain, then the ripening results of an unskillful action will be painful. If you are large-hearted, trained in virtue and discernment, and if pleasure and pain cannot invade your mind and remain, then the ripening results of an unskillful action will barely be felt (§65). The Buddha compares this to putting a lump of salt in a small cup of water or in a large, clear river. The water in the cup will be too salty to drink, but the water in the river will still be potable. In other words, just because you have done something bad doesn't mean that you deserve to suffer for it. After all, the Buddha taught a path to the end of suffering, regardless of whether that suffering is "deserved" or not. You can train yourself to develop more skillful states of mind, both to produce skillful actions now and to ameliorate unskillful kamma from the past.

It's because of the complexities in how kamma produces results that the Buddha said that the issue is imponderable (§64). For the sake of gaining release from suffering, it's enough to know the basic principles that skillful actions tend to lead to pleasure, unskillful actions tend to lead to pain, and that because these are tendencies—rather than deterministic, tit-for-tat

laws—you can train your mind to mitigate the results of past bad actions and actually gain release.

The way leading to release is also a path of action—the noble eightfold path—which leads to the end of action (§58). In other words, once total release is gained in this lifetime, your actions no longer create kammic results (§344); after your final death, you go beyond rebirth and any need to engage in the fabrication of action at all.

**Rebirth.** The Buddha sketched out the various levels of the cosmos to which one can be reborn, but he never provided a complete map of all the levels. Still, he did provide enough of a sketch to show how rebirth corresponds to actions. For instance, on the highest levels of heaven, there are beings whose states of bliss and rapture correspond, in descending order, to the formless concentration attainments (in which one takes as one's object perceptions such as nothingness, infinite consciousness, or infinite space), to the form levels of jhāna (in which one takes as one's object the inner form of the body), and to intense sensual pleasures, corresponding to the results of generosity, virtue, and goodwill.

Human rebirth corresponds to a more mixed bag of ripening kammic seeds. The different levels of beauty, wealth, power, life span, and status that different human beings experience depend on the relative abundance or lack of the seeds of generosity, virtue, and goodwill ripening in the bag.

Below the human level are the levels to which beings are reborn from having engaged in unskillful actions. First, going downward, is the level of the hungry ghosts, whose food is the merit dedicated to them. This level is not discussed in detail in the suttas, but later Buddhist texts depict the hungry ghosts as just that—hungry, poor, and miserable, often extremely so, from having been ungenerous in previous lives. Below them are the many varieties of common animals, and below them are the levels of hell. Although the suttas contain very few descriptions of heaven, they contain some very graphic descriptions of hell (§93), examples of the Buddha's policy of saying disagreeable things when the time and place called for it.

It's important to note, though, that whereas the Buddha talked about where rebirth can happen, he never discussed the issue of *what* gets reborn, or by what mechanism the results of action carry over from one lifetime to later lifetimes. After all, you are not responsible for those issues. He did

discuss, however, *how* rebirth happens as a process: acts of consciousness are sustained by craving as they move from one state to the next (§59). Just this much information is useful because you are responsible for this process, and it's something that you can aim in the right direction, or even end, by gaining control over your cravings or putting an end to them by following the noble eightfold path.

**Duties.** For anyone seeking the end of suffering, the imperatives that follow from mundane right view are simple: Abandon unskillful actions and develop skillful ones. This was one of only two teachings that the Buddha said were categorical, i.e., true across the board for all people in all times. The only question lies in how to determine what's skillful and what's not, and then—following that—how to develop the strength of character to follow through with that knowledge to yield either fortunate rebirths or, better still, find the way to release.

The famous Kālāma Sutta (§61) recommends two ways for finding the line between skillful and unskillful behavior: (1) testing a teaching by checking to see what results come from putting it into practice and (2) consulting the opinions of the wise. These instructions fall in line with two of the supplementary factors of the path that §§39–40 say are the prime internal and external factors for gaining the first taste of awakening: appropriate attention and admirable friendship. MN 9 (§130) gives a list of ten practices that wise people would criticize as unskillful, and their ten opposites that they would recommend as skillful. The sutta goes on to add that the roots both for unskillful and for skillful behavior lie in the mind—pointing to the need to train the mind if you want to find true happiness.

**Wrong views.** Many of the points that the Buddha discussed under mundane right view were unique to him in his time. There is a widespread misunderstanding that he simply picked up his teachings on kamma and rebirth from ancient Indian culture, but this is simply not true. In fact, the Buddha often used the teachings of mundane right view to counter many of the views widespread among his contemporaries.

Of the many forms of wrong view that he rejected in this way, six stand out, both because he argued against them so frequently and because they correspond to wrong views that are still widely held at present: annihilationism, materialism, fatalism, the denial of causality, eternalism,

and racism. The Buddha had to counter these views because they either (1) denied the possibility of any path of skillful action leading to the end of suffering, (2) denied the need for such a path, or (3) undermined the motivation needed to stick with the specific path he had discovered and taught.

• *Annihilationism* is the belief that a person, however one might be defined, is annihilated at death, and there is no rebirth. The Buddha rejected this belief because he had seen on the night of his awakening that it simply wasn't true. That, of course, wasn't reason enough to include it in his teachings. After all, as he said in SN 56:31, there were many facts he came to know in the course of his awakening that he didn't teach to others, because those facts would have served no purpose toward putting an end to suffering. But a belief in rebirth *would* serve such a purpose. Even though the Buddha never tried to provide an empirical proof of rebirth, he did provide a pragmatic proof for why a person seeking to develop the skills needed to put an end to suffering should reject annihilationism as a working hypothesis: If you don't believe that the results of action can carry over into another life, you can find in the present life plenty of examples of unskillful actions leading to pleasant results here and now (§67). These would undercut any desire to adopt skillfulness as a constant principle, particularly in cases where a skillful action might endanger your health, wealth, or life. If, however, you do adopt rebirth—and the power of actions to yield results after death—as a working hypothesis, you will be motivated to adopt the skillful approach in all situations, no matter how life-threatening.

• *Materialism* is a subset of annihilationism. It holds not only that a person is made of material elements that will be annihilated at death, but also that, while alive, those elements are in no position to know an unconditioned dimension. In addition, it holds that because causality is purely mechanical, with both the agent and the recipients of action nothing more than material elements, there is no inherent moral quality to actions. The judgment that an action is good or bad is simply a matter of convention; the moral quality of an intention has no bearing on the pleasure or pain that the action resulting from that intention might produce for the person doing it. At present, materialism holds that the mind is

nothing more than the brain, and that mental events—including acts of knowledge—are simply the by-product of chemical reactions in the brain.

In using mundane right view to counter these beliefs, the Buddha's main argument was that materialism, as a subset of annihilationism, provided no motivation to abandon unskillful actions and adopt skillful ones, and so it neglected the primary responsibility of any teaching worth the name: that it provide the basis for thinking in terms of what should and shouldn't be done. If everything were just material elements, no action would matter at all.

At the same time, implicit in the Buddha's rejection of materialism are five main points crucial to the practice of the path to the end of suffering. (1) Because experience at the six senses is shaped by intentions, the causal principle governing experience is not mechanical. (2) The quality of the intention behind an action, skillful or not, can determine the nature of the action's result. (3) The causes of suffering come from an untrained mind and they can be ended by training the mind. (4) When choosing a course of action, it's in your best interest to include the fact of rebirth into the equation to decide which actions are worth doing and which ones aren't. (5) Because people are not just made of material elements, they can know—through developing powers of concentration—truths about kamma and rebirth, as well as the possibility of stepping outside the dimensions of fabrication. This last principle means that it's possible to place trust in the ability of the Buddha and his awakened disciples to provide reliable guidance in these areas.

• *Fatalism* holds that human actions have no power to shape experience. The Buddha used mundane right view to counter two broad categories of fatalism. On the one hand, some of his contemporaries taught different varieties of what might be called personal fatalism, claiming that experience was determined by a creator god. On the other, there were those who taught impersonal fatalism, claiming that experience was determined by impersonal factors: fate, mechanical laws, or a version of the teaching on kamma in which everything in the present was totally determined by past actions. The Buddha denounced all these forms of fatalism, arguing that they denied the possibility that a path of action could yield results, or that it was even possible to choose a path of action to begin with. These views condemned people to continue suffering with no way out. Although they

might counsel people to choose to accept their suffering and to learn to embrace it, they don't even provide logical justification for assuming even *that* much power of choice. Fatalism teaches powerlessness; mundane right view, empowerment.

The Buddha also argued against a fatalistic interpretation of kamma—in which past bad actions inevitably lead to hell—on the grounds that anyone who has acted unskillfully in the past, on hearing such teachings, would immediately be thrown into despair. That despair would then weaken their ability to gain release from the cycle of kamma. In contrast, mundane right view, in showing that actions *tend* to give certain results, opens the way for people not to fall into remorse, but to recognize the error of their past ways and to resolve on (1) showing restraint in the future and (2) developing an attitude of goodwill for all beings. These resolves will then strengthen their ability to act skillfully in the future, which will be for their long-term welfare and happiness, not only now but also into the next lifetime (§69; §139).

In rejecting fatalism, mundane right view also allows for the objective benefit of feeling gratitude for the help provided by others, recognizing that they had the choice to provide that help or not.

• *The denial of causality* also provides no room for a path of action that will yield results, and so the Buddha attacked it for the same reasons. Because mundane right view asserts the principle that actions *tend* to have certain consequences, it denies both fatalism on the one hand, and a view of total randomness on the other. This perspective allows for the possibility of developing skills, because in a world of randomness, no patterns of cause and effect could be mastered to the point of skill; in a world of fatalism, no choice of what to do and what not to do to develop a skill would be available at all. In a world of tendencies, though, skills can be developed by learning to read those tendencies and directing them to your desired ends.

• *Eternalism* took many forms in the Buddha's time, but the version that has carried over to the present is the belief that there is an essence to each individual, not subject to change, that is either a separate soul or One with the changeless ground of the cosmos. The Buddha rejected these views because, whatever that essence might be, it would be impervious to the power of action to change (DN 1; MN 22). In addition, if your inner essence faces an eternal fate, then that fate cannot depend on your actions,

because all actions are, by nature, limited in scope, and so cannot have the power to create an eternal result. Eternalism thus forces you to look outside of your actions to provide for an eternal happiness, and so would undercut any motivation to act skillfully in all situations.

• *Racism* in the Buddha's time found its prime expression in the beliefs of the brahmans that they alone were worthy of respect, and that they alone could reach the highest spiritual attainments. The Buddha used mundane right view to argue that virtue and spiritual attainments were not connected to caste or race, and that brahmans, like everyone else, were capable of planting either good or bad seeds in their kammic fields. Also, he noted that the kammic fields of brahmans were not free of seeds that could yield bad results, and that people of other castes were not devoid of good seeds in *their* kammic fields. In addition, anyone, regardless of caste, can act on skillful intentions and reap their results. It's for this reason that the path to the end of suffering contains no factors that depend on caste, class, or race.

**From mundane to transcendent right view.** Mundane right view provides both a conceptual background for transcendent right view and the motivation for wanting to develop it.

On the conceptual level, as we have already seen, mundane right view counters the many forms of wrong view that would make the path to the end of suffering impossible. At the same time, it divides experience into four categories: skillful action, pleasant result, unskillful action, painful result. These four categories, when refined, turn into the four noble truths: respectively, the path to the end of suffering, the end of suffering, the origination of suffering, and suffering. And because mundane right view locates the roots of skillful and unskillful actions in the mind, it lays the groundwork for the underlying principle of the four noble truths: that both the origination of suffering and the path to its cessation are to be found in the mind as well.

As for motivation: Mundane right view provides reasons for people to attempt a life of skillful action, and in this way empowers them to begin turning their lives in the direction of less suffering. However, it also shows that the pleasant levels of rebirth are precarious, and that it's possible, even when reborn on those levels, to have bad seeds in your kammic field that

could yield intense suffering down the line. In these ways, mundane right view can encourage you to set your sights higher than a pleasant lifetime now—or good rebirths in the future—to aim at the more secure safety of gaining release from rebirth entirely.

This two-fold dynamic is illustrated in a discourse that the suttas call the graduated or gradual discourse *(anupubbīkathā)* that the Buddha reportedly gave to many of his listeners as a way of preparing their minds to be receptive to the four noble truths. Unfortunately, all we know now of this discourse is the list of topics it covered, but the list is enough to show how the Buddha used both sides of his teaching on kamma and rebirth—the empowering teaching on skillful action, and the dismaying impermanence of the results of action—to make his listeners receptive to transcendent right view.

The discourse began with the topics of *giving* and *virtue*. Giving covers the act of choosing freely to share your resources with others. The freedom of choice, here, is the essential element in the joy of giving, which is why the Buddha never placed restrictions on where a gift should be given (§§71–72). Similarly with virtue: It's the free choice to abstain from causing harm. From what the suttas report of the Buddha's teachings on these topics, when he discussed them in the graduated discourse he probably focused on the happy rewards they gave in this life—such as self-esteem, living in harmony, and earning the respect of others (§74; §82). As the next step in the graduated discourse, these discussions would be followed by a discussion of the third topic: the sensual pleasures that constitute the rewards of giving and virtue in *heaven*. If his listeners had not already developed these skillful actions, the Buddha would often stop here, with the encouragement that his listeners develop them and taste the rewards, both inner and outer, that can come from them here and now. In this way, he affirms the principle that the desire for happiness, if conducted in a blameless way, is neither futile nor something to be ashamed of.

If, however, his listeners were already experienced in giving and virtue, he would discuss the fourth topic, *the drawbacks of sensuality:* the mind's fascination with planning for and fantasizing about sensual pleasures, even heavenly ones (§147). At this point, if his listeners admitted the truth of this point, they would be receptive to the fifth topic: the teaching that *renunciation* of sensuality would be a state, not of deprivation, but of true

safety (§§97–101). In getting his listeners to look positively at renunciation, though, the Buddha was not preparing to tell them that the pursuit of happiness was futile. Instead, he was encouraging them to continue that pursuit by aiming it toward a higher happiness, beyond the level of sensuality. It was at this point that he would teach them the map to that higher happiness in the form of the four noble truths.

### Transcendent Right View

MN 117, in defining transcendent right view, doesn't directly mention the four noble truths, but it does mention the faculty and strength of discernment (§103), both of which are synonymous with the four noble truths. In addition, transcendent right view also is expressed in the teaching called dependent co-arising *(paṭicca samuppāda)*, which works out the first three noble truths in great detail. This section will cover both teachings.

The four noble truths are the Buddha's second categorical teaching, i.e., a teaching true for all situations across the board. These truths take a problem-solving approach to the issue of suffering, and treat it as a doctor might go about treating a disease. The first truth, the truth of suffering, corresponds to identifying the symptoms of the disease. The second truth, the origination of suffering, corresponds to identifying the causes of the symptoms. The third truth, the cessation of suffering, corresponds to the possibility that the disease can be cured, and the fourth noble truth corresponds to the course of treatment that cures the disease by attacking its causes.

It's useful to keep this analogy in mind, for it counters a popular misconception that, in focusing on suffering, the Buddha was a pessimist. On the contrary: He adopted the confident attitude of a doctor who talks about a disease, not because he has a pessimistic view of the world, but because he knows how the disease can be cured.

In moving from mundane right view to transcendent right view, the Buddha narrows the focus of the teaching—from action in general to the actions that cause and end suffering—and also changes the mode in which the view is expressed. Mundane right view talks about people and worlds; transcendent right view, about actions—primarily actions of the mind—without reference to people and worlds. To continue the analogy of right view as a map, mundane right view is like a map showing political

boundaries; transcendent right view is like a map of underlying geological features with the political boundaries removed. The reason for this change in the mode of expression will become clear when we discuss his definition for the origination of suffering, because one of the causes for suffering lies in being attached to concepts of "selves," "people," and "worlds." Although those concepts are necessary on the mundane level of right view—to explain to listeners attached to those concepts why the path to the end of suffering is worth their while—the actual ending of suffering requires thinking in a way that steps out of those concepts to view them from another perspective.

**The first noble truth.** Contrary to popular belief, the Buddha did not teach that life is suffering. Instead, as we pointed out in Chapter 1, the first noble truth—the truth of suffering/stress—starts with a list of instances of suffering, and then identifies the factor that they all have in common: the five clinging-aggregates. And contrary to another popular belief, the Buddha never stated that these aggregates constitute what a person is. He simply noted that, when clung to, they provide the basis for how a person defines him- or herself. He also admitted that the aggregates do provide pleasure—that's why people become infatuated with them and cling to them—but that to put an end to suffering, it's necessary to end the infatuation, which is why right view has to focus on the way in which the suffering that comes from clinging to the aggregates more than outweighs the pleasures they offer (§118).

**The second noble truth.** The origination of suffering/stress lies in three types of craving—craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for non-becoming—which are accompanied by passion and delight, and all of which lead to further becoming. (Here again, there's a popular misconception—that the Buddha identified all desire as the origination of suffering—but that's not true. Some forms of desire actually function as essential parts of the factor of right effort in the noble eightfold path.)

The Pāli word for craving, *taṇhā*, also means "thirst," a double meaning paralleling the double meaning of *upadāna*, noted above, as both clinging and feeding. This choice of words underlines the connection between the mind's felt need to cling and feed, and the suffering that that felt need creates. The three types of craving or thirst can be explained as follows:

• Sensuality *(kāma)*, here, carries the same meaning that it has under the graduated discourse: the mind's fascination with planning and fantasizing about pleasures of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations (§147).

• Becoming *(bhava)* is a word that the suttas never define. The closest they come to a definition is to say that becoming occurs on three levels—the level of sensuality, the level of form, and the level of formlessness—and that each of these levels is based on a corresponding desire for sensual pleasures, for the pleasures of form (such as the pleasures of the mind in the four jhānas), and for the pleasures of formlessness (e.g., the pleasures of the mind in levels of concentration based on formless objects, such as the perception of infinite space or infinite consciousness) (§365).

But even though the suttas do not define the term "becoming," the way they discuss it in various contexts shows that it means the process of taking on an identity in a particular world of experience. This process can happen both on the large-scale level—when the process of consciousness moves to a new world and new identity at the death of the body—and the small-scale level, when a thought-world appears in the mind and you inhabit that world in your imagination.

On both the large and the small scale, the world of experience and the identity you assume within that world grow out of a specific desire. In a very real sense, this desire forms the nucleus that locates both that particular world and your place in the world. This is why, in the definition of the second noble truth, the cravings that lead to becoming are said to relish, "now here, now there." In focusing on a particular "there," the mind establishes a location for itself, both in its imagination in this lifetime and in another world after death.

Small-scale becomings influence both scales. They begin to move out of your imagination into the larger world when you fasten on a desire to the point of acting on it. Say that you have a desire for pizza. Your world then becomes defined by the desire, consisting of anything that either helps you obtain the pizza or gets in the way. Anything or anyone irrelevant to the desire falls into the background of your world at that time.

As for your identity in this world, it has two sides: the "you" who will find pleasure in feeding on the pizza —this is your self as *consumer*—and

the "you" who either has the abilities to obtain the pizza or not: your self as *producer*.

When you abandon the desire for pizza—either because you've obtained it and eaten it, you've given up on trying to get it, or you've simply lost interest in it—you usually find yourself moving on to a different desire, around which you develop a different sense of the world and a different sense of who you are: a new becoming.

If, as often happens, you have several competing desires at any one time, they will cause you to straddle competing inner worlds and competing senses of who you are. This is why you can feel divided against yourself and unsure of your place in the world, and is one of the most common ways in which becoming entails suffering. But even when a desire is satisfied, it depends on worlds and identities that are fabricated out of precarious acts of clinging, and so those worlds and identities are precarious and bound to end. This is why all becomings entail suffering and stress. If the fabrication of those worlds requires unskillful kamma, that adds another level of suffering on top of the simple stress of trying to find happiness in the process of fabrication and the fabricated things that result.

The process of replacing one becoming with another can continue without end, which is how small-scale becomings can carry on repeatedly.

When you act on the desires that shape small-scale becomings, you shape large-scale becomings, both in this lifetime and in future lifetimes. This is how the process of rebirth after the death of the body is directed by events in the mind and—like becomings in the mind—has the potential to continue indefinitely.

• Non-becoming *(vibhava)* means the destruction of a particular process of becoming. The fact that craving for non-becoming could actually lead to becoming is counterintuitive, but the Buddha cited insight into this fact as one of the more subtle aspects of his awakening (§§127–128). The suttas don't explain the dynamic here, but apparently when the mind takes on the desire to end a particular type of becoming—either on the large-scale, in a desire to end a relationship or to commit suicide; or on the small-scale, in a desire to end the imaginings around a particular desire—it takes on a new identity, as a destroyer, and that becomes its new becoming.

AN 4:199 (§126) lists 36 verbalizations to show how the mind expresses the processes of becoming and non-becoming to itself. All of

these verbalizations center around "I"—what I am, how good or bad I am, what I might be, what I want to be, or how I might be turned into something else—and the things in the world outside that are the means by which any of these "I's" arise or change. The way these verbalizations are framed is important to know, because they show that, to get beyond craving for becoming and non-becoming, the mind has to frame its verbalizations in other terms. This is precisely why transcendent right view cannot be expressed in terms of "self" and "world" if it is to do its work.

The fact that craving for non-becoming creates further becoming presents a challenge on the path to the end of suffering: The desire to end becoming can be helpful in motivating you to embark on the path, but it will have to be abandoned if the path is to succeed. The Buddha's solution to this challenge is strategic, advocating skillful states of becoming in the mind—i.e., the four jhānas of right concentration—that function in three ways to put the mind in a position to get past both becoming and non-becoming. These states of concentration (1) provide a steady platform from which to observe the processes of becoming and non-becoming; (2) give hands-on experience in the causal processes by which states of becoming are created and destroyed; and (3) foster both the tranquility and the insight/discernment that allow the processes of becoming to run out on their own (§129). Because concentration is a form of becoming, and because insight and discernment are fabricated, the last step of the path requires that they run out on their own, as well. This is why the path is like a raft that has to be abandoned on reaching the further shore.

**The third noble truth.** The cessation of suffering occurs when these three forms of craving cease without remainder, and this happens when there is no remaining passion for them in the mind. The definition of this truth is phrased in a way that reflects the twofold release that we mentioned in Chapter 1 with regard to the image of a fire going out: As a result of the total fading of passion for these cravings, they are not only relinquished but also released. Just as a fire is released when it lets go of its fuel, the mind is released when it lets go of craving—and the cravings are released as well.

The suttas seem to be inconsistent on the question of whether the third noble truth can be equated with unbinding. Some, which identify unbinding as the highest *dhamma* (phenomenon, act, mental object), suggest that the

answer is Yes (§11); others, which state that unbinding is the transcending or ending of all dhammas, suggest No (§351; §353). The apparent inconsistency here can perhaps be resolved by saying that the act of realizing unbinding is identical with the third noble truth, but that the full dimension of unbinding lies beyond it.

**The fourth noble truth.** The path to the cessation of suffering is the noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

**Duties.** Three of these noble truths—the first, second, and fourth—are fabricated. Only the third noble truth is not. The Buddha divides the processes of fabrication into the first, second, and fourth truths for a strategic purpose: To put an end to suffering, it's necessary to treat suffering, its origination, and the path to its cessation in different ways. Suffering is to be comprehended (which means understanding it to the point where there is no remaining passion, aversion, or delusion around it (§107)), its origination abandoned, and the path developed (literally, made to become). These three activities differ sharply from the normal reaction to suffering: People often try to abandon suffering while holding on to—and developing—their cravings. This is like coming home, finding your house full of smoke, and trying to put out the smoke while at the same time stoking the fire. Instead, the Buddha recommends understanding what the smoke is and where it's coming from, and then putting out the fire by developing the actions appropriate for extinguishing that kind of fire.

The three activities of comprehending suffering, abandoning its origination, and developing the path are called the duties *(kicca)* appropriate to those truths—duties, not in the sense that they are imposed by the Buddha, but simply in the sense that if you want to end suffering, this is what you have to do.

As for the third noble truth, the duty is to realize it. Because the third noble truth is essentially identical with the act of abandoning the origination of suffering, and the act of abandoning the origination of suffering is the duty with regard to the second noble truth, this means that the duty with regard to the third noble truth is to watch the abandoning of craving and to affirm that, Yes, it does bring suffering to an end. There's a similar close relationship between the duties of the first and second noble

truths: It's possible to abandon craving only when you comprehend, in a dispassionate way, the suffering that it causes.

When the fourth noble truth is developed, it puts the mind in a position where it can do the comprehending, the abandoning, and the realizing together: This is why it's the path to the end of suffering.

However, whereas the duties of the first three noble truths converge around the theme of dispassion, the duties of the fourth noble truth can't be carried out without a level of passion and delight in developing the path-factors as skills. This is why total awakening requires a step beyond transcendent right view where—when the path is fully developed—it can be treated with dispassion, too.

**Dependent co-arising.** As mentioned above, the teaching of dependent co-arising gives a detailed treatment of the first three noble truths, listing the sequence of conditions that lead to suffering, and showing how suffering ends when ignorance, the first member of the sequence, ends. The detail given by the list is so extensive, and the alternative versions of the list presented in the suttas so varied, that it would be impossible to cover all the facets of dependent co-arising here. Instead, we will focus on the standard list and, within that list, on the salient points that bear most directly on the practice of the noble eightfold path. These points can be discussed under two headings: the *sequence* in which the factors are arranged, and the *content* of some of the more important factors.

The factors, beginning with suffering and working back to its causes, are these:

> *12) Aging, illness, and death,* along with sorrow, pain, despair, and *suffering,* which are conditioned by –
> *11)* the *birth* of an identity on any of –
> *10)* the three levels of *becoming.* Becoming is conditioned by –
> *9)* the four types of *clinging.*

All the factors from 12 through 9 fall under the first noble truth. However, because one of the definitions of "clinging" is delight (§109), and because the origination of suffering is defined as craving accompanied by

passion and delight (§106), clinging straddles the line between suffering and its origination.

Factors 8 through 1 fall entirely under the second noble truth. The conditions for clinging are –

> *8)* the three types of *craving*. These forms of craving focus on –
> *7) feelings* of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain, which depend on –
> *6) contact* at –
> *5) the six senses* (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind). These senses are conditioned by –
> *4) name-&-form:* the internal sense of the body and its mental events (such as attention, intention, contact, feeling, and perception). These, in turn, are conditioned by –
> *3) consciousness* at the six senses, which is conditioned by –
> *2)* three types of *fabrication*—bodily, verbal, and mental—all of which are conditioned by a particular type of delusion –
> *1) ignorance:* not seeing things in terms of the four noble truths.

MN 9 (§130) adds that ignorance is conditioned by three effluents *(āsava)*, qualities that "bubble up" in the mind and flow out of it to engage the world. These effluents are sensuality, becoming, and ignorance. So, in effect, ignorance begets ignorance at the beginning of the sequence leading to suffering.

*The aspects of the sequence* most obviously relevant to practicing the noble eightfold path are eight as well:

• The sequence as a whole is essentially unstable. Nothing caused can be permanent, because there are no permanent causes. This means that any happiness produced by the sequence will have to be unstable, inconstant, and unreliable, too. The Buddha conveyed this point by likening the causal process to the act of eating (§112): Effects feed off their causes. Inter-being is inter-eating. This fact is a primary motivation for following the path to the more reliable happiness that appears when the sequence can come to an end.

• All of the factors are processes and events immediately present in your awareness. There is no need to search outside of your immediate present awareness for any hidden causes underlying these factors. Every factor is right here to be observed.

• None of the factors make any reference to who is doing them or to any physical place where they are being done. Instead, they are observed simply as events and processes, in and of themselves, as they are directly experienced. Some of the Buddha's listeners tried to ask him who was doing the factors, or to whom they belonged, but he refused to answer (SN 12:12; SN 12:35). This fact has two major implications. One, it keeps attention focused on the process, rather than on speculation about who or what does or does not lie behind the process. Two, it enables dependent co-arising to describe the process of becoming both on the large scale and on the small scale: the way consciousness moves from one lifetime to the next, and on the way it moves moment to moment from one thought world to the next.

Buddhist philosophers in the centuries after the Buddha's life argued over whether dependent co-arising described large-scale becoming or small-scale becoming—in other words, becoming as it happened in the world or within oneself—but their arguments missed the point. Dependent co-arising does not fall in the framework either of the world or of the self. Instead, it forms the framework to describe how your sense of the world (under the factor of the six sense media (§63)) and your sense of self (under the factor of clinging) arise. The fact that dependent co-arising frames both the large scale and the small scale is reflected in the way the Buddha uses both large-scale and small-scale events to illustrate the individual factors and the relationships among them (DN 15; SN 12:2). By adopting this scale-invariant standpoint—i.e., one that stays the same across different scales of space and time—dependent co-arising provides a perspective for getting out of the framework of "world" or "self," allowing you to stand outside the processes of becoming and observe them without getting sucked into their terms. The perspective afforded by this standpoint is like entering a movie theater and—instead of facing the screen and getting involved in the story of the movie—sitting to the side and looking across the room to see how the beam of light from the projector and the

flashing colors on the screen—red, yellow, blue—cause the audience to laugh or cry.

• The factors most important in leading to stress and suffering occur prior to sensory contact. This means that suffering isn't caused primarily by unpleasant sensory contact; it's caused by the attitudes and views that are brought to any sensory contact, pleasant or not.

• The crucial causes for stress and suffering are internal, and so are not dependent on outside circumstances. In fact, they are so internal that they belong to the aspect of your awareness that you share with no one else. In formal terms, dependent co-arising deals in the phenomenology of awareness.

At the same time, the crucial causes of suffering and stress are subject to your knowledge and will. In this way, the focus of the noble eightfold path has to be primarily internal, on the training of the mind.

• The relationships among the factors are not simple. Even though the factors are listed in a linear sequence, a brief look at their sub-factors will show that some of the processes contained in the sequence recur at many other points in the sequence. This allows them to create feedback loops as, say, the feeling that follows on contact can also function as the feeling sub-factor in name-&-form, where it is then subject either to appropriate or to inappropriate attention. This feedback loop can then either amplify the suffering that results from the sequence or dampen it, depending on the quality of the attention involved. This is another way that right view, in the form of appropriate attention, can put a halt to the processes of suffering. And as we will see below, the many feedback loops in dependent co-arising explain why the process—unlike an iron-clad cycle that has to keep going once set into motion—can be brought to a halt.

• The sequence starts with ignorance—or lack of skill *(avijjā)*—in mastering the four noble truths and their appropriate duties. In other words, you don't see what you're doing that's causing stress or what you could do to stop—either because you're not focused on this issue or, if you are focused here, you have yet to master the skills to see these things clearly.

Here it's important to note that ignorance doesn't simply set the next factor into action and then step off the scene. It remains to foster the links between each of the succeeding factors. This is why §130 states that if

knowledge is brought to the relationships between *any* of the factors of dependent co-arising, suffering can cease with the cessation of that particular instance of ignorance.

The fact that ignorance comes first in the conditions leading to suffering explains why right view comes first in the path. The fact that the knowledge curing ignorance comes in the form of the skills mastered when completing all the duties appropriate to the four noble truths explains why right view on its own cannot cut through ignorance. It needs the help of all the other path-factors. In fact, as right view gradually replaces ignorance, it can turn many of the factors of dependent co-arising into path-factors. When the final level of right view totally replaces ignorance, the entire sequence ends, opening the way to the unfabricated dimension.

• Fabrication is another factor occurring prior to sensory contact, in two places in the sequence: both immediately following on ignorance and as the sub-factor of intention in name-&-form. This reflects the pro-active nature of consciousness that we discussed in Chapter 1. Even before the mind experiences sensory contact, it is already searching for that contact and intending it to go in a certain direction.

Because fabrication occurs so early in the sequence, it also occurs prior to your sense of the world (§63) and, as new kamma, prior to your experience of old kamma (§62). In this way, if you bring knowledge of the four noble truths to these processes of fabrication, you can change your experience of the world and of your old kamma so that you don't have to suffer, regardless of what the world and your old kamma have to offer. And when fabrication totally ends with the total ending of ignorance, the ensuing awareness of the unfabricated at the moment of awakening bears no relationship to the six sense media at all (§§370–372).

*In terms of the specific factors* of dependent co-arising, two are especially relevant as tools on the path: *fabrication* and *name*. Because these factors occur prior to sensory contact, they provide a useful analysis of what needs to be done to prevent the mind's proactive processes from leading to suffering.

• *Fabrication*. We have already noted, in Chapter 1, one of the prime ways in which the Buddha analyzed fabrication: in terms of the five aggregates. In dependent co-arising, he provides another useful framework

that overlaps in some ways with the five aggregates but also provides a few new perspectives on the processes of fabrication. Instead of five categories, here he analyzes fabrication into three: bodily, verbal, and mental. The suttas discussing dependent co-arising don't clarify these terms any further, but other suttas discuss them in ways showing that their meaning depends on context. When discussing becoming on the large scale—the way kamma leads to rebirth—the suttas use the three types of fabrication as an alternative way of describing the three types of kamma in general: bodily, verbal, and mental (SN 12:25). When discussing meditation, however, they define *bodily fabrication* to mean the in-and-out breath, *verbal fabrication* to mean directed thought and evaluation—the way the mind talks to itself—and *mental fabrication* to mean feeling and perception (§131). Given the place of these three fabrications in dependent co-arising, right after ignorance and before sensory contact, these more specific meditative meanings are probably the relevant ones here.

As we will see throughout this book, this way of analyzing fabrication is helpful in understanding how the path is fabricated—both for the purpose of actually knowing how to fabricate it and, eventually, for the purpose of letting it go when it has performed its function.

• *Name.* This factor replicates two of the mental aggregates—feeling and perception—and replaces the third mental aggregate, fabrication, with three other categories: attention, intention, and contact. *Contact,* here, apparently refers to intra-mental contact—say, between a perception and a feeling, or between an intention and an act of attention. *Intention* stands for kamma (§57). *Attention* refers to the way the mind chooses which questions to ask and which framework to apply to what is perceived at the six senses (§229). In the course of practicing the noble eightfold path, intention underlies all of the factors—after all, the path is the kamma that puts an end to kamma—but it's especially prominent in the concentration factors: right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Attention can be either appropriate or inappropriate—there is no "bare" or "mere" attention in the Buddha's teachings—and when it's fully appropriate, it frames experience in terms of the four noble truths. In this way, it plays a major role in right view.

As for feeling and perception, in Chapter 1 we have already noted the role of feeling in the pursuit of the middle way; in the section below—Final

Right View—we will discuss the role of perception in performing the tasks appropriate to both the transcendent and the final levels of right view. We should also note, though, that perception also plays an important role in fostering jhāna, a point that will be discussed in Chapter 9.

**Wrong views.** The mere existence of the four noble truths in the Buddha's teachings can be seen as an implicit rejection of all the other views about suffering current in his time: that it was unreal; that it was inevitable and so had to be accepted until it ran out on its own; that it could be burned off through austerities; that it could be averted through brahmanical rituals; or that all action led to suffering, so that only a path of total physical inaction, culminating in suicide by starvation, could bring it to an end. However, the Buddha never used the four noble truths to directly refute these beliefs.

Instead, when mentioning the four noble truths in contrast to other views, his main concern was to show that these truths avoided getting involved in philosophical questions that were distractions and obstacles on the path to the end of suffering, no matter how they were answered. Two prime examples stand out. In DN 9, he contrasts the four truths with a questionnaire that listed the hot topics of his time in terms of ten questions: Is the cosmos eternal? Not eternal? Infinite? Finite? Is the soul the same thing as the body? Something separate? After death, does a Tathāgata exist? Not exist? Both? Neither? In §229, he contrasts the four truths with views about the existence or non-existence of the self that arise from such questions as these: "Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it headed?" In both suttas, the crucial point is that the four truths provide a point of view that avoids getting involved with questions framed in terms of "self" and "world," the terms underlying becoming. This is why they are able to offer a way of stepping out of the processes of becoming and the suffering that results from it.

Dependent co-arising functions in a similar way as a means for explaining how and why the Buddha avoided certain philosophical questions that, no matter how they were answered, led to views that led away from the path. These questions included, "Does everything exist?" "Does nothing exist?" "Is everything a Oneness?" "Is everything a plurality?" (SN 12:48) "Are pleasure and pain (and any of the other factors of

dependent co-arising) self-made, other-made, or both self-made and other-made? Or—without self-making or other-making—do they arise without a cause?" (SN 12:17–18) "Is there or is there not anyone who does or experiences the factors of dependent co-arising?" (SN 12:35) Here again, the crucial point is that dependent co-arising provides, in the Buddha's terms, a middle way that avoids the extremes of taking any position, one way or another, on questions framed in terms of "self" and "world." In this way, dependent co-arising is a conceptual framework that gives added dimension to the Buddha's original statement that his path provides a middle way to the end of suffering.

### Final Right View

As noted above, the first, second, and fourth noble truths divide fabricated experience into three categories so as to apply three different duties to them. But as we have also noted, the duties with regard to the path fall into two stages: First it must be developed—through passion—so as to provoke dispassion for other processes of becoming and then, when it has done its work, it must be abandoned through dispassion along with all other fabrications. The final level of right view represents the stage when the path has done its work and the duties of the four noble truths collapse into one: Everything is to be regarded with dispassion and let go.

The line between transcendent and final right view is not as clear as the line between mundane and transcendent right view, due to the fact that both transcendent and final right view employ the same mode of expression: They treat events, primarily events in the mind, simply as actions. However, there is definitely a point in the practice where the line is crossed. Prior to that point, it's necessary to hold to the path so that you can use it in the interconnected duties of comprehending suffering, abandoning its cause, and realizing its cessation. However, the point comes when you turn on the path itself to comprehend it, abandon it, and realize its cessation, too. In other words, you see that—even though it involves less suffering than any other activity—nevertheless it, too, is a form of suffering, and so has to be dropped to allow for suffering and stress to truly end. This is what SN 12:15 means when it describes this level of the practice as seeing that *whatever* arises and passes away—and this would include the path—is simply stress arising and passing away.

SN 22:57 (§116) provides an outline for how, on this final level, the four duties corresponding to the four noble truths collapse into the single duty of inducing dispassion for all fabrications, in line with the third noble truth. This outline serves as an answer to the question, posed in §299, as to how one should go about cultivating *vipassanā*, or insight. It's important to note that, in the suttas, vipassanā—literally, "clear-seeing"—is treated as a quality of mind, not as a meditation technique, and that this quality is to be developed by pursuing the answer to these questions: "How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?"

SN 22:57's answer to these questions recommends seven steps for comprehending all five aggregates—and by this it means not just the clinging-aggregates in the first noble truth, but also the aggregates as they function in the second and fourth. In addition to viewing the five aggregates under the rubric of the four truths—truth, origination, cessation, and path to cessation—it recommends examining them in terms of their allure, their drawbacks, and the escape from them. Their allure, of course, is the pleasure that can be derived from them. Their drawbacks lie in the fact that they are inconstant and stressful. The escape from them is the subduing of passion and desire for them. This pattern of analysis follows that of the graduated discourse, particularly in its comparison of the allure of sensuality with the drawbacks of sensuality for the purpose of becoming disenchanted with the allure.

SN 22:57 itself doesn't make the connection, but the last three steps of this analysis are clearly related to one of the Buddha's most prominent teachings, the teaching on inconstancy, stress, and not-self. Although these qualities are frequently called the "three characteristics," the Buddha himself never used that term to describe them. Instead, he referred to them as "perceptions": the perception of inconstancy, the perception of stress, and the perception of not-self. The distinction here is not merely semantic. Seeing these qualities as perceptions reminds you that they are not metaphysical statements about the ultimate nature of reality. Instead, they are labels—mental fabrications—applied strategically for furthering the duties appropriate to right view. Unlike the four noble truths, these perceptions are never identified in the Canon as categorical teachings. They are always true (§122), but they have to be applied at the right time and

place if they are to be helpful in the practice (§139)—in line with the Buddha's strictures for his own speech, that it be true but also beneficial and timely.

On the final level of right view, the Buddha recommends contemplating all fabrications in terms of these perceptions as a way of inducing dispassion for them. In essence, the insight produced by this contemplation is a value judgment: You see that the aggregates, as actions, may produce pleasure on one level (§116), which is the allure that convinces you to engage in them. But, when viewing these actions in terms of their drawbacks, you see that the pleasure is more than outweighed by the fact that they also lead to results that are unstable, stressful, and—through the processes of kamma and dependent co-arising—beyond your control. This leads to the conclusion that they are not worth the effort that goes into them. Because passion is what drives the mind to engage in fabrication to begin with, the dispassion that results from this value judgment brings the processes of fabrication to an end. That is the escape.

The dynamic of this contemplation is clearly depicted in the questionnaire in which the Buddha frames these three perceptions (§123): With reference to each of the aggregates, he asks, "Is it constant or inconstant?" "Inconstant." "Is what is inconstant easeful or stressful?" "Stressful." "And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?" "No."

Notice that the last question does not ask, "Can we come to the conclusion that there is no self?" After all, as we have already noted, the Buddha on two occasions assigned the question of the existence or non-existence of the self to the category of questions to be put aside (§174; §229; SN 44:10). Instead, here he is simply asking, in effect: "Is it (1) *logically consistent* and (2) *worth the effort* to identify with things that are inconstant and stressful?" And the purpose of asking this question is to end any passion or delight that would keep the mind clinging to the aggregates.

The first part of this question, as §123 shows, builds on the basic meaning of "self": that it's something under your control. If something changes against your will and leads to stress, it's obviously not totally under your control, and so doesn't deserve to be regarded as self. However, this reflection is, on its own, not enough to put an end to passion. The really effective reflection is in the second part of this question, which is the value

judgment: If something changes against your will and leads to stress, is it worth the effort of clinging to it?

This line of questioning is effective only when the mind is not hungering for the pleasures of the aggregates. If it still has that hunger, then no matter how much you focus on the drawbacks of the food it gets from the aggregates, it will still refuse to abandon them (§295). It would be like telling yourself that, because food is temporary and the search for food is stressful, you're going to stop eating.

This is why the full-blown use of the three perceptions is reserved for the final level of right view, after right concentration has been mastered enough to provide enough nourishment for the mind to step back from its usual hungers. Up until that point, in the development of mundane right view, the perceptions of inconstancy, stress, and not-self are reserved for such things as wealth, relatives, or health that might induce you to engage in unskillful behavior. Meanwhile, you actually try to develop a sense of self around your desire to develop skillful behavior because, at this stage of the effort, that attachment is still worth the effort (§217).

Similarly, in the development of transcendent right view, the three perceptions are not applied to states of concentration themselves, for that would interfere with their development. Instead, the three perceptions—or variations on them—are applied to the distractions that would pull you out of concentration (§235). At the same time, you continue to develop a responsible sense of self that feels capable of sticking with the path (§221). When you have mastered the path to the point where a sense of self is no longer necessary—when the mind has tired of the fabricated nature even of the concentration it has mastered and so wants something better—only then are you ready for the final stage.

The suttas show how this final stage happens in three phases. In the first phase, the target of your analysis is the state of concentration from which the mind has been viewing other events in the mind. As AN 9:36 (§312) explains, once the concentration has been mastered, in the same way that an archer might master archery, you analyze it in terms of the five aggregates, applying a number of perceptions that expand on the primary three of inconstancy, stress, and not-self. Under the theme of *inconstancy*, you can also use the perception of disintegration; under the theme of *stress*, you can use the perceptions of a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction; and

under the theme of *not-self,* you can use the perceptions of alien and an emptiness.

These perceptions enable you to develop dispassion for the concentration and progress to the second phase, in which you incline the mind to the deathless. As AN 9:36 notes, though, it's possible for the mind then to develop a passion for the discernment that sees the deathless—and in fact, in the early stages of awakening, this is precisely what happens, preventing the mind from advancing to total awakening. Still, these earlier levels of awakening are useful because they show that, in abandoning the aggregates, the mind doesn't starve. Instead, it touches a happiness that requires no feeding at all.

But ultimately, to fully attain that happiness, the mind needs to develop dispassion also for the discernment that sees the deathless. This is why, as the third phase, the Buddha recommends the perception, not only that all fabrications are not-self, but that *all* dhammas—fabricated or not—are not-self, as a means of getting past that particular level of passion.

Then, as §138 notes, it's necessary to drop any attachment to this very last act of discernment. AN 10:93 (§132) describes this step as one in which right view turns on itself. Seeing all mental actions as fabrications unworthy of attachment, right view is able to see *itself* as a mental action, and so unworthy of attachment. This allows you to find the escape even beyond right view and the duties it entails. This is why right view is right: It contains the seeds for its own transcendence.

In transcending itself, it also cuts through all the causes for suffering described in dependent co-arising. Because concentration is the clearest practice for seeing attention in action, and acts of discernment are the clearest for seeing intention in action, when both of these forms of fabrication are allowed to drop away, the factor of "name" disbands, causing all the other factors in dependent co-arising to disband, leaving an opening to the unfabricated.

**Wrong views.** Just as DN 9 contrasts transcendent right view with the ten hot questions that philosophers debated in the Buddha's time, AN 10:93 contrasts final right view with the same list of ten questions. In both cases, the argument is the same: Right view, unlike any attempt to answer those questions, actually leads to the end of suffering. AN 10:93,

however, goes a little more into the specifics of why this is so. As Anāthapiṇḍika points out in that sutta, when you see with right discernment that whatever is fabricated is inconstant, stressful, and not me, not my self, not what I am, you also see the escape that allows you not to be stuck holding onto the stress of the view itself. This implies that right view is superior because it is self-reflexive, pointing to the need to let go not only of other fabricated things, but also of itself.

SN 12:15 (§135) shows that final right view arises when, while watching the arising and passing away of the world—the six sense media (§63), which include the states of jhāna under the sixth—you reach the point where concepts of "existence" and "non-existence" don't occur to you. As SN 22:94 (§140) indicates, this doesn't imply the semantic argument that these concepts cannot ever be rightly applied to fabricated phenomena. It simply means that, in that state of awareness, there is no basis for giving rise to those concepts. When the concepts aren't there, they don't get in the way of abandoning whatever appears to be stress—even if you've identified with it in the past—for there is no fear of going out of existence if you do. Although concepts of existence and non-existence are not wrong on other levels of right view, they are strategically wrong for this final stage, and so have to be dropped.

Reading SN 12:15 in conjunction with SN 22:94 helps to counteract a form of wrong view about right view that can sometimes occur within the Buddhist tradition: the belief that final right view is an ultimate truth, whereas earlier versions of right view are only conventional truths. One form of this wrong view states that the beings and worlds mentioned in mundane right view don't really exist; the only existing things are individual events. Another states that, on the level of ultimate truth, even individual events can't be described as existing, not existing, both, or neither.

It's true that the Buddha occasionally admits to adopting, as a teaching technique, the conventional views of the world without holding to them (see DN 9), but he never makes that statement with regard to mundane right view. And he never refers to any of the forms of right view as ultimate truths. All the levels of right view are strategies—true on their own terms, beneficial, and timely—which, after they have done their work, are abandoned for the sake of the higher truth of nibbāna (§317), which lies

beyond all views. As §139 shows, it's important not to mix up the levels by applying terms or value judgments appropriate to one level of strategy to another. The higher levels could not do their work without the support of mundane right view, and mundane right view is incomplete without the help of the higher levels. As part of the path, each level of strategy has its own integrity, and should be honored for the work it is able to accomplish.

### This/That Conditionality

Although the Buddha used right view to avoid getting involved in many of the metaphysical issues of his time, there was one metaphysical issue that he had to address because it underlies every level of right view. That issue is the question of causality: How does causality work in causing suffering and in giving rise to the path to the end of suffering? In particular, the Buddha had to show how causal principles could work in such a way as to allow for a fabricated path to lead to an unfabricated state, and for the ending of fabrication in the present moment to create an opening for the unfabricated even when fabrications from the past had not all had time to produce their results. Because causality was a hotly debated topic in his time, he couldn't simply say that causality happened, or that he accepted all forms of causality, because many of the causal theories advanced by his contemporaries—such as strict determinism or random chaos—didn't allow for the development of skills needed to put an end to suffering. So he had to be very specific in explaining the kind of causality assumed by right view.

His explanation was a teaching that he called this/that conditionality *(idappaccayatā)*, and expressed in the following formula:

> [1] "When this is, that is.
> [2] "From the arising of this, that arises.
> [3] "When this isn't, that isn't.
> [4] "From the cessation of this, that ceases." — *SN 12:61*

This formula is actually the intersection of two pairs of principles working together. The first pair describes causality in the present moment: "When this is, that is. When this isn't, that isn't." The cause is simultaneous with the result, and when the cause disappears, the result immediately disappears.

The second pair describes causality over time. "From the arising of this, that arises. From the cessation of this, that ceases." The cause may appear and disappear at one time, but the effect can come and go either right away or much later.

An example of the first kind of causality would be sticking your finger into a fire. You don't have to wait until your next lifetime to get the result. The fire burns right away.

An example of the second type of causality would be planting a seed in the field. You won't get a mature plant right away. It will take time, well after you stopped the action of planting the seed, and perhaps not even in this lifetime.

Experience consists of the combination of these two principles. At any one moment in time, you will have the results of some past actions ripening. Because actions can ripen at widely varying rates, those results could be coming from many disparate actions spread widely over time. You also have your present actions—i.e., your present intentions—along with some of the results of those present actions. This means that experience is shaped to some extent by past actions, but also by present actions. In fact, the present actions are actually the most important ones to attend to because the present moment is precisely where you have freedom of choice concerning which intentions to act on and which to discard. Your past actions are like raw material for the present moment, and your present actions are the act of shaping that raw material into an experience. You can compare this process to preparing food: Past actions are like raw, inedible ingredients, whereas present actions turn those ingredients into food you can eat.

Although the Buddha used this/that conditionality to explain the causal pattern at work in dependent co-arising, it also underlies some of his explanations of kamma on the level of mundane right view: the fact that fabrication fabricates all the aggregates (§120), and that the results of past bad kamma depend to a great extent on your present state of mind (§65). The way these two causal principles interact to form a causal pattern that follows some regular laws but nevertheless allows for freedom of choice is precisely the combination needed to allow for the ability to develop skills: It's because actions and their results follow a certain regular pattern that we can learn from them. It's because we have freedom of choice in the present

moment that we can use what we've learned to become more and more skillful over time.

But the interaction of these two principles also explains more. In general, when the interactions between two principles are complex enough—and dependent co-arising shows that their complexity is more than enough—then even though the original principles may separately be quite simple, their interaction creates complex non-linear systems. Scientists studying complex non-linear systems—both physical systems, such as erosion patterns, and social systems, such as stock market behavior—have found that many of them behave in ways that parallel the way the suttas describe the causal interactions underlying suffering and the path to the end of suffering. Four types of behavior are especially relevant here.

• The first is that such systems contain many *feedback loops*, where A influences B, B influences C, and C turns around to influence A. This type of pattern can be seen in dependent co-arising where feeling enters into the sequence at many points, allowing one feeling at a later position in the sequence to turn around and re-enter the sequence at an earlier point, where it can influence the factors that condition it.

Feedback loops are of two types: positive and negative. An example of a positive feedback loop is what happens when you put a microphone connected to a loudspeaker in front of the loudspeaker. A sound picked up by the microphone will get amplified many, many times until it's deafening. That's called a positive feedback loop, not because it's positively good, but because it tends to intensify the original event. An example of a positive feedback loop in dependent co-arising would be a feeling of pain that, through inappropriate attention, gives rise to angry perceptions that would then circle around to aggravate the feeling of pain.

An example of a negative feedback loop is a heater connected to a thermostat in the same room: When the heater raises the room temperature to a certain point, the thermostat will turn it off. When the room cools to a certain point, the thermostat will turn the heater back on. This is called a negative feedback loop—again, not because it does anything negative, but because the two members work in opposing directions to keep each other in check. An example of a negative feedback loop in dependent co-arising would be an emotional pain that, viewed with appropriate

attention, gives rise to skillful perceptions that would circle around to dampen the pain.

The fact that the causes of suffering contain feedback loops of these sorts places two obstacles in the path to their cessation. One is that their complexity can often make it hard to see exactly what the causal patterns are. A small action can be amplified by a positive feedback loop in one instance, and dampened by a negative loop in another. The second obstacle is that the patterns these loops create are so unstable and, in their details, so unpredictable, that there's no guarantee that when you change the input, the system will show the effects of your actions right away. This means that when you start practicing, there's no way of predicting how soon you'll see the results you want. This can often be discouraging.

However, the main advantage of a system containing many feedback loops such as those found in dependent co-arising is that it's neither strictly deterministic nor totally chaotic. The forces governing the system can be pushed in many different directions to lead to many different outcomes. If the "push" is done with knowledge of the principles underlying the system, it can lead the system to produce the desired results. This is why right view plays such an important role in the path, for it constitutes the knowledge that allows you to push the system of dependent co-arising in the right direction, away from causing suffering and toward suffering's end.

In particular, if you use knowledge to create skillful feedback loops in the mind by passing the causal sequence through appropriate attention again and again, those small changes can amplify throughout the system, forcing it to go in the direction you want it to go. This fact connects with the second feature of complex non-linear systems:

• They contain *different basins of attraction*. In other words, if the parameters acting on the system stay within a particular range, the system's behavior will be "attracted" to a particular outcome, like a ball circling around the floor of a basin and coming to rest in the lowest part of the basin. If those parameters pass over a threshold, the system's behavior will be attracted to another, quite different outcome, like a ball pushed over the edge of a basin and into another basin. An example of this sort of shift is weather at the North and South Poles. When subjected to continuous sunlight, the temperatures will fluctuate within a certain range; when

subjected to continuous darkness, they'll move to an entirely different range.

In terms of dependent co-arising, the "parameters" governing the system lie within the system itself, in the factors of ignorance versus knowledge, and inappropriate versus appropriate attention. The system will head toward suffering under the influence of ignorance and inappropriate attention, but toward the noble eightfold path and the end of suffering under the influence of their opposites.

• The third relevant feature of complex patterns is called *scale invariance*. What this means is that patterns operating on the small scale also operate on the large scale. This can be seen in aerial photos of erosion patterns that are identical whether they are on the scale of a few inches or many hundreds of miles.

The same principle applies to the mind. If you learn how to deal with the complexities of kamma and becoming in the present moment, you learn the larger complexities of kamma and becoming as they apply over large spans of time. And when you learn about the patterns of kamma and becoming over large time scales, they can teach you lessons about how to deal skillfully with your mind in the present. In fact, that's what the Buddha did on the night of his awakening. He learned about the pattern of intention and views on the large scale in his second knowledge, and then applied that pattern to his mind in the present moment in the third.

• The fourth relevant feature is that in most complex systems, the principles that put the system together can also be used to take the system apart. An example is the complex gravitational relationship among the Sun, Earth, and Moon. It's possible for the Moon's trajectory to reach a point called a *resonance*, where a member of one of the equations describing its trajectory gets divided by zero. When that happens, the result lies outside the system: The Moon will leave its orbit and go flying in a direction that cannot be predicted, even though it was brought to that point by following the laws of gravity.

In the same way, even though our experience is created by fabrication, and our experience of space and time is shaped by our actions, we can still fabricate our actions to get outside of those dimensions, by arriving at a point of equilibrium where intention stops and the present moment is, in effect, divided by zero. That's where release is found.

This last aspect of complex non-linear systems supplies the answer to the question of how a fabricated path can lead to an unfabricated dimension, and how the system of fabrication can break down even though not all of the fabricated actions of the past have yielded their results.

The analogy of resonance also illustrates, roughly, what happens after each level of awakening. After the Moon has entered a resonance and momentarily left the system, the laws of gravitation bring it into a new relationship with the Sun and the Earth. In a similar way, after an experience of awakening, a person returns to the six senses but in a new relationship to them. In the first three levels of awakening, certain fetters are dropped from the mind, but not all, which means that there is still some clinging in the mind's relationship to its objects (§324). After total awakening, though, when all the fetters are dropped, the relationship is radically different: The arahant is aware of the six senses, but disjoined from them (§24; §359). In this way, such a person continues to experience the results of old kamma until the total release occurring at death. The analogy breaks down here, however, in the sense that, unlike the gravity of the Earth and Sun acting on the Moon after the Moon has altered its course through a resonance, nothing in the six senses ever exerts any pull on the mind of an arahant at all.

The behavior of complex non-linear systems, in addition to showing how the fabrications that lead to suffering can be changed to fabrications that lead to the end of suffering, also helps to explain a central feature of the Buddha's teachings on suffering and its end: the fact that he provides so many different explanations of how suffering is originated, and so many different lists of the factors leading to its cessation. For example, as we noted above, dependent co-arising is explained in many different ways, with some factors appearing in some explanations and not in others. The noble eightfold path lists its factors in one order; the triple training, in another. The existence of many feedback loops in the causes of suffering show not only why it was valid for the Buddha to express his teachings in these different ways, but also why it was skillful. Just as the causes of suffering act in a mutually reinforcing way, so do the factors leading to its end. For people caught at different points in the various feedback loops of dependent co-arising, it's good to have a variety of entry points and lines of attack for dealing strategically with the causes of suffering and turning the

processes of fabrication to a good end. And in showing how suffering comes from causes that are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing, the complexity of this/that conditionality drives home the point that the path to the end of suffering will require factors that are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing as well.

## Readings

§ 54. "Suppose there were a man needing a water-snake, seeking a water-snake, wandering in search of a water-snake. He would see a large water-snake and grasp it by the coils or by the tail. The water-snake, turning around, would bite him on the hand, on the arm, or on one of his limbs, and from that cause he would suffer death or death-like suffering. Why is that? Because of the wrong-graspedness of the water-snake. In the same way, there is the case where some worthless men study the Dhamma.… Having studied the Dhamma, they don't ascertain the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment. Not having ascertained the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment, they don't come to an agreement through pondering. They study the Dhamma both for attacking others and for defending themselves in debate. They don't reach the goal for which (people) study the Dhamma. Their wrong grasp of those Dhammas will lead to their long-term harm & suffering. Why is that? Because of the wrong-graspedness of the Dhammas.…

"Suppose there were a man needing a water-snake, seeking a water-snake, wandering in search of a water-snake. He would see a large water-snake and pin it down firmly with a cleft stick. Having pinned it down firmly with a forked stick, he would grasp it firmly by the neck. Then no matter how much the water-snake might wrap its coils around his hand, his arm, or any of his limbs, he would not from that cause suffer death or death-like suffering. Why is that? Because of the right-graspedness of the water-snake. In the same way, there is the case where some clansmen study the Dhamma.… Having studied the Dhamma, they ascertain the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment. Having ascertained the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment, they come to an agreement through pondering. They don't study the Dhamma either for attacking others or for defending themselves in debate. They reach the goal for which people study the Dhamma. Their right grasp of those Dhammas

will lead to their long-term welfare & happiness. Why is that? Because of the right-graspedness of the Dhammas." — *MN 22*

*Mundane Right View*

§ 55. "Now, what is the faculty of conviction? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's awakening: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' This is called the faculty of conviction." — *SN 48:10*

§ 56. "Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that… 'Whatever a person experiences… is all caused by what was done in the past,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that… whatever a person experiences… is all caused by what was done in the past?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings because of what was done in the past. A person is a thief… uncelibate… a liar… a divisive speaker… a harsh speaker… an idle chatterer… greedy… malicious… a holder of wrong views because of what was done in the past.' When one falls back on what was done in the past as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort (at the thought), 'This should be done. This shouldn't be done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative.…

"Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that… 'Whatever a person experiences… is all caused by a supreme being's act of creation,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that… whatever a person experiences… is all caused by a supreme being's act of creation?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings because of a supreme being's act of creation. A person is a thief… uncelibate… a liar… a divisive speaker… a harsh speaker… an idle chatterer… covetous… malicious… a holder of wrong views because of a supreme being's act of creation.' When one falls back on a supreme being's act of creation as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], 'This should be done. This shouldn't be

done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative.…

"Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that… 'Whatever a person experiences… is all without cause, without condition,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that… whatever a person experiences… is all without cause, without condition?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings without cause, without condition. A person is a thief… uncelibate… a liar… a divisive speaker… a harsh speaker… an idle chatterer… covetous… malicious… a holder of wrong views without cause, without condition.' When one falls back on lack of cause and lack of condition as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], 'This should be done. This shouldn't be done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative." — *AN 3:62*

§ 57. "Intention, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, & intellect.

"And what is the cause by which kamma comes into play? Contact is the cause by which kamma comes into play.

"And what is the multiplicity in kamma? There is kamma to be experienced in hell, kamma to be experienced in the realm of common animals, kamma to be experienced in the realm of the hungry ghosts, kamma to be experienced in the human world, kamma to be experienced in the world of the devas. This is called the multiplicity in kamma.

"And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma is of three sorts, I tell you: that which arises right here-&-now, that which arises later [in this lifetime], and that which arises following that. This is called the result of kamma.

"And what is the cessation of kamma? From the cessation of contact is the cessation of kamma; and just this noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is the way leading to the cessation of kamma." — *AN 6:63*

§ 58. "And what is kamma that is dark with dark result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates an injurious bodily fabrication, fabricates an injurious verbal fabrication, fabricates an injurious mental fabrication. Having fabricated an injurious bodily fabrication, having fabricated an injurious verbal fabrication, having fabricated an injurious mental fabrication, he rearises in an injurious world. On rearising in an injurious world, he is there touched by injurious contacts. Touched by injurious contacts, he experiences feelings that are exclusively painful, like those of the beings in hell. This is called kamma that is dark with dark result.[1]

"And what is kamma that is bright with bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a non-injurious bodily fabrication… a non-injurious verbal fabrication… a non-injurious mental fabrication.… He rearises in a non-injurious world.… There he is touched by non-injurious contacts.… He experiences feelings that are exclusively pleasant, like those of the Beautiful Black Devas. This is called kamma that is bright with bright result.

"And what is kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a bodily fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious… a verbal fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious… a mental fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious.… He rearises in an injurious & non-injurious world.… There he is touched by injurious & non-injurious contacts.… He experiences injurious & non-injurious feelings, pleasure mingled with pain, like those of human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms. This is called kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result.

"And what is kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma." — *AN 4:237*

### Note

1. AN 4:234 defines dark kamma with dark result with the following example: "There is the case of a certain person who kills living beings, steals what is not given, engages in illicit sex, tells lies, and drinks fermented &

distilled liquors that are the basis for heedlessness," and bright kamma with bright result with the following example: "There is the case of a certain person who abstains from killing living beings, abstains from stealing what is not given, abstains from engaging in illicit sex, abstains from telling lies, and abstains from drinking fermented & distilled liquors that are the basis for heedlessness."

§ 59. "I designate the rebirth of one who has sustenance [clinging], Vaccha, and not of one without sustenance. Just as a fire burns with sustenance and not without sustenance, even so I designate the rebirth of one who has sustenance and not of one without sustenance."

"But, Master Gotama, at the moment a flame is being swept on by the wind and goes a far distance, what do you designate as its sustenance then?"

"Vaccha, when a flame is being swept on by the wind and goes a far distance, I designate it as wind-sustained, for the wind is its sustenance at that time."

"And at the moment when a being sets this body aside and is not yet reborn in another body, what do you designate as its sustenance then?"

"Vaccha, when a being sets this body aside and is not yet reborn in another body, I designate it as craving-sustained, for craving is its sustenance at that time." — *SN 44:9*

§ 60. As Ven. Ānanda was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "I say categorically, Ānanda, that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct should not be done."

"Given that the Blessed One has declared, lord, that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct should not be done, what drawbacks can one expect when doing what should not be done?"

"… One can fault oneself; observant people, on close examination, criticize one; one's bad reputation gets spread about; one dies confused; and —with the breakup of the body, after death—one reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell.…

"I say categorically, Ānanda, that good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct should be done."

"Given that the Blessed One has declared, lord, that good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct should be done, what rewards can one expect when doing what should be done?"

"… One doesn't fault oneself; observant people, on close examination, praise one; one's good reputation gets spread about; one dies unconfused; and—with the breakup of the body, after death—one reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world." — *AN 2:18*

§ 61. As they were sitting there, the Kālāmas of Kesaputta said to the Blessed One, "Lord, there are some contemplatives & brahmans who come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, disparage them, show contempt for them, & pull them to pieces. And then other contemplatives & brahmans come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, disparage them, show contempt for them, & pull them to pieces. They leave us absolutely uncertain & in doubt: Which of these venerable contemplatives & brahmans are speaking the truth, and which ones are lying?"

"Of course you are uncertain, Kālāmas. Of course you are in doubt. When there are reasons for doubt, uncertainty is born. So in this case, Kālāmas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These dhammas are unskillful; these dhammas are blameworthy; these dhammas are criticized by the observant; these dhammas, when adopted & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering'—then you should abandon them.

"What do you think, Kālāmas? When greed arises in a person, does it arise for welfare or for harm?"

"For harm, lord."

"And this greedy person, overcome by greed, his mind possessed by greed, kills living beings, takes what is not given, goes after another person's wife, tells lies, and induces others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term harm & suffering."

"Yes, lord."

[Similarly with aversion & delusion.]

"So what do you think, Kālāmas: Are these dhammas skillful or unskillful?"

"Unskillful, lord."

"Blameworthy or blameless?"

"Blameworthy, lord."

"Criticized by the observant or praised by the observant?"

"Criticized by the observant, lord."

"When adopted & carried out, do they lead to harm & to suffering, or not?"

"When adopted & carried out, they lead to harm & to suffering. That is how it appears to us." …

"Now, Kālāmas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These dhammas are skillful; these dhammas are blameless; these dhammas are praised by the observant; these dhammas, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness'—then you should enter & remain in them.

"What do you think, Kālāmas? When lack of greed arises in a person, does it arise for welfare or for harm?"

"For welfare, lord."

"And this ungreedy person, not overcome by greed, his mind not possessed by greed, doesn't kill living beings, take what is not given, go after another person's wife, tell lies, or induce others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term welfare & happiness."

"Yes, lord."

[Similarly with lack of aversion & lack of delusion.]

"So what do you think, Kālāmas: Are these dhammas skillful or unskillful?"

"Skillful, lord."

"Blameworthy or blameless?"

"Blameless, lord."

"Criticized by the observant or praised by the observant?"

"Praised by the observant, lord."

"When adopted & carried out, do they lead to welfare & to happiness, or not?"

"When adopted & carried out, they lead to welfare & to happiness. That is how it appears to us." — *AN 3:66*

§ 62. "Now, what is old kamma? The eye is to be seen as old kamma, fabricated & willed, capable of being felt. The ear… The nose… The tongue… The body… The intellect is to be seen as old kamma, fabricated & willed, capable of being felt. This is called old kamma.

"And what is new kamma? Whatever kamma one does now with the body, with speech, or with the intellect: This is called new kamma." — *SN 35:145*

§ 63. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "'The world, the world *[loka],*' it is said. In what respect does the word 'world' apply?"

"Insofar as it disintegrates *[lujjati],* monk, it is called the 'world.' Now, what disintegrates? The eye disintegrates. Forms disintegrate. Eye-consciousness disintegrates. Eye-contact disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on eye-contact—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too disintegrates.

"The ear disintegrates. Sounds disintegrate…

"The nose disintegrates. Aromas disintegrate…

"The tongue disintegrates. Tastes disintegrate…

"The body disintegrates. Tactile sensations disintegrate…

"The intellect disintegrates. Ideas disintegrate. Intellect-consciousness disintegrates. Intellect-contact disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on intellect-contact—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too disintegrates.

"Insofar as it disintegrates, it is called the 'world.'" — *SN 35:82*

## The Complexity of Kamma

§ 64. "These four imponderables are not to be speculated about. Whoever speculates about them would go mad & experience vexation. Which four? The Buddha-range of the Buddhas [i.e., the range of powers a Buddha develops as a result of becoming a Buddha].... The jhāna-range of one absorbed in jhāna [i.e., the range of powers that one may obtain while absorbed in jhāna].... *The results of kamma*.... Speculation about [the origin, extent, purpose, etc., of] the cosmos is an imponderable that is not to be speculated about. Whoever speculates about these things would go mad & experience vexation." — *AN 4:77*

§ 65. "Monks, for anyone who says, 'In whatever way a person makes kamma, that is how it is experienced,' there is no living of the holy life, there is no opportunity for the right ending of stress. But for anyone who says, 'When a person makes kamma to be felt in such & such a way, that is how its result is experienced,' there is the living of the holy life, there is the opportunity for the right ending of stress....

"There is the case where a trifling evil act done by a certain individual takes him to hell. There is the case where the very same sort of trifling act done by another individual is experienced in the here-&-now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.

"Now, a trifling evil act done by what sort of individual takes him to hell? There is the case where a certain individual is undeveloped in the body [i.e., pleasant feelings can invade the mind and stay there—see §30], undeveloped in virtue, undeveloped in mind [i.e., painful feelings can invade the mind and stay there], undeveloped in discernment: restricted, small-hearted, dwelling with suffering. A trifling evil act done by this sort of individual takes him to hell.

"Now, a trifling evil act done by what sort of individual is experienced in the here-&-now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment? There is the case where a certain individual is developed in the body [i.e., pleasant feelings cannot invade the mind and stay there], developed in virtue, developed in mind [i.e., painful feelings cannot invade the mind and stay there], developed in discernment: unrestricted, large-hearted, dwelling with the unlimited. A trifling evil act done by this sort of individual is experienced in the here-&-now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.

"Suppose that a man were to drop a lump of salt into a small amount of water in a cup. What do you think? Would the water in the cup become salty because of the lump of salt, and unfit to drink?"

"Yes, lord…."

"Now, suppose that a man were to drop a lump of salt into the River Ganges. What do you think? Would the water in the River Ganges become salty because of the lump of salt, and unfit to drink?"

"No, lord…."

"In the same way, there is the case where a trifling evil act done by one individual [the first] takes him to hell; and there is the case where the very same sort of trifling act done by the other individual is experienced in the here-&-now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment." — *AN 3:101*

§ 66. Moḷiyasivaka: "There are some contemplatives & brahmans who are of this doctrine, this view: Whatever an individual feels—pleasure, pain, neither-pleasure-nor-pain—is entirely caused by what was done before. Now, what does Master Gotama say to that?"

The Buddha: "There are cases where some feelings arise based on bile [i.e., diseases and pains that come from a malfunction of the gall bladder]. You yourself should know how some feelings arise based on bile. Even the world is agreed on how some feelings arise based on bile. So any contemplatives & brahmans who are of the doctrine & view that whatever an individual feels—pleasure, pain, neither-pleasure-nor-pain—is entirely caused by what was done before—slip past what they themselves know, slip past what is agreed on by the world. Therefore I say that those contemplatives & brahmans are wrong.

"There are cases where some feelings arise based on phlegm… based on internal winds… based on a combination of bodily humors… from the change of the seasons… from uneven ('out-of-tune') care of the body… from attacks… from the result of kamma. You yourself should know how some feelings arise from the result of kamma. Even the world is agreed on how some feelings arise from the result of kamma. So any contemplatives & brahmans who are of the doctrine & view that whatever an individual feels—pleasure, pain, neither pleasure-nor-pain—is entirely caused by what was done before—slip past what they themselves know, slip past what is

agreed on by the world. Therefore I say that those contemplatives & brahmans are wrong." — *SN 36:21*

§ 67. "There are, headman, some contemplatives & brahmans who hold a doctrine & view like this: 'All those who kill living beings experience pain & distress in the here-&-now. All those who take what is not given… who engage in sexual misconduct… who tell lies experience pain & distress in the here-&-now.'

"Now there is the case where a certain person is seen garlanded & adorned, freshly bathed & groomed, with hair & beard trimmed, enjoying the sensualities of women as if he were a king. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he has been garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king?' They answer: 'My good man, this man attacked the king's enemy and took his life. The king, gratified with him, rewarded him. That is why he is garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king.'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen bound with a stout rope with his arms pinned tightly against his back, his head shaved bald, marched to a harsh-sounding drum from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, evicted through the south gate, and beheaded to the south of the city. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he is bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city?' They answer: 'My good man, this man, an enemy of the king, has taken the life of a man or a woman. That is why the rulers, having had him seized, inflicted such a punishment upon him.'

"Now, what do you think, headman? Have you ever seen or heard of such a case?"

"I have seen this, lord, have heard of it, and will hear of it (again in the future)."

"So, headman, when those contemplatives & brahmans who hold a doctrine & view like this say: 'All those who kill living beings experience pain & distress in the here-&-now,' do they speak truthfully or falsely?" — "Falsely, lord."

"And those who babble empty falsehood: Are they moral or immoral?" — "Immoral, lord."

"And those who are immoral and of evil character: Are they practicing wrongly or rightly?" — "Wrongly, lord."

"And those who are practicing wrongly: Do they hold wrong view or right view?" — "Wrong view, lord."

"And is it proper to place confidence in those who hold wrong view?" —

"No, lord."

"Then, headman, there is the case where a certain person is seen garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he has been garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king?' They answer: 'My good man, this man attacked the king's enemy and stole a treasure. The king, gratified with him, rewarded him…'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he is bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city?' They answer: 'My good man, this man, an enemy of the king, has committed a theft, stealing something from a village or a forest…'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he has been garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king?' They answer: 'My good man, this man seduced the wives of the king's enemy…'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he is bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city?' They answer: 'My good man, this man seduced women & girls of good families…'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he has been garlanded & adorned… as if he were a king?' They answer: 'My good man, this man made the king laugh with a lie…'

"Then there is the case where a certain person is seen bound with a stout rope… and beheaded to the south of the city. They ask about him: 'My good man, what has this man done that he is bound with a stout rope… and

beheaded to the south of the city?' They answer: 'My good man, this man has brought the aims of a householder or a householder's son to ruin with a lie. That is why the rulers, having had him seized, inflicted such a punishment upon him.'

"Now, what do you think, headman? Have you ever seen or heard of such a case?"

"I have seen this, lord, have heard of it, and will hear of it (again in the future)."

"So, headman, when those contemplatives & brahmans who hold a doctrine & view like this, say: 'All those who tell lies experience pain & distress in the here-&-now,' do they speak truthfully or falsely?… Is it proper to place confidence in those who hold wrong view?" — "No, lord." — *SN 42:13*

§ 68. "There are four kinds of person to be found in the world. Which four? There is the case where a certain person takes life, takes what is not given [steals], engages in sexual misconduct, lies, speaks divisively, speaks harshly, engages in idle chatter; is covetous, malevolent, & holds wrong views. On the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.

"But there is also the case where a certain person takes life… holds wrong views [yet], on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world.

"And there is the case where a certain person abstains from taking life, abstains from taking what is not given… is not covetous, not malevolent, & holds right views. On the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world.

"But there is also the case where a certain person abstains from taking life, abstains from taking what is not given… is not covetous, not malevolent, & holds right views [yet], on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.…

"In the case of the person who takes life…[yet] on the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world: Either earlier he performed fine kamma that is to be felt as pleasant, or later he performed fine kamma that is to be felt as pleasant, or at the time of death

he adopted & carried out right views. Because of that, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world. But as for the results of taking life…holding wrong views, he will feel them either right here-&-now, or later [in this lifetime], or following that.…

"In the case of the person who abstains from taking life… but on the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell: Either earlier he performed evil kamma that is to be felt as painful, or later he performed evil kamma that is to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he adopted & carried out wrong views. Because of that, on the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But as for the results of abstaining from taking life…holding right views, he will feel them either right here-&-now, or later [in this lifetime], or following that." — *MN 136*

§ 69. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him: "Headman, how does Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teach the Dhamma to his disciples?"

"Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples in this way, lord: 'All those who take life are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell. All those who steal… All those who engage in sexual misconduct… All those who tell lies are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell. Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth].' That's how Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples."

"If it's true that 'Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],' then no one is destined for the plane of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta's words. What do you think, headman? If a man is one who takes life, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, which time is more: the time he spends taking life or the time he spends not taking life?"

"… the time he spends taking life is less, lord, and the time he spends not taking life is certainly more. If it's true that 'Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],' then no one is destined

for the plane of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta's words."

"What do you think, headman? If a man is one who steals… engages in sexual misconduct… tells lies, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, which time is more: the time he spends telling lies or the time he spends not telling lies?"

"… the time he spends telling lies is less, lord, and the time he spends not telling lies is certainly more. If it's true that 'Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],' then no one is destined for the plane of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta's words."

"There's the case, headman, where a certain teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: 'All those who take life are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell. All those who steal… All those who engage in sexual misconduct… All those who tell lies are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell.' A disciple has faith in that teacher, and the thought occurs to him, 'Our teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: "All those who take life are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell." There are living beings that I have killed. I, too, am destined for the plane of deprivation, am destined for hell.' He fastens onto that view. If he doesn't abandon that doctrine, doesn't abandon that state of mind, doesn't relinquish that view, then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell.

"[The thought occurs to him,] 'Our teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: 'All those who steal… All those who engage in sexual misconduct… All those who tell lies are destined for the plane of deprivation, are destined for hell.' There are lies that I have told. I, too, am destined for the plane of deprivation, am destined for hell.' He fastens onto that view. If he doesn't abandon that doctrine, doesn't abandon that state of mind, doesn't relinquish that view, then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell.

"There is the case, headman, where a Tathāgata appears in the world, worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear knowing & conduct, well-gone, a knower of the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of those to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed. He, in various ways, criticizes & censures the taking of life, and says, 'Abstain from taking life.'

He criticizes & censures stealing, and says, 'Abstain from stealing.' He criticizes & censures indulging in sexual misconduct, and says, 'Abstain from sexual misconduct.' He criticizes & censures the telling of lies, and says, 'Abstain from the telling of lies.'

"A disciple has faith in that teacher and reflects: 'The Blessed One in a variety of ways criticizes & censures the taking of life, and says, "Abstain from taking life." There are living beings that I have killed, to a greater or lesser extent. That was not right. That was not good. But if I become remorseful for that reason, that evil deed of mine will not be undone.' So, reflecting thus, he abandons right then the taking of life, and in the future refrains from taking life. This is how there comes to be the abandoning of that evil deed. This is how there comes to be the transcending of that evil deed.

"[He reflects:] 'The Blessed One in a variety of ways criticizes & censures stealing… sexual misconduct… the telling of lies, and says, "Abstain from the telling of lies." There are lies I have told, to a greater or lesser extent. That was not right. That was not good. But if I become remorseful for that reason, that evil deed of mine will not be undone.' So, reflecting thus, he abandons right then the telling of lies, and in the future refrains from telling lies. This is how there comes to be the abandoning of that evil deed. This is how there comes to be the transcending of that evil deed.

"Having abandoned the taking of life, he refrains from taking life… he refrains from stealing… he refrains from sexual misconduct… he refrains from lies… he refrains from divisive speech… he refrains from harsh speech… he refrains from idle chatter. Having abandoned covetousness, he becomes uncovetous. Having abandoned malevolence & anger, he becomes one with a mind of no malevolence. Having abandoned wrong views, he becomes one who has right views.

"That disciple of the noble ones, headman—thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of malevolence, unbewildered, alert, mindful—keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with goodwill, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with goodwill—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without malevolence. Just as a

strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way, when the awareness-release through goodwill is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there.

"That disciple of the noble ones… keeps pervading the first direction with an awareness imbued with compassion… empathetic joy… equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with equanimity—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without malevolence. Just as a strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way, when the awareness-release through equanimity is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there." — *SN 42:8*

*From Mundane to Transcendent Right View*

§ 70. Then the Blessed One gave a graduated talk to Upāli the householder, i.e., a talk on giving, a talk on virtue, a talk on heaven; he proclaimed the drawbacks, degradation, and defilement in sensuality, and the rewards of renunciation. Then, when he knew that Upāli the householder was of ready mind, malleable mind, unhindered mind, exultant mind, confident mind, he proclaimed to him the distinctive teaching of the Awakened Ones: stress, origination, cessation, path. Just as a white cloth with stains removed would rightly take dye, in the same way there arose to Upāli the householder, in that very seat, the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: *Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.* Then—having seen the Dhamma, having reached the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, gained a footing in the Dhamma, having crossed over & beyond doubt, having had no more questioning—Upāli the householder gained fearlessness and was independent of others with regard to the Teacher's message. — *MN 56*

## Giving

§ 71. As he was sitting to one side, King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One: "Where, lord, should a gift be given?"

"Wherever the mind feels confidence, great king."

"But a gift given where, lord, bears great fruit?"

"This [question] is one thing, great king—'Where should a gift be given?'—while this—'A gift given where bears great fruit?'—is something else entirely. What is given to a virtuous person—rather than to an unvirtuous one—bears great fruit." — *SN 3:24*

§ 72. "Vaccha, whoever prevents another from giving a gift creates three obstructions, three impediments. Which three? He creates an obstruction to the merit of the giver, an obstruction to the recipient's gains, and prior to that he undermines and damages his own self. Whoever prevents another from giving a gift creates these three obstructions, these three impediments.

"I tell you, Vaccha, even if a person throws the rinsings of a bowl or a cup into a village pool or pond, thinking, 'May whatever animals live here feed on this,' that would be a source of merit, to say nothing of what is given to human beings. But I do say that what is given to a virtuous person is of great fruit, and not so much what is given to an unvirtuous person." — *AN 3:58*

*§ 73. A deva:*

"Giving is good, dear sir!
Even when there's next to nothing,
giving is good.
Giving with conviction is good!
The giving of what's righteously gained
is good!

And further:
Giving with discretion is good!
It's praised by the One Well-gone:
giving with discretion,
to those worthy of offerings
here in the world of the living.

What's given to them bears great fruit
like seeds sown in a good field." — *SN 1:33*

§ 74. "One who is generous, a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large.… This is a fruit of generosity visible in the here-&-now.

"And further, good people, people of integrity, admire one who is generous, a master of giving.… This, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here-&-now.

"And further, the fine reputation of one who is generous, a master of giving, is spread far & wide.… This, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here-&-now.

"And further, when one who is generous, a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives—he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment.… This, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here-&-now.

"And further, at the break-up of the body, after death, one who is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world.… This is a fruit of generosity in the next life." — *AN 5:35*

§ 75. What the miser fears,
that keeps him from giving,
is the very danger that comes
when he doesn't give. — *SN 1:32*

§ 76. No misers go
to the world of the devas.
Those who don't praise giving
are fools.
The enlightened
express their approval for giving
and so find ease
in the world beyond. — *Dhp 177*

§ 77. "If beings knew, as I know, the results of giving & sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would the stain of stinginess overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there were someone to receive their gift. But because beings do not know, as I know, the results of giving

& sharing, they eat without having given. The stain of stinginess overcomes their minds." — *Iti 26*

*§ 78. A devatā:*

"When a house is on fire,
the vessel salvaged
is the one that will be of use,
not the one left there to burn.

So when the world is on fire
with aging & death,
one should salvage (one's wealth) by giving:
what's given is well salvaged.

What's given bears fruit as pleasure.
What isn't given does not:
thieves take it away, or kings;
it gets burnt by fire or lost.

Then in the end
one leaves the body
together with one's possessions.

Knowing this, the intelligent man
enjoys possessions & gives.
Having enjoyed & given
in line with his means,
uncensured he goes
to the heavenly state." — *SN 1:41*

§ 79. On that occasion Princess Sumanā—with an entourage of 500 ladies-in-waiting riding on 500 carriages—went to the Buddha. On arrival, having bowed down to him, she sat to one side. As she was sitting there, she said to the Blessed One, "Suppose there were two disciples of the Blessed One, equal in conviction, equal in virtue, equal in discernment, but one was a giver of alms, the other a non-giver of alms. At the break-up of the body, after death, they would reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world. Having become devas, would there be any distinction, any difference between the two?"

"There would, Sumanā," said the Blessed One. "The one who was a giver of alms, on becoming a deva, would surpass the non-giver of alms in five areas: in divine life span, divine beauty, divine pleasure, divine status, and divine sovereignty. The one who was a giver of alms, on becoming a deva, would surpass the non-giver of alms in these five areas."

"And if they were to fall from there and reappear in this world: Having become human beings, would there be any distinction, any difference between the two?"

"There would, Sumanā," said the Blessed One. "The one who was a giver of alms, on becoming a human being, would surpass the non-giver of alms in five areas: in human life span, human beauty, human pleasure, human status, and human sovereignty. The one who was a giver of alms, on becoming a human being, would surpass the non-giver of alms in these five areas.""

"And if they were to go forth from home into the homeless life [of a monk]: Having gone forth, would there be any distinction, any difference between the two?"

"There would, Sumanā," said the Blessed One. "The one who was a giver of alms, on going forth, would surpass the non-giver of alms in five areas: He would often be asked to make use of robes and rarely not be asked. He would often be asked to take food… to make use of shelter… to make use of medicine and rarely not be asked. He would live with companions in the holy life who would often treat him with pleasing actions and rarely with unpleasing ones, who would treat him with pleasing words… pleasing thoughts… who would present him with pleasing gifts, and rarely with unpleasing ones. The one who was a giver of alms, on going forth, would surpass the non-giver of alms in these five areas"

"And if both were to attain arahantship, would there be any distinction, any difference between their attainments of arahantship?"

"In that case, I tell you, Sumanā, there would be no difference between them as to their release."

"It's amazing, lord, and astounding. Just this is reason enough to give alms, to make merit, in that merit is helpful to one who has become a deva, merit is helpful to one who has become a human being, and merit is helpful to one who has gone forth." — *AN 5:31*

§ 80. "And how is a donation endowed with six factors? There is the case where there are the three factors of the donor, the three factors of the recipients.

"And which are the three factors of the donor? There is the case where the donor, before giving, is glad; while giving, his/her mind is bright & clear; and after giving is gratified. These are the three factors of the donor.

"And which are the three factors of the recipients? There is the case where the recipients are free of passion or are practicing for the subduing of passion; free of aversion or practicing for the subduing of aversion; and free of delusion or practicing for the subduing of delusion. These are the three factors of the recipients.…

"Just as it's not easy to take the measure of the great ocean as 'just this many buckets of water, just this many hundreds of buckets of water, just this many thousands of buckets of water, or just this many hundreds of thousands of buckets of water.' It's simply reckoned as a great mass of water, incalculable, immeasurable. In the same way, it's not easy to take the measure of the merit of a donation thus endowed with six factors as 'just this much a bonanza of merit, a bonanza of what is skillful—a nutriment of bliss, heavenly, resulting in bliss, leading to heaven—that leads to what is desirable, pleasing, charming, beneficial, pleasant.' It is simply reckoned as a great mass of merit, incalculable, immeasurable." — *AN 6:37*

## Virtue

§ 81. "There are these five gifts, five great gifts—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning— are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans. Which five?

"There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from taking life. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression.…

"Abandoning taking what is not given [stealing], he abstains from taking what is not given.…

"Abandoning sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct.…

"Abandoning lying, he abstains from lying.…

"Abandoning the use of intoxicants, he abstains from taking intoxicants. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression.… This is the fifth gift, the fifth great gift—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—that is not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and is unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans." — *AN 8:39*

§ 82. "There are these five benefits in being virtuous, in being consummate in virtue. Which five? There is the case where a virtuous person, consummate in virtue, through not being heedless in his affairs, amasses a great quantity of wealth.… His fine reputation is spread far & wide.… When approaching an assembly of nobles, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives, he does so confidently & without embarrassment.… He dies without becoming delirious.… With the break-up of the body, after death, he reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world. These are the five benefits in being virtuous, in being consummate in virtue." — *DN 16*

§ 83. "And further—with reference to the virtues that are untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, leading to concentration—the monk dwells with his virtue in tune with that of his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity." — *AN 6:12*

## Heaven

§ 84. "It's from having known it myself, seen it myself, realized it myself that I tell you that I have seen beings who—endowed with bodily good conduct, verbal good conduct, & mental good conduct; who did not revile noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—at the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destination, a heavenly world." — *Iti 71*

§ 85. "I have seen a heaven named 'Six Spheres of Contact.' Whatever form one sees there with the eye is desirable, never undesirable; pleasing, never displeasing; agreeable, never disagreeable. Whatever sound one hears there with the ear… Whatever aroma one smells there with the nose… Whatever flavor one tastes there with the tongue… Whatever tactile sensation one touches there with the body… Whatever idea one cognizes there with the intellect is desirable, never undesirable; pleasing, never displeasing; agreeable, never disagreeable." — *SN 35:135*

§ 86. "Monks, if one speaking rightly were to say of anything, 'It's utterly desirable, utterly charming, utterly appealing,' one speaking rightly would say that just of heaven: 'It's utterly desirable, utterly charming, utterly appealing'—so much so that it's not easy to make a comparison for how pleasant heaven is."

When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One, "But, lord, is it possible to make a comparison?"

"It is," the Blessed One said. "Monks, suppose that a universal emperor were endowed with the seven treasures and four powers, and because of that would experience pleasure & joy."

[Here the Buddha gives a detailed description of these treasures and powers, which briefly stated are these: The seven treasures consist of the wheel-treasure, which magically and peacefully establishes the emperor's rule over all four directions; the elephant-treasure and the horse-treasure, either of which—leaving the palace at dawn—can take him to the ocean and back before his morning meal; the jewel-treasure that can turn night into day; the woman-treasure—his queen—who is lovely and faithful to him; the steward-treasure, who provides him with all the gold and bullion he needs; and the counselor treasure, who teaches him what is right and wrong, and rules wisely in his stead. The four powers are the power of a

supremely attractive appearance, a supremely long life, supremely good health, and supreme popularity among his subjects.]

Then the Blessed One, taking a small stone the size of his hand, said to the monks, "What do you think, monks? Which is greater, this small stone I have taken, the size of my hand, or the Himalayas, the king of mountains?"

"It's next to nothing, lord, the small stone you have taken.… It doesn't count. It's not even a small fraction. There's no comparison."

"In the same way, monks, the pleasure & joy experienced by a universal emperor because of his seven treasures and four powers doesn't count next to the pleasures of the heavenly world. It's not even a small fraction. There's no comparison." — *MN 129*

## Drawbacks

§ 87. "When a deva is about to pass away from the company of devas, five omens appear: His garlands wither, his clothes get soiled, sweat comes out of his armpits, a dullness descends on his body, he no longer delights in his own deva-seat. The devas, knowing from this that 'This deva-son is about to pass away,' encourage him with three sayings: 'Go from here, honorable sir, to a good destination. Having gone to a good destination, gain the gain that is good to gain. Having gained the gain that is good to gain, become well-established.'"

When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One, "What, lord, is the devas' reckoning of going to a good destination? What is their reckoning of the gain that is good to gain? What is their reckoning of becoming well-established?"

"The human state, monks, is the devas' reckoning of going to a good destination. Having become a human being, acquiring conviction in the Dhamma-&-Vinaya taught by the Tathāgata: This is the devas' reckoning of the gain that is good to gain. When that conviction is settled within one —rooted, established, & strong, not to be destroyed by any contemplative or brahman; deva, Māra, or Brahmā; or anyone else in the world: This is the devas' reckoning of becoming well-established."

> When a deva passes away
> from the company of devas

through his life-span's ending,
three sounds sound forth
—the devas' encouragement.

'Go from here,
honorable sir,
to a good destination,
to companionship
with human beings.
On becoming a human being,
acquire a conviction
unsurpassed
in True Dhamma.
That conviction of yours
in True Dhamma, well-taught,
should be
settled,
rooted,
established,
—undestroyed
as long as you live.
Having abandoned
bodily misconduct,
verbal misconduct,
mental misconduct,
and whatever else is flawed;
having done with the body what's skillful,
and much that is skillful with speech,
having done what's skillful
with a heart without limit,
with no acquisitions,
then—having made much of the merit
that's a ground for spontaneously arising [in heaven]
through giving—
establish other mortals
in
True Dhamma &

the holy life.'

With this sympathy, the devas–
when they know a deva is passing away–
encourage him:
'Come back, deva,
again & again.' — *Iti 83*

§ 88. Then the Blessed One, picking up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, said to the monks, "What do you think, monks? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the great earth?"

"The great earth is far greater, lord. The little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail is next to nothing. It doesn't even count. It's no comparison. It's not even a fraction, this little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail, when compared with the great earth.

"In the same way, monks, few are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn among human beings. Far more are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn in hell… in the animal womb… in the domain of the hungry ghosts.

… "In the same way, monks, few are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn among devas. Far more are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn in hell… in the animal womb… in the domain of the hungry ghosts.

… "In the same way, monks, few are the beings who, on passing away from the deva realm, are reborn among devas. Far more are the beings who, on passing away from the deva realm, are reborn in hell… in the animal womb… in the domain of the hungry ghosts.

… "In the same way, monks, few are the beings who, on passing away from the deva realm, are reborn among human beings. Far more are the beings who, on passing away from the deva realm, are reborn in hell… in the animal womb… in the domain of the hungry ghosts.

"Therefore your duty is the contemplation, 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress.' Your duty is the contemplation, 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'" — *SN 56:102–113*

§ 89. "From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. What do you think, monks? Which is greater, the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—or the water in the four great oceans?"

"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the tears we have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans."

"Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me.

"This is the greater: the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans.

"Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father… the death of a brother… the death of a sister… the death of a son… the death of a daughter… loss with regard to relatives… loss with regard to wealth… loss with regard to disease. The tears you have shed over loss with regard to disease while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries—enough to become disenchanted with all fabricated things, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released." — *SN 15:3*

§ 90. "From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. When you see someone who has fallen on hard times, overwhelmed with hard times, you should conclude: 'We, too, have experienced just this sort of thing in the course of that long, long time.'… When you see someone who is happy & well-provided in life, you should conclude: 'We, too, have experienced just this sort of thing in the course of that long, long time.'" — *SN 15:11–12*

§ 91. "There is, monks, an intergalactic void, an unrestrained darkness, a pitch-black darkness, where even the light of the sun & moon—so mighty, so powerful—doesn't reach."

When this was said, one of the monks said to the Blessed One, "Wow, what a great darkness! What a really great darkness! Is there any darkness greater & more frightening than that?"

"There is, monk, a darkness greater & more frightening than that."

"And which darkness, lord, is greater & more frightening than that?"

"Any contemplatives or brahmans who do not know, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress'; who do not know, as it has come to be, that 'This is the origination of stress'… 'This is the cessation of stress'… 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress': They revel in fabrications leading to birth; they revel in fabrications leading to aging; they revel in fabrications leading to death; they revel in fabrications leading to sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. Reveling in fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, they fabricate fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. Fabricating fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, they drop into the darkness of birth. They drop into the darkness of aging… the darkness of death… darkness of sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. They are not released from birth, aging, death, sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. They are not released, I tell you, from suffering & stress." — *SN 56:46*

§ 92. "Monks, I have seen a hell named 'Six Spheres of Contact.' Whatever form one sees there with the eye is undesirable, never desirable;

displeasing, never pleasing; disagreeable, never agreeable. Whatever sound one hears there with the ear.… Whatever aroma one smells there with the nose.… Whatever flavor one tastes there with the tongue.… Whatever tactile sensation one touches there with the body.… Whatever idea one cognizes there with the intellect is undesirable, never desirable; displeasing, never pleasing; disagreeable, never agreeable." — *SN 35:135*

§ 93. "Then the hell-wardens, seizing [an evil-doer] by the arms, present him to King Yama: 'This is a man, your majesty, with no respect for mother, no respect for father, no reverence for contemplatives, no reverence for brahmans, no honor for the leaders of his clan. Let your majesty decree his punishment.'

"Then King Yama interrogates & interpellates & castigates the man regarding the first deva messenger: 'My good man, didn't you see the first deva messenger that has appeared among human beings?'

"'I didn't, lord,' he says.

Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't you see among human beings a tender baby boy lying prone in its own urine & excrement?'

"'I did, lord,' he says.

Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't the thought occur to you—observant & mature: "I, too, am subject to birth, have not gone beyond birth. I'd better do good with body, speech, & mind"?'

"'I couldn't, lord. I was heedless, lord.'

Then King Yama says, 'My good man, through heedlessness you did not do what is good with body, speech, & mind. And of course, my good man, they will deal with you in accordance with your heedlessness. For that evil kamma of yours was neither done by your mother, nor done by your father, nor done by your brother, nor done by your sister, nor done by your friends & companions, nor done by your kinsmen & relatives, nor done by the devas. That evil kamma was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.'

"Then, having interrogated & interpellated & castigated the man regarding the first deva messenger, King Yama interrogates & interpellates & castigates him regarding the second: 'My good man, didn't you see the second deva messenger that has appeared among human beings?'

"'I didn't, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't you see among human beings a woman or man eighty, ninety, one hundred years old: aged, roof-rafter crooked, bent-over, supported by a cane, palsied, miserable, broken-toothed, gray-haired, scanty-haired, bald, wrinkled, with limbs all blotchy?'

"'I did, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't the thought occur to you—observant & mature: "I, too, am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging. I'd better do good with body, speech, & mind"?'

"'I couldn't, lord. I was heedless, lord.'

"Then King Yama… interrogates & interpellates & castigates him regarding the third deva messenger: 'My good man, didn't you see the third deva messenger that has appeared among human beings?'

"'I didn't, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't you see among human beings a woman or man diseased, in pain, severely ill, lying in her/his own urine & excrement, lifted up by others, laid down by others?'

"'I did, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't the thought occur to you—observant & mature: "I, too, am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness. I'd better do good with body, speech, & mind"?'

"'I couldn't, lord. I was heedless, lord.'

"Then King Yama… interrogates & interpellates & castigates him regarding the fourth deva messenger: 'My good man, didn't you see the fourth deva messenger that has appeared among human beings?'

"'I didn't, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't you see among human beings kings—catching a thief, a criminal—having him tortured in many ways [as above]?'

"'I did, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't the thought occur to you—observant & mature: "It seems that those who do evil actions are tortured in these many ways in the here-&-now. And how much more in the hereafter? I'd better do good with body, speech, & mind"?'

"'I couldn't, lord. I was heedless, lord.'

"Then King Yama… interrogates & interpellates & castigates him regarding the fifth deva messenger: 'My good man, didn't you see the fifth deva messenger that has appeared among human beings?'

"'I didn't, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't you see among human beings a woman or man, one day, two days, or three days dead: bloated, livid, oozing with lymph?'

"'I did, lord,' he says.

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, didn't the thought occur to you—observant & mature: "I, too, am subject to death, have not gone beyond death. I'd better do good with body, speech, & mind"?'

"'I couldn't, lord. I was heedless, lord.'

"Then King Yama says, 'My good man, through heedlessness you did not do what is good with body, speech, & mind. And of course, my good man, they will deal with you in accordance with your heedlessness. For that evil kamma of yours was neither done by your mother, nor done by your father, nor done by your brother, nor done by your sister, nor done by your friends & companions, nor done by your kinsmen & relatives, nor done by the devas. That evil kamma was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.'

"Then, having interrogated & interpellated & castigated the man regarding the fifth deva messenger, King Yama falls silent.

"Then the hell-wardens torture [the evil-doer] with what's called a five-fold imprisonment. They drive a red-hot iron stake through one hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through one foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the middle of his chest. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings, yet he does not die as long as his evil kamma is not exhausted.

"Then the hell-wardens lay him down and slice him with axes… they hold him feet up & head down and slice him with adzes… they harness him to a chariot and drive him back & forth over ground that is burning, blazing, & glowing… they make him climb up & down a vast mountain of embers that is burning, blazing, & glowing… they hold him feet up &

head down and plunge him into a red-hot copper cauldron that is burning, blazing, & glowing.…

"Then the hell-wardens throw him into the Great Hell.… The flame that leaps from the eastern wall of the Great Hell strikes the western wall. The flame that leaps from the western wall strikes the eastern wall. The flame that leaps from the northern wall strikes the southern wall. The flame that leaps from the southern wall strikes the northern wall. The flame that leaps from the bottom strikes the top. The flame that leaps from the top strikes the bottom.…

"There ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, the eastern gate of the Great Hell opens. He runs there, rushing quickly. As he runs there, rushing quickly, his outer skin burns, his inner skin burns, his flesh burns, his tendons burn, even his bones turn to smoke.… When he finally gets there, the door slams shut.… [Similarly with the western gate, the northern gate, & the southern gate.] …

"There ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, the eastern gate of the Great Hell opens. He runs there, rushing quickly.… He gets out through the gate. But right next to the Great Hell is a vast Excrement Hell. He falls into that.… Right next to the Excrement Hell is the vast Hot Ashes Hell… the vast Simbali Forest… the vast Sword-leaf Forest… the vast Lye-water River. He falls into that.…

"Then the hell-wardens pull him out with a hook and, placing him on the ground, say to him, 'Well, my good man, what do you want?' He replies, 'I'm hungry, venerable sirs.' So the hell-wardens pry open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, & glowing, and throw into it a copper ball, burning, blazing, & glowing.… Then the hell-wardens say to him, 'Well, my good man, what do you want?' He replies, 'I'm thirsty, venerable sirs.' So the hell-wardens pry open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, & glowing, and pour into it molten copper, burning, blazing, & glowing.… There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings, yet he does not die as long as his evil kamma is not exhausted.

"Then the hell-wardens throw him back into the Great Hell once more.…

"I tell you this, monks, not from having heard it from another contemplative or brahman. On the contrary, I tell you this just as I have known for myself, seen for myself, penetrated for myself." — *MN 130*

§ 94. The man immersed in
gathering blossoms,
his heart distracted:
death sweeps him away–
as a great flood,
a village asleep.

The man immersed in
gathering blossoms,
his heart distracted,
insatiable in sensual pleasures:
the End-Maker holds him
under his sway. — *Dhp 47–48*

§ 95. Not even if it rained gold coins
would we have our fill
of sensual pleasures.
'Stressful,
they give little enjoyment'–
knowing this, the wise one
finds no delight
even in heavenly sensual pleasures.

He is
one who delights
in the ending of craving,
a disciple of the Rightly
Self-Awakened One. — *Dhp 186–187*

*§ 96. Ven. Raṭṭhapāla:*

I see in the world
people with wealth
who, from delusion,
don't make a gift
of the treasure they've gained.
Greedy, they stash it away,
hoping for even more
sensual pleasures.

A king who, by force,
has conquered the world
and rules over the earth
to the edge of the sea,
dissatisfied with the ocean's near shore,
longs for the ocean's
far shore as well.

Kings & others
—plenty of people—
go to death with craving
unabated. Unsated,
they leave the body behind,
having not had enough
of the world's sensual pleasures.

Sensual pleasures—
variegated,
enticing,
sweet—
in various ways disturb the mind.
Seeing the drawbacks in sensual objects:
that's why, O king, I went forth.

Just like fruits, people fall
—young & old—
at the break-up of the body.
Knowing this, O king,
I went forth.
The contemplative life is better
for sure. — *MN 82*

## Renunciation

§ 97. Subdue greed for sensual pleasures,
& see renunciation as safety. — *Sn 5:11*

§ 98. Now, on that occasion, Ven. Bhaddiya, Kāḷigodhā's son, on going to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, would

repeatedly exclaim, "What bliss! What bliss!" A large number of monks heard Ven. Bhaddiya, Kāḷigodhā's son, on going to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, repeatedly exclaim, "What bliss! What bliss!" and on hearing him, the thought occurred to them, "There's no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya, Kāḷigodhā's son doesn't enjoy leading the holy life, for when he was a householder he knew the bliss of kingship, so that now, on recollecting that when going to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, he is repeatedly exclaiming, 'What bliss! What bliss!'" They went to the Blessed One and… told him.…

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, "Come, monk. In my name, call Bhaddiya, saying, 'The Teacher calls you, friend Bhaddiya.'"

Responding, "As you say, lord," the monk went to Ven. Bhaddiya.…

Then Ven. Bhaddiya went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Is it true, Bhaddiya, that—on going to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling—you repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss! What bliss!'?"

"Yes, lord."

"What compelling reason do you have in mind that… you repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss! What bliss!'?"

"Before, when I has a householder, maintaining the bliss of kingship, lord, I had guards posted within and without the royal apartments, within and without the city, within and without the countryside. But even though I was thus guarded, thus protected, I dwelled in fear—agitated, distrustful, & afraid. But now, on going alone to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident, & unafraid —unconcerned, unruffled, living on the gifts of others, with my mind like a wild deer. This is the compelling reason I have in mind that—when going to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling—I repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss! What bliss!'" — *Ud 2:10*

§ 99. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Āḷavī on a spread of leaves by a cattle track in a siṁsapa forest. Then Hatthaka of Āḷavī, out roaming & rambling for exercise, saw the Blessed One sitting on a spread of leaves by the cattle track in the siṁsapa forest. On seeing him, he went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side.

As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, I hope the Blessed One has slept in ease."

"Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one."

"But cold, lord, is the winter night. The 'Between-the-Eights' is a time of snowfall. Hard is the ground trampled by cattle hooves. Thin is the spread of leaves. Sparse are the leaves in the trees. Thin are your ochre robes. And cold blows the Verambhā wind. Yet still the Blessed One says, 'Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one.'"

"In that case, young man, I will question you in return. Answer as you see fit. Now, what do you think? Suppose a householder or householder's son has a house with a gabled roof, plastered inside & out, draft-free, with close-fitting door & windows shut against the wind. Inside he has a throne-like bed spread with a long-fleeced coverlet, a white wool coverlet, an embroidered coverlet, a rug of kadali-deer hide, with a canopy above, & red cushions on either side. And there a lamp would be burning, and his four wives, with their many charms, would be attending to him. Would he sleep in ease, or not? Or how does this strike you?"

"Yes, lord, he would sleep in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, he would be one."

"But what do you think, young man? Might there arise in that householder or householder's son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of passion so that—burned with those passion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?" — "Yes, lord."

"As for those passion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that passion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

"Now, what do you think, young man? Might there arise in that householder or householder's son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of aversion… any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of delusion so that so that—burned with those delusion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?" — "Yes, lord."

"As for those delusion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that delusion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

"Always, always,
he sleeps in ease:
the brahman totally unbound,
who doesn't adhere
to sensual pleasures,
who's without acquisitions
& cooled.

Having
cut all ties
& subdued fear in the heart,
calmed,
he sleeps in ease,
having reached peace
of awareness." — *AN 3:35*

§ 100. "And who is the person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death? There is the case of the person who has abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, & craving for sensuality. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought doesn't occur to him, 'O, those beloved sensual pleasures will be taken from me, and I will be taken from them!' He doesn't grieve, isn't tormented; doesn't weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death." — *AN 4:184*

§ 101. "A discerning lay follower who is diseased, in pain, severely ill… should be asked, 'Friend, are you concerned for the five strings of human sensuality?' If he should say, 'I am concerned for the five strings of human sensuality,' he should be told, 'Friend, divine sensual pleasures are more splendid & more refined than human sensual pleasures. It would be good if, having raised your mind above human sensual pleasures, you set it on the Devas of the Four Great Kings.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above human sensual pleasures and is set on the Devas of the Four Great Kings,' he should be told, 'Friend, the Devas of the Thirty-three are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Four Great Kings. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Devas of the Four Great Kings, you set it on the Devas of the Thirty-three.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Devas of the Four Great Kings and is set on the Devas of the Thirty-three,' he should be told, 'Friend, the Devas of the Hours are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Thirty-three. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Devas of the Thirty-three, you set it on the Devas of the Hours.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Devas of the Thirty-three and is set on the Devas of the Hours,' he should be told, 'Friend, the Contented Devas are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Hours… the Devas Delighting in Creation are more splendid & more refined than the Contented Devas… the Devas [Muses?] Wielding Power over the Creations of Others are more splendid & more refined than the Devas Delighting in Creation… the Brahmā world is more splendid and more refined than the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others, you set it on the Brahmā world.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others and is set on the Brahmā world,' he should be told, 'Friend, even the Brahmā world is inconstant, impermanent, included in self-identity. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Brahmā world, you brought it to the cessation of self-identity.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Brahmā worlds and is brought to the cessation of self-identity,' then, I tell you, Mahānāma, there is no difference—in terms of release—between the release of that lay follower whose mind is released and the release of a monk whose mind is released." — *SN 55:54*

*Transcendent Right View*

§ 102. "And what, monks, is right view? Knowledge with regard to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard

to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This, monks, is called right view." — *SN 45:8*

§ 103. "And what is the faculty of discernment? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. He discerns, as it has come to be: 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.' This is called the faculty of discernment." — *SN 48:10*

§ 104. "Any time one examines, investigates, & scrutinizes internal dhammas with discernment, that is analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening. And any time one examines, investigates, & scrutinizes external dhammas with discernment, that too is analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening." — *SN 46:52*

§ 105. "There are dhammas that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening once it has arisen." — *SN 46:51*

§ 106. "Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress: Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

"And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of stress: the craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

"And this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of stress: the remainderless dispassioning & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment,

release, & letting go of that very craving.

"And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of stress'… 'This noble truth of stress is to be comprehended'… 'This noble truth of stress has been comprehended.'

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the origination of stress'… 'This noble truth of the origination of stress is to be abandoned'… 'This noble truth of the origination of stress has been abandoned.'

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the cessation of stress'… 'This noble truth of the cessation of stress is to be directly experienced'… 'This noble truth of the cessation of stress has been directly experienced.'

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress'… 'This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress is to be developed'… 'This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress has been developed.'

"And, monks, as long as this—my three-round, twelve-permutation knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths as they have come to be—was not pure, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk. But as soon as this—my three-round, twelve-permutation knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths as they have come to be—was truly pure, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk. Knowledge &

vision arose in me: 'Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.'" — *SN 56:11*

§ 107. "And what is comprehension? Any ending of passion, ending of aversion, ending of delusion: This is called comprehension." — *SN 22:23*

§ 108. "Monks, I will teach you the five aggregates & the five clinging-aggregates. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

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

The Blessed One said, "Now what, monks, are the five aggregates?

"Whatever form is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: That is called the form aggregate.

"Whatever feeling is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: That is called the feeling aggregate.

"Whatever perception is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: That is called the perception aggregate.

"Whatever fabrications are past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: Those are called the fabrication aggregate.

"Whatever consciousness is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: That is called the consciousness aggregate.

"These are called the five aggregates.

"And what are the five clinging-aggregates?

"Whatever form—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—is clingable, offers sustenance, and is accompanied with effluents: That is called the form clinging-aggregate.

"Whatever feeling—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—is clingable, offers sustenance, and is accompanied with effluents: That is called the feeling clinging-aggregate.

"Whatever perception—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—is clingable, offers sustenance, and is accompanied with effluents: That is called the perception clinging-aggregate.

"Whatever fabrications—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—are clingable, offer sustenance, and are accompanied with effluents: Those are called the fabrication clinging-aggregate.

"Whatever consciousness—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—is clingable, offers sustenance, and is accompanied with effluents: That is called the consciousness clinging-aggregate.

"These are called the five clinging-aggregates." — *SN 22:48*

§ 109. "There is the case where one enjoys, welcomes, & remains fastened. And what does one enjoy & welcome, to what does one remain fastened? One enjoys, welcomes, & remains fastened to form. As one enjoys, welcomes, & remains fastened to form, there arises delight. *Any delight in form is clinging*. [Similarly with feeling, perception, fabrications, and consciousness.]" — *SN 22:5* (emphasis added)

§ 110. Visākha: "Is it the case, lady, that clinging is the same thing as the five clinging-aggregates or is it something separate?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "Friend Visākha, neither is clinging the same thing as the five clinging-aggregates, nor is it something separate. Whatever desire & passion there is with regard to the five clinging-aggregates, that is the clinging there.

Visākha: "But, lady, how does self-identity come about?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "There is the case, friend Visākha, where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—assumes form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

"He assumes feeling to be the self.…

"He assumes perception to be the self.…

"He assumes fabrications to be the self.…

"He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. This is how self-identity comes about."

Visākha: "But, lady, how does self-identity not come about?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "There is the case where a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—doesn't assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

"He doesn't assume feeling to be the self.…

"He doesn't assume perception to be the self.…

"He doesn't assume fabrications to be the self.…

"He doesn't assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. This is how self-identity does not come about."" — *MN 44*

§ 111. Then Ven. Rādha went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "'A being,' lord. 'A being,' it's said. To what extent is one said to be 'a being *[satta]*'?"

"Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for form, Rādha: When one is caught up *[satta]* there, tied up *[visatta]* there, one is said to be 'a being.'

"Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for feeling… perception… fabrications…

"Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for consciousness, Rādha: When one is caught up there, tied up there, one is said to be 'a being.'" — *SN 23:2*

§ 112. "What is one?—All beings subsist on nutriment." — *Khp 4*

§ 113. "If one stays obsessed with form, that's what one is measured/limited by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified.

"If one stays obsessed with feeling…

"If one stays obsessed with perception…

"If one stays obsessed with fabrications…

"If one stays obsessed with consciousness, that's what one is measured/limited by. Whatever one is measured by, that's how one is classified."— *SN 22:36*

§ 114. "Which clinging? These four clingings: sensuality clinging, view clinging, habit-&-practice clinging, and self-doctrine clinging." — *SN 12:2*

## Perceptions for Inducing Dispassion for the Aggregates

§ 115. Ven. Sāriputta said, "Friends, just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant's footprint is reckoned the foremost among them in terms of size; in the same way, all skillful dhammas are included in the four noble truths. In which four? In the noble truth of stress, in the noble truth of the origination of stress, in the noble truth of the cessation of stress, and in the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

"And what is the noble truth of stress? Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful. And which are the five clinging-aggregates? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrication clinging-aggregate, and the consciousness clinging-aggregate.

"And what is the form clinging-aggregate? The four great existents and the form derived from them. And what are the four great existents? The earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property.

### THE EARTH PROPERTY

"And what is the earth property? The earth property can be either internal or external. What is the internal earth property? Whatever internal, within oneself, is hard, solid, & sustained [by craving]: head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys,

heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else internal, within oneself, is hard, solid, & sustained: This is called the internal earth property. Now, both the internal earth property and the external earth property are simply earth property. And that should be seen as it actually is with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the earth property and makes the mind dispassionate toward the earth property.

"Now, there comes a time, friends, when the external liquid property is provoked,[1] and at that time the external earth property vanishes. So when even in the external earth property—so vast—inconstancy will be discerned, destructibility will be discerned, a tendency to decay will be discerned, changeability will be discerned, then what of this short-lasting body, sustained by clinging, is 'I' or 'mine' or 'what I am'? It has here only a 'no.'

"Now, if other people insult, malign, exasperate, & harass a monk [who has discerned this], he discerns that 'A painful feeling, born of ear-contact, has arisen within me. And that is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.' And he sees that contact is inconstant, feeling is inconstant, perception is inconstant, consciousness is inconstant. His mind, with the [earth] property as its object/support, leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & released.…

### THE LIQUID PROPERTY

"And what is the liquid property? The liquid property may be either internal or external. What is the internal liquid property? Whatever internal, belonging to oneself, is liquid, watery, & sustained: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine, or whatever else internal, within oneself, is liquid, watery, & sustained: This is called the internal liquid property. Now, both the internal liquid property and the external liquid property are simply liquid property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the liquid property and makes the mind dispassionate toward the liquid property.

"Now, there comes a time, friends, when the external liquid property is provoked and washes away village, town, city, district, & country. There comes a time when the water in the great ocean drops down one hundred leagues, two hundred… three hundred… four hundred… five hundred… six hundred… seven hundred leagues. There comes a time when the water in the great ocean stands seven palm-trees deep, six… five… four… three… two palm-trees deep, one palm-tree deep. There comes a time when the water in the great ocean stands seven fathoms deep, six… five… four… three… two fathoms deep, one fathom deep. There comes a time when the water in the great ocean stands half a fathom deep, hip-deep, knee-deep, ankle deep. There comes a time when the water in the great ocean is not even the depth of the first joint of a finger.

"So when even in the external liquid property—so vast—inconstancy will be discerned, destructibility will be discerned, a tendency to decay will be discerned, changeability will be discerned, then what of this short-lasting body, sustained by clinging, is 'I' or 'mine' or 'what I am'? It has here only a 'no.'…

THE FIRE PROPERTY

"And what is the fire property? The fire property may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire property? Whatever internal, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, & sustained: that by which [the body] is warmed, aged, & consumed with fever; and that by which what is eaten, drunk, chewed, & savored gets properly digested, or whatever else internal, within oneself, is fire, fiery, & sustained: This is called the internal fire property. Now, both the internal fire property and the external fire property are simply fire property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the fire property and makes the mind dispassionate toward the fire property.

Now, there comes a time, friends, when the external fire property is provoked and consumes village, town, city, district, & country; and then, coming to the edge of a green district, the edge of a road, the edge of a rocky district, to the water's edge, or to a lush, well-watered area, goes out

from lack of sustenance. There comes a time when people try to make fire using a wing-bone & tendon parings.[2]

"So when even in the external fire property—so vast—inconstancy will be discerned, destructibility will be discerned, a tendency to decay will be discerned, changeability will be discerned, then what of this short-lasting body, sustained by clinging, is 'I' or 'mine' or 'what I am'? It has here only a 'no.' …

THE WIND PROPERTY

"And what is the wind property? The wind property may be either internal or external. What is the internal wind property? Whatever internal, belonging to oneself, is wind, windy, & sustained: up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the stomach, winds in the intestines, winds that course through the body, in-&-out breathing, or whatever else internal, within oneself, is wind, windy, & sustained: This is called the internal wind property. Now, both the internal wind property and the external wind property are simply wind property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the wind property and makes the mind dispassionate toward the wind property.

"Now, there comes a time, friends, when the external wind property is provoked and blows away village, town, city, district, & country. There comes a time when, in the last month of the hot season, people try to start a breeze with a fan or bellows, and even the grass at the fringe of a thatch roof doesn't stir.

"So when even in the external wind property—so vast—inconstancy will be discerned, destructibility will be discerned, a tendency to decay will be discerned, changeability will be discerned, then what of this short-lasting body, sustained by clinging, is 'I' or 'mine' or 'what I am'? It has here only a 'no.'

"Now, if other people insult, malign, exasperate, & harass a monk [who has discerned this], he discerns that 'A painful feeling, born of ear-contact, has arisen within me. And that is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.' And he sees that contact is inconstant, feeling is inconstant, perception is inconstant, consciousness is inconstant.

His mind, with the [wind] property as its object/support, leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & released.

"And if other people attack the monk in ways that are undesirable, displeasing, & disagreeable—through contact with fists, contact with stones, contact with sticks, or contact with knives—the monk discerns that 'This body is of such a nature contacts with fists come, contacts with stones come, contacts with sticks come, & contacts with knives come. Now, the Blessed One has said, in his exhortation of the simile of the saw, "Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely into pieces with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding." So my persistence will be aroused & untiring, my mindfulness established & unconfused, my body calm & unaroused, my mind concentrated & gathered into one. And now let contact with fists come to this body, let contact with stones, with sticks, with knives come to this body, for this is how the Buddha's bidding is done.'

"And if, in the monk recollecting the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on what is skillful is not established, he feels apprehensive at that and gives rise to a sense of urgency: 'It is a loss for me, not a gain; ill-gotten for me, not well-gotten, that when I recollect the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on what is skillful is not established within me.' Just as when a daughter-in-law, on seeing her father-in-law, feels apprehensive and gives rise to a sense of urgency [to please him], in the same way, if, in the monk recollecting the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on what is skillful is not established, he feels apprehensive at that and gives rise to a sense of urgency: 'It is a loss for me, not a gain; ill-gotten for me, not well-gotten, that when I recollect the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on what is skillful is not established within me.'

"But if, in the monk recollecting the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on what is skillful is established, then he is gratified at that. And even to this extent, friends, the monk has accomplished a great deal.

### THE SPACE PROPERTY

"Friends, just as when—in dependence on timber, vines, grass, & clay—space is enclosed and is gathered under the term 'house,' in the same way,

when space is enclosed in dependence on bones, tendons, muscle, & skin, it is gathered under the term, 'form.'

DEPENDENT CO-ARISING

"Now, if internally the eye is intact but externally forms do not come into range, nor is there a corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. If internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, but there is no corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, and there is a corresponding engagement, then there is the appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

"The form of what has thus come to be is gathered under the form clinging-aggregate. The feeling of what has thus come to be is gathered under the feeling clinging-aggregate. The perception of what has thus come to be is gathered under the perception clinging-aggregate. The fabrications of what has thus come to be are gathered under the fabrication clinging-aggregate. The consciousness of what has thus come to be is gathered under the consciousness clinging-aggregate. One discerns, 'This, it seems, is how there is the gathering, meeting, & convergence of these five clinging-aggregates. Now, the Blessed One has said, "Whoever sees dependent co-arising sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees dependent co-arising."[3] And these things—the five clinging-aggregates—are dependently co-arisen.[4] Any desire, embracing, grasping, & holding-on to these five clinging-aggregates is the origination of stress. Any subduing of desire & passion, any abandoning of desire & passion for these five clinging-aggregates is the cessation of stress.'[5] And even to this extent, friends, the monk has accomplished a great deal.

"Now, if internally the ear is intact.…

"Now, if internally the nose is intact.…

"Now, if internally the tongue is intact.…

"Now, if internally the body is intact.…

"Now, if internally the intellect is intact but externally ideas do not come into range, nor is there a corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. If internally the

intellect is intact and externally ideas come into range, but there is no corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when internally the intellect is intact and externally ideas come into range, and there is a corresponding engagement, then there is the appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

"The form of what has thus come to be is gathered under the form clinging-aggregate. The feeling of what has thus come to be is gathered under the feeling clinging-aggregate The perception of what has thus come to be is gathered under the perception clinging-aggregate. The fabrications of what has thus come to be are gathered under the fabrication clinging-aggregate. The consciousness of what has thus come to be is gathered under the consciousness clinging-aggregate. One discerns, 'This, it seems, is how there is the gathering, meeting, & convergence of these five clinging-aggregates. Now, the Blessed One has said, "Whoever sees dependent co-arising sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees dependent co-arising." And these things—the five clinging-aggregates—are dependently co-arisen. Any desire, embracing, grasping, & holding-on to these five clinging-aggregates is the origination of stress. Any subduing of desire & passion, any abandoning of desire & passion for these five clinging-aggregates is the cessation of stress.' And even to this extent, friends, the monk has accomplished a great deal."

That is what Ven. Sāriputta said. Gratified, the monks delighted in Ven. Sāriputta's words. — *MN 28*

## Notes

1. The compilers of the Pāli Canon used a common theory to explain the physics of heat & motion, meteorology, and the etiology of diseases. That theory centered on the concept of *'dhātu':* property or potential. The physical properties presented in this theory were four: those of earth (solidity), liquid, fire, & wind (motion). Three of them—liquid, fire, & wind—were viewed as potentially active. When they were aggravated, agitated or provoked—the Pāli term here, *'pakuppati',* was used also on the psychological level, where it meant angered or upset—they acted as the underlying cause for activity in nature. For more on this topic, see *The Mind Like Fire Unbound,* Chapter 2.

2. AN 7:46 (quoted in *The Mind Like Fire Unbound)* cites a wing bone and tendon parings as examples of items that will not catch fire. Perhaps the passage was meant as a comical parody of someone who, having seen

another person start fire with a fire stick, tried to imitate that person without understanding the basic principle involved. If you used a fire stick and wood shavings, you would get fire. If you used a wing bone instead of a fire stick, and tendon parings instead of wood shavings, you wouldn't.

3. This statement has not been traced in any other part of the extant Pāli Canon.

4. See SN 12:2.

5. Although the fourth noble truth—the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress—is not explicitly mentioned in this discussion, it is implicit as the path of practice leading to the subduing of desire & passion, the abandoning of desire & passion for the five clinging-aggregates.

§ 116. "Monks, a monk who is skilled in seven bases and has three modes of investigation is fulfilled & fully accomplished in this Dhamma & Vinaya—the ultimate person.

"And how is a monk skilled in seven bases? There is the case where a monk discerns form, the origination of form, the cessation of form, the path of practice leading to the cessation of form. He discerns the allure of form, the drawback of form, and the escape from form.

"He discerns feeling.… He discerns perception.… He discerns fabrications.…

"He discerns consciousness, the origination of consciousness, the cessation of consciousness, the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness. He discerns the allure of consciousness, the drawback of consciousness, and the escape from consciousness.

"And what is form? The four great existents [the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property] and the form derived from them: this is called form. From the origination of nutriment comes the origination of form. From the cessation of nutriment comes the cessation of form. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of form, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The fact that pleasure & happiness arise in dependence on form: That is the allure of form. The fact that form is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is the drawback of form. The subduing of desire-

passion for form, the abandoning of desire-passion for form: That is the escape from form.…

"And what is feeling? These six bodies of feeling—feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact, feeling born of nose-contact, feeling born of tongue-contact, feeling born of body-contact, feeling born of intellect-contact: This is called feeling. From the origination of contact comes the origination of feeling. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of feeling.… The fact that pleasure & happiness arise in dependence on feeling: That is the allure of feeling. The fact that feeling is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is the drawback of feeling. The subduing of desire-passion for feeling, the abandoning of desire-passion for feeling: That is the escape from feeling.…

"And what is perception? These six bodies of perception—perception of form, perception of sound, perception of smell, perception of taste, perception of tactile sensation, perception of ideas: This is called perception. From the origination of contact comes the origination of perception. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of perception. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of perception.… The fact that pleasure & happiness arise in dependence on perception: That is the allure of perception. The fact that perception is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is the drawback of perception. The subduing of desire-passion for perception, the abandoning of desire-passion for perception: That is the escape from perception.…

"And what are fabrications? These six bodies of intention—intention with regard to form, intention with regard to sound, intention with regard to smell, intention with regard to taste, intention with regard to tactile sensation, intention with regard to ideas: These are called fabrications. From the origination of contact comes the origination of fabrications. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of fabrications. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of fabrications.… The fact that pleasure & happiness arise in dependence on fabrications: That is the allure of fabrications. The fact that fabrications are inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is the drawback of fabrications. The subduing of desire-passion for fabrications, the abandoning of desire-passion for fabrications: That is the escape from fabrications.…

"And what is consciousness? These six bodies of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness. From the origination of name-&-form comes the origination of consciousness. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of consciousness. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The fact that pleasure & happiness arise in dependence on consciousness: That is the allure of consciousness. The fact that consciousness is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is the drawback of consciousness. The subduing of desire-passion for consciousness, the abandoning of desire-passion for consciousness: That is the escape from consciousness.…

"This is how a monk is skilled in seven bases.

"And how does a monk have three modes of investigation? There is the case where a monk investigates in terms of properties, investigates in terms of sense media, investigates in terms of dependent co-arising. This is how a monk has three modes of investigation.

"A monk who is skilled in seven bases and has three modes of investigation is fulfilled and fully accomplished in this Dhamma & Vinaya —the ultimate person." — *SN 22:57*

§ 117. "Suppose, monks, that there were a beverage in a bronze cup—consummate in its color, consummate in its smell, consummate in its flavor, but mixed with poison—and a man were to come along: scorched from the heat, oppressed by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty. They would say to him, 'Here, my good man, is a beverage for you in a bronze cup: consummate in its color, consummate in its smell, consummate in its flavor, but mixed with poison. Drink it, if you want. Having been drunk, it will please you with its color, smell, & flavor. But having drunk it, you will —from that cause—meet with death or death-like suffering.' He would drink it quickly without reflection—he wouldn't reject it—and from that cause he would meet with death or death-like suffering.

"In the same way, monks, any contemplatives & brahmans in the past… future… present who see whatever seems endearing & alluring in terms of

the world as constant, as pleasant, as self, as freedom from disease, as safety, make craving grow. Those who make craving grow make acquisition grow. Those who make acquisition grow make stress grow. Those who make stress grow are not released from birth, aging, death, sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. They are not released, I tell you, from suffering & stress.…

"Suppose, monks, that there were a beverage in a bronze cup—consummate in its color, consummate in its smell, consummate in its flavor, but mixed with poison—and a man were to come along: scorched from the heat, oppressed by heat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty. They would say to him, 'Here, my good man, is a beverage for you in a bronze cup: consummate in its color, consummate in its smell, consummate in its flavor, but mixed with poison. Drink it, if you want. Having been drunk, it will please you with its color, smell, & flavor. But having drunk it, you will—from that cause—meet with death or death-like suffering.' The thought would occur to that man, 'It's possible to subdue this thirst of mine with water, with whey, with salted porridge, or with bean-broth. I certainly shouldn't drink that which would be for my long-term harm & suffering.' Having reflected on that beverage in the bronze cup, he wouldn't drink it. He would reject it. And so from that cause he would not meet with death or death-like suffering.

"In the same way, monks, any contemplatives & brahmans in the past… future… present who see whatever seems endearing & alluring in terms of the world as inconstant, as stressful, as not-self, as a disease, as a danger: They abandon craving. Those who abandon craving abandon acquisition. Those who abandon acquisition abandon stress. Those who abandon stress are released from birth, aging, death, sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. They are released, I tell you, from suffering & stress." — *SN 12:66*

§ 118. "Mahāli, there is cause, there is requisite condition, for the defilement of beings. Beings are defiled with cause, with requisite condition. There is cause, this is requisite condition, for the purification of beings. Beings are purified with cause, with requisite condition."

"And what, lord, is the cause, what the requisite condition, for the defilement of beings? How are beings defiled with cause, with requisite

condition?"

"Mahāli, if form were exclusively stressful—followed by stress, infused with stress and not infused with pleasure—beings would not be infatuated with form. But because form is also pleasurable—followed by pleasure, infused with pleasure and not infused with stress—beings are infatuated with form. Through infatuation, they are captivated. Through captivation, they are defiled. This is the cause, this the requisite condition, for the defilement of beings. And this is how beings are defiled with cause, with requisite condition.

"If feeling were exclusively stressful.…

"If perception were exclusively stressful.…

"If fabrications were exclusively stressful.…

"If consciousness were exclusively stressful—followed by stress, infused with stress and not infused with pleasure—beings would not be infatuated with consciousness. But because consciousness is also pleasurable—followed by pleasure, infused with pleasure and not infused with stress—beings are infatuated with consciousness. Through infatuation, they are captivated. Through captivation, they are defiled. This is the cause, this the requisite condition, for the defilement of beings. And this is how beings are defiled with cause, with requisite condition."

"And what, lord, is the cause, what the requisite condition, for the purification of beings? How are beings purified with cause, with requisite condition?"

"Mahāli, if form were exclusively pleasurable—followed by pleasure, infused with pleasure and not infused with stress—beings would not be disenchanted with form. But because form is also stressful—followed by stress, infused with stress and not infused with pleasure—beings are disenchanted with form. Through disenchantment, they grow dispassionate. Through dispassion, they are purified. This is the cause, this the requisite condition, for the purification of beings. And this is how beings are purified with cause, with requisite condition.

"If feeling were exclusively pleasurable.…

"If perception were exclusively pleasurable.…

"If fabrications were exclusively pleasurable.…

"If consciousness were exclusively pleasurable—followed by pleasure, infused with pleasure and not infused with stress—beings would not be disenchanted with consciousness. But because consciousness is also stressful—followed by stress, infused with stress and not infused with pleasure—beings are disenchanted with consciousness. Through disenchantment, they grow dispassionate. Through dispassion, they are purified. This is the cause, this the requisite condition, for the purification of beings. And this is how beings are purified with cause, with requisite condition." — *SN 22:60*

§ 119. Sister Dhammadinnā: "Pleasant feeling is pleasant in remaining, & painful in changing, friend Visākha. Painful feeling is painful in remaining & pleasant in changing. Neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling is pleasant in occurring together with knowledge, and painful in occurring without knowledge." — *MN 44*

§ 120. "Monks, any contemplatives or brahmans who recollect their manifold past lives all recollect the five clinging-aggregates, or one among them. Which five? When recollecting, 'I was one with such a form in the past,' one is recollecting just form. Or when recollecting, 'I was one with such a feeling in the past,' one is recollecting just feeling. Or when recollecting, 'I was one with such a perception in the past,' one is recollecting just perception. Or when recollecting, 'I was one with such mental fabrications in the past,' one is recollecting just mental fabrications. Or when recollecting, 'I was one with such a consciousness in the past,' one is recollecting just consciousness.

"And why do you call it 'form' *[rūpa]?* Because it is afflicted *[ruppati],* thus it is called 'form.' Afflicted with what? With cold & heat & hunger & thirst, with the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles. Because it is afflicted, it is called form.

"And why do you call it 'feeling'? Because it feels, thus it is called 'feeling.' What does it feel? It feels pleasure, it feels pain, it feels neither-pleasure-nor-pain. Because it feels, it is called feeling.

"And why do you call it 'perception'? Because it perceives, thus it is called 'perception.' What does it perceive? It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, it perceives white. Because it perceives, it is called perception.

"And why do you call them 'fabrications'? Because they fabricate fabricated things, thus they are called 'fabrications.' What do they fabricate as a fabricated thing? For the sake of form-ness, they fabricate form as a fabricated thing. For the sake of feeling-ness, they fabricate feeling as a fabricated thing. For the sake of perception-hood… For the sake of fabrication-hood… For the sake of consciousness-hood, they fabricate consciousness as a fabricated thing. Because they fabricate fabricated things, they are called fabrications.

"And why do you call it 'consciousness'? Because it cognizes, thus it is called consciousness. What does it cognize? It cognizes what is sour, bitter, pungent, sweet, alkaline, non-alkaline, salty, & unsalty. Because it cognizes, it is called consciousness.

"Thus a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones reflects in this way: 'I am now being chewed up by form. But in the past I was also chewed up by form in the same way I am now being chewed up by present form. And if I delight in future form, then in the future I will be chewed up by form in the same way I am now being chewed up by present form.' Having reflected in this way, he becomes indifferent to past form, does not delight in future form, and is practicing for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, and cessation with regard to present form.

"[He reflects:] "I am now being chewed up by feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness. But in the past I was also chewed up by consciousness in the same way I am now being chewed up by present consciousness. And if I delight in future consciousness, then in the future I will be chewed up by consciousness in the same way I am now being chewed up by present consciousness.' Having reflected in this way, he becomes indifferent to past consciousness, does not delight in future consciousness, and is practicing for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, and cessation with regard to present consciousness." — *SN 22:79*

§ 121. "In seeing six rewards, it's enough for a monk to establish the perception of inconstancy with regard to all fabrications without exception. Which six? 'All fabrications will appear as unstable. My mind will not delight in any world. My mind will rise above every world. My heart will be inclined to unbinding. My fetters will go to their abandoning. I'll be endowed with the foremost dhammas of the contemplative life.'"

"In seeing six rewards, it's enough for a monk to establish the perception of stress with regard to all fabrications without exception. Which six? 'The perception of disenchantment will be established within me with regard to all fabrications, like a murderer with a drawn sword. My mind will rise above every world. I'll become one who sees peace in unbinding. My obsessions will go to their destruction. I'll be one who has completed his task. The Teacher will have been served with goodwill.'"

"In seeing six rewards, it's enough for a monk to establish the perception of not-self with regard to all phenomena without exception. Which six? 'I won't be fashioned in connection with any world. My I-making will be stopped. My my-making will be stopped. I'll be endowed with uncommon knowledge. I'll become one who rightly sees cause, along with causally-originated phenomena.'" — *AN 6:102–104*

§ 122. "Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands—this steadfastness of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: 'All fabrications are inconstant.'

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, makes it plain: 'All fabrications are inconstant.'

"Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands—this steadfastness of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: 'All fabrications are stressful.'

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, makes it plain: 'All fabrications are stressful.'

"Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands—this steadfastness of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: 'All phenomena are not-self.'[1]

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, makes it plain: 'All phenomena are not-self.'" — *AN 3:137*

## Note

1. The suttas are inconsistent on the question of whether unbinding counts as a phenomenon *(dhamma)*. Iti 90 (§11), among others, states clearly that it is. AN 10:58 (§353), however, calls unbinding the ending of all phenomena. Sn 5:6 (§351) quotes the Buddha as calling the attainment of the goal the transcending of all phenomena, just as Sn 4:6 and Sn 4:10 state that the arahant has transcended dispassion, said to be the highest phenomenon. If the former definition applies here, unbinding would be not-self. If the latter, the word phenomenon (as more inclusive than fabrication) would apply to the non-returner's experience of the deathless (see AN 9:36 (§312)). The arahant's experience of unbinding would be neither self nor not-self, as it lies beyond all designations (see DN 15 (§348). Even the arahant, at that point, would be undefined, as beings are defined by their attachments, whereas there are no attachments by which an arahant could be defined as existing, not existing, both, or neither (see SN 23:2 (§111) and SN 22:85–86).

§ 123. "Form, monks, is not self. If form were the self, this form would not lend itself to dis-ease. It would be possible (to say) with regard to form, 'Let my form be thus. Let my form not be thus.' But precisely because form is not self, this form lends itself to dis-ease. And it is not possible (to say) with regard to form, 'Let my form be thus. Let my form not be thus.'

"Feeling is not self.…

"Perception is not self.…

"Fabrications are not self.…

"Consciousness is not self. If consciousness were the self, this consciousness would not lend itself to dis-ease. It would be possible (to say) with regard to consciousness, 'Let my consciousness be thus. Let my consciousness not be thus.' But precisely because consciousness is not self, consciousness lends itself to dis-ease. And it is not possible (to say) with regard to consciousness, 'Let my consciousness be thus. Let my consciousness not be thus.'

"What do you think, monks? Is form constant or inconstant?"—"Inconstant, lord."— "And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"—"Stressful, lord." "And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant,

stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"… Is feeling constant or inconstant?"—"Inconstant, lord."…

"… Is perception constant or inconstant?"—"Inconstant, lord."…

"… Are fabrications constant or inconstant?"—"Inconstant, lord."…

"What do you think, monks? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?"—"Inconstant, lord."—"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"—"Stressful, lord."—"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: Every form is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"Any feeling whatsoever.…

"Any perception whatsoever.…

"Any fabrications whatsoever.…

"Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: Every consciousness is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'" — *SN 22:59*

§ 124. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Ayujjhans on the banks of the Ganges River. There he addressed the monks: "Monks, suppose that a large glob of foam were floating down this Ganges River, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, &

appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a glob of foam? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any form that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in form?

"Now, suppose that in the autumn—when it's raining in fat, heavy drops—a water bubble were to appear & disappear on the water, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a water bubble? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any feeling that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in feeling?

"Now, suppose that in the last month of the hot season a mirage were shimmering, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a mirage? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any perception that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in perception?

"Now, suppose that a man desiring heartwood, in quest of heartwood, seeking heartwood, were to go into a forest carrying a sharp ax. There he would see a large banana tree: straight, young, of enormous height. He would cut it at the root and, having cut it at the root, would chop off the top. Having chopped off the top, he would peel away the outer skin. Peeling away the outer skin, he wouldn't even find sapwood, to say nothing of heartwood. Then a man with good eyesight would see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately

examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a banana tree? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any fabrications that are past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing them, observing them, & appropriately examining them—they would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in fabrications?

"Now, suppose that a magician or magician's apprentice were to display a magic trick at a major intersection, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a magic trick? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any consciousness that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in consciousness?" — *SN 22:95*

## Craving for Becoming & Non-becoming

§ 125. Ven. Ānanda: "This word, 'becoming, becoming'—to what extent is there becoming?"

The Buddha: "If there were no kamma ripening in the sensuality-property, would sensuality-becoming be discerned?"

Ven. Ānanda: "No, lord."

The Buddha: "Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a lower property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

"If there were no kamma ripening in the form-property, would form-becoming be discerned?"

Ven. Ānanda: "No, lord."

The Buddha: "Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by

ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a middling property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

"If there were no kamma ripening in the formless-property, would formless-becoming be discerned?"

Ven. Ānanda: "No, lord."

The Buddha: "Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a refined property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. This is how there is becoming." — *AN 3:76*

§ 126. "And which craving is the ensnarer that has flowed along, spread out, and caught hold, with which this world is smothered & enveloped like a tangled skein, a knotted ball of string, like matted rushes and reeds, and does not go beyond transmigration, beyond the planes of deprivation, woe, & bad destinations? These 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is internal and 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is external.

"And which are the 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is internal? There being 'I am,' there comes to be 'I am here,' there comes to be 'I am like this' … 'I am otherwise' … 'I am bad' … 'I am good' … 'I might be' … 'I might be here' … 'I might be like this' … 'I might be otherwise' … 'May I be' … 'May I be here' … 'May I be like this' … 'May I be otherwise' … 'I will be' … 'I will be here' … 'I will be like this' … 'I will be otherwise.' These are the 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is internal.

"And which are the 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is external? There being 'I am because of this [or: by means of this],' there comes to be 'I am here because of this,' there comes to be 'I am like this because of this' … 'I am otherwise because of this' … 'I am bad because of this' … 'I am good because of this' … 'I might be because of this' … 'I might be here because of this' … 'I might be like this because of this' … 'I might be otherwise because of this' … 'May I be because of this' … 'May I be here because of this' … 'May I be like this because of this' … 'May I be otherwise because of this' … 'I will be because of this' … 'I will be here because of this' … 'I will be like this because of this' … 'I will be otherwise because of this.' These are the 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is external.

"Thus there are 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is internal and 18 craving-verbalizations dependent on what is external. These are called the 36 craving-verbalizations. Thus, with 36 craving-verbalizations of this sort in the past, 36 in the future, and 36 in the present, there are 108 craving-verbalizations.

"This, monks is the craving that's the ensnarer that has flowed along, spread out, and caught hold, with which this world is smothered & enveloped like a tangled skein, a knotted ball of string, like matted rushes and reeds, and does not go beyond transmigration, beyond the planes of deprivation, woe, & bad destinations." — *AN 4:199*

§ 127. 'Having seen
danger
right in becoming,
and becoming
in searching for non-becoming,
I didn't affirm
any kind of becoming,
or cling to any delight.' — *MN 49*

§ 128. "Now, as for those contemplatives & brahmans who describe the destruction, annihilation, & non-becoming of the existing being after death, they criticize the contemplatives & brahmans who describe the self as percipient & free from disease after death and they criticize the contemplatives & brahmans who describe the self as non-percipient & free from disease after death and they criticize the contemplatives & brahmans who describe the self as neither percipient nor non-percipient & free from disease after death. For what reason? (They say,) 'These venerable contemplatives & brahmans, rushing ahead, assert nothing but their attachment: "I will be this after death. I will be this after death." Just as when a merchant going to market thinks, "From this, that will be mine. By means of this I will get that"; in the same way, these venerable contemplatives & brahmans act like merchants, as it were: "I will be this after death. I will be this after death."'

"With regard to this, the Tathāgata discerns that "Those venerable contemplative & brahmans who describe the destruction, annihilation, & non-becoming of the existing being after death, they—through fear of self-

identity, through disgust for self-identity—(nevertheless) keep running & circling around self-identity. Just as a dog, tied by a leash to a post or stake, keeps running around and circling around that very post or stake; in the same way, these venerable contemplative & brahmans—through fear of self-identity, through disgust for self-identity—(nevertheless) keep running & circling around self-identity. With regard to that—fabricated, gross—there is still the cessation of fabrications: There *is* this.' Knowing that, seeing the escape from it, the Tathāgata has gone beyond it." — *MN 102*

§ 129. "Overcome by two viewpoints, some devas & human adhere, other devas & human beings slip right past, while those with vision see.

"And how do some adhere? Devas & human beings enjoy becoming, delight in becoming, are satisfied with becoming. When the Dhamma is being taught for the sake of the cessation of becoming, their minds do not take to it, are not calmed by it, do not settle on it or become resolved on it. This is how some adhere.

"And how do some slip right past? Some, feeling horrified, humiliated, & disgusted with that very becoming, relish non-becoming: 'When this self, at the break-up of the body, after death, perishes & is destroyed, and does not exist after death, that is peaceful, that is exquisite, that is sufficiency!' This is how some slip right past.

"And how do those with vision see? There is the case where a monk sees what's come to be as what's come to be. Seeing what's come to be as what's come to be, he practices for disenchantment with what's come to be, dispassion toward what's come to be, cessation of what's come to be. This is how those with vision see."

Those, having seen
what's come to be
as what's come to be,
and what's gone beyond
what's come to be,
are released in line
with what's come to be,
through the exhaustion of craving
for becoming.

If they've comprehended
what's come to be,
and are free from the craving
for becoming & non-,
with the non-becoming
of what's come to be,
monks come
to no further becoming. — *Iti 49*

## Dependent Co-arising

§ 130. Ven. Sāriputta said, "'Right view, right view' it is said. To what extent is a disciple of the noble ones a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this True Dhamma?"

"We would come from a long distance, friend, to learn the meaning of these words in Ven. Sāriputta's presence. It would be good if Ven. Sāriputta himself would enlighten us as to their meaning. Having listened to him, the monks will bear it in mind."

"Then in that case, friends, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, friend," the monks responded to him.

### SKILLFUL & UNSKILLFUL

Ven. Sāriputta said, "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns what is unskillful, discerns the root of what is unskillful, discerns what is skillful, and discerns the root of what is skillful, it is to that extent that he is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is unskillful? Taking life is unskillful, taking what is not given… sexual misconduct… lying… divisive speech… harsh speech… idle chatter is unskillful. Covetousness… ill will… wrong views are unskillful. These things are called unskillful.

"And what are the roots of what is unskillful? Greed is a root of what is unskillful, aversion is a root of what is unskillful, delusion is a root of what

is unskillful. These are called the roots of what is unskillful.

"And what is skillful? Abstaining from taking life is skillful, abstaining from taking what is not given… from sexual misconduct… from lying… from divisive speech… harsh speech… abstaining from idle chatter is skillful. Lack of covetousness… lack of ill will… right views are skillful. These things are called skillful.

"And what are the roots of what is skillful? Lack of greed is a root of what is skillful, lack of aversion… lack of delusion is a root of what is skillful. These are called the roots of what is skillful.

"When a disciple of the noble ones discerns what is unskillful in this way, discerns the root of what is unskillful in this way, discerns what is skillful in this way, and discerns the root of what is skillful in this way, when—having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing—he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this True Dhamma."

### NUTRIMENT

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sāriputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns nutriment, the origination of nutriment, the cessation of nutriment, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is nutriment? What is the origination of nutriment? What is the cessation of nutriment? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment?

"There are these four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come to be or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical food, gross or refined; contact as the second, intellectual intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. From the

origination of craving comes the origination of nutriment. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of nutriment. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

STRESS

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is stress? Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful; separation from the loved is stressful; not getting what one wants is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful. This is called stress.

"What is the origination of stress? The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming. This is called the origination of stress.

"And what is the cessation of stress? The remainderless dispassioning & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving. This is called the cessation of stress.

"And what is the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress? Just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

AGING-&-DEATH

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns aging-&-death, the origination of aging-&-death, the cessation of aging-&-death, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging-&-death, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is aging-&-death? What is the origination of aging-&-death? What is the cessation of aging-&-death? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging-&-death?

"Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death. This aging & this death are called aging-&-death.

From the origination of birth comes the origination of aging-&-death. From the cessation of birth comes the cessation of aging-&-death. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging-&-death is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

BIRTH

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns birth, the origination of birth, the cessation of birth, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is birth? What is the origination of birth? What is the cessation of birth? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth?

"Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of [sense] spheres of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.

"From the origination of becoming comes the origination of birth. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

BECOMING

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns becoming, the origination of becoming, the cessation of becoming, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is becoming? What is the origination of becoming? What is the cessation of becoming? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming?

"There are these three becomings: sensual becoming, form becoming, & formless becoming. This is called becoming.

"From the origination of clinging comes the origination of becoming. From the cessation of clinging comes the cessation of becoming. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

CLINGING

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns clinging, the origination of clinging, the cessation of clinging, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is clinging? What is the origination of clinging? What is the cessation of clinging? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging?

"There are these four clingings: sensuality clinging, view clinging, habit-&-practice clinging, and self-doctrine clinging. This is called clinging.

"From the origination of craving comes the origination of clinging. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

CRAVING

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns craving, the origination of craving, the cessation of craving, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is craving? What is the origination of craving? What is the cessation of craving? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving?

"There are these six cravings: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for tactile sensations, craving for ideas. This is called craving.

"From the origination of feeling comes the origination of craving. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

FEELING

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns feeling, the origination of feeling, the cessation of feeling, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is feeling? What is the origination of feeling? What is the cessation of feeling? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling?

"There are these six feelings: feeling born from eye-contact, feeling born from ear-contact, feeling born from nose-contact, feeling born from tongue-contact, feeling born from body-contact, feeling born from intellect-contact. This is called feeling.

"From the origination of contact comes the origination of feeling. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

CONTACT

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns contact, the origination of contact, the cessation of contact, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is contact? What is the origination of contact? What is the cessation of contact? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact?

"There are these six classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, intellect-contact: This is called contact.

"From the origination of the six sense media comes the origination of contact. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

SIX SENSE MEDIA

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns the six sense media, the origination of the six sense media, the cessation of the six sense media, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what are the six sense media? What is the origination of the six sense media? What is the cessation of the six sense media? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media?

"There are these six sense media: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium: These are called the six sense media.

"From the origination of name-&-form comes the origination of the six sense media. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

NAME-&-FORM

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns name-&-form, the origination of name-&-form, the cessation of name-&-form, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is name-&-form? What is the origination of name-&-form? What is the cessation of name-&-form? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form?

"Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.

"From the origination of consciousness comes the origination of name-&-form. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

CONSCIOUSNESS

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns consciousness, the origination of consciousness, the cessation of consciousness, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is consciousness? What is the origination of consciousness? What is the cessation of consciousness? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness?

"There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness.

"From the origination of fabrication comes the origination of consciousness. From the cessation of fabrication comes the cessation of consciousness. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

FABRICATION

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns fabrication, the origination of fabrication, the cessation of fabrication, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is fabrication? What is the origination of fabrication? What is the cessation of fabrication? What is the way of practice leading to the

cessation of fabrication?

"There are these three fabrications: bodily fabrication, verbal fabrication, mental fabrication. These are called fabrication.

"From the origination of ignorance comes the origination of fabrication. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fabrication. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

IGNORANCE

… "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns ignorance, the origination of ignorance, the cessation of ignorance, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is ignorance? What is the origination of ignorance? What is the cessation of ignorance? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance?

"Any lack of knowledge with reference to stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the origination of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the cessation of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.

"From the origination of effluent comes the origination of ignorance. From the cessation of effluent comes the cessation of ignorance. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.…

EFFLUENT

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sāriputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns effluent, the origination of effluent, the cessation of effluent, and the way of practice

leading to the cessation of effluent, then he is a person of right view… who has arrived at this True Dhamma.

"And what is effluent? What is the origination of effluent? What is the cessation of effluent? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of effluent?

"There are these three effluents: the effluent of sensuality, the effluent of becoming, the effluent of ignorance. This is called effluent.

"From the origination of ignorance comes the origination of effluent. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of effluent. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of effluent is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns effluent, the origination of effluent, the cessation of effluent, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of effluent in this way, when—having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing—he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this True Dhamma."

That is what Ven. Sāriputta said. Gratified, the monks delighted in Ven. Sāriputta's words. — *MN 9*

§ 131. Visākha: "Now, lady, what are fabrications?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "These three fabrications, friend Visākha: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, & mental fabrications.… In-&-out breaths are bodily; these are things tied up with the body. That's why in-&-out breaths are bodily fabrications. Having first directed one's thoughts and made an evaluation, one then breaks out into speech. That's why directed thought & evaluation are verbal fabrications. Perceptions & feelings are mental; these are things tied up with the mind. That's why perceptions & feelings are mental fabrications." — *MN 44*

*Final Right View*

§ 132. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder went to where the wanderers of other sects were staying. On arrival he greeted them courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the wanderers said to him, "Tell us, householder, what views Gotama the contemplative has."

"Venerable sirs, I don't know entirely what views the Blessed One has."

"Well, well. So you don't know entirely what views Gotama the contemplative has. Then tell us what views the monks have."

"I don't even know entirely what views the monks have."

"So you don't know entirely what views Gotama the contemplative has or even that the monks have. Then tell us what views you have."

"It wouldn't be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have. But please let the venerable ones expound each in line with his view-standpoint, and then it won't be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have."

When this had been said, one of the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, *"The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have."

Another wanderer said to Anāthapiṇḍika, *"The cosmos is not eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have."

Another wanderer said, *"The cosmos is finite…"…"The cosmos is infinite…"…"The soul is the same thing as the body…"…"The soul is one thing and the body another…"…"After death a Tathāgata exists…"…"After death a Tathāgata does not exist…"…"After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist…"…"After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have."

When this had been said, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder said to the wanderers, "As for the venerable one who says, *'The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have,' his view arises from his own inappropriate attention or in dependence on the words of another. Now, this view has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen. Whatever has been brought into

being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. This venerable one thus adheres to that very stress, submits himself to that very stress." [Similarly for the other view-standpoints.]

When this had been said, the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, "We have each & every one expounded to you in line with our own view-standpoints. Now tell us what views you have."

"Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. This is the sort of view I have."

"So, householder, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. You thus adhere to that very stress, submit yourself to that very stress."

"Venerable sirs, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it has come to be, I also discern the higher escape from it as it has come to be."

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words. Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, sensing that the wanderers were silent, abashed… at a loss for words, got up & went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entirety of his discussion with the wanderers.

[The Blessed One said,] "Well done, householder. Well done. That is how you should periodically & righteously refute those foolish men." Then he instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged Anāthapiṇḍika the householder with a talk on Dhamma. When Anāthapiṇḍika the householder had been instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged by the Blessed One with a talk on Dhamma, he got up from his seat and, having bowed down to the Blessed One, left, keeping the Blessed One on his right side. Not long afterward, the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks, even a monk who has long penetrated the Dhamma in this Dhamma & Vinaya would do well,

periodically & righteously, to refute the wanderers of other sects in just the way Anāthapiṇḍika the householder has done." — *AN 10:93*

§ 133. "When those contemplatives & brahmans assert various types of theories… on 62 grounds, that is an agitation & vacillation to be felt by those contemplatives & brahmans who, not knowing, not seeing, are immersed in craving.… That comes from contact as a requisite condition.… That they would experience that other than through contact: That isn't possible.… They all experience that through repeated contact at the six sense media. For them, from feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance. From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

"But when a monk discerns the origination, ending, allure, drawbacks of, & emancipation from the six sense media, he discerns what is higher than all of this." — *DN 1*

§ 134. "What do you think, Māluṅkyaputta? The forms cognizable via the eye that are unseen by you—that you have never before seen, that you don't see, and that are not to be seen by you: Do you have any desire or passion or love there?"

"No, lord."

"The sounds cognizable via the ear…

"The aromas cognizable via the nose…

"The flavors cognizable via the tongue…

"The tactile sensations cognizable via the body…

"The ideas cognizable via the intellect that are uncognized by you–the you have never before cognized, that you don't cognize, and that are not to be cognized by you: Do you have any desire or passion or love there?"

"No, lord."

"Then, Māluṅkyaputta, with regard to phenomena to be seen, heard, sensed, or cognized: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In

reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how your should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Māluṅkyaputta, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor there nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress." — *SN 35:95*

§ 135. Then Ven. Kaccāyana Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, 'Right view, right view,' it is said. To what extent is there right view?"

"By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is supported by/takes as its object a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world with right discernment as it has come to be, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world with right discernment as it has come to be, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.

"By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings, & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on 'my self.' He has no uncertainty or doubt that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It's to this extent, Kaccāyana, that there is right view.

"'All exists': That is one extreme. 'All doesn't exist': That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle:

From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.

From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.

From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.

From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.

From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.

From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.

From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming.

From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.

From birth as a requisite condition, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress and suffering.

"Now, from the remainderless dispassioning & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress and suffering." — *SN 12:15*

§ 136. "From the abandoning of craving, action *[kamma]* is abandoned. From the abandoning of action, stress is abandoned.

"Thus, Udāyin, from the ending of craving comes the ending of action; from the ending of action, the ending of stress." — *SN 46:26*

§ 137. "There is the case, Moggallāna, where a monk has heard, 'All dhammas are unworthy of attachment.' Having heard that all dhammas are unworthy of attachment, he directly knows every dhamma. Directly knowing every dhamma, he comprehends every dhamma. Comprehending every dhamma, then whatever feeling he experiences—pleasure, pain, neither pleasure nor pain—he remains focused on inconstancy, focused on dispassion, focused on cessation, focused on relinquishing with regard to that feeling. As he remains focused on inconstancy, focused on dispassion,

focused on cessation, focused on relinquishing with regard to that feeling, he is unsustained by [doesn't cling to] anything in the world. Unsustained, he isn't agitated. Unagitated, he totally unbinds right within. He discerns: 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"It's in this respect, Moggallāna, that a monk, in brief, is released through the ending of craving, utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, a follower of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate: foremost among devas & human beings." — *AN 7:58*

§ 138. "This, monks, the Tathāgata discerns. And he discerns that these standpoints, thus seized, thus grasped at, lead to such & such a destination, to such & such a state in the world beyond. And he discerns what is higher than this. And yet discerning that, he does not grasp at that act of discerning. And as he is not grasping at it, unbinding *[nibbuti]* is experienced right within. Knowing, as they have come to be, the origin, ending, allure, & drawbacks of feelings, along with the escape from feelings, the Tathāgata, monks—through lack of clinging/sustenance —is released." — *DN 1*

*On Not Confusing Levels of Right View*

§ 139. Then Potaliputta the wanderer, while walking & wandering around to exercise his legs, went to Ven. Samiddhi and exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Samiddhi, "Face to face with Gotama the contemplative have I heard this, face to face have I learned this: 'Bodily action is barren, verbal action is barren, only mental action is true. And there is an attainment in which, on being attained, nothing is felt.'"

"Don't say that, friend. Don't slander the Blessed One. For it's not good to slander the Blessed One; the Blessed One would not say that: 'Bodily action is barren, verbal action is barren, only mental action is true.' But there is, friend, an attainment in which, on being attained, nothing is felt."

"How long has it been, friend Samiddhi, since you went forth (into homelessness)?"

"Not long, friend. Three years."

"Then what now should I say about the elder monks, when a junior monk would suppose that his Teacher is to be defended in this way? Having intentionally done an action with body, with speech, or with mind, what does one experience?"

"Having intentionally done an action with body, with speech, or with mind, one experiences stress."

Then Potaliputta the wanderer neither delighted in nor scorned Ven. Samiddhi's words. Neither delighting nor scorning, he got up from his seat and left.

[Ven. Samiddhi reports this conversation to Ven. Ānanda, who then—taking Samiddhi along—takes him to the Buddha and reports the conversation to him.]

When this was said, the Blessed One said, "I do not recall even having seen Potaliputta the wanderer, much less having that sort of discussion. And his question, which deserved an analytical answer, has been given a categorical answer by this worthless man, Samiddhi."

When this was said, Ven. Udāyin said to the Blessed One, "But what if Ven. Samiddhi was speaking in reference to this: 'Whatever is felt comes under stress'?"

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Ven. Ānanda, "Look, Ānanda, at how this worthless Udāyin interrupts. I knew just now that he would interrupt in an inappropriate way. From the very beginning, Potaliputta the wanderer was asking about the three kinds of feeling. When this worthless Samiddhi was asked by him in this way, he should have answered, 'Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be felt as pleasure, one experiences pleasure. Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be felt as pain, one experiences pain. Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be felt as neither-pleasure-nor-pain, one experiences neither-pleasure-nor-pain. Answering this way, this worthless Samiddhi would have rightly answered Potaliputta the wanderer." — *MN 136*

§ 140. "Monks, it's not that I dispute with the world, but that the world disputes with me. A proponent of the Dhamma doesn't dispute with

anyone with regard to the world. Whatever is agreed upon by the wise as not existing in the world, of that I too say, 'It doesn't exist.' Whatever is agreed upon by the wise as existing in the world, of that I too say, 'It exists.'

"And what is agreed upon by the wise as not existing in the world that I too say, 'It doesn't exist'?

"Form that's constant, permanent, eternal, not subject to change is agreed upon by the wise as not existing in the world, and I too say, 'It doesn't exist.'

"Feeling that's constant…

"Perception that's constant…

"Fabrications that are constant…

"Consciousness that's constant, permanent, eternal, not subject to change is agreed upon by the wise as not existing in the world, and I too say, 'It doesn't exist.'

"And what is agreed upon by the wise as existing in the world that I too say, 'It exists'?

"Form that's inconstant, stressful, subject to change is agreed upon by the wise as existing in the world, and I too say, 'It exists.'

"Feeling that's inconstant…

"Perception that's inconstant…

"Fabrications that are inconstant…

"Consciousness that's inconstant, stressful, subject to change is agreed upon by the wise as existing in the world, and I too say, 'It exists.'" — *SN 22:94 [Compare with §135, above]*

CHAPTER FOUR

# *Right Resolve*

Right resolve is the second of the discernment factors in the path. The Pāli term for resolve—*saṅkappa*—can also mean plan of action. It is the aspect of discernment related to the will, although its connotations are stronger and more organized than "intention," its near synonym. If right view is like a map for the path, right resolve is the plan of action based on the information contained in the map. At the same time, however, a plan of action can also determine what kind of information is going to be desired in the map: Right resolve—which on all its levels and in all its manifestations is the resolve not to cause affliction (§45; §§141–146)—plays a role in shaping the focus and purpose of right view in just the same way.

Given that right resolve is largely a matter of the will, it is also closely associated with the other factors of the path dealing with the will, such as right effort and the sub-factor of ardency in right mindfulness. In addition, the transcendent level of right resolve is actually identical with the sub-factors of directed thought and evaluation in right concentration. And, of course, it supplies direction to the virtue factors of the path as well. This means that it informs—and, as we will see, is informed by—all the other factors of the path.

**Mundane right resolve.** MN 117 (§48) defines wrong resolve as the resolve for sensuality, the resolve for ill will, and the resolve for harmfulness. In contrast, it defines the mundane level of right resolve as the resolve for renunciation, the resolve for non-ill will, and the resolve for harmlessness. In pairing mundane right resolve against its opposites, MN 117 helps to clarify the meaning of the first terms in each set: "Sensuality" here has the same meaning as it has in the graduated discourse and in the first type of craving: It's the passion for resolves and plans focused on sensual pleasures. "Renunciation" means specifically the renouncing of that passion.

However, to clarify the meanings of the other two pairs of right and wrong resolve, we have to look elsewhere in the Canon. AN 10:165 (§165) helps with the second pair—ill will and non-ill will—by showing how ill will and non-ill will are expressed. First, ill will:

> "'May these beings be killed or cut apart or crushed or destroyed, or may they not exist at all!'"

Then, non-ill will:

> "'May these beings be free from animosity, free from oppression, free from trouble, and may they look after themselves with ease!'"

AN 6:13 (§369) helps to clarify the third pair in stating that compassion is the escape from harmfulness.

Given these definitions, it's clear that resolve for non-ill will is a resolve to develop an attitude of goodwill, and that resolve for harmlessness is a resolve to develop an attitude of compassion. These two attitudes are closely related. When developed in an immeasurable way—i.e., extended to all living beings everywhere—they are two of the four *brahma-vihāras,* or sublime attitudes. Goodwill is a general wish for happiness; compassion is what goodwill feels on seeing that beings are suffering: It wants that suffering to end.

The question arises: Why did the Buddha include in the three forms of right resolve two qualities that are so closely related? The Canon provides no answer, but a possible answer can be derived by examining how the three forms of wrong resolve relate to the three types of craving that lead to suffering. The resolve for sensuality is obviously related to craving for sensuality. The expression for ill will is an especially unskillful expression of craving for non-becoming: hoping to see that beings will be injured or wiped out of existence. Harmfulness, as the opposite of compassion, would be an unskillful expression of the craving for becoming: hoping that beings who are already in a state of suffering will continue in that state.

The fact that these two last expressions of wrong resolve are not entirely separate illustrates the Buddha's statement, in connection with the second noble truth, that there is becoming in the craving for non-becoming (§127). To crave the becoming of one state involves non-becoming for another state; to crave the non-becoming of a state brings about the

becoming of the state of one who craves. In the same way, to crave for the destruction of happiness brings about the becoming of a state of suffering. To crave for the becoming of a state of suffering brings about the non-becoming of well-being.

When we examine the three types of *right* resolve that counteract the three types of craving, we can see that resolve for renunciation is clearly a resolve to abandon craving for sensuality. Resolve for non-ill will is a relatively skillful craving for becoming: the desire that all living beings—oneself included—can develop states of becoming where they can live in ease and without animosity, oppression, or trouble. Resolve for harmlessness is a relatively skillful craving for non-becoming: the desire that sufferings be destroyed.

The reason why the Buddha didn't simply list the resolve to abandon becoming and non-becoming as mundane forms of right resolve is because the factors of the path—both on the mundane and transcendent levels—require the use both of skillful becoming and skillful non-becoming if they are to develop at all. Only on the final level of the path, beyond the transcendent, can both becoming and non-becoming be entirely dropped. So on the mundane level, the Buddha focuses right resolve on skillful levels of becoming and non-becoming that are helpful to the path: the resolve to abandon sensuality, and the resolve to live—and to help others to live—in ease and without animosity, oppression, trouble, or suffering.

In this way, mundane right resolve focuses on the beginning stages of eliminating suffering and its causes. MN 19 (§161) makes this point especially clear in noting that the determining factor separating mundane right resolve from wrong resolve is that right resolve does not lead to affliction, whereas wrong resolve does. Seeing that suffering comes from unskillful actions, and that actions come from intentions, mundane right resolve aims at ridding the mind of unskillful intentions that would lead to the affliction caused by unskillful actions. This is one of the ways in which mundane right resolve is shaped by the analysis of action and the problem of suffering provided both by mundane and by transcendent right view.

Another way that mundane and transcendent right view give guidance to the desire for non-affliction lies in their analysis of what exactly counts as affliction. In light of the teaching on kamma and rebirth, §144 notes that loss in terms of view and virtue is much more serious than loss of relatives,

wealth, or health. In a similar light, §145 notes that you benefit yourself by avoiding unskillful behavior, and you benefit others by getting them to avoid unskillful behavior, too. The converse is also true: You afflict yourself by behaving unskillfully, and you afflict others by getting them to behave unskillfully. You would do more long-term harm to people by getting them to lose right view and virtue than you would by damaging their health or wealth, or by harming their relatives. After all, behavior is what determines whether a person will be happy or not—in this life and in lives to come—so the real roots of affliction and non-affliction lie, not in what's done to a person, but what views a person holds about skillful and unskillful action, and what that person does as a result. This understanding of affliction and non-affliction governs not only this aspect of right resolve, but also all the virtue factors of the path.

As you begin to act on mundane right resolve, the guidance it receives from right view becomes even more detailed. For instance, with renunciation: Right view provides a twofold analysis that helps you see sensuality as a problem and understand how to overcome it.

• First, the understanding of kamma provided by right view shows the harmful kammic consequences that come from acting on sensuality: Families get into quarrels, people commit robbery, and nations get into wars, all because of sensuality (§149). It's because of sensuality that people suffer over the death of a loved one (MN 87; Ud 2:7; Ud 8:8). It's also because of sensuality that people fear death—in that they're afraid of losing the sensual pleasures of the human realm—so they do the many unskillful things based on that fear (§§153–154). In this way, sensuality leads to suffering not only in this lifetime, but also after death.

• Second, the teachings on the three forms of fabrication—bodily, verbal, and mental—show how thoughts and moods are constructed, information that is useful in deconstructing sensual thoughts and in constructing resolves for renunciation in their place.

For instance, you can analyze a sensual mood in terms of how it relates to (1) the way you breathe, (2) the way you are talking to yourself about your sensual desire, and (3) the way in which the mood is inflamed both by (a) unpleasant feelings of irritation at not getting the object of your desire and by (b) perceptions of the attractiveness of the object of your desire, of the desire itself, or of both. Having analyzed the sensual mood into these

terms, you can pull yourself out of that mood by altering all of those fabrications: breathing in a more calming way that helps to disperse the feelings of irritation, talking to yourself about the drawbacks of the desire and of acting on it, and altering your perceptions to show that neither the desire nor its object are as attractive as you thought them to be. To help in this last step, the Canon provides many recommendations for how to perceive the body as unattractive—such as imagining it divided into its various parts, or imagining what it will be like when it dies (§258)—along with many analogies and reflections that give you a fund of perceptions to remind yourself of how sensual desire disturbs the mind and blinds you to the real nature of things (§151), at the same time exposing you to dangers and disappointment (§§149–150).

Right view provides similar guidance for developing the second and third forms of mundane right resolve: a heart of goodwill and its corollary, compassion.

• To begin with, the teachings on kamma show why your own well-being requires that you maintain goodwill and compassion for all. If your goodwill is only partial, you can't trust yourself to act skillfully when faced with difficult people for whom you feel ill will. For this reason, when you extend goodwill and compassion to others, you do it not because they deserve it, but because you need it as a form of protection against your own unskillful urges. This is why §156 states that you should protect your goodwill as a mother would protect her only child even with her life, and why §157 recommends developing goodwill even for bandits who have pinned you down and are trying to saw off your limbs. In other words, don't let anyone's actions damage your goodwill, and hold your goodwill as more worthy of protection than even your life.

SN 10:4 (§159) also states that mere mindfulness is not enough to overcome enmity with others. For that, you need to develop an attitude of harmlessness—compassion—as well.

• Second, the teaching on kamma also explains what it means to have goodwill and compassion for others. Because their well-being will depend on their actions, true goodwill and compassion mean wishing that they will know the causes for true happiness and be willing and able to act on them. To whatever extent you can help them in this direction, you are happy to help, but you can't take ultimate responsibility for their happiness. The

Canon's expressions of goodwill illustrate this point by going beyond the mere wish that others be happy to the wish that they be capable of creating happiness in themselves through their own skillful efforts:

> "May these beings… look after themselves with ease!" — *AN 10:176*

> "Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere, or through anger or irritation wish for another to suffer." — *Khp 9*

Because the happiness of others is ultimately outside of your control, the brahma-vihāras also include the practice of developing immeasurable equanimity, to cover cases where you would like to see suffering end but, for reasons of kamma, it can't. Equanimity in these cases allows you to preserve your energy to focus on areas where it will be more productive.

• Third, the teaching on the three forms of fabrication reminds you that goodwill, like ill will, is a fabricated state of mind. Universal goodwill is no more innate to the mind than is universal ill will. This is why §156 states that the development of goodwill is both a determination—something you have to will to happen—and a form of mindfulness: something you have to keep in mind.

More specifically, the teaching on the three forms of fabrication give precise instructions on how to replace ill will with non-ill will. First, you have to look at how the way you breathe, the way you talk to yourself, and the feelings and perceptions you focus on are aggravating ill will. Then you see how you can change each of these fabrications to foster a felt sense of goodwill. Here, as under sensuality, the Canon provides many useful analogies that can be used as perceptions to remind yourself of the drawbacks of ill will and of the fact that goodwill is not a sentimental weakness of mind, but actually a strength (§157)—and a strength that you need to foster for your own well-being (§159).

**Lessons for right view.** In response to the guidance that right resolve receives from right view, right resolve also gives focus and direction to right view. We have already seen how resolve for renunciation, as part of the graduated discourse, puts the mind in a position where it is prepared to accept and adopt transcendent right view. The resolve for renunciation also makes it easier to abandon sensual craving, in line with the duty of the second noble truth. At the same time, the contemplation of the body that is

one of the tactics used to overcome sensuality gives hands-on experience in dealing with the power of perception as a mental fabrication. It also alerts right view to the way in which the mind can choose its perceptions to foster unskillful mind-states, even when it should know better. This alerts you to deeper undercurrents that have to be dealt with if you want to put a genuine end to the craving that causes suffering and stress.

As for resolves for non-ill will and harmlessness, they are factors that focus knowledge of the principle of kamma onto the problem of suffering. It's one thing to know about the principle of kamma; it's something else to see that the best use of that knowledge is to eliminate suffering. If it were not for the Buddha's own goodwill and compassion, he wouldn't have made the solution of the problem of suffering the centerpiece of his teaching.

**Transcendent right resolve.** MN 117 defines transcendent right resolve as "the thinking, directed thinking, resolve, (mental) fixity, transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble." These terms appear to correspond to the sub-factors of directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna, under right concentration. This observation is supported by the statement in MN 78 (§164) that the first jhāna counts as the highest skillful resolve. This jhāna is directly related to right resolve in that it's a state of mind secluded from sensuality, and it embodies your resolve for your own well-being.

This last point is shown in three suttas describing how right resolve develops from the mundane to the transcendent level. MN 19 (§161) shows how, once mundane right resolves are strong, you realize that there would be no danger in thinking thoughts based on right resolve for long periods of time, aside from the fact that constant thinking tires the mind. Out of goodwill for yourself, you then incline the mind to discontinue that thinking and to find rest in the first jhāna.

MN 14 (§295), however, shows another way in which goodwill for yourself can incline you to foster the first jhāna: You realize that, no matter how well you see the drawbacks of sensuality, if you don't have a level of non-sensual pleasure such as can be found in the first jhāna—or something higher—your mind can still hunger to return to sensual thoughts. For your own safety and well-being, you need at least the first jhāna to carry through with your right resolves.

Finally, AN 8:63 (§163) shows that contemplation of goodwill and compassion, along with the other two brahma-vihāras—empathetic joy and equanimity—if done with enough focus, can in and of itself lead to states of concentration that correspond to the jhānas.

**Beyond transcendent right resolve.** MN 78 states that all resolves, skillful and not, are transcended in the second jhāna, which is devoid of directed thought and evaluation. However, when you leave jhāna, the mind's resolves will return, and so they are not totally transcended. Also, when the mind moves from one level of jhāna to another, and when it analyzes the states of jhāna to master them and eventually get beyond them, it still has to use directed thought and evaluation in a focused way: This, too, would count as transcendent right resolve. Only when right view gains the insight that allows it to abandon all the factors of the path, on the threshold of awakening, can right resolve of every sort be abandoned as well.

## Readings

*Mundane Right Resolve*

§ 141. **The principle of non-affliction.** "This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a contemplative or brahman, to ask: 'What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?'" — *MN 135*

§ 142. "Just as a firebrand from a funeral pyre—burning at both ends, covered with excrement in the middle—is used as fuel neither in a village nor in the wilderness: I tell you that this is a simile for the individual who practices neither for his/her own benefit nor for that of others. The individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his/her own is the higher & more refined of these two. The individual who practices for his/her own benefit but not for that of others is the highest & most refined of these three. The individual who practices for his/her own benefit and for

that of others is, of these four, the foremost, the chief, the most outstanding, the highest, & supreme. Just as from a cow comes milk; from milk, curds; from curds, butter; from butter, ghee; from ghee, the skimmings of ghee; and of these, the skimmings of ghee are reckoned the foremost—in the same way, of these four, the individual who practices for his/her own benefit and for that of others is the foremost, the chief, the most outstanding, the highest, & supreme." — *AN 4:95*

§ 143. "And how is one an individual who practices for his own benefit but not for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual himself abstains from the taking of life but doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from the taking of life. He himself abstains from stealing but doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from stealing. He himself abstains from sexual misconduct but doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from sexual misconduct. He himself abstains from lying but doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from lying. He himself abstains from intoxicants that cause heedlessness but doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from intoxicants that cause heedlessness. That's how one is an individual who practices for his own benefit but not for that of others.

"And how is one an individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his own? There is the case where a certain individual himself doesn't abstain from the taking of life but encourages others in undertaking abstinence from the taking of life. [Similarly with abstaining from stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, & intoxicants that cause heedlessness.] That's how one is an individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his own.

"And how is one an individual who practices neither for his own benefit nor for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual himself doesn't abstain from the taking of life and doesn't encourage others in undertaking abstinence from the taking of life. [Similarly with abstaining from stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, & intoxicants that cause heedlessness.] That's how one is an individual who practices neither for his own benefit nor for that of others.

"And how is one an individual who practices for his own benefit and for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual himself abstains

from the taking of life and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from the taking of life. He himself abstains from stealing and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from stealing. He himself abstains from sexual misconduct and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from sexual misconduct. He himself abstains from lying and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from lying. He himself abstains from intoxicants that cause heedlessness and encourages others in undertaking abstinence from intoxicants that cause heedlessness. That's how one is an individual who practices for his own benefit and for that of others." — *AN 4:99*

§ 144. "Monks, there are these five kinds of loss. Which five? Loss of relatives, loss of wealth, loss through disease, loss in terms of virtue, loss in terms of views. It's not by reason of loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease that beings—with the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. It's by reason of loss in terms of virtue and loss in terms of views that beings—with the break-up of the body, after death—reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell." — *AN 5:130*

§ 145. "And how is one an individual who practices for his/her own benefit but not for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual practices for the subduing of passion within him/herself but doesn't encourage others in the subduing of passion; practices for the subduing of aversion within him/herself but doesn't encourage others in the subduing of aversion; practices for the subduing of delusion within him/herself but doesn't encourage others in the subduing of delusion. That's how one is an individual who practices for his/her own benefit but not for that of others.

"And how is one an individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his/her own? There is the case where a certain individual doesn't practice for the subduing of passion within him/herself but encourages others in the subduing of passion; he/she doesn't practice for the subduing of aversion within him/herself but encourages others in the subduing of aversion; he/she doesn't practice for the subduing of delusion within him/herself but encourages others in the subduing of delusion. That's how one is an individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his/her own.

"And how is one an individual who practices neither for his/her own benefit nor for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual doesn't practice for the subduing of passion within him/herself and doesn't encourage others in the subduing of passion; he/she doesn't practice for the subduing of aversion within him/herself and doesn't encourage others in the subduing of aversion; he/she doesn't practice for the subduing of delusion within him/herself and doesn't encourage others in the subduing of delusion. That's how one is an individual who practices neither for his/her own benefit nor for that of others.

"And how is one an individual who practices for his/her own benefit and for that of others? There is the case where a certain individual practices for the subduing of passion within him/herself and encourages others in the subduing of passion; practices for the subduing of aversion within him/herself and encourages others in the subduing of aversion; practices for the subduing of delusion within him/herself and encourages others in the subduing of delusion. That's how one is an individual who practices for his/her own benefit and for that of others." — *AN 4:96*

§ 146. Channa the wanderer: "But, friend Ānanda, seeing what drawbacks in passion do you advocate the abandoning of passion? Seeing what drawbacks in aversion do you advocate the abandoning of aversion? Seeing what drawbacks in delusion do you advocate the abandoning of delusion?"

Ven. Ānanda: "A person impassioned, his mind bound up, overcome with passion, wills for his own detriment, wills for the detriment of others, wills for the detriment of both. He also experiences mental stress & sorrow. But having abandoned passion, he doesn't will for his own detriment, doesn't will for the detriment of others, doesn't will for the detriment of both. He doesn't experience mental stress or sorrow.

"A person impassioned, his mind bound up, overcome with passion, engages in bodily misconduct, in verbal misconduct, in mental misconduct. But having abandoned passion, he doesn't engage in bodily misconduct, in verbal misconduct, or in mental misconduct.

"A person impassioned, his mind bound up, overcome with passion, doesn't discern, as it has come to be, what is of profit to himself, what is of profit to others, what is of profit to both. But having abandoned passion, he

discerns, as it has come to be, what is of profit to himself, what is of profit to others, what is of profit to both.

"Passion, my friend, makes you blind, makes you sightless, makes you ignorant. It brings about the cessation of discernment, is conducive to trouble, and does not lead to unbinding. [Similarly with aversion & delusion.]" …

"Seeing these drawbacks in passion we advocate the abandoning of passion. Seeing these drawbacks in aversion we advocate the abandoning of aversion. Seeing these drawbacks in delusion we advocate the abandoning of delusion."

Channa: "But is there, my friend, a path, is there a way to the abandoning of that passion, aversion, & delusion?"

Ven. Ānanda: "Yes, my friend, there is a path, there is a way to the abandoning of that passion, aversion, & delusion."

Channa: "And what is that path, my friend, what is that way to the abandoning of that passion, aversion, & delusion?"

Ven. Ānanda: "Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the path, my friend, this is the way to the abandoning of that passion, aversion, & delusion."

Channa: "It's an auspicious path, my friend, it's an auspicious way to the abandoning of that passion, aversion, & delusion—enough, friend Ānanda, for the sake of heedfulness." — *AN 3:72*

§ 147. **Renunciation of sensuality.** "There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire; sounds cognizable via the ear… aromas cognizable via the nose… flavors cognizable via the tongue… tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. But these are not sensuality. They are called strings of sensuality in the discipline of the noble ones.

> The passion for his resolves is a man's sensuality,
> not the beautiful sensual pleasures
> found in the world.

The passion for his resolves is a man's sensuality.

The beauties remain as they are in the world,
while, in this regard,
the enlightened
subdue their desire. — *AN 6:63*

§ 148. If one, longing for sensual pleasure,
achieves it, yes,
he's enraptured at heart.
The mortal gets what he wants.
But if for that person
—longing, desiring—
the pleasures diminish,
he's afflicted,
as if shot with an arrow.

Whoever avoids sensual desires
—as he would, with his foot,
the head of a snake—
goes beyond, mindful,
this attachment in the world.

A man who is greedy
for fields, land, gold,
cattle, horses,
servants, employees,
women, relatives,
many sensual pleasures,
is overpowered with weakness
and trampled by trouble,
for pain invades him
as water, a cracked boat.

So one, always mindful,
should avoid sensual desires.
Letting them go,
he'd cross over the flood
like one who, having bailed out the boat,
has reached the far shore. — *Sn 4:1*

§ 149. "Now what, monks, is the allure of sensuality? These five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Sounds cognizable via the ear… Aromas cognizable via the nose… Flavors cognizable via the tongue… Tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Now, whatever pleasure or happiness arises in dependence on these five strings of sensuality, that is the allure of sensuality.

"And what is the drawback of sensuality? There is the case where, on account of the occupation by which a clansman makes a living—whether checking or accounting or calculating or plowing or trading or cattle-tending or archery or as a king's man, or whatever the occupation may be—he faces cold, he faces heat, being harassed by mosquitoes & flies, wind & sun & creeping things, dying from hunger & thirst.

"Now, this drawback in the case of sensuality, this mass of stress visible here-&-now, has sensuality for its reason, sensuality for its source, sensuality for its cause, the reason being simply sensuality.

"If the clansman gains no wealth while thus working & striving & making effort, he sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught: 'My work is in vain, my efforts are fruitless!'…

"If the clansman gains wealth while thus working & striving & making effort, he experiences pain & distress in protecting it: 'How will neither kings nor thieves make off with my property, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?' And as he thus guards and watches over his property, kings or thieves make off with it, or fire burns it, or water sweeps it away, or hateful heirs make off with it. And he sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught: 'What was mine is no more!'…

"Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source, sensuality for the cause, the reason being simply sensuality, that kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, brahmans with brahmans, householders with householders, mother with child, child with mother, father with child, child with father, brother with brother, sister with sister, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And then in their quarrels, brawls, & disputes, they attack one another with fists or with

clods or with sticks or with knives, so that they incur death or deadly pain.…

"Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source… that (men), taking swords & shields and buckling on bows & quivers, charge into battle massed in double array while arrows & spears are flying and swords are flashing; and there they are wounded by arrows & spears, and their heads are cut off by swords, so that they incur death or deadly pain.…

"Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source… that (men), taking swords & shields and buckling on bows & quivers, charge slippery bastions while arrows & spears are flying and swords are flashing; and there they are splashed with boiling cow dung and crushed under heavy weights, and their heads are cut off by swords, so that they incur death or deadly pain.…

"Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source… that (men) break into windows, seize plunder, commit burglary, ambush highways, commit adultery, and when they are captured, kings have them tortured in many ways. They flog them with whips, beat them with canes, beat them with clubs. They cut off their hands, cut off their feet, cut off their hands & feet. They cut off their ears, cut off their noses, cut off their ears & noses. They subject them to [many graphic tortures]. They have them splashed with boiling oil, devoured by dogs, impaled alive on stakes. They have their heads cut off with swords, so that they incur death or deadly pain. Now, this drawback too in the case of sensuality, this mass of stress visible here-&-now, has sensuality for its reason, sensuality for its source, sensuality for its cause, the reason being simply sensuality.

"Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source… that (people) engage in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct. Having engaged in bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct, they —on the break-up of the body, after death—re-appear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. Now, this drawback too in the case of sensuality, this mass of stress in the future life, has sensuality for its reason, sensuality for its source, sensuality for its cause, the reason being simply sensuality." — *MN 13*

§ 150. "Householder, suppose a dog, overcome with weakness & hunger, were to come across a slaughterhouse, and there a dexterous butcher or butcher's apprentice were to fling him a chain of bones—thoroughly scraped, without any flesh, smeared with blood. What do you think? Would the dog, gnawing on that chain of bones—thoroughly scraped, without any flesh, smeared with blood—appease its weakness & hunger?"

"No, lord. And why is that? Because the chain of bones is thoroughly scraped, without any flesh, & smeared with blood. The dog would get nothing but its share of weariness & vexation."

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to a chain of bones, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, [according to MN 137, this means equanimity based on the four formless attainments] where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose a vulture, a kite, or a hawk, seizing a lump of flesh, were to take off, and other vultures, kites, or hawks—following right after it—were to tear at it with their beaks & pull at it with their claws. What do you think? If that vulture, kite, or hawk were not quickly to drop that lump of flesh, would it meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to a lump of flesh, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose a man were to come against the wind, carrying a burning grass torch. What do you think? If he were not quickly to drop that grass torch, would he burn his hand or his arm or some other part of his body, so that he would meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to a grass torch, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose there were a pit of glowing embers, deeper than a man's height, full of embers that were neither flaming nor smoking, and a man were to come along—loving life, hating death, loving pleasure, abhorring pain—and two strong men, grabbing him with their arms, were to drag him to the pit of embers. What do you think? Wouldn't the man twist his body this way & that?"

"Yes, lord. And why is that? Because he would realize, 'If I fall into this pit of glowing embers, I will meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain.'"

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to a pit of glowing embers, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose a man, when dreaming, were to see delightful parks, delightful forests, delightful stretches of land, & delightful lakes, and on awakening were to see nothing. In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to a dream, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose a man having borrowed some goods—a manly carriage, fine jewels, & ear ornaments—were to go into the market preceded & surrounded by his borrowed goods, and people seeing him would say, 'How wealthy this man is, for this is how the wealthy enjoy their possessions,'

but the actual owners, wherever they might see him, would strip him then & there of what is theirs. What do you think? Would the man justifiably be upset?"

"No, lord. And why is that? Because the owners are stripping him of what is theirs."

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to borrowed goods, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace.

"Now, suppose that, not far from a village or town, there were a dense forest grove, and there in the grove was a tree with delicious fruit, abundant fruit, but with no fruit fallen to the ground. A man would come along, desiring fruit, looking for fruit, searching for fruit. Plunging into the forest grove, he would see the tree… and the thought would occur to him, 'This is a tree with delicious fruit, abundant fruit, and there is no fruit fallen to the ground, but I know how to climb a tree. Why don't I climb the tree, eat what I like, and fill my clothes with the fruit?' So, having climbed the tree, he would eat what he liked and fill his clothes with the fruit. Then a second man would come along, desiring fruit, looking for fruit, searching for fruit and carrying a sharp ax. Plunging into the forest grove, he would see the tree… and the thought would occur to him, 'This is a tree with delicious fruit, abundant fruit, and there is no fruit fallen to the ground, and I don't know how to climb a tree. Why don't I chop down this tree at the root, eat what I like, and fill my clothes with the fruit?' So he would chop the tree at the root. What do you think? If the first man who climbed the tree didn't quickly come down, wouldn't the falling tree crush his hand or foot or some other part of his body, so that he would meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, householder, a disciple of the noble ones considers this point: 'The Blessed One has compared sensuality to the fruits of a tree, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks.' Seeing this with right discernment, as it actually is present, then avoiding the equanimity coming

from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, where sustenance/clinging for the baits of the world ceases without trace." — *MN 54*

§ 151. "Māgaṇḍiya, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, and thanks to the medicine he would be cured of his leprosy: well & happy, free, master of himself, going wherever he liked. Then suppose two strong men, having seized hold of him by both arms, were to drag him to a pit of glowing embers. What do you think? Wouldn't he twist his body this way & that?"

"Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? The fire is painful to the touch, very hot & scorching."

"Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Is the fire painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, only now, or was it also that way before?"

"Both now & before is it painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, Master Gotama. It's just that when the man was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, his faculties were impaired, which was why, even though the fire was actually painful to the touch, he had the skewed perception of 'pleasant.'"

"In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, sensual pleasures in the past were painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures in the future will be painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures at present are painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; but when beings are not free from passion for sensual pleasures—devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever—their faculties are impaired, which is why, even though sensual pleasures are actually painful to the touch, they have the skewed perception of 'pleasant.'

"Now, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores & infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. The more he cauterized his body over the pit of glowing embers, the more disgusting,

foul-smelling, & putrid the openings of his wounds would become, and yet he would feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction because of the itchiness of his wounds. In the same way, beings not free from passion for sensual pleasures—devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever—indulge in sensual pleasures. The more they indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their sensual craving increases and the more they burn with sensual fever, and yet they feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction dependent on the five strings of sensuality.

"Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Have you ever seen or heard of a king or king's minister—enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever—who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace?"

"No, Master Gotama."

"Very good, Māgaṇḍiya. Neither have I ever seen or heard of a king or king's minister—enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever—who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace. But whatever contemplatives or brahmans who have dwelt or will dwell or are dwelling free from thirst, their minds inwardly at peace, all have done so having realized—as it has come to be—the origination & disappearance, the allure, the danger, & the escape from sensual pleasures, having abandoned sensual craving and removed sensual fever." — *MN 75*

*§ 152. Sister Subhā:*

"I was a child, with clean clothes,
when I first heard the Dhamma.
And within me, heedful,
was a break-through to the truth.
Then I arrived
at an enormous dissatisfaction
with all sensuality.
Seeing the danger
    in self-identity,
I longed only

for renunciation.
Leaving my circle of relatives,
slaves, workers,
prosperous villages & fields,
delightful, enticing possessions,
I went forth,
abandoning not-insignificant wealth.

Having gone out through conviction
in the well-taught true Dhamma,
it wouldn't be proper for me—
aspiring to nothingness—
having cast off gold & silver
to take them back.
Gold & silver
don't buy awakening,
don't buy peace.
This [gold] isn't proper for contemplatives.
This isn't noble wealth.
This is
greediness, intoxication,
delusion, bondage to dust,
suspicion, many troubles.
There's no lasting stability here.
It's to this extent that many, many men
—heedless, their hearts defiled—
opposing one another, create
conflicts, murder, bondage,
calamity, loss, grief, & lamentation.
Many misfortunes are seen
for those head-over-heels in sensuality.
So, my relatives:
Why do you, like enemies,
try to bind me to sensuality?
You know I've gone forth,
seeing the danger in sensuality.
Gold coin & bullion

can't put an end to effluents.
Sensuality is an enemy,
a murderer,
hostile, arrows & bonds.
    So, my relatives:
    Why do you, like enemies,
    try to bind me to sensuality?
You know I've gone forth
with shaven head, wrapped in a patchwork cloak.
Leftover alms-scraps, gleanings,
a robe made from cast-off cloth:
    *That's* what's proper for me—
    the requisites of one with no home.
The great seers have rejected sensuality,
    both human & divine.
Released are they,
                in the place of security.
Arrived are they,
                in unshaken ease.

So may I not come into union
with sensuality, in which no shelter is found.
It's an enemy, a murderer
    —sensuality—
painful, like a mass of flame.
    Greed:
an obstacle, fearful, threatened,
full of thorns,
very discordant,
a great cause of delusion.
    Sensuality:
a frightening attack,
like a snake's head
in which fools delight—
blinded, run-of-the-mill.

Because many people in the world
are stuck in the mud of sensuality,

unknowing,
they don't realize the ending of birth & death.
Many people follow the path
to bad destinations
because of sensuality,
bringing disease on themselves.

Thus sensuality creates enemies.
It burns, is defiled.
It's the bait of the world,
constraining, the bondage of death,
maddening, deceptive, agitating the mind.
It's a net cast by Māra
for the defilement of living beings:
with endless drawbacks, much pain,
great poison,
giving little enjoyment, creating conflict,
drying up the good side [of the mind].

I, having cast off much trouble like this
caused by sensuality,
will not return to it,
as I always delight in unbinding.
Doing battle with sensuality
in hopes of the cool state,
I will stay heedful, finding delight>
in the ending of fetters.
I follow the path—
eightfold, straight,
griefless, stainless, secure—
over which great seers
have crossed." — *Thig 13:5*

§ 153. "And who is the person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death? There is the case of the person who has not abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, & craving for sensuality. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought occurs to him, 'O, those beloved sensual pleasures will be taken from me, and I will be taken from them!' He grieves & is tormented, weeps,

beats his breast, & grows delirious. This is a person who, subject to death, is afraid & in terror of death." — *AN 4:184*

§ 154. "In dependence on the property of sensuality there occurs the perception of sensuality. In dependence on the perception of sensuality there occurs the resolve for sensuality… the desire for sensuality… the fever for sensuality… the quest for sensuality. Questing for sensuality, monks, an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person conducts himself wrongly through three means: through body, through speech, & through mind.…

"Just as if a man were to throw a burning firebrand into a dry, grassy wilderness and not quickly stamp it out with his hands & feet, and thus whatever animals inhabiting the grass & timber would come to ruin & loss; in the same way, monks, any contemplative or brahman who doesn't quickly abandon, dispel, demolish, & wipe out of existence an out-of-tune, unskillful perception once it has arisen, will dwell in stress in the present life—threatened, despairing, & feverish—and on the break-up of the body, after death, can expect a bad destination." — *SN 14:12*

§ 155. **Non-ill will.** "When you give birth to hatred for an individual, you should develop goodwill for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"When you give birth to hatred for an individual, you should develop compassion for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"When you give birth to hatred for an individual, you should develop equanimity toward that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"When you give birth to hatred for an individual, you should pay him no mind & pay him no attention. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"When you give birth to hatred for an individual, you should direct your thoughts to the fact of his being the product of his actions: 'This venerable one is the doer of his actions, heir of his actions, born of his actions, related by his actions, and has his actions as his arbitrator. Whatever action he does, for good or for evil, to that will he fall heir.' Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued." — *AN 5:161*

§ 156. Think: Happy, at rest,
may all beings be happy at heart.
Whatever beings there may be,
    weak or strong, without exception,
    long, large,
    middling, short,
    subtle, gross,
    seen & unseen,
    living near & far away,
    born or seeking birth:
May all beings be happy at heart.
Let no one deceive another
or despise anyone anywhere,
or, through anger or resistance-perception,
wish for another to suffer.

As a mother would risk her life
to protect her child, her only child,
even so should one cultivate the heart limitlessly
with regard to all beings.
With goodwill for the entire cosmos,
cultivate the heart limitlessly:
above, below, & all around,
unobstructed, without hostility or hate.
Whether standing, walking,
sitting, or lying down,
    as long as one has banished torpor,
one should be resolved on this mindfulness.
This is called a Brahmā abiding
here. — *Sn 1:8*

§ 157. "Suppose that a man were to come along carrying a hoe & a basket, saying, 'I will make this great earth be without earth.' He would dig here & there, scatter soil here & there, spit here & there, urinate here & there, saying, 'Be without earth. Be without earth.' Now, what do you think? Would he make this great earth be without earth?"

"No, lord. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep & enormous. It can't easily be made to be without earth. The man would reap only a share

of weariness & disappointment."

"In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: 'Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person's welfare, with a mind of goodwill, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with goodwill equal to the great earth—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves.…

"Even if bandits were to carve you up savagely into pieces with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: 'Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of goodwill, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with goodwill—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves."— *MN 21*

§ 158. **Harmlessness.** "This is the escape from ill will: goodwill as an awareness-release.…

"This is the escape from harmfulness: compassion as an awareness-release.…

"This is the escape from resentment: empathetic joy as an awareness-release.'

"This is the escape from passion: equanimity as an awareness-release.'" — *AN 6:13*

*§ 159. Maṇibhadda the yakkha-spirit:*

"It's always auspicious for one who is mindful.
The mindful one prospers happily—always.
The mindful one grows better each day
and is totally freed from animosity."

*The Buddha:*

"It's always auspicious for one who is mindful.
The mindful one prospers happily always.
The mindful one grows better each day
but isn't totally freed from animosity.

Whoever's heart, all day, all night,
delights in harmlessness
with goodwill for all beings
has no animosity with anyone at all. — *SN 10:4*

§ 160. "When a person is impure in his bodily behavior & verbal behavior, and does not periodically experience mental clarity & calm, how should one subdue hatred for him? Just as when there is a sick man—in pain, seriously ill—traveling along a road, far from the next village & far from the last, unable to get the food he needs, unable to get the medicine he needs, unable to get a suitable assistant, unable to get anyone to take him to human habitation. Now, suppose another person were to see him coming along the road. He would do what he could out of compassion, pity, & sympathy for the man, thinking, 'O that this man should get the food he needs, the medicine he needs, a suitable assistant, someone to take him to human habitation. Why is that? So that he won't fall into ruin right here.' In the same way, when a person is impure in his bodily behavior & verbal behavior, and who does not periodically experience mental clarity & calm, one should do what one can out of compassion, pity, & sympathy for him, thinking, 'O that this man should abandon wrong bodily conduct and develop right bodily conduct, abandon wrong verbal conduct and develop right verbal conduct, abandon wrong mental conduct and develop right mental conduct. Why is that? So that, on the break-up of the body, after

death, he won't fall into a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.' Thus the hatred for him should be subdued." — *AN 5:162*

*From Mundane to Transcendent Right Resolve*

§ 161. The Blessed One said, "Monks, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta, the thought occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep dividing my thinking into two sorts?' So I made thinking imbued with sensuality, thinking imbued with ill will, & thinking imbued with harmfulness one sort, and thinking imbued with renunciation, thinking imbued with non-ill will, & thinking imbued with harmlessness another sort. [Compare this passage with the description of food for the arising of analysis of dhammas as a factor of awakening, in §105, above.]

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with sensuality arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with sensuality has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others… to the affliction of both… it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with sensuality had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with ill will arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with ill will has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others… to the affliction of both… it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with ill will had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with harmfulness arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with harmfulness has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the

affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others… to the affliction of both… it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with harmfulness had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking & pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with sensuality, abandoning thinking imbued with renunciation, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with sensuality. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with non-ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmfulness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmlessness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmfulness.

"Just as in the last month of the Rains, in the autumn season when the crops are ripening, a cowherd would look after his cows: He would tap & poke & check & curb them with a stick on this side & that. Why is that? Because he foresees flogging or imprisonment or a fine or public censure arising from that [if he let his cows wander into the crops]. In the same way I foresaw in unskillful dhammas drawbacks, degradation, & defilement, and I foresaw in skillful dhammas rewards related to renunciation & promoting cleansing.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with renunciation arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with renunciation has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night… even for a day… even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with non-ill will arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with non-ill will has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night… even for a day… even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with harmlessness arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with harmlessness has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night… even for a day… even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking & pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with renunciation, abandoning thinking imbued with sensuality, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with renunciation. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with non-ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with non-ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmlessness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmfulness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmlessness.

"Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all the crops have been gathered into the village, a cowherd would look after his cows: While resting under the shade of a tree or out in the open, he simply keeps himself mindful of 'those cows.' In the same way, I simply kept myself mindful of 'those dhammas.'

"Unflagging persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established. My body was calm & unaroused, my mind concentrated & single. Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture I remained equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joy & distress—I entered & remained in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain." — *MN 19*

§ 162. Then Ven. Ānanda, together with Tapussa the householder, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Tapussa the householder, here, has said to me, 'Venerable Ānanda, sir, we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensuality, enjoy sensuality, rejoice in sensuality. For us—indulging in sensuality, delighting in sensuality, enjoying sensuality, rejoicing in sensuality—renunciation seems like a sheer drop-off. Yet I've heard that in this Dhamma & Vinaya the hearts of the very young monks leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace. So right here is where this Dhamma & Vinaya is contrary to the great mass of people: i.e., [this issue of] renunciation.'"

"So it is, Ānanda. So it is. Even I myself—before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta—thought, 'Renunciation is good; seclusion is good,' but my heart didn't leap up at renunciation, didn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, 'That is peace.' The thought occurred to me, 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why my heart doesn't leap up at renunciation, doesn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, "That is peace"?' Then the thought occurred to me, 'I haven't seen the drawback of sensuality; I haven't pursued [that theme]. I haven't understood the reward of renunciation; I haven't familiarized myself with

it. That's why my heart doesn't leap up at renunciation, doesn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, "That is peace."'

"Then the thought occurred to me, 'If, having seen the drawback of sensuality, I were to pursue that theme; and if, having understood the reward of renunciation, I were to familiarize myself with it, there's the possibility that my heart would leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing, "That is peace."'

"So at a later time, having seen the drawback of sensuality, I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of renunciation, I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at renunciation, grew confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing, 'That is peace.' Then, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, I entered & remained in the first jhāna." — *AN 9:41*

§ 163. "Then you should train yourself thus: 'Goodwill, as my awareness-release, will be developed, pursued, given a means of transport, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, & well-undertaken.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture… not accompanied by rapture… endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity.

"When this concentration is thus developed, thus well-developed by you, you should then train yourself thus: 'Compassion, as my awareness-release.… Empathetic joy, as my awareness-release.… Equanimity, as my awareness-release, will be developed, pursued, given a means of transport, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, & well-undertaken.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture… not accompanied by rapture… endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should

develop it endowed with equanimity." — *AN 8:63 [See the remainder of this passage at §254.]*

*Transcendent Right Resolve & Beyond*

§ 164. "And what are unskillful resolves? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. These are called unskillful resolves. What is the cause of unskillful resolves? Their cause, too, has been stated, and they are said to be perception-caused. Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations. Any sensuality-perception, ill will-perception, or harmfulness-perception: That is the cause of unskillful resolves. Now, where do unskillful resolves cease without trace? Their cessation, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is where unskillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire… for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen… for the sake of the arising of skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… (and) for the… development & culmination of skillful dhammas that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves.

"And what are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation (freedom from sensuality), on non-ill will, on harmlessness. These are called skillful resolves. What is the cause of skillful resolves? Their cause, too, has been stated, and they are said to be perception-caused. Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations. Any renunciation-perception, non-ill will-perception, or harmlessness-perception: That is the cause of skillful resolves. Now, where do skillful resolves cease without trace? Their cessation, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves? There is the case where

a monk generates desire… for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen… for the sake of the arising of skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… (and) for the… development & culmination of skillful dhammas that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves." — *MN 78*

CHAPTER FIVE

# *Right Speech & Right Action*

Right speech and right action are the first two virtue factors on the path. Both are based on the principle of non-affliction, developed through right resolve, in that they involve abstaining from specific types of behavior that cause harm. Because these two path-factors parallel each other in many ways, they are best discussed together.

The suttas provide general definitions for, and a few specific examples of, right and wrong speech and action. The Vinaya also contains training rules covering most of the types of behavior that these factors abstain from, which it discusses in great detail. Our discussion here will draw from all these sources.

**Right speech.** Right speech is defined as abstaining from four types of wrong speech: lies, divisive tale-bearing, harsh speech, and idle chatter.

*Lies* are statements that intentionally misstate the facts of a case. The Vinaya's discussion of its training rule against lying shows that the intention defining a lie here is not so much the intention to deceive as it is the intention to misrepresent the truth (Pc 1). The distinction is a fine one, but it's important. In §170, the Buddha states that there are cases where a truth should not be told if it gives rise to passion, aversion, and delusion in the speaker. This does not mean, however, that you can misstate the facts of the case in such instances. It simply means that you need not tell the whole truth about an issue. You avoid speaking about the facts that would provoke harm, even if this would cause your listener to misunderstand the situation. AN 4:73 (§172) provides an example relevant to this principle: To maintain your integrity, you speak as little as possible of your own good points and of the faults of other people.

Of the four types of wrong speech, the telling of lies is the only one that has a corresponding precept in the five lay precepts. This means that it's the

only aspect of wrong speech that is absolutely to be avoided in all situations. As AN 10:165 (§165) says, one should not tell a lie for one's own sake, for the sake of another, or for any reward.

Of the various forms of wrong speech and wrong action, the Buddha regarded the telling of lies as the most serious and most destructive—perhaps because if you cause your listeners to misunderstand the truth, it can cause them to act unskillfully not only in this lifetime, but also in future ones as well. Furthermore, as he said in §169, if a person feels no shame at telling a lie, there is no evil that that person will not do.

This is a principle with far-ranging implications: Even a seemingly sober attempt to justify the telling of a lie in certain situations would count as feeling no shame around lying. In addition to showing that one is untrustworthy, a lack of shame around telling lies would severely hamper one's ability to learn the Dhamma. After all, as we noted in Chapter 2, truthfulness is one of the basic qualities that the Buddha looked for in a student, and it's absolutely necessary for examining one's actions for the sake of progress on the path.

*Divisive tale-bearing* is the act of telling A about the misbehavior of B so as to win favor with A or to provoke a rift between A and B. Divisive tale-bearing also covers all sorts of speech intended to promote factionalism between individuals and groups of people. This type of wrong speech is sometimes translated as "slander," but that's a mistranslation. Slander is a form of lying. Divisive tale-bearing is not. You simply report the unadorned facts of another person's behavior, and if the intention is to create a rift, it still counts as divisive tale-bearing.

The Vinaya's discussion of its training rule against divisive tale-bearing shows that the intention is the crucial factor in determining whether the act of reporting A's misbehavior to B would come under the rule (Pc 3). In line with the discussion there, it would not count as wrong speech if you tell A about B's misbehavior for other reasons—as when A is responsible for B's behavior and can put a stop to it, or if someone, A or C, could be hurt by B's behavior. It's for this reason that the Buddha would criticize the teachings of contemporary teachers, although he was careful to mention those teachers by name only when speaking to his monks. When speaking to outsiders, he would criticize opposing teachings but without mentioning the teachers by name.

*Harsh speech* is speech that is meant to be rough and repellant. AN 10:165 describes it as, "words that are insolent, cutting, mean (or: bitter) to others, reviling others, provoking anger and destroying concentration." The Vinaya focuses on the "cutting" aspect of harsh speech with a rule against insults, which it defines as remarks based on the desire to jeer or to scoff at someone, or to make that person feel abashed (Pc 2).

In its discussion of that rule, though, it recognizes that there can be times when a teacher (or a parent) has to use harsh language to get the attention of the person he or she is teaching. For this reason, it states that harsh or even insulting terms do not count as offenses when used for the purpose of conveying the Dhamma.

The suttas and the Vinaya in general recognize this principle when they show the Buddha using strong words to criticize wayward students. In MN 22 and MN 38, for instance, two monks, in his presence, attribute pernicious views to him, and in response he calls them "worthless men," a term that he also uses to address monks who act in ways that will inspire him to set forth a Vinaya rule. In Cv VII.3.1, when Devadatta asks to take over the Saṅgha, the Buddha calls him a lick-spittle—apparently to warn Devadatta that his desire will lead to his ruin, or to warn the monks in general that Devadatta has embarked on a seriously wrong course and so should not be followed.

At times, the Buddha could also be cutting and satirical in his humor when it served the purpose of the Dhamma. In AN 5:191, for instance, he compares brahmans with dogs, and the dogs come out on the better end of the comparison, in that dogs still observe some of the fine aspects of old brahmanical traditions that many brahmans have abandoned:

> "In the past, brahman males mated only with brahman females and not with non-brahman females. At present, brahman males mate with brahman females and with non-brahman females. At present, male dogs mate only with female dogs and not with female non-dogs. This is the first ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.… In the past, brahmans did not make a stash of wealth, grain, silver, or gold. At present, brahmans make stashes of wealth, grain, silver, & gold. At present, dogs do not make a stash of wealth, grain, silver, or gold. This is the

fourth ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans."

The Buddha's rationale for this sort of speech is stated in §175, where he notes that he has a sense of time and place for when to use pleasing words and when to use displeasing words. To explain his motivation for using displeasing words, he cites the analogy of a young boy who gets a sharp object in his mouth: You have to do everything you can to remove the object, even if it requires drawing blood. Otherwise, the boy will swallow the object and suffer even greater harm. This analogy shows that—contrary to a common misunderstanding—people are not necessarily harmed by offensive speech or by having their feelings hurt. But because you harm yourself by speaking wrong speech, it's in your interest to be sure of your motivation and of the situation before using strong language or cutting humor with others.

*Idle chatter* is defined as speaking "out of season, what isn't based in fact, what isn't in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya, words that are not worth treasuring." Examples would include frivolous chatter and idle gossip. As the above example indicates, though, humorous speech does not come under idle chatter as long as it serves a useful purpose. Human behavior can be so absurd that the best humor is often that which simply states the facts of the case. The Canon contains enough examples of the Buddha's sense of humor in exposing human foibles to show that humor can be an effective tool on the path.

The Vinaya contains no training rule against idle chatter, although its narratives contain a list of topics that would count as idle chatter among monks, a list that is also found in the suttas (§173). The list is interesting in covering everything from village gossip to topics that are currently studied in academic philosophy and science, such as speculations on the origin of the cosmos. Most of the list, though, is composed of topics—such as politics, battles, women, heroes, food, and places—that provide the standard fodder for the public media.

In light of the fact that right speech should be timely, §139 provides a particularly interesting example of applying the Dhamma in an untimely way. Ven. Udāyin tries to use the perception that all feelings are stressful to argue, in response to a question on the consequences of action, that all action results in stress. The Buddha, however, rebukes him for applying the

wrong teaching to the question, showing that this type of speech also counts as idle chatter. This principle would then apply to any discussion of a point of Dhamma that is not appropriate to the question asked or the person asking it.

AN 10:165, in addition to listing forms of wrong speech to be avoided, also lists corresponding forms of right speech to be developed: Above and beyond avoiding lies, for example, one should be one who "holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world." Beyond avoiding divisive speech, one should reconcile "those who have broken apart or cement those who are united… love concord, delight in concord, enjoy concord, speak things that create concord." In addition to avoiding harsh speech, one should speak "words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large." In addition to avoiding idle chatter, one should speak "words worth treasuring, timely, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal." In this way, right speech is not just a matter of avoiding harmful speech, but is also a matter of engaging in speech that gives benefit all around.

**Right action.** Right action is defined as abstaining from three types of wrong action: taking life, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Like the telling of lies, all of these types of wrong action have corresponding precepts in the five lay precepts, which means that they are to be absolutely avoided in all situations.

*Taking life* means intentionally killing any animate being: human beings, animals, even insects. The Vinaya's discussion of its training rules against killing human beings and animals show that, to count as wrong action, the act of taking life would have to involve knowing that the being was a being and that your act would kill it (Pr 3; Pc 61). In other words, if you stepped on an ant, thinking that it was a spot of dirt, that would not count as taking life. The Vinaya also shows that, to qualify as an animate being, the being would have to be big enough to see with the naked eye. For this reason, intentionally killing bacteria would not count as wrong action. The motivation for killing, however, is not a mitigating factor here. This means that acts of euthanasia and "putting animals out of their misery," even though motivated by a misguided sense of compassion—misguided in the sense that you don't really know what awaits the person or animal after death—would count as wrong action, too.

The firmness with which the Buddha regards the need to abstain from killing is illustrated in §183, where the question gives him the opportunity to allow for exceptions of any sort to the principle against killing, but he responds simply by saying that the one thing whose killing he condones is anger.

*Stealing* means taking objects for one's own, in the manner of theft, knowing that they have an owner who has not given permission to take them. The Vinaya's discussion of its training rule against stealing shows that it does not cover borrowing with the intent to return, nor does it cover taking things from nature or the environment in general (Pr 2). The owner has to be a specific person or group of people, with "person" meaning human being or an inhabitant of the higher realms.

*Sexual misconduct* is defined in the texts from the man's point of view, and covers having sexual intercourse with those who are protected by their families (i.e., minors), those protected by their Dhamma (i.e., those who have taken a vow of celibacy), those with husbands, those who entail punishments (i.e., members of a king's harem), and even those who are "crowned with flowers by another man"—i.e., those who are not formally married but who are going steady or in a committed relationship. From this list, it is possible to extrapolate similar standards for women.

In one of the descriptions of the noble path (§46), the phrase, "abstaining from sexual misconduct" is replaced with "abstaining from sexual intercourse." None of the suttas explain this discrepancy, although as §178 states, if you're incapable of celibate behavior, then at least don't transgress with the spouses of others. In other words, celibacy is ideal for the path. Sn 4:7 (§220) points out that in one who practices sexual intercourse, the teaching is muddled—but not so muddled that it prevents awakening, as witnessed by the large number of lay people who became arahants on listening to the Buddha's teachings. What is clear from these cases, though, is that awakening will not occur in the midst of sexual intercourse, regardless of what later traditions claim.

**Guidance from right view.** Right view provides guidance to right speech and right action on many levels. To begin with, it points to the importance of intention in determining the kammic consequences of your

actions. This is why the definitions of wrong speech and wrong action apply only to acts done knowingly and deliberately.

In describing the good and bad consequences of various actions (§82; §166; MN 135), right view also shows specifically why wrong speech and wrong action are wrong, and why their right counterparts are right.

It also warns of the synergy of bad kamma. As §181 points out, if a person obsessed with gaining power wrongly inflicts punishments on others, he will then find it harder and harder to learn the truth, putting himself in a position where he removes himself further and further from the Dhamma.

Right view, as we noted above, also teaches the principle that you harm others by getting them to engage in wrong conduct. For this reason, right speech and right action require that you not only refrain from wrong speech and wrong action yourself, but also that you refrain from getting others to engage in such behavior, and even from condoning them for engaging in it. So, for example, arguing that war can be morally justified, even if you don't participate in the killing yourself, would count as wrong action, as would a recommendation to others that, in times of poverty, they should steal from those who, in their eyes, are inappropriately wealthy.

It's because of this principle against getting others to engage in wrong action that, even though abortion was legal in the Buddha's time, he forbade his monks and nuns from recommending abortion.

The multi-lifetime perspective offered by right view, along with its explanation that the results of actions sometimes take more than one lifetime to ripen, serves to remind you that even in times of difficulty and hardship—when it seems that holding to right speech and right action would put you at a disadvantage in terms of your wealth and survival—it's better to sacrifice your current well-being for the sake of long-term well-being. Especially during times of hardship, when you're threatened with death, it's important to be mindful of three passages from the Canon:

1) the Buddha's statement in §144 that loss in terms of relatives, wealth, and disease do not lead to rebirth in the lower realms, but that loss in terms of view and virtue do;

2) his statement that you protect yourself by following right action and right speech (§187), whereas if you steal and kill you leave yourself unprotected; and

3) his statement that, in observing the principles of right speech and right action in all situations, you give universal safety to others—at least from your quarter—and will ultimately share in that universal safety yourself (§81).

These reflections show why rebirth is such an important part of the working hypothesis provided by mundane right view: Without this multi-life perspective, it's all too easy to rationalize engaging in wrong speech and action if you feel that your survival depends on it. With this perspective, you can maintain your resolve to stick with right speech and right action all the way to the end of life.

The values flowing from this perspective are particularly difficult to remember in times of verbal and physical conflict, which is why right view offers specific advice on how to maintain right action and right speech in such situations. In terms of action, it reminds you that victory over your own defilements is greater than victory over a thousand-thousand others (§185). Even if you are in a relative position of strength over your enemy, it's best to show restraint (§186)—which means that it's better to lose a battle if winning it entails engaging in wrong action. The Vinaya gives a specific example of this principle in allowing monks to strike back in self-defense when attacked, but not to do so with the intent to kill (Pc 74).

In terms of verbal conflict, the Buddha encourages the monks not to get involved in useless debates, but his own behavior shows that, under certain conditions, debates can actually be helpful. This is why §176 sets the conditions for which kinds of people are worth engaging in discussion. The conditions come down to two sorts: The other person (a) should know proper procedure in how to engage in a reasonable debate and (b) should have the integrity to conduct the debate in a fair manner. These conditions, of course, reflect back on you: If you're going to engage in a debate, you have to meet these conditions as well. If either side lacks the requisite conditions, it's better to walk away from the debate, even if other people regard that as a defeat. As §176 points out, the purpose of discussion should be to lead to the mind's liberation. A discussion that does not serve that purpose is best avoided.

In addition to debates, verbal conflict can also take the form of accusations of misbehavior. Here again, the Canon offers advice to both sides, the accuser and the accused, as to what qualities they should bring to

the accusation if it is to serve as an aid to both sides' liberation from defilement (§177).

**Guidance for concentration & discernment.** In addition to receiving guidance from the discernment factors of the path, right speech and right action also exercise qualities of mind that are conducive to developing the path-factors that come under concentration and discernment.

In terms of concentration, §202 mentions that following the principles of right speech and right action leads to lack of remorse, which in turn fosters two of the conditions needed for concentration.

The first condition is mindfulness, the ability to keep something in mind. If you have nothing to regret in your words and deeds, you'll feel less need to block things from your memory. As a result, your mindfulness—and thus your concentration—will have fewer gaps.

The second condition is gladness. Lack of remorse promotes the skillful gladness that allows the mind to settle down with a steady sense of well-being.

Also—although the suttas don't mention this point—the practice of right speech in particular makes you more and more sensitive to the verbal fabrications (directed thought and evaluation) that precede speech, at the same time giving you practice in how to control these fabrications so that your speech doesn't wander into ways that are wrong. The practice of applying the three tests for right speech to your own speech—that it be true, beneficial, and timely—prepares you for applying the same tests to your thoughts as you try to bring the mind to concentration. In this way, right speech provides excellent preparation in exercising the sort of control over verbal fabrication that will be necessary to bring the mind into jhāna. Gaining control over your mouth gives you practice in gaining control over the chatter in your mind.

At the same time, the act of holding to right speech and right action helps to exercise the three qualities that have to function in right mindfulness: mindfulness, alertness, and ardency. To maintain right speech and right action at all times, you have to be mindful of—i.e., to hold in mind—the principles of what counts as right speech and right action; you have to be alert to make sure that your speech and actions are actually in line with those principles; and you have to be ardent in making the effort to

stick with right speech and right action and to avoid their wrong counterparts. This is what MN 117 (§48) means when it says that right mindfulness and right effort—which is equivalent to ardency—circle around right speech and right action. This is also why SN 47:16 notes that virtue is one of the requisites for right mindfulness.

In addition to exercising the qualities of mind needed for concentration, the practice of right speech and right action also exercises your discernment.

• To begin with, it sensitizes you to your intentions in action. In this way, it takes the general principle of mundane right action—that actions are rooted in intention—and makes it more detailed and specific. You begin to see for yourself that honesty inside and out is necessary for genuine insight into your motives and intentions to arise.

• In a similar vein, it gives you exercise in learning how to develop the strategic wisdom needed to talk yourself into avoiding wrong speech and wrong action even when you want to engage in such things, and to talk yourself into engaging in right speech and right action even when you don't want to (§204). We will treat this issue in more detail under right effort, but it's important to realize that it's a matter of right view and right resolve as well.

• Third, the practice of right speech and right action also exercises your ingenuity in using discernment in the areas where the principles of right speech allow for exceptions—i.e., in the areas of divisive tale-bearing, harsh speech, and idle chatter—and in the areas, such as the principle of truthfulness and all the areas of right action, where no exceptions are allowed.

In the areas where exceptions are allowed, you have to be honest with yourself about your motivations for taking advantage of the exceptions. For instance, with divisive tale-bearing, you have to know for sure that your motives are pure when telling A about B's misbehavior, and that it really will be in A's best interest to know. In the case of harsh speech, you have to discern your motivation clearly enough to be sure that your words are motivated, not by anger, but by the knowledge that harsh speech will be timely and effective in that particular case.

In the areas where no exceptions are allowed, you have to know how to minimize the immediate harm that may come from holding firmly to the

principles of right speech and right action. SN 41:3 (§171) gives an interesting illustration of this point. Ven. Isidatta does not want to reveal his identity to Citta, for fear that Citta, on knowing that they are related, will give him preferential treatment that he has not offered to the more senior monks. This would damage his standing vis-à-vis the monastic community. So when Citta questions him about Isidatta's whereabouts, he answers in a non-committal way so as not to reveal his true identity. Only when Citta presses him, and he cannot find a way to avoid answering the question, does he reveal who he is.

By forcing you to be ingenious and quick-witted in holding to the principle of not misrepresenting the truth, the principles of right speech in this area are an excellent exercise in discernment in action—much more so than the "discernment" that tries to decide when it's all right to lie.

The principles of right action, because they are also meant to be followed in all situations, provide similar exercises in how to use your discernment in holding to your principles while at the same time doing the least immediate harm.

**Transcendent virtue.** MN 78 (§201) provides a definition of the transcendent level for all the virtue factors of the path when it defines what it means to be beyond skillful habits—"habit," here, being a translation of the word *sīla*, which can also mean "virtue" or "precept." Instead of dropping the precepts, a person beyond skillful habits is virtuous *(sīlavant)* but is not "made of virtue" *(sīlamaya)*. What this means is that, on reaching this stage of the practice—which, apparently, follows the first stage of awakening—your behavior stays in line with the principles of right speech, right action, and right livelihood, but you do not define yourself around your virtue, and you neither exalt yourself for being virtuous nor do you disparage others for not. In this way, you avoid the dangers that come from clinging to habits and practices, at the same time enjoying the benefits that come from skillful words and deeds. In addition, you gain practice in becoming familiar with a state of mind that does not think in terms of "I" or "me," thus preparing yourself to think more consistently in the terms that characterize right view on the transcendent level.

Some ancient commentators in non-Pāli Indian Buddhist traditions maintained that, because speech, action, and livelihood are not an issue

when the mind is in meditation, the virtue factors of the path are not really involved as the mind approaches awakening. Thus they argued that the path just prior to awakening has only five factors. However, they missed the fact that the transcendent levels of virtue are still present in the mind, and so the path-factors at the threshold of awakening still number eight.

## Readings

### *Right Speech*

§ 165. "And how is one made impure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person engages in false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty [i.e., a royal court proceeding], if he is asked as a witness, 'Come & tell, good man, what you know': If he doesn't know, he says, 'I know.' If he does know, he says, 'I don't know.' If he hasn't seen, he says, 'I have seen.' If he has seen, he says, 'I haven't seen.' Thus he consciously tells lies for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of a certain reward. He engages in divisive speech. What he has heard here he tells there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he tells here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus breaking apart those who are united and stirring up strife between those who have broken apart, he loves factionalism, delights in factionalism, enjoys factionalism, speaks things that create factionalism. He engages in harsh speech. He speaks words that are insolent, cutting, mean to others, reviling others, provoking anger and destroying concentration. He engages in idle chatter. He speaks out of season, speaks what isn't factual, what isn't in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya, words that are not worth treasuring. This is how one is made impure in four ways by verbal action.…

"And how is one made pure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty, if he is asked as a witness, 'Come & tell, good man, what you know': If he doesn't know, he says, 'I don't know.' If he does know, he says, 'I know.' If he hasn't seen, he says, 'I haven't seen.' If he has seen, he says, 'I have seen.' Thus he doesn't

consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he doesn't tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he doesn't tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is based in fact, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, timely, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This is how one is made pure in four ways by verbal action." — *AN 10:165*

§ 166. "Telling lies—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from telling lies is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to being falsely accused.

"Divisive speech—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from divisive speech is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to the breaking of one's friendships.

"Harsh speech—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from harsh speech is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to unappealing sounds.

"Idle chatter—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from idle chatter

is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to words that aren't worth taking to heart." — *AN 8:40*

*§ 167. Ven. Vaṅgīsa:*

"Speak only the speech
that neither torments self
nor does harm to others.
That speech is truly well-spoken.

Speak only endearing speech,
speech that is welcomed.
Speech when it brings no evil
to others
is pleasant.

Truth, indeed, is deathless speech:
This is a primeval principle.
The goal and the Dhamma
—so say the calm—
are firmly established on truth.

The speech the Awakened One speaks,
for attaining unbinding,
rest,
for making an end
to the mass of stress:
That is the speech unsurpassed." — *Sn 3:3*

§ 168. When gone to an audience hall or assembly,
or one-on-one, he should not tell a lie,
nor have it told, nor condone it's being told.
He should avoid every untruth. — *Sn 2:14*

§ 169. For the person who lies,
who transgresses in this one thing,
transcending concern for the world beyond:
there's no evil
not to be done. — *Iti 25*

§ 170. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Forest, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. Then Vassakāra the brahman, the minister to the king of Magadha, approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "I am of the view, of the opinion, that when anyone speaks of what he has seen, (saying,) 'Thus have I seen,' there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has heard, (saying,) 'Thus have I heard,' there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has sensed, (saying,) 'Thus have I sensed,' there is no fault in that. When anyone speaks of what he has cognized, (saying,) 'Thus have I cognized,' there is no fault in that."

[The Blessed One responded:] "I do not say, brahman, that everything that has been seen should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been seen should not be spoken about. I do not say that everything that has been heard… everything that has been sensed… everything that has been cognized should be spoken about. Nor do I say that everything that has been cognized should not be spoken about.

"When, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful dhammas increase and skillful dhammas decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been seen, unskillful dhammas decrease and skillful dhammas increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about.

"When, for one who speaks of what has been heard… what has been sensed… what has been cognized, unskillful dhammas increase and skillful dhammas decrease, then that sort of thing should not be spoken about. But when, for one who speaks of what has been cognized, unskillful dhammas decrease and skillful dhammas increase, then that sort of thing should be spoken about."

Then Vassakāra the brahman, delighting & rejoicing in the Blessed One's words, got up from his seat and left. — *AN 4:183*

§ 171. Citta the householder [to the junior monk, Ven. Isidatta, after the latter had answered a question that monks senior to him couldn't answer]: "Venerable sir, where does Master Isidatta come from?"

"I come from Avanti, householder."

"There is, venerable sir, a clansman from Avanti named Isidatta, an unseen friend of mine, who has gone forth. Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes, householder."

"Where is he living now, venerable sir?"

When this was said, the Venerable Isidatta was silent.

"Are you my Isidatta?"

"Yes, householder."

"Then may Master Isidatta delight in the charming Wild Mango Grove at Macchikāsaṇḍa. I will be responsible for your robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites."

"That is admirably said, householder."

Then Citta the householder—having delighted & rejoiced in the Venerable Isidatta's words—with his own hand served & satisfied the senior monks with choice staple & non-staple foods. When the senior monks had finished eating and had removed their hands from their bowls, they got up from their seats and left.

Then the most senior monk said to the Venerable Isidatta: "It was excellent, friend Isidatta, the way that question inspired you to answer. It didn't inspire an answer in me at all. Whenever a similar question comes up again, may it inspire you to answer as you did just now."

Then Ven. Isidatta—having set his lodging in order and taking his bowl & robes—left Macchikāsaṇḍa. And in leaving Macchikāsaṇḍa, he was gone for good and never returned. — *SN 41:3*

§ 172. "There is the case where a person of integrity, when asked, doesn't reveal another person's bad points, to say nothing of when unasked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person's bad points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"And further, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals another person's good points, to say nothing of when asked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person's good points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"And further, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals his own bad points, to say nothing of when asked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own bad points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"And further, a person of integrity, when asked, doesn't reveal his own good points, to say nothing of when unasked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own good points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'" — *AN 4:73*

§ 173. Then the Blessed One, emerging from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to the meeting hall and, on arrival, sat down on a seat laid out. Seated, he addressed the monks: "For what topic of conversation are you gathered together here? In the midst of what topic of conversation have you been interrupted?"

"Just now, lord, after the meal, on returning from our alms round, we gathered at the meeting hall and got engaged in many kinds of bestial topics of conversation: conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state; armies, alarms, & battles; food & drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, & scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women & heroes; the gossip of the street & the well; tales of the dead; tales of multiplicity, the creation of the world & of the sea; talk of whether things exist or not."

"It isn't right, monks, that sons of good families, on having gone forth out of faith from home to the homeless life, should get engaged in such topics of conversation, i.e., conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state… talk of whether things exist or not.

"There are these ten topics of (proper) conversation. Which ten? Talk on modesty, contentment, seclusion, non-entanglement, arousing persistence, virtue, concentration, discernment, release, and the knowledge & vision of release. These are the ten topics of conversation. If you were to engage repeatedly in these ten topics of conversation, you would outshine even the sun & moon, so mighty, so powerful—to say nothing of the wanderers of other sects." — *AN 10:70*

§ 174. "There are these four ways of answering questions. Which four? There are questions that should be answered categorically [straightforwardly yes, no, this, that]. There are questions that should be answered with an analytical answer [qualified by defining or redefining the terms]. There are questions that should be answered with a counter-question. There are questions that should be put aside." — *AN 4:42*

§ 175. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Forest, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

Then Prince Abhaya went to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta said to him, "Come now, prince. Refute the words of Gotama the contemplative, and this admirable report about you will spread afar: 'The words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful—were refuted by Prince Abhaya!'"

"But how, venerable sir, will I refute the words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful?"

"Come now, prince. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: 'Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others?' If Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, 'The Tathāgata would say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others,' then you should say, 'Then how is there any difference between you, venerable sir, and run-of-the-mill people? For even run-of-the-mill people say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others.' But if Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, 'The Tathāgata would not say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others,' then you should say, 'Then how, venerable sir, did you say of Devadatta that "Devadatta is headed for destitution, Devadatta is headed for hell, Devadatta will boil for an eon, Devadatta is incurable"? For Devadatta was upset & disgruntled at those words of yours.' When Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up. Just as if a two-horned chestnut were stuck in a man's throat: He would not be able to swallow it down or spit it up. In the same way, when Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up."

Responding, "As you say, venerable sir," Prince Abhaya got up from his seat, bowed down to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, circumambulated him, and then went to the Blessed One. On arrival, he bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he glanced up at the sun and thought, "Today is not the time to refute the Blessed One's words. Tomorrow in my own home I will overturn the Blessed One's words." So he said to the Blessed One, "May the Blessed One, together with three others, acquiesce to my offer of tomorrow's meal."

The Blessed One acquiesced with silence.

Then Prince Abhaya, understanding the Blessed One's acquiescence, got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and left.

Then, after the night had passed, the Blessed One early in the morning put on his robes and, carrying his bowl and outer robe, went to Prince Abhaya's home. On arrival, he sat down on a seat made ready. Prince Abhaya, with his own hand, served & satisfied the Blessed One with fine staple & non-staple foods. Then, when the Blessed One had eaten and had removed his hand from his bowl, Prince Abhaya took a lower seat and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others?"

"Prince, there is no categorical yes-or-no answer to that."

"Then right here, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas are destroyed."

"But prince, why do you say, 'Then right here, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas are destroyed'?"

"Just yesterday, venerable sir, I went to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and… he said to me… 'Come now, prince. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: "Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & disagreeable to others?"… Just as if a two-horned chestnut were stuck in a man's throat: He would not be able to swallow it down or spit it up. In the same way, when Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up.'"

Now, at that time a baby boy was lying face-up on the prince's lap. So the Blessed One said to the prince, "What do you think, prince? If this

young boy, through your own negligence or that of the nurse, were to take a stick or a piece of gravel into its mouth, what would you do?"

"I would take it out, venerable sir. If I couldn't get it out right away, then holding its head in my left hand and crooking a finger of my right, I would take it out, even if it meant drawing blood. Why is that? Because I have sympathy for the young boy."

"In the same way, prince:

[1] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial [or: not connected with the goal], unendearing & disagreeable to others, he does not say them.

[2] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, unendearing & disagreeable to others, he does not say them.

[3] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, beneficial, but unendearing & disagreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them.

[4] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial, but endearing & agreeable to others, he does not say them.

[5] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, but endearing & agreeable to others, he does not say them.

[6] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, beneficial, and endearing & agreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has sympathy for living beings."

"Venerable sir, when wise nobles or brahmans, householders or contemplatives, having formulated questions, come to the Tathāgata and ask him, does this line of reasoning appear to his awareness beforehand—'If those who approach me ask this, I—thus asked—will answer in this way'—or does the Tathāgata come up with the answer on the spot?"

"In that case, prince, I will ask you a counter-question. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Are you skilled in the parts of a chariot?"

"Yes, venerable sir. I am skilled in the parts of a chariot."

"And what do you think? When people come & ask you, 'What is the name of this part of the chariot?' does this line of reasoning appear to your

awareness beforehand—'If those who approach me ask this, I—thus asked—will answer in this way'—or do you come up with the answer on the spot?"

"Venerable sir, I am renowned for being skilled in the parts of a chariot. All the parts of a chariot are well-known to me. I come up with the answer on the spot."

"In the same way, prince, when wise nobles or brahmans, householders or contemplatives, having formulated questions, come to the Tathāgata and ask him, he comes up with the answer on the spot. Why is that? Because the property of the Dhamma is thoroughly penetrated by the Tathāgata. From his thorough penetration of the property of the Dhamma, he comes up with the answer on the spot."

When this was said, Prince Abhaya said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, venerable sir! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life." — *MN 58*

§ 176. "Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, doesn't give a categorical answer to a question deserving a categorical answer, doesn't give an analytical answer to a question deserving an analytical answer, doesn't give a counter-question to a question deserving a counter-question, doesn't put aside a question deserving to be put aside, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, gives a categorical answer to a question deserving a categorical answer, gives an analytical answer to a question deserving an analytical answer, gives a counter-question to a question deserving a counter-question, and puts aside a question deserving to be put aside, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, doesn't stand by what is possible and impossible,

doesn't stand by agreed-upon assumptions, doesn't stand by teachings known to be true, doesn't stand by standard procedure, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, stands by what is possible and impossible, stands by agreed-upon assumptions, stands by teachings known to be true, stands by standard procedure, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, wanders from one thing to another, pulls the discussion off the topic, shows anger & aversion and sulks, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, doesn't wander from one thing to another, doesn't pull the discussion off the topic, doesn't show anger or aversion or sulk, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, puts down (the questioner), crushes him, ridicules him, grasps at his little mistakes, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, doesn't put down (the questioner), doesn't crush him, doesn't ridicule him, doesn't grasp at his little mistakes, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as drawing near or not drawing near. One who lends ear draws near; one who doesn't lend ear doesn't draw near. Drawing near, one clearly knows one dhamma, comprehends one dhamma, abandons one dhamma, and realizes one dhamma.[1] Clearly knowing one dhamma, comprehending one dhamma, abandoning one dhamma, and realizing one dhamma, one touches right release. For that's the purpose of discussion, that's the purpose of counsel, that's the purpose of drawing near, that's the purpose of lending ear: i.e., the liberation of the mind through lack of clinging/sustenance." — *AN 3:68*

### Note

1. According to the Commentary, these dhammas are, respectively, the fourth, first, second, and third noble truths.

§ 177. Five dhammas to establish in oneself before leveling a charge:

1) "I will speak at the right time, not at the wrong time."
2) "I will say what is factual, not what is not factual."
3) "I will speak gently, and not harshly."
4) "I will say what is connected with the goal [or: the matter at hand], not what is unconnected to the goal [the matter at hand]."
5) "I will speak with an attitude of goodwill, and not with inner aversion." —*Cv IX.5.2*

Five dhammas to attend to inwardly when leveling a charge: compassion, seeking (the other's) welfare, sympathy, removal of offenses, esteem for the Vinaya. — *Cv IX.5.7*

Two dhammas to remain established in when being charged: the truth and unprovocabilty. — *Cv IX.5.7*

*Right Action*

§ 178. Laying aside violence toward all living creatures,
both the firm & unfirm in the world,
one should not kill a living being, nor have it killed,
nor condone killing by others.
Then the disciple should avoid
consciously (taking) what's not given,
—anything, anywhere—
should not have it taken,
nor condone its taking.
He should avoid all (taking of) what's not given.
The observant person should avoid uncelibate behavior
like a pit of glowing embers.
But if he's incapable of celibate behavior,
he should not transgress with the wife of another. —
*Sn 2:14*

§ 179. "And how is one made impure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person takes life, is brutal, bloody-handed, devoted to killing & slaying, showing no mercy to living beings. He takes

what is not given. He takes, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. He engages in sexual misconduct. He gets sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made impure in three ways by bodily action.…

"And how is one made pure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not take, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. Abandoning sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made pure in three ways by bodily action." — *AN 10:176*

§ 180. "Monks, the taking of life—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from the taking of life is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to a short life span.

"Stealing—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from stealing is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to the loss of one's wealth.

"Sexual misconduct—when indulged in, developed, & pursued—is something that leads to hell, leads to rebirth as a common animal, leads to the realm of the hungry ghosts. The slightest of all the results coming from sexual misconduct is that, when one becomes a human being, it leads to rivalry & revenge." — *AN 8:40*

§ 181. "Because of having wrongly inflicted suffering on another person through beating or imprisonment or confiscation or placing blame or banishment (with the thought), 'I have power. I want power,' when told what is factual, he denies it and doesn't acknowledge it. When told what is unfactual, he doesn't make an ardent effort to untangle it (to see), 'This is unfactual. This is baseless.'" — *AN 3:90*

§ 182. Four things befall the heedless man
who lies down with the wife of another:
a wealth of demerit;
a lack of good sleep;
third, censure;
fourth, hell.

A wealth of demerit, an evil destination,
& the brief delight of a
    fearful man with a
    fearful woman,
& the king inflicts a harsh punishment.
    So
no man should lie down
with the wife of another. — *Dhp 309–310*

*§ 183. A devatā:*

"Having killed what
  do you sleep in ease?
Having killed what
  do you not grieve?
Of the slaying
of what one thing
  does Gotama approve?"

*The Buddha:*

"Having killed anger
  you sleep in ease.
Having killed anger
  you do not grieve.

The noble ones praise
the slaying of anger
    —with its honeyed crest
    & poison root—
for having killed it
    you do not grieve." — *SN 1:71*

§ 184. Like a merchant with a small
but well-laden caravan
                —a dangerous road,
like a person who loves life
                —a poison,
one should avoid
                —evil deeds.

If there's no wound on the hand,
that hand can hold poison.
Poison won't penetrate
        where there's no wound.
There's no evil
        for those who don't do it. — *Dhp 123–124*

§ 185. Greater in battle
than the man who would conquer
a thousand-thousand men,
is he who would conquer
just one—
                himself.

Better to conquer yourself
        than others.

When you've trained yourself,
living in constant self-control,
neither a deva nor gandhabba,
nor a Māra banded with Brahmas,
could turn that triumph
back into defeat. — *Dhp 103–105*

§ 186. The Blessed One said, "Once in the past the devas & asuras were arrayed for battle. Then Vepacitti the asura-king said to Sakka the deva-king: 'Let there be victory through what is well spoken.'

"'Yes, Vepacitti, let there be victory through what is well spoken.'

"So the devas & asuras appointed a panel of judges, (thinking,) 'These will decide for us what is well spoken & poorly spoken.'

"Then Vepacitti the asura-king said to Sakka the deva-king, 'Say a verse, deva-king!'

"When this was said, Sakka the deva-king said to Vepacitti the asura-king, 'But you are the senior deity here, Vepacitti. You say a verse.'

"When this was said, Vepacitti recited this verse:

'Fools would flare up even more
if there were no constraints.
Thus an enlightened one
should restrain the fool
with a heavy stick.'

"When Vepacitti had said this verse, the asuras applauded but the devas were silent. So Vepacitti said to Sakka, 'Say a verse, deva-king!'

"When this was said, Sakka recited this verse:

'This, I think,
is the only constraint for a fool:
When, knowing the other's provoked,
you mindfully grow calm.'

"When Sakka had said this verse, the devas applauded but the asuras were silent. So Sakka said to Vepacitti, 'Say a verse, Vepacitti!'

"When this was said, Vepacitti recited this verse:

'Vāsava, I see a fault
in this very forbearance:
When the fool thinks,
"He's forbearing
out of fear of me,"
the idiot pursues you even more—
as a bull, someone who runs away.'

"When Vepacitti had said this verse, the asuras applauded but the devas were silent. So Vepacitti said to Sakka, 'Say a verse, deva-king!'

"When this was said, Sakka recited this verse:

'It doesn't matter
whether he thinks,
"He's forbearing
out of fear of me."

One's own true good
is the foremost good.
Nothing better
than patience
is found.

Whoever, when strong,
is forbearing
to one who is weak:
that's the foremost patience.
The weak must constantly endure.
They call that strength
no strength at all:
whoever's strength
is the strength of a fool.
There's no reproach
for one who is strong,
guarding—guarded by—Dhamma.

You make things worse
when you flare up
at someone who's angry.
Whoever doesn't flare up
at someone who's angry
wins a battle
hard to win.

You live for the good of both
—your own, the other's—
when, knowing the other's provoked,
you mindfully grow calm.

When you work the cure of both
    —your own, the other's—
those who think you a fool
know nothing of Dhamma.'

"When Sakka had said this verse, the devas applauded but the asuras were silent. Then the deva & asura panel of judges said, 'The verses said by Vepacitti the asura-king lie in the sphere of swords & weapons—thence arguments, quarrels, & strife. Whereas the verses said by Sakka the deva-king lies outside the sphere of swords & weapons—thence no arguments, no quarrels, no strife. The victory through what is well spoken goes to Sakka the deva-king.'

"And that, monks, is how the victory through what was well spoken went to Sakka the deva-king." — *SN 11:5*

§ 187. "Those who engage in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct leave themselves unprotected. Even though a squadron of elephant troops might protect them, a squadron of cavalry troops, a squadron of chariot troops, a squadron of infantry troops might protect them, still they leave themselves unprotected. Why is that? Because that's an external protection, not an internal one. Therefore they leave themselves unprotected. But those who engage in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct have themselves protected. Even though neither a squadron of elephant troops, a squadron of cavalry troops, a squadron of chariot troops, nor a squadron of infantry troops might protect them, still they have themselves protected. Why is that? Because that's an internal protection, not an external one. Therefore they have themselves protected." — *SN 3:5*

§ 188. "A man may plunder
as long as it serves his ends,
but when others are plundered,
    he who has plundered
    gets plundered in turn.

A fool thinks,
'Now's my chance,'
as long as his evil

has yet to ripen.
But when it ripens,
the fool
    falls
        into pain.

Killing, you gain
    your killer.
Conquering, you gain one
    who will conquer you;
insulting,  insult;
harassing,  harassment.

And so, through the cycle of action,
    he who has plundered
    gets plundered in turn." — *SN 3:15*

CHAPTER SIX

# *Right Livelihood*

Right livelihood is the third virtue factor in the path. Like right speech and right action, it is defined as abstaining from wrong livelihood, but unlike them, the standard description of this path-factor doesn't state clearly what wrong livelihood is. There is the obvious point that right livelihood should avoid any need to engage in wrong speech and wrong action, but a survey of other passages in the suttas shows that there is more to right livelihood than that. It deals not only with the ramifications of how you acquire the requisites of life—food, clothing, shelter, and medicine—but also with the attitude you take toward consuming them. By fostering the right attitude in this area, the pursuit of right livelihood moves directly into the training of the mind, providing a connection between the virtue factors and the three concentration factors that follow them on the path.

MN 117 (§48) provides a definition of wrong livelihood that seems aimed specifically at wrong livelihood for monks: "scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, & pursuing gain with gain." Persuading and hinting are standard procedure in many forms of right livelihood for lay people, as when a merchant persuades a customer to buy an item, or hints that a certain purchase would be wise. The same is true of "pursuing gain with gain"—i.e., offering a gift to get a larger gift in return. For monks, however, such behavior is not in line with their station in life as recipients of requisites given in faith. DN 2 (§199) expands on this point by listing in great detail the specific types of occupations from which monks should abstain. These fall into three main groups—making predictions, offering protective charms, acting in a servile capacity for laypeople—along with a more miscellaneous group of occupations that includes accounting, counting, calculation, composing poetry, and teaching hedonistic arts and doctrines.

Only a few passages in the suttas, however, deal directly with wrong means of livelihood for lay people, and in only one passage (§189) does the Buddha state outright that his lay followers should not pursue specific occupations: "trade in weapons, trade in living beings, trade in meat, trade in intoxicants, and trade in poison." Of these, only trade in living beings requires extra explanation. It covers not only buying and selling common animals, but also buying and selling human beings.

The reason for the Buddha's reticence in discussing the issue of livelihood for lay people is suggested by §§190–191: If he criticized those who followed a particular occupation, he risked setting himself up as a busybody, condemning other people who had not asked for his opinion. If people were to react unfavorably when told that their occupation was inherently unskillful and conducive to a bad rebirth, they might close their minds to learning the Dhamma. As a result, the Buddha never went on a campaign to denounce occupations that he saw as unskillful. Even in §189, he did not state that all people should avoid the five types of trade, only that his lay followers should avoid them.

Similarly, the Buddha would not condemn a person's occupation to the person's face unless that person had shown his/her sincerity in asking for the Buddha's opinion on the matter by repeating the question up to three times. Even then, the Buddha would not simply condemn the occupation—soldiering and acting are the examples given in the suttas—but would also explain why it was inherently unskillful.

In the case of soldiering, the Buddha focused his objection, not on the obvious fact that soldiers are hired to engage in the wrong action of killing, but on the states of mind that killing incites. When in battle, soldiers' minds are focused on the wrong resolve of ill will: "May these beings be struck down or slaughtered or annihilated or destroyed. May they not exist." If they themselves are struck down and killed in that moment, they are likely to go to hell.

In the case of acting, the Buddha focused his objection on the mind-states the actors foster within themselves, and on the mind-states they intend to incite in their audience. By inspiring their audience to greater passion, aversion, and delusion, they themselves are intoxicated and heedless, and they inspire their audience to be intoxicated and heedless as well. As a result, their destination after death will not be good.

From these cases, we can extrapolate a few general principles to determine what sorts of occupations a person on the path should avoid: any that are based on doing physical harm to other beings, any that are based on encouraging heedlessness and intoxication in oneself or others, and any that are based on inciting wrong resolves in one's own mind.

However, wrong livelihood is measured not only in terms of specific occupations, but also in terms of following an otherwise acceptable occupation in a dishonest way. This point is illustrated by §192, in which Ven. Sāriputta speaks in very frank terms to one of his old students, Dhanañjānin, about the future dangers of plundering householders in the name of the king, and plundering the king in the name of householders. In other words, Dhanañjānin was collecting more revenue from the king's subjects than he was supposed to, and paying the king less than was his due. Ven. Sāriputta's concluding argument—that the guardians of hell will not care that Dhanañjānin did this from necessity, to take care of his wife, children, or parents—applies in any case where one pursues a livelihood in a dishonest way. As he tells Dhanañjānin at the end of their discussion, "There are other activities—reasonable, righteous—by which one can refresh & nourish one's body, and at the same time both not do evil and practice the practice of merit."

Right here, however, is where the issue of right livelihood bites the mind, in that many of those reasonable and righteous ways of gaining a livelihood do not pay as well as some of the other less righteous ways. This is where the mind is forced to see the truth of the Buddha's teaching that beings are defined by their need to feed and suffer because of that need.

**Contentment.** The best way to weaken the mind's felt need to feed—and to weaken its temptation to engage in wrong livelihood—is to develop an attitude of contentment with the requisites of life (§196). To develop contentment in this area is good not only for your own sake—in terms of your present state of mind and future destination—but also for the sake of others, in that you are placing less of a burden on the world. This is why the Buddha encouraged both monks and lay people to develop, as part of their practice of right livelihood, an attitude of material contentment.

• To help encourage his monks in this direction, the Buddha recommended that they engage in a constant reflection on how they use the

requisites of life (§229). This reflection serves both to promote contentment—in reminding the monks of how little is actually needed in terms of the requisites necessary to support the practice—and to promote a sense of saṁvega, in forcing them to reflect on the suffering inherent both for themselves and for others simply in the fact that they have a body and mind that constantly need to feed.

SN 12:63 (§198) provides some graphic analogies to aid in this reflection, and in so doing shows how right view's analysis of the three forms of fabrication provides guidance to right livelihood. The images of the dead baby child, the flayed cow, the pit of glowing embers, and the criminal struck with hundreds of spears help to foster the right sorts of perceptions to fabricate an attitude of contentment toward the requisites and, at the same time, to foster an attitude of discontent with skillful dhammas—i.e., the unwillingness to rest satisfied with where you are in the practice. At the very least, these perceptions help to aim your mind in the direction of finding the blameless nourishment that can be derived from the practice of concentration—the food for the mind that keeps your right mindfulness and right effort alive (§293).

However, reflection on food does not stop there. As SN 12:63 notes, comprehension of physical food can lead to the third level of awakening, non-return, and comprehension of the food for consciousness—contact, intellectual intention, and consciousness itself—can lead all the way to full awakening.

In this way, right livelihood, in gaining guidance from right view both in terms of understanding feeding as the essence of suffering, and in terms of the three types of fabrication for developing an attitude of contentment, returns the favor by making these teachings specific and personal in a way that can develop right view to the level where it issues in the goal of the path.

• For lay people, the suttas' standards of contentment are less stringent than those for monks and nuns. The Buddha encouraged his lay followers to take initiative in earning their living righteously and in enjoying the fruits of their labor in line with their means, being neither spendthrifts nor penny-pinchers. The warning against being a spendthrift is not surprising, nor is the Buddha's warning against getting yourself into debt (AN 6:45). His warning against being a penny-pincher, however, is a little more

surprising. AN 8:54 (§193) justifies this warning by saying that, if you're a penny-pincher your reputation will be affected. SN 3:19 (§194), however, extols the right use of wealth in more positive terms: When you provide for your own needs, those of your family, and those of contemplatives, your wealth is not wasted. The implication is that, if you can see your own well-being and pleasure in positive terms, it's easier to feel goodwill for the happiness of others as well.

However, even lay people need to practice contentment if their desire for pleasure is not to get out of bounds. This is why AN 8:54 mentions the importance of being vigilant in taking care of your possessions, so as to save the expense of replacing them. And the principle of the middle way in the pursuit of pleasure applies as much to lay people as it does to monks: When you use your wealth to obtain pleasure, make sure that the pleasures you obtain don't involve unskillful actions or have a negative impact on the state of your mind.

Similarly, the reflections on food given in SN 12:63 hold true for lay people as much as they do for monks. They drive home the point that the need to keep working to assuage your hunger is a constant source of suffering and stress both for yourself and for others. And although the right use of your livelihood helps to fend off one of the drawbacks of sensuality—that your wealth will be stolen or confiscated or fall to hateful heirs (§149)—it cannot prevent that drawback entirely. The only truly safe state of mind is one that has no need to feed. Reflection on this fact can lead the mind to a point where it's ready to move beyond the mundane level of right view and right resolve—using right livelihood as a way of fostering well-being now and on into future lives—to the level of transcendent right view, looking for a way to put an end to all suffering and stress.

**Transcendent right livelihood.** As with right speech and right action, transcendent right livelihood is expressed as a state of being virtuous but not being defined by virtue. AN 4:28 (§196) expresses this point in its discussion of the customs of the noble ones, saying that, to follow these customs, you not only have to be content with the requisites as they come to you, but you also have to be free of any tendency to exalt yourself or disparage others over the fact that you are more content than they. In this way, you enjoy the fruits of right livelihood while at the same time

avoiding the dangers that come from clinging to habits and practices and to unskillful forms of conceit.

### Readings

§ 189. "Monks, a lay follower should not engage in five types of trade. Which five? Trade in weapons, trade in living beings, trade in meat, trade in intoxicants, and trade in poison." — *AN 5:177*

§ 190. As he was sitting there, Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of actors that 'When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that."

A second time… A third time Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe, said: "Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of actors that 'When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Apparently, headman, I don't get leave from you (to avoid the matter by saying), 'Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that.' So I will simply answer you. Any beings who are not devoid of passion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of passion, focus with even more passion on things inspiring passion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Any beings who are not devoid of aversion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of aversion, focus with even more aversion on things inspiring aversion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Any beings who are not devoid of delusion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of delusion, focus with even more delusion on things inspiring delusion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Thus the actor—himself intoxicated & heedless, having made others intoxicated & heedless—with the break-up of the body, after death, is reborn in what is

called the hell of laughter. But if he holds such a view as this: 'When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas,' that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb."

When this was said, Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe, sobbed & burst into tears. (The Blessed One said:) "That was what I didn't get leave from you [to avoid by saying], 'Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that.'"

"I'm not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have been deceived, cheated, & fooled for a long time by that ancient teaching lineage of actors who said: 'When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.'" — *SN 42:2*

§ 191. As he was sitting there, Yodhājīva [Professional Warrior] the headman said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors that 'When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that."

A second time… A third time Yodhājīva the headman said: "Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors that 'When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.' What does the Blessed One have to say about that?"

"Apparently, headman, I don't get leave from you (to avoid the matter by saying), 'Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that.' So I will simply answer you. When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself

in battle, his mind is already seized, debased, & misdirected by the thought: 'May these beings be struck down or slaughtered or annihilated or destroyed. May they not exist.' If others then strike him down & slay him while he is thus striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the hell called the realm of those slain in battle. But if he holds such a view as this: 'When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle,' that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb."

When this was said, Yodhājīva the headman sobbed & burst into tears. (The Blessed One said:) "That was what I didn't get leave from you [to avoid by saying], 'Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don't ask me that.'"

"I'm not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have been deceived, cheated, & fooled for a long time by that ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors who said: 'When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the break-up of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.'" — *SN 42:3*

§ 192. Now, on that occasion Ven. Sāriputta was wandering in the Southern Mountains with a large community of monks. Then a certain monk who had spent the Rains in Rājagaha went to the Southern Mountains, to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with Ven. Sāriputta and—after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies—sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta said to him, "I trust, friend, that the Blessed One is strong & free from illness?"

"The Blessed One, friend, is strong & free from illness."

"I trust that the community of monks is strong & free from illness?"

"The community of monks is also strong & free from illness."

"At the Tandulapala Gate is a brahman named Dhanañjānin. I trust that he is strong & free from illness?"

"Dhanañjānin the brahman is also strong & free from illness."

"And I trust that Dhanañjānin the brahman is heedful?"

"From where would our Dhanañjānin the brahman get any heedfulness, friend? Relying on the king, he plunders brahmans & householders. Relying on the brahmans & householders, he plunders the king. His wife—a woman of faith, fetched from a family with faith—has died. He has fetched another wife—a woman of no faith—from a family with no faith."

"What a bad thing to hear, my friend—when we hear that Dhanañjānin the brahman is heedless. Perhaps sooner or later we might meet with Dhanañjānin the brahman. Perhaps there might be some conversation."

Then Ven. Sāriputta, having stayed in the Southern Mountains as long as he liked, wandered in the direction of Rājagaha. After wandering by stages, he arrived at Rājagaha. There he stayed near Rājagaha in the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

Then early in the morning, Ven. Sāriputta adjusted his lower robe and, carrying his bowl & outer robe, went into Rājagaha for alms. And on that occasion Dhanañjānin the brahman was milking cows in a cow pen outside the city. Then Ven. Sāriputta, having gone for alms in Rājagaha, after his meal, on his way back from his alms round, went to Dhanañjānin the brahman. Dhanañjānin the brahman saw Ven. Sāriputta coming from afar. On seeing him, he went to him and said, "Drink some of this fresh milk, master Sāriputta. It must be time for your meal."

"That's all right, brahman. I have finished my meal for today. My day's abiding will be under that tree over there. You may come there."

"As you say, master," Dhanañjānin responded to Ven. Sāriputta. Then after he had finished his morning meal, he went to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with Ven. Sāriputta and—after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies—sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta said to him, "I trust, Dhanañjānin, that you are heedful?"

"From where would we get any heedfulness, master?—when parents are to be supported, wife & children are to be supported, slaves & workers are to be supported, friend-&-companion duties are to be done for friends & companions, kinsmen-&-relative duties for kinsmen & relatives, guest duties for guests, departed-ancestor duties for departed ancestors, devatā duties for devatās, king duties for the king, and this body also has to be refreshed & nourished."

"What do you think, Dhanañjānin? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of his mother & father, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, 'I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of my mother & father. Don't [throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would his mother & father gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for our sake. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'?"

"No, master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"What do you think, Dhanañjānin? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of his wife & children… his slaves & workers… his friends & companions… his kinsmen & relatives… his guests… his departed ancestors… the devatās… the king, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, 'I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of the king. Don't [throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would the king gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for our sake. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'?"

"No, master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"What do you think, Dhanañjānin? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, 'I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing my body. Don't [throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would others gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'?"

"No, master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"Now, what do you think, Dhanañjānin? Which is the better: one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is unrighteous, what is

discordant; or one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is righteous, what is concordant?"

"Master Sāriputta, the one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant, is not the better one. The one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is righteous, what is concordant would be the better one there. Righteous behavior, concordant behavior, is better than unrighteous behavior, discordant behavior.

"Dhanañjānin, there are other activities—reasonable, righteous—by which one can support one's mother & father, and at the same time both not do evil and practice the practice of merit.

"What do you think, Dhanañjānin? Which is the better: one who, for the sake of his wife & children… his slaves & workers… his friends & companions… his kinsmen & relatives… his guests… his departed ancestors… the devatās… the king… refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant; or one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is righteous, what is concordant?

"Master Sāriputta, the one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant, is not the better one. The one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is righteous, what is concordant would be the better one there. Righteous behavior, concordant behavior, is better than unrighteous behavior, discordant behavior.

"Dhanañjānin, there are other activities—reasonable, righteous—by which one can refresh & nourish one's body, and at the same time both not do evil and practice the practice of merit."

Then Dhanañjānin the brahman, delighting & rejoicing in Ven. Sāriputta's words, got up from his seat and left. — *MN 97*

§ 193. "There are these four dhammas, TigerPaw, that lead to a lay person's happiness and well-being in this life. Which four? Being consummate in initiative, being consummate in vigilance, admirable friendship, and maintaining one's livelihood in tune.

"And what is meant by being consummate in initiative? There is the case where a lay person, by whatever occupation he makes his living—whether

by farming or trading or cattle tending or archery or as a king's man or by any other craft—is clever and untiring at it, endowed with discrimination in its techniques, enough to arrange and carry it out. This is called being consummate in initiative.

"And what is meant by being consummate in vigilance? There is the case where a lay person has righteous wealth—righteously gained, coming from his initiative, his striving, his making an effort, gathered by the strength of his arm, earned by his sweat—he manages to protect it through vigilance (with the thought), 'How shall neither kings nor thieves make off with this property of mine, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?' This is called being consummate in vigilance.

"And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, associates with householders or householders' sons, young or old, who are consummate in conviction, consummate in virtue, consummate in generosity, consummate in discernment. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.

"And what is meant by maintaining one's livelihood in tune? There is the case where a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.' Just as when a weigher or his apprentice, when holding the scales, knows, 'It has tipped down so much or has tipped up so much,' in the same way, the lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.' If a lay person has a small income but maintains a grand livelihood, it will be rumored of him, 'This clansman devours his wealth like a fruit-tree eater [Commentary: one who shakes more fruit off a tree than he can possibly eat].' If a lay person has a large income but maintains a miserable livelihood, it will be rumored of him, 'This clansman will die of starvation.' But when a lay person, knowing the

income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income,' this is called maintaining one's livelihood in tune." — *AN 8:54*

§ 194. When a person of no integrity acquires lavish wealth, he doesn't provide for his own pleasure & satisfaction, nor for the pleasure & satisfaction of his parents, nor for the pleasure & satisfaction of his wife & children; nor for the pleasure & satisfaction of his slaves, servants, & assistants; nor for the pleasure & satisfaction of his friends. He doesn't institute for contemplatives & brahmans offerings of supreme aim, heavenly, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven. When his wealth isn't properly put to use, kings make off with it, or thieves make off with it, or fire burns it, or water sweeps it away, or hateful heirs make off with it. Thus his wealth, not properly put to use, goes to waste and not to any good use.

"Just as with a pond in a place haunted by non-human beings, with clear water, cool water, fresh water, clean, with good fords, delightful: No people would draw water from it or drink it or bathe in it or apply it to their needs. And so that water, not properly put to use, would go to waste and not to any good use. In the same way, when a person of no integrity acquires lavish wealth… his wealth, not properly put to use, goes to waste and not to any good use.

"But when a person of integrity acquires lavish wealth, he provides for his own pleasure & satisfaction, for the pleasure & satisfaction of his parents, the pleasure & satisfaction of his wife & children; the pleasure & satisfaction of his slaves, servants, & assistants; and the pleasure & satisfaction of his friends. He institutes for contemplatives & brahmans offerings of supreme aim, heavenly, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven. When his wealth is properly put to use, kings don't make off with it, thieves don't make off with it, fire doesn't burn it, water doesn't sweep it away, and hateful heirs don't make off with it. Thus his wealth, properly put to use, goes to a good use and not to waste.

"Just as with a pond not far from a town or village, with clear water, cool water, fresh water, clean, with good fords, delightful. People would draw water from it or drink it or bathe in it or apply it to their needs. And so that water, properly put to use, would go to a good use and not to waste. In the

same way, when a person of integrity acquires lavish wealth… his wealth, properly put to use, goes to a good use and not to waste." — *SN 3:19*

§ 195. An ochre robe tied 'round their necks,
many with evil qualities
–unrestrained, evil–
rearise, because of their evil acts,
in hell.

Better to eat an iron ball
–glowing, aflame–
than that, unprincipled &
unrestrained,
you should eat the alms of the country. — *Dhp 307–308*

§ 196. "These four traditions of the noble ones—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans. Which four?

"There is the case where a monk is content with any old robe cloth at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old robe cloth at all. He doesn't, for the sake of robe cloth, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting cloth, he isn't agitated. Getting cloth, he uses it unattached to it, uninfatuated, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks (of attachment to it), and discerning the escape from them. He doesn't, on account of his contentment with any old robe cloth at all, exalt himself or disparage others. In this he is diligent, deft, alert, & mindful. This is said to be a monk standing firm in the ancient, original traditions of the noble ones.

"And further, the monk is content with any old almsfood at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old almsfood at all. He doesn't, for the sake of almsfood, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting almsfood, he isn't agitated. Getting almsfood, he uses it unattached to it, uninfatuated, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks (of attachment to it), and discerning the escape from them. He doesn't, on account of his contentment with any old almsfood at all, exalt himself or disparage others. In this he is diligent, deft, alert, & mindful. This is said to be a monk standing firm in the ancient, original traditions of the noble ones.

"And further, the monk is content with any old lodging at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old lodging at all. He doesn't, for the sake of lodging, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting lodging, he isn't agitated. Getting lodging, he uses it unattached to it, uninfatuated, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks (of attachment to it), and discerning the escape from them. He doesn't, on account of his contentment with any old lodging at all, exalt himself or disparage others. In this he is diligent, deft, alert, & mindful. This is said to be a monk standing firm in the ancient, original traditions of the noble ones.

"And further, the monk finds pleasure & delight in developing [skillful dhammas], finds pleasure & delight in abandoning [unskillful dhammas]. He doesn't, on account of his pleasure & delight in developing & abandoning, exalt himself or disparage others. In this he is diligent, deft, alert, & mindful. This is said to be a monk standing firm in the ancient, original traditions of the noble ones.

"These are the four traditions of the noble ones—original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning—which are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & brahmans." — *AN 4:28*

§ 197. "Just as a person anoints a wound simply for its healing, or greases an axle simply for the sake of carrying a load, in the same way a monk, considering it appropriately, takes his food not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification, but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, 'I will destroy old feelings [of hunger] & not create new feelings [from overeating]. Thus I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.'" — *SN 35:198*

§ 198. "There are these four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical food, gross or refined; contact as the second, intellectual intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. These are the four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born.

"And how is physical food to be regarded? Suppose a couple, husband & wife, taking meager provisions, were to travel through a desert. With them would be their only baby son, dear & appealing. Then the meager provisions of the couple going through the desert would be used up & depleted while there was still a stretch of the desert yet to be crossed. The thought would occur to them, 'Our meager provisions are used up & depleted while there is still a stretch of this desert yet to be crossed. What if we were to kill this only baby son of ours, dear & appealing, and make dried meat & jerky. That way—chewing on the flesh of our son—at least the two of us would make it through this desert. Otherwise, all three of us would perish.' So they would kill their only baby son, loved & endearing, and make dried meat & jerky. Chewing on the flesh of their son, they would make it through the desert. While eating the flesh of their only son, they would beat their breasts, (crying,) 'Where have you gone, our only baby son? Where have you gone, our only baby son?' Now, what do you think, monks? Would that couple eat that food playfully or for intoxication, or for putting on bulk, or for beautification?"

"No, lord."

"Wouldn't they eat that food simply for the sake of making it through that desert?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of physical food to be regarded. When physical food is comprehended, passion for the five strings of sensuality is comprehended. When passion for the five strings of sensuality is comprehended, there is no fetter bound by which a disciple of the noble ones would come back again to this world.

"And how is the nutriment of contact to be regarded? Suppose a flayed cow were to stand leaning against a wall. The creatures living in the wall would chew on it. If it were to stand leaning against a tree, the creatures living in the tree would chew on it. If it were to stand exposed to water, the creatures living in the water would chew on it. If it were to stand exposed to the air, the creatures living in the air would chew on it. For wherever the flayed cow were to stand exposed, the creatures living there would chew on it. In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of contact to be regarded. When the nutriment of contact is comprehended, the three feelings [pleasure, pain, neither pleasure nor pain] are comprehended. When the

three feelings are comprehended, I tell you, there is nothing further for a disciple of the noble ones to do.

"And how is the nutriment of intellectual intention to be regarded? Suppose there were a pit of glowing embers, deeper than a man's height, full of embers that were neither flaming nor smoking, and a man were to come along—loving life, hating death, loving pleasure, abhorring pain—and two strong men, having grabbed him by the arms, were to drag him to the pit of embers. To get far away would be that man's intention, far away would be his wish, far away would be his aspiration. Why is that? Because he would realize, 'If I fall into this pit of glowing embers, I will meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain.' In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of intellectual intention to be regarded. When the nutriment of intellectual intention is comprehended, the three forms of craving [for sensuality, for becoming, and for non-becoming] are comprehended. When the three forms of craving are comprehended, I tell you, there is nothing further for a disciple of the noble ones to do.

"And how is the nutriment of consciousness to be regarded? Suppose that, having arrested a thief, a criminal, they were to show him to the king: 'This is a thief, a criminal for you, your majesty. Impose on him whatever punishment you like.' So the king would say, 'Go, men, and stab him in the morning with a hundred spears.' So they would stab him in the morning with a hundred spears. Then the king would say at noon, 'Men, how is that man?' 'Still alive, your majesty.' So the king would say, 'Go, men, and stab him at noon with a hundred spears.' So they would stab him at noon with a hundred spears. Then the king would say in the late afternoon, 'Men, how is that man?' 'Still alive, your majesty.' So the king would say, 'Go, men, and stab him in the late afternoon with a hundred spears.' So they would stab him in the late afternoon with a hundred spears. Now, what do you think, monks? Would that man, being stabbed with three hundred spears a day, experience pain & distress from that cause?"

"Even if he were to be stabbed with only one spear, lord, he would experience pain & distress from that cause, to say nothing of three hundred spears."

"In the same way, I tell you, monks, is the nutriment of consciousness to be regarded. When the nutriment of consciousness is comprehended, name-&-form is comprehended. When name-&-form is comprehended, I

tell you, there is nothing further for a disciple of the noble ones to do." — *SN 12:63*

§ 199. "[The ideal monk] abstains from conveying messages and running errands… from buying and selling… from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures… from bribery, deception, fraud, and crooked practices in general. He abstains from mutilating, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence. This, too, is part of his virtue.…

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, are intent on conveying messages and running errands for people such as these—kings, ministers of state, noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or youths (who say), 'Go here,' 'Go there,' 'Take this there,' 'Fetch that here'—he abstains from conveying messages and running errands for people such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, engage in scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, and pursuing gain with gain, he abstains from forms of scheming and persuading such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as:

> reading marks on the limbs [e.g., palmistry];
> reading omens and signs;
> interpreting celestial events [falling stars, comets];
> interpreting dreams;
> reading features of the body [e.g., phrenology];
> reading marks on cloth gnawed by mice;
> offering fire oblations, oblations from a ladle, oblations of husks, rice powder, rice grains, ghee, and oil;
> offering oblations from the mouth;
> offering blood-sacrifices;
> making predictions based on the fingertips;
> geomancy;
> making predictions for state officials;
> laying demons in a cemetery;
> placing spells on spirits;

earth-skills [divining water and gems?];
snake-skills, poison-skills, scorpion-skills, rat-skills, bird-skills, crow-skills;
predicting life spans;
giving protective charms;
casting horoscopes—
he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as: determining lucky and unlucky gems, staffs, garments, swords, arrows, bows, and other weapons; women, men, boys, girls, male slaves, female slaves; elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, goats, rams, fowl, quails, lizards, rabbits, tortoises, and other animals—he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as (forecasting):

the rulers will march forth;
the rulers will not march forth;
our rulers will attack, and their rulers will retreat;
their rulers will attack, and our rulers will retreat;
there will be triumph for our rulers and defeat for their rulers;
there will be triumph for their rulers and defeat for our rulers;
thus there will be triumph this one, defeat for that one—
he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as (forecasting):

there will be a lunar eclipse;
there will be a solar eclipse;
there will be an occultation of [a conjunction of the moon or a planet with] an asterism;

the sun and moon will be favorable;
the sun and moon will be unfavorable;
the asterisms will be favorable;
the asterisms will be unfavorable;
there will be a meteor shower;
there will be a flickering light on the horizon [an aurora?];
there will be an earthquake;
there will be thunder coming from dry clouds;
there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the sun, moon, and asterisms;
such will be the result of the lunar eclipse… the rising, setting, darkening, brightening of the sun, moon, and asterisms—
he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as (forecasting):

there will be abundant rain; there will be a drought;
there will be plenty; there will be famine;
there will be safety & security; there will be danger;
there will be disease; there will be freedom from disease;
or they earn their living by accounting, counting, calculation, composing poetry, or teaching hedonistic arts and doctrines *[lokāyata]*—
he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as:

calculating auspicious dates for marriages—both those in which the bride is brought home and those in which she is sent out; calculating auspicious dates for betrothals and divorces; for collecting debts or making investments and loans; reciting charms to make people attractive or unattractive; curing women who have undergone miscarriages or abortions;

> reciting spells to bind a man's tongue, to paralyze his jaws, to make him lose control over his hands, or to bring on deafness; getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a spirit in a mirror, in a young girl, or to a spirit medium;
> worshipping the sun, worshipping the Great Brahma, bringing forth flames from the mouth, invoking the goddess of luck—
> he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these.

"Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood, by such 'animal' arts as:

> promising gifts to deities in return for favors; fulfilling such promises;
> demonology;
> reciting spells in earth houses [see earth skills, above];
> inducing virility and impotence;
> preparing sites for construction;
> consecrating sites for construction;
> giving ceremonial mouthwashes and ceremonial baths;
> offering sacrificial fires;
> administering emetics, purges, purges from above, purges from below, head-purges; ear-oil, eye-drops, treatments through the nose, ointments, and counter-ointments; practicing eye-surgery [or: extractive surgery], general surgery, pediatrics;
> administering root-medicines and binding medicinal herbs—
> he abstains from wrong livelihood, from 'animal' arts such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue." — *DN 2*

§ 200. At that time the monks of Āḷavī were having huts built from their own begging—having no sponsors, destined for themselves, not to any standard measurement—that did not come to completion. They were continually begging, continually hinting: "Give a man, give labor, give an ox, give a wagon, give a machete, give an ax, give an adz, give a spade, give a chisel, give rushes, give reeds, give grass, give clay." People, harassed with the begging, harassed with the hinting, on seeing monks would feel apprehensive, alarmed, would run away; would take another route, face

another direction, close the door. Even on seeing cows, they would run away, imagining them to be monks.

Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa, having come out of his Rains retreat at Rājagaha, set out for Āḷavī. After wandering by stages he arrived at Āḷavī, where he stayed at the Chief Shrine. Then in the early morning, having adjusted his lower robe and carrying his bowl & outer robe, he went into Āḷavī for alms. The people, on seeing Ven. Mahā Kassapa, were apprehensive, alarmed, ran away, took another route, faced another direction, closed the door. Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa, having gone for alms, after his meal, returning from his alms round, addressed the monks: "Before, friends, Āḷavī was a good place for alms. Alms food was easy to come by, it was easy to maintain oneself by gleanings & patronage. But now Āḷavī is a bad place for alms. Alms food is hard to come by, it isn't easy to maintain oneself by gleanings or patronage. What is the cause, what is the reason why Āḷavī is now a bad place for alms? …"

Then the monks told Ven. Mahā Kassapa about that matter.

Then the Blessed One, having stayed at Rājagaha as long as he like, left for Āḷavī. After wandering by stages he arrived at Āḷavī, where he stayed at the Chief Shrine. Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One about that matter. Then the Blessed One, because of that issue, because of that affair, had the community of monks convened and asked the Āḷavī monks, "They say that you are having huts built from your own begging—having no sponsors, destined for yourselves, not to any standard measurement—that do not come to completion; that you are continually begging, continually hinting: 'Give a man, give labor, give an ox, give a wagon, give a machete, give an ax, give an adz, give a spade, give a chisel, give rushes, give reeds, give grass, give clay'; that people, harassed with the begging, harassed with the hinting, on seeing monks feel apprehensive, alarmed, run away; take another route, face another direction, close the door; that even on seeing cows, they run away, imagining them to be monks: is this true?"

"Yes, lord. It is true."

So the Blessed One rebuked them: "Worthless men, it's unseemly, unbecoming, unsuitable, and unworthy of a contemplative; improper and not to be done.… Haven't I taught the Dhamma in many ways for the sake

of dispassion and not for passion; for unfettering and not for fettering; for letting go and not for clinging? Yet here, while I have taught the Dhamma for dispassion, you set your heart on passion; while I have taught the Dhamma for unfettering, you set your heart on being fettered; while I have taught the Dhamma for letting go, you set your heart on clinging. Haven't I taught the Dhamma in various ways for the dispassioning of passion, the sobering of pride, the subduing of thirst, the destruction of attachment, the severing of the round, the depletion of craving, dispassion, cessation, unbinding? Haven't I advocated abandoning sensual pleasures, understanding sensual perceptions, subduing sensual thirst, destroying sensual preoccupations, calming sensual fevers?… Worthless men, this neither inspires faith in the faithless nor increases the faithful. Rather, it inspires lack of faith in the faithless and wavering in some of the faithful."

Then, having given a Dhamma talk on what is seemly & becoming for monks, he addressed the monks:

"Once, monks, there were two brothers who were hermits living on the banks of the Ganges. Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went to the younger hermit and, on arrival, having encircled him seven times with his coils, stood spreading his great hood above his head. Then the younger hermit, through fear of the nāga, became thin, wretched, unattractive, & jaundiced, his body covered with veins. The elder brother, seeing his younger brother thin… his body covered with veins, asked him, 'Why are you thin… your body covered with veins?'

"'Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, comes to me and, on arrival, having encircled me seven times with his coils, stands spreading his great hood above my head. Through fear of the nāga I have become thin… my body covered with veins.'

"'But do you want that nāga not to return?'

"'I want the nāga not to return.'

"'Do you see that this nāga has anything?'

"'I see that he is ornamented with a jewel on his throat.'

"'Then beg the nāga for the jewel, saying, "Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel."'

"Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went to the younger hermit and, on arrival, stood to one side. As he was

standing there, the younger hermit said to him, 'Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.' Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, 'The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,' hurried off. Then a second time, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went toward the younger hermit. Seeing him from afar, the younger hermit said to him, 'Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.' Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, 'The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,' hurried off. Then a third time, the nāga-king came up out of the river Ganges. Seeing him come up out of the river Ganges, the younger hermit said to him, 'Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.'

"Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, addressed the younger hermit with this verse:

> My food & drink
> are produced grandly, abundantly,
> by means of this jewel.
> I won't give it to you.
> You're one who asks
> too much.
> Nor will I come to your hermitage.
>
> Like a youth with a sharp sword in his hand,
> you scare me, begging for my stone.
> I won't give it to you.
> You're one who asks
> too much.
> Nor will I come to your hermitage.

"Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, 'The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,' went away. And having gone away, he never again returned. Then the younger hermit, from not seeing that lovely nāga, became even thinner, more wretched, unattractive, & jaundiced, his body cover with veins. His older brother saw that he was even thinner… his body covered with veins, and on seeing him, he asked him, 'Why are you even thinner… your body covered with veins?'

"'It's from not seeing that lovely nāga that I am even thinner… my body covered with veins.'

"Then the elder hermit addressed the younger hermit with this verse:

'Don't beg for what you covet
from one who is dear.
Begging too much
is detested.
The nāga, begged by a brahman for his jewel,
went away from there,
never again to be seen.'

"Monks, begging is unpleasant, hinting is unpleasant even to those who are common animals—how much more so to human beings?"

"Once, monks, a monk lived on the slopes of the Himalayas in a forest grove. Not far from the grove was a broad, low-lying marsh. A great flock of birds, after feeding all day in the marsh, went to roost in the grove at nightfall. The monk was annoyed by the noise of that flock of birds.

"So he came to me and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, I said to him, 'I hope, monk, that you are well, that you are getting along, that you have completed your journey with little fatigue. Where have you come from?"

"I am well, lord, am getting along, and have completed my journey with little fatigue. Lord, there is a large forest grove on the slopes of the Himalayas, and not far from it is a broad, low-lying marsh. A great flock of birds, after feeding all day in the marsh, goes to roost in the grove at nightfall. That is why I have come to see the Blessed One—because I am annoyed by the noise of that flock of birds.'

"'Monk, you want those birds to go away for good?'

"'Yes, lord, I want them to go away for good.'

"'Then go back there, enter the forest, and in the first watch of the night make this announcement three times: "Listen to me, good birds. I want a feather from everyone roosting in this forest. Each of you, give me one feather." In the second watch… In the third watch of the night make this announcement three times: "Listen to me, good birds. I want a feather from everyone roosting in this forest. Each of you, give me one feather."… [The monk did as he was told.] Then the flock of birds, thinking, 'The monk begs for a feather, the monk wants a feather,' left the forest. And after they were gone, they never again returned. Monks, begging is unpleasant, hinting is

unpleasant even to these common animals—how much more so to human beings?"

"Once, monks, the father of Raṭṭhapāla the clansman addressed Raṭṭhapāla with this verse:

'Although I don't know them, Raṭṭhapāla,
many people,
on meeting me,
beg from me.
Why don't you beg from me?'

*Ven. Raṭṭhapāla:*

'A beggar isn't liked.
One who,
on being begged,
doesn't give
isn't liked.
That's why I don't beg from you:
so that you won't detest me.'
"Monks, if Raṭṭhapāla the clansman can speak this way to his father, why not a stranger to a stranger?" — *Sg 6*

*Beyond Skillful Habits*

§ 201. "And what are skillful habits? Skillful bodily actions, skillful verbal actions, purity of livelihood. These are called skillful habits. What is the cause of skillful habits? Their cause, too, has been stated, and they are said to be mind-caused. Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations. Any mind without passion, without aversion, without delusion: That is the cause of skillful habits. Now, where do skillful habits cease without trace? Their cessation, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk is virtuous, but not fashioned of virtue. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release & discernment-release where his skillful habits cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire… for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful

dhammas that have arisen… for the sake of the arising of skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… (and) for the… development & culmination of skillful dhammas that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits." — *MN 78*

CHAPTER SEVEN

# *Right Effort*

Right effort is the first of the three concentration factors in the path, and is actually contained in the other two. In right mindfulness, it functions as the sub-factor of ardency; right mindfulness, in turn, acts as the theme of right concentration. In this way, right effort is the nucleus around which the other two factors grow.

We have already noted in the preceding chapter why right effort grows out of right livelihood: The reflection on the drawbacks of feeding, which plays a part in right livelihood and is meant to induce contentment, also induces a sense of saṁvega, an emotion that spurs the mind to aim at gaining total release from the feeding cycle inherent in saṁsāra, the wandering-on through birth and death. However, the relationship between right effort and all the preceding path-factors is more complex than that. MN 117 (§48) notes that right effort—informed with right view and right mindfulness—actually circles around all the factors of the path as it tries to abandon each of the wrong path-factors and develop the right path-factors in their place. And as the analogy in AN 7:63 shows, the soldiers of right effort and the gatekeeper of right mindfulness need the food of right concentration in order to protect the fortress of the practice (§219; §240). In these ways, right effort is in a reciprocal relationship with every other factor of the path.

A distinctive feature of all of the path's concentration factors is that they're defined, not with simple lists of terms, but with more complex formulae. In fact, when the standard definitions for the path-factors are written down, more than half the space is filled with the formulae for the concentration factors. This gives some idea of the complexity of the issues involved in practicing concentration in a way that leads to the goal.

For right effort, the formula is this:

> "There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen… for the sake of the arising of skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen… [and] for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful dhammas that have arisen." — *SN 45:8*

This formula has three explicit dimensions, and one implicit. The explicit dimensions are these:

• The formula is focused on the distinction between skillful and unskillful dhammas. The term *dhamma* has a wide range of meanings in the Canon, but here—and in right mindfulness and right concentration—the meanings most relevant include mental quality, act (as in an act of the body, speech, or mind), and phenomenon (around which skillful or unskillful mental qualities might form).

• The formula lists the mental factors needed to motivate and maintain right effort around skillful and unskillful dhammas: desire, endeavor, persistence, and intent.

• It lists four types of right effort, two each for skillful and for unskillful dhammas, depending on whether those dhammas have yet to arise or have already arisen.

The implicit dimension, which surfaces in other passages in the suttas, deals with the issue of balance: how to find the middle point between excessive and deficient effort, so that the amount of right effort is just right.

The close connection between right effort and right concentration is shown in the fact that three of the motivating and maintaining sub-factors —desire, persistence, and intent—are also three of the bases of power *(iddhipāda)* that underlie the practice of concentration (§SN 51:20). Although the fourth base of power—the discernment factor of discrimination—is not listed in the formula for right effort, it is implicitly there in the fact that each of the four dimensions of right effort receives guidance from the discernment factors of the path: right view and right resolve. In fact, discernment plays such an important role in informing

these dimensions that, to understand right effort and put it into practice, you need to know the type of guidance that discernment gives in each case.

**Skillful vs. unskillful actions.** This is the dimension where right view gives the simplest and most direct guidance to right effort. In distinguishing skillful from unskillful actions—both on the mundane and the transcendent levels—right view keeps right effort focused on the task at hand.

**Motivation.** Right effort is a matter not only of exerting yourself in the proper way, but also of making yourself *want* to do so. As right view points out, desire is the root of all phenomena (§9), a fact that is true not only for suffering but also for the path to the end of suffering. Without desire, the path cannot grow. Although there are several suttas stating that, if you bring the beginning steps of the practice to maturity, there is no need to formulate a wish that the ensuing steps will develop (§§202–203), you still need to motivate yourself to undertake the beginning steps and stick with them until they start showing results. It's like growing a tree: If you water it, there's no need to wish for it to grow, but you need desire to keep watering it. This is why the motivating and maintaining factors, such as persistence and intent, start with the generation of desire.

Right view aids in fostering the right sort of desire by pointing out the consequences of skillful and unskillful actions. Right resolve, as it aims at non-affliction, then builds on this knowledge to give rise to a sense of *heedfulness:* the strong sense of the dangers of acting in unskillful ways, and the sense that those dangers can be avoided by acting in skillful ways instead. Just as heedfulness is the root of all skillful dhammas (§205), the desire to act on a sense of heedfulness is the root desire of right effort. Instead of leading to suffering, as most other desires do, it leads to its cessation (§12).

As the Buddha notes, all skillful states are rooted in heedfulness. This fact is reflected in the contemplation, discussed in Chapter 3, for comparing the allure of a course of action with its drawbacks. When you realize that the drawbacks outweigh the allure, the proper response is heedfulness: You want to avoid those drawbacks. The texts give specific examples of how to use this sense of heedfulness, both directly and indirectly, to motivate yourself to engage in right effort.

The direct examples, such as the reflections that §§207–208 recommend for the monk living in the wilderness, focus on the dangers that are ever-present but can be avoided by doing the practice and reaching the goal. Mindfulness of death (§209) is a particularly vivid way to induce heedfulness, but there are also cases where heedfulness can be induced by subtler means. AN 9:41 (§162), for example, shows how reflections on the subtle drawbacks of the lower levels of jhāna can be used to motivate you to try for the higher levels.

The more indirect passages recommend a variety of other emotions and attitudes that, growing out of heedfulness, can be used as means for generating desire to engage in right effort.

• *Humor:* AN 8:80 (§212) uses humor as a way of making the lazy monk look ridiculous: The very conditions that he uses to excuse his laziness are precisely those that a wise monk reflects on skillfully to induce energy.

• *Goodwill:* SN 55:7 and Ud 5:1 (§§213–214) use the principle of enlightened self-interest to induce goodwill and compassion: It would be neither right nor wise to base your happiness on the suffering of others. This reflection is then used to encourage right effort in your search for happiness. Enlightened self-interest—and compassion for yourself—are also used in the example in AN 3:40 (§217) where you take the self as your governing principle: In other words, you originally took on the path for the sake of ending your suffering, so you would not be showing compassion to yourself if you abandoned it.

MN 39 (§215) also uses goodwill as a means for motivating right effort: If you reach the noble attainments, the requisites with which others provide you will bring them great reward.

• *Shame:* Several passages use a healthy sense of shame—the shame that accompanies a wise sense of honor—as a way of motivating right effort. MN 39 notes that if you claim to be a contemplative, you should live up to the standards that would make you a genuine contemplative, i.e., one of the Buddha's noble disciples. As we noted in Chapter 2, AN 10:48 (§216) deals with a custom common at the time of the Buddha: When a monk was on his deathbed, his fellow monks would ask him if he had gained any particular attainment and, if he had, they would advise him to focus his mind on that attainment. This passage uses this custom as a way

of inducing shame: As a point of honor, you will want to be able to say, Yes, you do have a noble attainment, so that you won't be abashed as death approaches. AN 3:40 induces a sense of shame in reminding you that there are those who can read minds, and you would be embarrassed for them to see unskillful states in yours. Sn 4:7 (§220) also induces a sense of shame, noting the ways in which people will criticize a person who undertook the holy life but then later abandoned it.

And as we have already noted in Chapter 2, the Buddha used a sense of shame to induce his son, Rāhula, to train himself in skillful dhammas (§45).

However, because a sense of shame—if it turns into debilitating remorse over past misdeeds—can actually get in the way of right effort, the Buddha is careful to point out that if you have given in to unskillful mind-states in the past, the honorable course of action is to recognize your mistakes and to resolve not to repeat them, reminding yourself that in putting such mistakes behind you, you actually brighten the world (§69; §§210–211).

• *Craving & conceit:* Ven. Ānanda, in §221 notes that even though craving and conceit should ultimately be abandoned, right effort needs to be motivated by healthy forms of craving and conceit—craving in the sense that you want to attain the goal; conceit in the sense that you tell yourself: If others can do this practice, why can't I? These motivating emotions are in line with Ven. Ānanda's remarks in §12, that desire is a necessary part of the path even though desire will be abandoned when the path reaches its goal.

• *Pride & honor:* Closely related to the healthy sense of conceit is the pride that a craftsman takes in mastering his skill. The similes of the archers in §225 and §312 use this sense of pride as motivation to master the skills of the path. Similarly, the similes of the warriors in §§223–224 take the warrior's sense of honor in not giving in to fear and apply it to the monk's sense of honor in not giving in to defilement. And as we noted in Chapter 2, §45 uses the simile of the elephant guarding its trunk as an example of how not to be servile to others: Guard your truthfulness in all occasions.

In a similar vein, §196 builds on the desire to live up to the traditions of the noble ones as a motivating factor for developing contentment, and for finding delight in abandoning unskillful dhammas and developing skillful

ones. However, it also notes that the pride of following these traditions should not become a pretext for exalting yourself over others who don't.

AN 7:60 (§226) uses a somewhat different sense of pride and honor as motivation for not acting on anger: If you acted on anger, you would damage yourself in ways that your enemy would find pleasing. In this way, you curb your anger almost out of spite: the desire not to give your enemy the satisfaction of seeing you do something stupid. This example shows the tactical aspect of skillful motivation: Even though a spiteful sense of honor and pride is not the noblest motivation for engaging in right effort, if it's needed and it works, you use it.

• *Inspiration:* Finally, several passages of a more uplifting sort use a sense of inspiration in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha as motivation to engage in right effort: Here is your chance to practice a well-taught Dhamma (§217); in times of hardship, you now have the chance to emulate the shining examples of the Buddha himself and the great monks and nuns of the past (§115; §222). Let their example inspire you to greater efforts.

**Types of effort.** The formula for right effort lists four types of effort, which §229 translates into four exertions: the exertion to guard (unarisen unskillful dhammas), the exertion to abandon (arisen unskillful dhammas), the exertion to develop (unarisen skillful dhammas), and the exertion to maintain (arisen skillful dhammas). However, in the standard formula defining right effort, this last type of effort goes beyond simply maintaining a skillful dhamma. It also includes developing it further until it reaches a point of culmination.

These four types of effort derive from the duties of right view both on the mundane and the transcendent levels. The duty to abandon (1) unskillful dhammas on the mundane level and (2) the origination of suffering on the transcendent level here grows into the effort not only to abandon these things, but also to prevent their future arising. Similarly, the duty to develop (1) skillful dhammas on the mundane level and (2) the path to the cessation of suffering on the transcendent level here grows into the effort not only to develop these things but also to maintain them and bring them to the culmination of their development.

Discernment informs these four types of effort by pointing out when they are appropriate and why. The "when" is obvious from the standard formula for right effort: You apply the right type of effort in a timely way, depending on which kinds of dhammas have or have not arisen in your actions. The "why" comes from an understanding of the habits of the mind. Neither innately good nor innately bad, but capable of both good and bad—and very quick to change from one to the other (§227)—the mind has to be trained with a vigilant eye. To prevent it from falling easily into unskillful actions, you have to be on your guard to think strategically about how to avoid things that will incite it in the wrong direction. If skillful states have yet to arise, or are still very weak, you have to make whatever effort you can not to let the moment go to waste.

Of the four types of effort, the first—preventing unskillful dhammas from arising—tends to receive the least attention, perhaps because of the misunderstanding that meditation is simply a matter of staying focused on what's happening in the present moment. However, as the heedfulness reflections under the heading of "motivation" make clear, it's because of future dangers that you focus on the present to begin with—not simply to be aware of what's going on, but to do your duty in line with the four noble truths while you have the chance to do it, and to train the mind for the sake of its future growth. Part of your duty in the present is to plant the seeds for future growth on the path and to develop the skillful dhammas that will prevent unskillful dhammas from arising in the future.

MN 2 (§229) expands on these four types of effort, dividing them into seven: Under *guarding* are restraining (the senses), using (the requisites while reflecting on their proper use), and avoiding (obvious dangers). Under *abandoning* are destroying (wrong resolves and other unskillful states) and seeing (which types of questions are not worth attending to). Under *developing* are seeing (which types of questions *are* worth attending to) and developing (the seven factors for awakening). And under *maintaining* is tolerating (painful feelings and hurtful words). The fact that "seeing" comes under both abandoning and developing illustrates an important principle underlying the four types of effort: They are not radically distinct. To prevent unskillful dhammas from arising, and to abandon those that have arisen, you have to develop and maintain skillful dhammas. The differences among the types of effort are simply a matter of

emphasis. They are all aimed in the same direction: developing all the right factors of the path.

**The amount of effort.** As §§230–231 point out, right effort has to be just right in order to yield the desired results. Excessive effort exhausts itself quickly; deficient effort accomplishes very little. The question is, how to determine how much effort is just right?

The suttas answer this question in two ways: in terms of your own level of energy, and in terms of the task at hand.

In terms of your own level of energy, you have to test to see how much you are capable of, and then tune the rest of your practice to your capabilities. AN 6:55 (§231) illustrates this point with the simile of the lute: Apparently, the lute in the Buddha's time had five strings, so he compared a well-tuned lute to the practice of the five faculties of conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. Just as you tune a lute by getting one string just right and then tuning the other strings to the first string, in the same way, once you have determined the level of your persistence/energy, you tune the rest of your practice to that. For example, on days when your energy is low, you place lower demands on your conviction as to what you can accomplish in terms of mindfulness, concentration, and discernment at that time. When your energy improves, you put more effort into heightening your conviction along with all the other faculties of the mind.

In terms of the task at hand, MN 101 (§232) points out that the causes of suffering come in two sorts: those that go away if you simply look at them with equanimity, and those that require the exertion of fabrication—which, other suttas show, means making a concerted effort in employing any of the three types of fabrication: bodily, verbal, and mental. Here the amount of effort you need to put into skillful fabrication will vary widely with the problem. Sometimes the effort should be gentle; at other times, as §§237–238 make clear, your determination not to be defeated by the defilements has to be extreme.

As for general guidance in how to apply the three types of fabrication in dealing with a cause of stress, §116 outlines the basic vipassanā approach: Learn to label the problematic state of mind for what it is, then look for its

origination, its cessation, the path to its cessation, its allure, its drawbacks, and the escape, through dispassion, from it.

Other suttas provide specific advice on how to implement this approach. In some cases, this guidance comes in the form of recommendations as to which skillful mind-states are useful antidotes for specific unskillful states. For example, to overcome hatred, §155 recommends developing goodwill, compassion, or equanimity toward that person; to pay no attention to that person, or to reflect on the fact that that person is the owner of his/her own kamma. Other suttas, such as §115, recommend specific ways of talking to yourself—i.e., verbal fabrications—to overcome distress. And other suttas provide analogies that can be used as skillful perceptions—i.e., mental fabrications—to counteract unskillful mind-states. Examples include the perceptions of goodwill as vast as the earth in §157, or as an attitude to be guarded with your life as a mother would protect her only child in §156.

There are also passages showing that "bodily fabrication" in this context carries not only its meditative meaning, as the in-and-out breath, but also its more general meaning as any bodily action. For example, if fear or terror arise when the body is in a specific posture, §233 recommends maintaining that posture until the fear and terror have subsided. Thag 16:7 (§234) lists 13 ascetic practices that can be adopted to help weaken the mind's defilements.

There are also passages showing how the various types of fabrication can be combined to counteract specific defilements. Three passages can give an idea of what this might entail.

• The first passage is the discussion of the 16 steps of breath meditation in §257, which shows how verbal fabrication can be used to direct the mind to breathe in various ways, and how breathing—bodily fabrication—can be used to induce skillful states of mind that release the mind from particular defilements.

• The second passage is §235, which recommends five approaches for using the three types of fabrication to rescue the mind from unskillful thoughts. Most prominently, it illustrates each approach with a perception—a mental fabrication—to help keep the approach in mind and to give guidance in how to use it. The first three approaches—replacing the unskillful thought with a skillful one, examining the drawbacks of the unskillful thought, and turning attention away from the unskillful thought

while allowing it to run out on its own—also involve verbal fabrication. The fourth approach—relaxing the fabrication of the thought—involves bodily fabrication, in that the breath has to be calmed and relaxed in order to do it. The fifth approach—suppressing the thought while pressing your tongue against the roof of the mouth—employs both bodily and verbal fabrication in order to bring the thought down.

• Finally, there is the questionnaire discussed in Chapter 3 (§123), in which the Buddha applies the three perceptions to the five aggregates as a way of inducing dispassion for them. The three perceptions themselves are examples of mental fabrications. The series of questions and answers that apply them to the five aggregates are examples of verbal fabrication aimed at helping the mind come to the conclusion that the aggregates in question are not worth clinging to. If these fabrications succeed in inducing dispassion for those aggregates, they open the way to an escape from them.

**Wrong effort** is nowhere defined in the suttas. Apparently, however, any effort that opposes the explicit dimensions of right effort—generating desire to give rise to unskillful dhammas or to maintain and develop them; or to prevent skillful dhammas from arising or to push any existing skillful dhammas aside—would count as wrong effort.

**Lessons for discernment.** Like the other factors of the path, right effort has a reciprocal relationship with the discernment factors of right view and right resolve. Just as it depends on these factors for general guidance in all four of its dimensions, it in turn exercises discernment and enriches the general strategic approach of discernment with specific tactical experience in applying that approach.

Two of the dimensions of right effort stand out in this regard. The first deals with the question of motivation: As we noted above, the act of generating desire to engage in the four types of right effort can sometimes involve using counterintuitive methods, employing pride, craving, conceit, and even spite whenever necessary to accomplish its aims. In this way, it teaches right view not to be simplistic, and gives it greater psychological nuance and depth.

Also, as §204 points out, your ability to talk yourself into doing skillful things that you don't like to do, and to talk yourself out of doing unskillful things that you like to do, is a measure of your wisdom. This is a type of

wisdom that can be gained only through experience in trying to withstand unskillful habits. Although it's true that the defilements of the mind can ultimately be overcome only through understanding, there is no way of understanding them well enough if you haven't struggled with them. It's like dealing with an enemy: You don't really know him well until you've fought with him and come out victorious.

The same principle—that discernment has to learn from your efforts—also applies to the other dimension of right effort: the act of determining how much effort is just right. While §232 notes that the causes of suffering and stress fall into two categories—those that will go away when you simply look at them, and those that won't go away until you exert a fabrication against them—it doesn't give any guidelines for knowing in advance which particular mental state falls into which category. Nor does it tell how much exertion is needed in any particular case. For that kind of specific knowledge, you have to learn from your own efforts. As you gain this sort of tactical discernment that goes beyond "right" to "just right," detecting the middle way, you raise right view and right resolve to higher and higher levels as you cut away progressively more and more refined levels of ignorance in the mind.

**Beyond transcendent right effort.** SN 1:1 (§239) describes a level of right effort that occurs on the verge of awakening, after right effort on the transcendent level has completed its duties in line with the four noble truths. In the Buddha's image, this level of right effort—which corresponds to the final level of right view—involves crossing the flood of becoming and ignorance by neither pushing forward nor staying in place. The Buddha doesn't explain this paradoxical image—it was apparently intended to subdue the pride of the deva who asked him how he crossed the flood—but we can gain a sense of what he's talking about by referring to other passages in the texts.

As we noted in Chapter 3, each process of becoming, both on the small scale and on the large, coalesces around a nucleus of desire: the act of craving that relishes "now here, now there." In fact, this act of craving is what creates the "here" and "there" both for the world of becoming and for your identity within it. Even on the transcendent level of right view, which carries the duty of developing the path, a sense of location is necessary for centering the mind and developing all the other skillful qualities of the

path, so on that level of right view there is a need for a "here" and a "there": There are times when you want the mind to stay *here* in concentration, and not go *there* into distractions; there are other times when you want it to go from this state here to that better state there.

But when the path has been fully developed, and right view attains its final level, there is no longer any need for that sense of location. With the final level of right view, the final duty of right effort is to abandon all phenomena, even the sense of "here" and "there" within the mind. With no here and there, there is no need to choose between staying in place here and pushing forward to there. When even these basic orientations in the world can be abandoned, the mind is freed from worlds entirely. As §373 states, in the dimension of nibbāna there is neither coming nor going, and that's because, as §374 adds, that dimension has neither a here nor a there nor a between-the-two from which you could come or to which you could go. In this way, the last moment of right effort foreshadows the dimension to which it leads.

## Readings

### *Desire Focused on Causes*

§ 202. "For a person endowed with virtue, consummate in virtue, there is no need for an act of will, 'May freedom from remorse arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that freedom from remorse arises in a person endowed with virtue, consummate in virtue.

"For a person free from remorse, there is no need for an act of will, 'May joy arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that joy arises in a person free from remorse.

"For a joyful person, there is no need for an act of will, 'May rapture arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that rapture arises in a joyful person.

"For a rapturous person, there is no need for an act of will, 'May my body be calm.' It is in the nature of things that a rapturous person grows calm in body.

"For a person calm in body, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I experience pleasure.' It is in the nature of things that a person calm in body experiences pleasure.

"For a person experiencing pleasure, there is no need for an act of will, 'May my mind grow concentrated.' It is in the nature of things that the mind of a person experiencing pleasure grows concentrated.

"For a person whose mind is concentrated, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I know & see things as they have come to be.' It is in the nature of things that a person whose mind is concentrated knows & sees things as they have come to be.

"For a person who knows & sees things as they have come to be, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I feel disenchantment.' It is in the nature of things that a person who knows & sees things as they actually are feels disenchantment.

"For a person who feels disenchantment, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I grow dispassionate.' It is in the nature of things that a person who feels disenchantment grows dispassionate.

"For a dispassionate person, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I realize the knowledge & vision of release.' It is in the nature of things that a dispassionate person realizes the knowledge & vision of release." — *AN 11:2*

§ 203. "Suppose a hen has eight, ten, or twelve eggs: If she doesn't cover them rightly, warm them rightly, or incubate them rightly, then even though this wish may occur to her—'O that my chicks might break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely!'—still it is not possible that the chicks will break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely. Why is that? Because the hen has not covered them rightly, warmed them rightly, or incubated them rightly. In the same way, even though this wish may occur to a monk who dwells without devoting himself to development—'O that my mind might be released from effluents through lack of clinging!'—still his mind is not released from effluents through lack of clinging. Why is that? From lack of developing, it should be said. Lack of developing what? The four establishings of mindfulness, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for awakening, the noble eightfold path.…

"But suppose a hen has eight, ten, or twelve eggs that she covers rightly, warms rightly, & incubates rightly: Even though this wish may not occur to

her—'O that my chicks might break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely!'—still it is possible that the chicks will break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely. Why is that? Because the hen has covered them, warmed them, & incubated them rightly. In the same way, even though this wish may not occur to a monk who dwells devoting himself to development—'O that my mind might be released from effluents through lack of clinging!'—still his mind is released from effluents through lack of clinging. Why is that? From developing, it should be said. Developing what? The four establishings of mindfulness, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for awakening, the noble eightfold path." — *AN 7:68 [See also §18.]*

*Generating Desire*

§ 204. "As for the course of action that is unpleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is profitable, it's in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn't reflect, 'Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when done it leads to what is profitable.' So he doesn't do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, 'Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when done it leads to what is profitable.' So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.

"As for the course of action that is pleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, it's in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn't reflect, 'Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when done it leads to what is unprofitable.' So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, 'Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when done it leads to what is unprofitable.' So he doesn't do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him." — *AN 4:115*

§ 205. "Just as the rafters in a peak-roofed house all go to the roof-peak, incline to the roof-peak, converge at the roof-peak, and the roof-peak is reckoned the foremost among them; in the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, converge in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned the foremost among them." — *AN 10:15*

§ 206. "And what is heedfulness? There is the case where a monk guards his mind with regard to effluents and qualities accompanied by effluents. When his mind is guarded with regard to effluents and qualities accompanied by effluents, the faculty of conviction goes to the culmination of its development. The faculty of persistence… mindfulness… concentration… discernment goes to the culmination of its development." — *SN 58:56*

§ 207. "There is the case where a monk living in the wilderness reminds himself of this: 'I am now living alone in the wilderness. While I am living alone in the wilderness a snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. So let me arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.'…

"And further, the monk living in the wilderness reminds himself of this: 'I am now living alone in the wilderness. While I am living alone in the wilderness, stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm… piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. So let me arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.'…

"And further, the monk living in the wilderness reminds himself of this: 'I am now living alone in the wilderness. While I am living alone in the wilderness, I might meet up with vicious beasts: a lion or tiger or leopard or bear or hyena. They might take my life. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. So let me arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.'…

"And further, the monk living in the wilderness reminds himself of this: 'I am now living alone in the wilderness. While I am living alone in the wilderness, I might meet up with youths on their way to committing a crime or on their way back. They might take my life. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. So let me arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.'…

"And further, the monk living in the wilderness reminds himself of this: 'I am now living alone in the wilderness. And in the wilderness are vicious non-human beings [spirits]. They might take my life. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. So let me arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.'…

"These are the five future dangers that are just enough, when considered, for a monk living in the wilderness—heedful, ardent, & resolute—to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized." — *AN 5:77*

§ 208. "There is the case where a monk reminds himself of this: 'At present I am young, black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life. The time will come, though, when aging touches this body. When one is overcome with old age & decay, it's not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It's not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that—endowed with that Dhamma—I will live in peace even when old.'…

"And further, the monk reminds himself of this: 'At present I am free from illness & discomfort, endowed with good digestion: not too cold, not too hot, of medium strength & tolerance. The time will come, though, when illness touches this body. When one is overcome with illness, it's not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It's not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome,

disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that—endowed with that Dhamma—I will live in peace even when ill.'…

"And further, the monk reminds himself of this: 'At present food is plentiful, alms are easy to come by. It is easy to maintain oneself by gleanings & patronage. The time will come, though, when there is famine: Food is scarce, alms are hard to come by, and it's not easy to maintain oneself by gleanings & patronage. When there is famine, people will congregate where food is plentiful. There they will live packed & crowded together. When one is living packed & crowded together, it's not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It's not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that—endowed with that Dhamma—I will live in peace even when there is famine.'…

"And further, the monk reminds himself of this: 'At present people are in harmony, on friendly terms, without quarreling, like milk mixed with water, viewing one another with eyes of affection. The time will come, though, when there is danger & an invasion of savage tribes. Taking power, they will surround the countryside. When there is danger, people will congregate where it is safe. There they will live packed & crowded together. When one is living packed & crowded together, it's not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It's not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that—endowed with that Dhamma—I will live in peace even when there is danger.'…

"And further, the monk reminds himself of this: 'At present the Saṅgha—in harmony, on friendly terms, without quarreling—lives in comfort with a single recitation. The time will come, though, when the Saṅgha splits. When the Saṅgha is split, it's not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It's not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first

arouse persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that—endowed with that Dhamma—I will live in peace even when the Saṅgha is split.'…

"These are the five future dangers that are just enough, when considered, for a monk—heedful, ardent, & resolute—to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized." — *AN 5:78*

§ 209. "Monks, mindfulness of death—when developed & pursued—is of great fruit & great benefit. It gains a footing in the deathless, has the deathless as its final end. And how is mindfulness of death developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end?

"There is the case where a monk, as day departs and night returns, reflects: 'Many are the [possible] causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm… piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.' Then the monk should investigate: 'Are there any evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die in the night?'

"If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas.

"But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were

he to die in the night, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training himself day & night in skillful dhammas.

"And further, there is the case where a monk, as night departs and day returns, reflects: 'Many are the [possible] causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm… piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.' Then the monk should investigate: 'Are there any evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die during the day?'

"If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas.

"But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful dhammas unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training himself day & night in skillful dhammas.

"This, monks, is how mindfulness of death is developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end." — *AN 6:20*

§ 210. Who once was heedless,
but later is not,
    brightens the world
    like the moon set free from a cloud.

His evil-done deed
is replaced with skillfulness:

he brightens the world
like the moon set free from a cloud. — *Dhp 172–173*

§ 211. "It is a cause of growth in the Dhamma & Vinaya of the noble ones when, seeing a transgression as such, one makes amends in accordance with the Dhamma and exercises restraint in the future." — *DN 2*

§ 212. "Monks, there are these eight grounds for laziness. Which eight?

"There is the case where a monk has some work to do. The thought occurs to him: 'I will have to do this work. But when I have done this work, my body will be tired. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the first ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk has done some work. The thought occurs to him: 'I have done some work. Now that I have done work, my body is tired. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the second ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk has to go on a journey. The thought occurs to him: 'I will have to go on this journey. But when I have gone on the journey, my body will be tired. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the third ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk has gone on a journey. The thought occurs to him: 'I have gone on a journey. Now that I have gone on a journey, my body is tired. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fourth ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, does not get as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: 'I, having gone for alms in a village or

town, have not gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is tired & unsuitable for work. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fifth ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, gets as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: 'I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is heavy & unsuitable for work—stuffed with beans, as it were. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the sixth ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk comes down with a slight illness. The thought occurs to him: 'I have come down with a slight illness. There's a need to lie down.' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the seventh ground for laziness.

"Then there is the case where a monk has recovered from his illness, not long after his recovery. The thought occurs to him: 'I have recovered from my illness. It's not long after my recovery. This body of mine is weak & unsuitable for work. Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. He doesn't make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the eighth ground for laziness.

"These are the eight grounds for laziness.

"There are these eight grounds for the arousal of energy. Which eight?

"There is the case where a monk has some work to do. The thought occurs to him: 'I will have to do this work. But when I am doing this work, it will not be easy to attend to the Buddha's message. Why don't I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the first ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk has done some work. The thought occurs to him: 'I have done some work. While I was doing work, I couldn't attend to the Buddha's message. Why don't I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the second ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk has to go on a journey. The thought occurs to him: 'I will have to go on this journey. But when I am going on the journey, it will not be easy to attend to the Buddha's message. Why don't I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the third ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk has gone on a journey. The thought occurs to him: 'I have gone on a journey. While I was going on the journey, I couldn't attend to the Buddha's message. Why don't I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fourth ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, does not get as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: 'I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have not gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is light & suitable for work. Why don't I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fifth ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, gets as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill.

The thought occurs to him: 'I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is light & suitable for work. Why don't I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the sixth ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk comes down with a slight illness. The thought occurs to him: 'I have come down with a slight illness. Now, there's the possibility that it could get worse. Why don't I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the seventh ground for the arousal of energy.

"Then there is the case where a monk has recovered from his illness, not long after his recovery. The thought occurs to him: 'I have recovered from my illness. It's not long after my recovery. Now, there's the possibility that the illness could come back. Why don't I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?' So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the eighth ground for the arousal of energy.

"These are the eight grounds for the arousal of energy." — *AN 8:95*

§ 213. "There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones reflects thus: 'I love life and don't love death. I love happiness and abhor pain. If I—loving life and not loving death, loving happiness and abhorring pain—were to be killed, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me. And if I were to kill another who loves life and doesn't love death, who loves happiness and abhors pain, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to the other. What is displeasing & disagreeable to me is displeasing & disagreeable to others. How can I inflict on others what is displeasing & disagreeable to me?' Reflecting in this way, he refrains from taking life, gets others to refrain

from taking life, and speaks in praise of refraining from taking life. In this way his bodily behavior is pure in three ways.

"And further, he reflects thus: 'If someone, by way of theft, were to take from me what I haven't given, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.… If someone were to commit adultery with my wives, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.… If someone were to damage my well-being with a lie, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.… If someone were to divide me from my friends with divisive speech, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.… If someone were to address me with harsh speech, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.… If someone were to address me with idle chatter, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me. And if I were to address another with idle chatter, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to the other. What is displeasing & disagreeable to me is displeasing & disagreeable to others. How can I inflict on others what is displeasing & disagreeable to me?' Reflecting in this way, he refrains from idle chatter, gets others to refrain from idle chatter, and speaks in praise of refraining from idle chatter." — *SN 55:7*

§ 214. on that occasion King Pasenadi Kosala had gone with Queen Mallikā to the upper palace. Then he said to her, "Mallikā, is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?"

"No, great king. There is no one dearer to me than myself. And what about you, great king? Is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?"

"No, Mallikā. There is no one dearer to me than myself."

Then the king, descending from the palace, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Just now, lord, when I had gone with Queen Mallikā to the upper palace, I said to her, 'Mallikā, is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?'

"When this was said, she said to me, 'No, great king. There is no one dearer to me than myself. And what about you, great king? Is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?'

"When this was said, I said to her, 'No, Mallikā. There is no one dearer to me than myself.'"

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

Searching all directions
with your awareness,
you find no one dearer
        than yourself.
In the same way, others
are thickly dear to themselves.
So you shouldn't hurt others
        if you love yourself. — *Ud 5:1*

§ 215. The Blessed One said, "'Contemplatives, contemplatives': That is how people perceive you. And when asked, 'What are you?' you claim that 'We are contemplatives.' So, with this being your designation and this your claim, this is how you should train yourselves: 'We will undertake & practice those dhammas that make one a contemplative, that make one a brahman, so that our designation will be true and our claim accurate; so that the services of those whose robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicinal requisites we use will bring them great fruit & great reward; and so that our going forth will not be barren, but fruitful & fertile.'" — *MN 39*

§ 216. "'Can my observant fellows in the holy life, on close examination, fault me with regard to my virtue?': A person gone-forth should often reflect on this.

"'What am I becoming as the days & nights fly past?': A person gone-forth should often reflect on this.…

"'Have I attained a superior human attainment, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision, such that—when my companions in the holy life question me in the last days of my life—I won't feel abashed?': A person gone-forth should often reflect on this." — *AN 10:48*

§ 217. "There are these three governing principles. Which three? The self as a governing principle, the cosmos as a governing principle, and the Dhamma as a governing principle.

"And what is the self as a governing principle? There is the case where a monk, having gone to a wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, reflects on this: 'It is not for the sake of robes that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; it is not for the sake of almsfood, for the sake of lodgings, or for the sake of this or that state of

(future) becoming that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness. Simply that I am beset by birth, aging, & death; by sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs; beset by stress, overcome with stress, (and I hope,) "Perhaps the end of this entire mass of suffering & stress might be known!" Now, if I were to seek the same sort of sensual pleasures that I abandoned in going forth from home into homelessness—or a worse sort—that would not be fitting for me.'

So he reflects on this: 'My persistence will be aroused & not lax; my mindfulness established & not confused; my body calm & not aroused; my mind concentrated & gathered into one.' Having made himself his governing principle, he abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is unblameworthy, and looks after himself in a pure way. This is called the self as a governing principle.

"And what is the cosmos as a governing principle? There is the case where a monk, having gone to a wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, reflects on this: 'It's not for the sake of robes that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; it's not for the sake of almsfood, for the sake of lodgings, or for the sake of this or that state of (future) becoming that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness. Simply that I am beset by birth, aging, & death; by sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs; beset by stress, overcome with stress, (and I hope,) "Perhaps the end of this entire mass of suffering & stress might be known!" Now if I, having gone forth, were to think thoughts of sensuality, thoughts of ill will, or thoughts of harmfulness: Great is the community of this cosmos. And in the great community of this cosmos there are contemplatives & brahmans endowed with psychic power, clairvoyant, skilled in (reading) the minds of others. They can see even from afar. Even up close, they are invisible. With their awareness they know the minds of others. They would know this of me: "Look, my friends, at this clansman who—though he has in good faith gone forth from the home life into homelessness—remains overcome with evil, unskillful dhammas." There are also devas endowed with psychic power, clairvoyant, skilled in (reading) the minds of others. They can see even from afar. Even up close, they are invisible. With their awareness they know the minds of others. They would know this of me: "Look, my friends, at this clansman

who—though he has in good faith gone forth from the home life into homelessness—remains overcome with evil, unskillful dhammas.'"

So he reflects on this: 'My persistence will be aroused & not lax; my mindfulness established & not confused; my body calm & not aroused; my mind concentrated & gathered into one.' Having made the cosmos his governing principle, he abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is unblameworthy, and looks after himself in a pure way. This is called the cosmos as a governing principle.

"And what is the Dhamma as a governing principle? There is the case where a monk, having gone to a wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, reflects on this: 'It's not for the sake of robes that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; it's not for the sake of almsfood, for the sake of lodgings, or for the sake of this or that state of (future) becoming that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness. Simply that I am beset by birth, aging, & death; by sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs; beset by stress, overcome with stress, (and I hope,) "Perhaps the end of this entire mass of suffering & stress might be known!" Now, the Dhamma is well-taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here-&-now, timeless, inviting all to come & see, pertinent, to be seen by the observant for themselves. There are fellow practitioners of the chaste life who dwell knowing & seeing it. If I—having gone forth in this well-taught Dhamma & Vinaya—were to remain lazy & heedless, that would not be fitting for me.'

So he reflects on this: 'My persistence will be aroused & not lax; my mindfulness established & not confused; my body calm & not aroused; my mind concentrated & gathered into one.' Having made the Dhamma his governing principle, he abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is unblameworthy, and looks after himself in a pure way. This is called the Dhamma as a governing principle.

"These are the three governing principles." — *AN 3:40*

§ 218. "Monks, these two bright dhammas guard the world. Which two? Shame & compunction. If these two bright dhammas did not guard the world, there would be no recognition of 'mother' here, no recognition of

'mother's sister,' 'uncle's wife,' 'teacher's wife,' or 'wives of those who deserve respect.' The world would be immersed in promiscuity, like rams with goats, roosters with pigs, or dogs with jackals. But because these two bright dhammas guard the world, there is recognition of 'mother,' 'mother's sister,' 'uncle's wife,' 'teacher's wife,' & 'wives of those who deserve respect.'" — *AN 2:9*

§ 219. "Just as the royal frontier fortress has a moat, both deep & wide, for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way, the disciple of the noble ones has a sense of shame. He feels shame at [the thought of engaging in] bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct. He feels shame at falling into evil, unskillful actions. With shame as his moat, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity.…

"Just as the royal frontier fortress has an encircling road, both high & wide, for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way, the disciple of the noble ones has compunction. He feels compunction about [the suffering that would result from] bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct. He feels compunction about falling into evil, unskillful actions. With compunction as his encircling road, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity.…

"Just as the royal frontier fortress has a large army stationed within—elephant soldiers, cavalry, charioteers, bowmen, standard-bearers, billeting officers, soldiers of the supply corps, noted princes, commando heroes, infantry, & slaves—for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful dhammas and taking on skillful dhammas, is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful dhammas. With persistence as his army, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity." — *AN 7:63*

§ 220. "In one given over
to sexual intercourse,
the teaching is muddled
and he practices wrongly:
    This is ignoble
    in him.
Whoever once went alone,
but then resorts
to sexual intercourse
    —like a carriage out of control—
is called vile in the world,
a person run-of-the-mill.
His earlier honor & dignity:
        lost.
Seeing this,
he should train himself
to abandon sexual intercourse.

    They thought him wise
when he committed himself
to the life alone,
but now that he's given
to sexual intercourse
    they declare him a dullard.

Knowing these drawbacks, the sage
    here—before & after—
stays firm in the life alone;
doesn't resort to sexual intercourse;
would train himself
in seclusion—
        this, for the noble,
        is highest.
He wouldn't, because of that,
suppose himself
to be better than others:
        *He's* on the verge
    of unbinding.

People enmeshed
in sensual pleasures,
envy him:
    a sage remote,
leading his life
unconcerned for sensual pleasures
    —one who's crossed over the flood." — *Sn 4:7*

§ 221. Ven. Ānanda: "'This body comes into being through craving. And yet it is by relying on craving that craving is to be abandoned.' Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said? There is the case, sister, where a monk hears, 'The monk named such-&-such, they say, through the ending of the effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having known & realized them for himself in the here-&-now.' The thought occurs to him, 'I hope that I, too, will—through the ending of the effluents—enter & remain in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for myself right in the here-&-now.' Then, at a later time, he abandons craving, having relied on craving. 'This body comes into being through craving. And yet it is by relying on craving that craving is to be abandoned.' Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said.

"'This body comes into being through conceit. And yet it is by relying on conceit that conceit is to be abandoned.' Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said? There is the case, sister, where a monk hears, 'The monk named such-&-such, they say, through the ending of effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here-&-now.' The thought occurs to him, 'The monk named such-&-such, they say, through the ending of effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here-&-now. Then why not me?' Then, at a later time, he abandons conceit, having relied on conceit. 'This body comes into being through conceit. And yet it is by relying on conceit that conceit is to be abandoned.' Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said." — *AN 4:159*

*§ 222. Ven. Vakkali:*

Stricken by sharp, wind-like pains,
you, monk, living in the forest grove
—harsh, with limited range for alms—
what, what will you do?

Suffusing my body
with abundant rapture & joy,
& enduring what's harsh,
I'll stay in the grove.

Developing the establishings of mindfulness,
strengths, faculties,
the factors for awakening,
I'll stay in the grove.

Reflecting on those who are resolute,
their persistence aroused,
constantly firm in their effort,
united in concord,
I'll stay in the grove.

Recollecting the One Self-awakened,
self-tamed & centered,
untiring both day & night,
I'll stay
in the grove. — *Thag 5:8*

§ 223. "Monks, there are these five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world. Which five?

"There is the case of a warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust [stirred up by the enemy army], falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle.…

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy's banner, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle.…

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy's banner, but on hearing the tumult [of the approaching forces], he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle.…

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded.…

"Then there is the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & the hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle.…

"These are the five types of warriors who can be found existing in the world.

"In the same way, monks, there are these five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks. Which five?

[1] "There is the case of the monk who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the cloud of dust for him? There is the case of the monk who hears, 'In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.' On hearing this, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the cloud of dust. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the first type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[2] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy's banner, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the top of the banner for him? There is the case of the monk who not only hears that 'In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.' He sees for himself that in that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion. On seeing her, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the top of the banner. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who

can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy's banner, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the second type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[3] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy's banner, but on hearing the tumult [of the approaching forces], he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the tumult for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and giggles at him, calls out to him, laughs aloud, & teases him. On being giggled at, called out to, laughed at, & teased by the woman, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the tumult. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy's banner, but on hearing the tumult he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the third type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[4] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. What is the hand-to-hand combat for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he—without renouncing the training, without declaring his weakness—engages in sexual intercourse. This, for him, is hand-to-hand combat. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some individuals are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[5] "Then there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy's banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On

winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. What is victory in the battle for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he extricates himself, frees himself, and goes off where he will." — *AN 5:75*

§ 224. "Endowed with four dhammas, monks, a warrior is worthy of a king, an asset to a king, and counts as a very limb of his king. Which four?

"There is the case where a warrior is skilled in his stance, able to shoot far, able to fire shots in rapid succession, and able to pierce great objects. A warrior endowed with these four dhammas is worthy of a king, an asset to a king, and counts as a very limb of his king.

"In the same way a monk endowed with four dhammas is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world. Which four?

"There is the case where a monk is skilled in his stance, able to shoot far, able to fire shots in rapid succession, and able to pierce great objects. A monk endowed with these four dhammas is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world.

"And how is a monk skilled in his stance? There is the case where a monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. This is how a monk is skilled in his stance.

"And how is a monk one who is able to shoot far? There is the case where a monk sees any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—every form—as it has come to be with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"He sees any feeling whatsoever.…

"He sees any perception whatsoever.…

"He sees any fabrications whatsoever.…

"He sees any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle, common or sublime, far or near—every consciousness—as it has come to be with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"This is how a monk is one who is able to shoot far.

"And how is a monk one who is able to fire shots in rapid succession? There is the case where a monk discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress' … 'This is the origination of stress' … 'This is the cessation of stress' … 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.' This is how a monk is one who is able to fire shots in rapid succession.

"And how is a monk one who is able to pierce great objects? There is the case where a monk pierces right through the great mass of ignorance. This is how a monk is one who is able to pierce great objects right through.

"Endowed with these four dhammas, a monk is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world." — *AN 4:181*

§ 225. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesālī at the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest. Then in the early morning, Ven. Ānanda, having adjusted his under robe and carrying his bowl & outer robe, went into Vesālī for alms. He saw a large number of Licchavi boys practicing archery in the stadium building. From a distance they were shooting arrows through a tiny keyhole without missing, one right after the other. On seeing this, the thought occurred to him, "How trained these Licchavi boys are, how well-trained these Licchavi boys are, in that from a distance they can shoot arrows through a tiny keyhole without missing, one right after the other!"

Then, having gone for alms in Vesālī, after his meal, returning from his alms round, Ven. Ānanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Just now, lord, in the early morning, having adjusted my under robe and carrying my bowl & outer robe, I went into Vesālī for alms. I saw a large number of Licchavi boys practicing archery in the stadium building. From a distance they were shooting arrows through a tiny keyhole without missing, one right after the other. On seeing this, the

thought occurred to me 'How trained these Licchavi boys are, how well-trained these Licchavi boys are, in that from a distance they can shoot arrows through a tiny keyhole without missing, one right after the other!'"

"What do you think, Ānanda? Which is harder to do, harder to master— to shoot arrows through a tiny keyhole without missing, one right after the other, or to take a horsehair split into seven strands and pierce tip with a tip?"

"This, lord, is harder to do, harder to master— to take a horsehair split into seven strands and pierce tip with a tip."

"And they, Ānanda, pierce what is even harder to pierce, those who pierce, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress'; who pierce, as it has come to be, that 'This is the origination of stress'… 'This is the cessation of stress'… 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'

"Therefore, Ānanda, your duty is the contemplation, 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress.' Your duty is the contemplation, 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'" — *SN 56:45*

§ 226. "These seven things—pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim—come to a man or woman who is angry. Which seven?

"…When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger —then even though that he may be well-bathed, well-anointed, dressed in white clothes, his hair & beard neatly trimmed, he is ugly nevertheless, all because he is overcome with anger.

"…When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger —then even though he sleeps on a bed spread with a white blanket, spread with a woolen coverlet, spread with a flower-embroidered bedspread, covered with a rug of deerskins, with a canopy overhead, or on a sofa with red cushions at either end, he sleeps badly nevertheless.…

"… When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger —then even when he suffers a loss, he thinks, 'I've gained a profit'; and even when he gains a profit, he thinks, 'I've suffered a loss.' When he has grabbed hold of these ideas that work in mutual opposition [to the truth], they lead to his long-term suffering & loss.…

"… When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—then whatever his wealth, earned through his efforts & enterprise, amassed through the strength of his arm, and piled up through the sweat of his brow—righteous wealth righteously gained—the king orders it sent to the royal treasury [in payment of fines levied for his behavior].…

"… When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—whatever reputation he has gained from being heedful, it falls away.…

"… When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—his friends, companions, & relatives will avoid him from afar.…

"… When a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—he engages in misconduct with the body, misconduct with speech, misconduct with the mind. Having engaged in misconduct with the body, misconduct with speech, misconduct with the mind, then—on the break-up of the body, after death—he reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell, all because he was overcome with anger.

"These are the seven things—pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim—that come to a man or woman who is angry." — *AN 7:60*

*The Types of Effort*

§ 227. "I don't envision a single thing that is as quick to reverse itself as the mind—so much so that there is no satisfactory simile for how quick to reverse itself it is." — *AN 1:49*

§ 228. "There are these four exertions. Which four? The exertion to guard, the exertion to abandon, the exertion to develop, & the exertion to maintain.

"And what is the exertion to guard? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful dhammas such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. [Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.] This is called the exertion to guard.

"And what is the exertion to abandon? There is the case where a monk does not acquiesce to a thought of sensuality that has arisen (in him). He

abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, wipes it out of existence. He does not acquiesce to a thought of ill will… a thought of harmfulness… any evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen (in him). He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, wipes them out of existence. This is called the exertion to abandon.

"And what is the exertion to develop? There is the case where a monk develops *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops *analysis of dhammas* as a factor for awakening… *persistence* as a factor for awakening… *rapture* as a factor for awakening… *calm* as a factor for awakening… *concentration* as a factor for awakening… *equanimity* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. This is called the exertion to develop.

"And what is the exertion to maintain? There is the case where a monk maintains a favorable theme of concentration—the skeleton perception, the worm-eaten perception, the livid perception, the festering perception, the falling-apart perception, the bloated perception. This is called the exertion to maintain." — *AN 4:14*

§ 229. The Blessed One said, "Monks, the ending of effluents is for one who knows & sees, I tell you, not for one who does not know & does not see. For one who knows what & sees what? Appropriate attention & inappropriate attention. When a monk attends inappropriately, unarisen effluents arise, and arisen effluents increase. When a monk attends appropriately, unarisen effluents do not arise, and arisen effluents are abandoned. There are effluents to be abandoned by seeing, those to be abandoned by restraining, those to be abandoned by using, those to be abandoned by tolerating, those to be abandoned by avoiding, those to be abandoned by destroying, and those to be abandoned by developing.

[1] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by seeing? There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—does not discern what ideas are fit for attention or what ideas

are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention and attends (instead) to ideas unfit for attention.

"And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality arises in him, and the arisen effluent of sensuality increases; the unarisen effluent of becoming arises in him, and the arisen effluent of becoming increases; the unarisen effluent of ignorance arises in him, and the arisen effluent of ignorance increases. These are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to.

"And what are the ideas fit for attention that he does not attend to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of becoming does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of becoming is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of ignorance does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of ignorance is abandoned. These are the ideas fit for attention that he does not attend to. Through his attending to ideas unfit for attention and through his not attending to ideas fit for attention, both unarisen effluents arise in him, and arisen effluents increase.

"This is how he attends inappropriately: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it headed?'

"As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self…* or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self…* or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self…* or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions—is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity.* This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of

views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—discerns what ideas are fit for attention and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention and attends (instead) to ideas fit for attention.

"And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he does not attend to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality arises in him, and the arisen effluent of sensuality increases; the unarisen effluent of becoming arises in him, and the arisen effluent of becoming increases; the unarisen effluent of ignorance arises in him, and the arisen effluent of ignorance increases. These are the ideas unfit for attention that he does not attend to.

"And what are the ideas fit for attention that he does attend to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of becoming does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of becoming is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of ignorance does not arise in him, and the arisen effluent of ignorance is abandoned. These are the ideas fit for attention that he does attend to. Through his not attending to ideas unfit for attention and through his attending to ideas fit for attention, unarisen effluents do not arise in him, and arisen effluents are abandoned.

"He attends appropriately, *This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.* As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: self-identity-view, uncertainty, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by seeing.

[2] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by restraining? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, dwells restrained with the restraint of the eye-faculty. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were to dwell unrestrained with the restraint of the eye-faculty do not arise for him when he dwells restrained with the restraint of the eye-

faculty. [Similarly with the ear-faculty, the nose-faculty, the tongue-faculty, the body-faculty, and the intellect-faculty.]

"These are called the effluents to be abandoned by restraining.

[3] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by using? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, uses the robe simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame.

"Reflecting appropriately, he uses alms food, not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification; but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, 'Thus will I destroy old feelings [of hunger] and not create new feelings [from overeating]. I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.'

"Reflecting appropriately, he uses lodging simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for protection from the inclemencies of weather and for the enjoyment of seclusion.

"Reflecting appropriately, he uses medicinal requisites that are used for curing the sick simply to counteract any pains of illness that have arisen and for maximum freedom from disease.

"The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to use these things (in this way) do not arise for him when he uses them (in this way). These are called the effluents to be abandoned by using.

[4] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by tolerating? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, endures. He tolerates cold, heat, hunger, & thirst; the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; ill-spoken, unwelcome words & bodily feelings that, when they arise, are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, displeasing, & menacing to life. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to tolerate these things do not arise for him when he tolerates them. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by tolerating.

[5] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by avoiding? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a

chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer. Reflecting appropriately, he avoids sitting in the sorts of unsuitable seats, wandering to the sorts of unsuitable habitats, and associating with the sorts of bad friends that would make his knowledgeable friends in the holy life suspect him of evil conduct. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to avoid these things do not arise for him when he avoids them. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by avoiding.

[6] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by destroying? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, does not tolerate an arisen thought of sensuality. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, & wipes it out of existence.

"Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate an arisen thought of ill will…

"Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate an arisen thought of harmfulness…

"Reflecting appropriately, he does not tolerate arisen evil, unskillful dhammas. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to destroy these things do not arise for him when he destroys them. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by destroying.

[7] "And what are the effluents to be abandoned by developing? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, develops *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops *analysis of dhammas* as a factor for awakening… *persistence* as a factor for awakening… *rapture* as a factor for awakening… *calm* as a factor for awakening… *concentration* as a factor for awakening… *equanimity* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in letting go. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to develop these dhammas do not arise for him when he develops them. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by developing.

"When a monk's effluents that should be abandoned by seeing have been abandoned by seeing, his effluents that should be abandoned by restraining have been abandoned by restraining, his effluents that should be abandoned by using have been abandoned by using, his effluents that should be abandoned by tolerating have been abandoned by tolerating, his

effluents that should be abandoned by avoiding have been abandoned by avoiding, his effluents that should be abandoned by destroying have been abandoned by destroying, his effluents that should be abandoned by developing have been abandoned by developing, then he is called a monk who dwells restrained with the restraint of all the effluents. He has severed craving, thrown off the fetters, and—through the right penetration of conceit—has made an end of suffering & stress." — *MN 2*

*The Amount of Effort*

§ 230. "There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence & the fabrications of exertion, thinking, 'This persistence of mine will be neither overly sluggish nor overly active, neither inwardly constricted nor outwardly scattered'.…

"And how is persistence overly sluggish? Whatever persistence is accompanied by laziness, conjoined with laziness: That is called overly sluggish persistence.

"And how is persistence overly active? Whatever persistence is accompanied by restlessness, conjoined with restlessness: That is called overly active persistence.

"And how is persistence inwardly constricted? Whatever persistence is accompanied by sloth & drowsiness, conjoined with sloth & drowsiness: That is called inwardly constricted persistence.

"And how is persistence outwardly scattered? Whatever persistence is stirred up by the five strings of sensuality, outwardly dispersed & dissipated: That is called outwardly scattered persistence." — *SN 51:20*

§ 231. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha, on Vulture Peak Mountain. And on that occasion Ven. Soṇa was staying near Rājagaha in the Cool Wood. Then, as Ven. Soṇa was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split & bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: "Of the Blessed One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from effluents through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be

possible to enjoy wealth & make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?"

Then the Blessed One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Soṇa's awareness disappeared from Vulture Peak Mountain—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—appeared in the Cool Wood right in front of Ven. Soṇa, and sat down on a seat laid out. Ven. Soṇa, after bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn't this train of thought appear to your awareness: 'Of the Blessed One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from effluents.… What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?'"

"Yes, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Soṇa? Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the lute?"

"Yes, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were too taut, was your lute in tune & playable?"

"No, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were too loose, was your lute in tune & playable?"

"No, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned to be right on pitch, was your lute in tune & playable?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, Soṇa, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there pick up your theme."

"Yes, lord," Ven. Soṇa answered the Blessed One. Then, having given this exhortation to Ven. Soṇa, the Blessed One—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Vulture Peak Mountain.

So after that, Ven. Soṇa determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, having directly known & realized it for himself in the here-&-now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And thus Ven. Soṇa became another one of the arahants. — *AN 6:55*

§ 232. "And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, doesn't load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure. He discerns that 'When I exert a [bodily, verbal, or mental] fabrication against this cause of stress, then from the fabrication of exertion there is dispassion. When I look on with equanimity at that cause of stress, then from the development of equanimity there is dispassion.' So he exerts a fabrication against the cause of stress where there comes dispassion from the fabrication of exertion, and develops equanimity with regard to the cause of stress where there comes dispassion from the development of equanimity. Thus the stress where there comes dispassion from the fabrication of exertion is exhausted & the stress where there comes dispassion from the development of equanimity is exhausted." — *MN 101*

§ 233. "[Prior to my self-awakening,] the thought occurred to me: 'What if—on recognized, designated nights such as the eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight—I were to stay in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines? …' So at a later time—on recognized, designated nights such as the eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight—I stayed in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines. And while I was staying there a wild animal would come, or a bird would drop a twig, or wind would rustle the fallen leaves. The thought would occur to me: 'Is this that fear & terror coming?' Then the thought

occurred to me: 'Why do I just keep waiting for fear? What if I were to subdue fear & terror in whatever state they come?'

"So when fear & terror came while I was walking back & forth, I would not stand or sit or lie down. I would keep walking back & forth until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was standing, I would not walk or sit or lie down. I would keep standing until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was sitting, I would not lie down or stand up or walk. I would keep sitting until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was lying down, I would not sit up or stand or walk. I would keep lying down until I had subdued that fear & terror." — *MN 4*

### *§ 234. Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodhāyaputta*

Wearing cast-off cloth, persevering,
delighting in whatever falls into his bowl,
Bhaddiya, son of Godhā,
does jhāna without clinging.

Going for alms, persevering…

Wearing only one triple set of robes, persevering…

Bypassing no donors on his alms round, persevering…

Eating only one meal a day, persevering…

Eating from the bowl, persevering…

Refusing food brought afterwards, persevering…

Living in the wilderness, persevering…

Living at the foot of a tree, persevering…

Living in the open air, persevering…

Living in a cemetery, persevering…

Accepting whatever lodging he's assigned, persevering,

Not lying down, persevering,
delighting in whatever falls into his bowl,
Bhaddiya, son of Godhā,
does jhāna without clinging. — *Thag 16:7*

§ 235. "When a monk is intent on the heightened mind, there are five themes he should attend to at the appropriate times. Which five?

"There is the case where evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—arise in a monk while he is referring to & attending to a particular theme. He should attend to another theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful. When he is attending to this other theme… those evil, unskillful thoughts… are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a dexterous carpenter or carpenter's apprentice would use a small peg to knock out, drive out, & pull out a large one; in the same way… he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

"If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to this other theme, connected with what is skillful, he should scrutinize the drawbacks of those thoughts: 'Truly, these thoughts of mine are unskillful… blameworthy… these thoughts of mine result in stress.' As he is scrutinizing their drawbacks… those evil, unskillful thoughts… are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, would be horrified, humiliated, & disgusted if the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human being were hung from her neck; in the same way… the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

"If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts, he should pay no mind & pay no attention to those thoughts. As he is paying no mind & paying no attention to them… those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a man with good eyes, not wanting to see forms that had come into range, would close his eyes or look away; in the same way… the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

"If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is paying no mind & paying no attention to those thoughts, he should attend to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts. As he is attending to the relaxing of

thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts… those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as the thought would occur to a man walking quickly, 'Why am I walking quickly? Why don't I walk slowly?' So he walks slowly. The thought occurs to him, 'Why am I walking slowly? Why don't I stand?' So he stands. The thought occurs to him, 'Why am I standing? Why don't I sit down?' So he sits down. The thought occurs to him, 'Why am I sitting? Why don't I lie down?' So he lies down. In this way, giving up the grosser posture, he takes up the more refined one. In the same way… the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

"If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts, then—with his teeth clenched & his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he should beat down, constrain, & crush his mind with his awareness. As—with his teeth clenched & his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he is beating down, constraining, & crushing his mind with his awareness… those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a strong man, seizing a weaker man by the head or the throat or the shoulders, would beat him down, constrain, & crush him; in the same way… the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it." — *MN 20*

§ 236. "Anuruddha, even I, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta, perceived both light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why the light and the vision of forms have disappeared?' Then the thought occurred to me: 'Doubt has arisen in me, and on account of the doubt my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms have disappeared. I will act in a way such that doubt doesn't arise in me again.'

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms

disappeared.… Then the thought occurred to me: 'Inattention has arisen in me…' … 'Sloth-&-torpor has arisen in me…' … 'Panic has arisen in me, and on account of the panic my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms have disappeared.' Suppose, Anuruddha, that a man was traveling along a road, and murderers appeared on both sides. He would, for that reason, feel panic. In the same way, panic arose in me, and on account of the panic my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. [I thought:] 'I will act in a way such that doubt, inattention, sloth-&-torpor, and panic don't arise in me again.'

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms disappeared.… Then the thought occurred to me: 'Excitement has arisen in me, and on account of the excitement my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms have disappeared.' Suppose, Anuruddha, that a man searching for portals to hidden treasure suddenly came across five portals to hidden treasure. He would, for that reason, feel excitement. In the same way, excitement arose in me.… [I thought:] 'I will act in a way such that doubt, inattention, sloth-&-torpor, panic, and excitement don't arise in me again.'

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why the light and the vision of forms have disappeared?' Then the thought occurred to me: 'Boredom has arisen in me…' … 'Excess persistence has arisen in me, and on account of the excess persistence my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms have disappeared.' Suppose, Anuruddha, that a man was grasping a baby quail tightly with both hands. It would die right there. In the same way, excess persistence arose in me.… [I thought:] 'I will act in a way such that doubt, inattention, sloth-&-torpor, panic, excitement, boredom, and excess persistence don't arise in me again.'

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why the light and the vision of forms have disappeared?' Then the

thought occurred to me: 'Slack persistence has arisen in me, and on account of the slack persistence my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and vision of forms have disappeared.' Suppose, Anuruddha, that a man was holding a baby quail loosely. It would fly out of his hand. In the same way, slack persistence arose in me, and on account of the slack persistence my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. [I thought:] 'I will act in a way such that doubt, inattention, sloth-&-torpor, panic, excitement, boredom, excess persistence, and slack persistence do not arise in me again.'

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light and a vision of forms. But not long afterward, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why the light and the vision of forms has disappeared?' Then the thought occurred to me: 'A perception of multiplicity has arisen in me…' … 'Excess absorption in forms has arisen in me, and on account of the excess absorption in forms my concentration fell away. With the falling away of concentration, the light and the vision of forms have disappeared. I will act in a way such that doubt, inattention, sloth-&-torpor, panic, excitement, boredom, excess persistence, slack persistence, a perception of multiplicity, and excessive absorption in forms don't arise in me again.'

"So, understanding that 'doubt is a defilement of the mind,' I abandoned the doubt defilement of the mind. Understanding that 'inattention is a defilement of the mind'… 'sloth-&-torpor is a defilement of the mind'… 'panic is a defilement of the mind'… 'excitement is a defilement of the mind'… 'boredom is a defilement of the mind'… 'excess persistence is a defilement of the mind'… 'slack persistence is a defilement of the mind'… 'a perception of multiplicity is a defilement of the mind'… 'excessive absorption in forms is a defilement of the mind,' I abandoned the excessive-absorption-in-forms defilement of the mind.

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived light but I did not see forms, or saw forms but did not perceive light for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why I perceive light but I do not see forms, or see forms but do not perceive light for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night?' The thought occurred to me, 'At

the time when, not attending to the theme of forms, I attend to the theme of light, that is the time when I perceive light but do not see forms. But at the time when, not attending to the theme of light, I attend to the theme of forms, that is the time when I see forms but do not perceive light for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night.

"So—staying heedful, ardent, and resolute—I perceived limited light and limited forms, and immeasurable light and immeasurable forms for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why I perceive limited light and limited forms, and immeasurable light and immeasurable forms for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night?' The thought occurred to me, 'At the time when my concentration is limited, my (inner) eye is limited. With a limited eye, I perceive limited light and see limited forms. But at the time when my concentration is immeasurable, my (inner) eye is immeasurable. With an immeasurable eye, I perceive immeasurable light and see immeasurable forms for an entire night, for an entire day, and for an entire day and night.

"When, having understood that 'doubt is a defilement of the mind' and having abandoned doubt, having understood that 'inattention… sloth-&-torpor… panic… excitement… boredom… excess persistence… slack persistence… a perception of multiplicity… excessive absorption in forms is a defilement of the mind,' and having abandoned excessive absorption in forms, the thought occurred to me, 'Those defilements of the mind are abandoned in me. What if I were to develop concentration in three ways?

"So, Anuruddha, I developed concentration with directed thought and evaluation. I developed concentration without directed thought but with a modicum of evaluation. I developed concentration without directed thought or evaluation.

"I developed concentration with rapture. I developed concentration without rapture.

"I developed concentration with enjoyment. I developed concentration with equanimity.

"When, in me, concentration with directed thought and evaluation was developed, concentration without directed thought but with a modicum of evaluation was developed, concentration without directed thought or evaluation was developed, concentration with rapture was developed,

concentration without rapture was developed, concentration with enjoyment was developed, and concentration with equanimity was developed, knowledge & vision arose in me: 'Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.'" — *MN 128*

§ 237. "For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, what accords with the Dhamma is this: 'The Blessed One is the Teacher, I am a disciple. He is the one who knows, not I.' For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, the Teacher's message is healing & nourishing. For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, what accords with the Dhamma is this: 'Gladly would I let the flesh & blood in my body dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if I have not attained what can be reached through manly stamina, manly persistence, manly striving, there will be no relaxing my persistence.' For a disciple who has conviction in the Teacher's message & lives to penetrate it, one of two fruits can be expected: either gnosis here-&-now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging/sustenance—non-return." — *MN 70*

*§ 238. Ven. Soṇa Poṭiriyaputta*

It's not for sleeping,
the night garlanded
with zodiac stars.
The night, for one who knows,
is for staying awake.

If I were to fall from my elephant's shoulder,
and a tusker trampled me,
death in battle would be better for me,
than that I, defeated,
survive. — *Thag 2:37*

*Beyond Right Effort*

§ 239. Then a certain devatā, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, she stood to one side. As she was

standing there, she said to him, "Tell me, dear sir, how you crossed over the flood."

"I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place."

"But how, dear sir, did you cross over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place?"

"When I pushed forward, I was whirled about. When I stayed in place, I sank. And so I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place."

*The devatā:*

"At long last I see
a brahman, totally unbound,
who
        without pushing forward,
        without staying in place,
has crossed        over
    the entanglements
    of the world." — *SN 1:1*

CHAPTER EIGHT

# *Right Mindfulness*

Right mindfulness is the second of the three concentration factors of the path. As we noted in the preceding chapter, it is intimately connected with the other two concentration factors in that it contains right effort and acts as the theme for right concentration. To understand and develop it properly, you always have to bear these connections in mind.

AN 7:63 and SN 48:10 (§219; §241) define mindfulness as a factor of memory: the ability to keep in mind what was done and said long ago. MN 117 (§48) shows how memory, in the form of right mindfulness, works together with right view and right effort on the path: It remembers to abandon unskillful dhammas and to develop skillful ones in their place, and it brings these directives to bear on whatever is happening in the mind in the present moment. In other words, it remembers the lessons of right view as to which dhammas are skillful and which are not, and it reminds right effort to perform the proper duties with regard to those dhammas as they come up. At the same time, it learns lessons from whatever you have done—successfully or not—as you've tried to exercise right effort, and adds those lessons to its stock of memories to apply to the future. AN 4:245 (§243) echoes the description of right mindfulness given in MN 117, stating that mindfulness is focused on giving rise to any skillful dhammas that have not yet arisen, and on protecting any that have.

Taken together, these two passages show that right mindfulness does not simply watch things arise and pass away. Instead, it remembers to make skillful dhammas arise and to stop them from passing away once they have arisen.

AN 7:63 illustrates this aspect of mindfulness practice with the analogy of the wise, experienced gatekeeper who protects a frontier fortress by knowing who to let in and who not to let in through the gate. In the same way, mindfulness is selective as to what it allows into the mind.

**The establishing of mindfulness.** To function as a theme for right concentration, mindfulness has to be established, and most of the passages dealing with mindfulness focus on four ways of establishing it. These establishings of mindfulness *(satipaṭṭhāna)* are described in the formula that defines right mindfulness in SN 45:8 (§287):

> "There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world."

The Canon contains two long suttas (MN 10—§258; DN 22—§282) discussing this formula—so long that many people have assumed that they cover the entire topic. However, the organization of the suttas—they are almost identical— shows that their discussions are intentionally incomplete. After introducing the above formula, they pose and answer questions only on one part: what it means to remain focused on any of the four frames of reference. There is no discussion of subduing greed and distress with reference to the world, nor of ardency, alertness, and mindfulness.

Many attempts have been made to understand the establishing of mindfulness based solely on these suttas, but because these suttas leave these sections of the formula unexplained, those attempts have given rise to many misunderstandings about what mindfulness is and how it's established. However, it's possible to find, in other suttas, discussions of the missing parts of the formula. When they are assembled, they give a much more complete picture of how the establishing of mindfulness functions as part of the path. The picture may not be fully complete—as the Buddha said in MN 12, he could answer questions on the establishing of mindfulness for 100 years and still not come to the end of its implications—but at least this approach is a start toward understanding the above formula as a whole.

The formula describes two activities—*remaining focused* on a particular frame of reference, and *subduing greed and distress with reference to the world*—and it recommends three qualities of mind to bring to bear on both activities: ardency, alertness, and mindfulness. The two activities lie at the basis of any attempt to bring the mind to concentration: You have to stay focused on your object and, at the same time, fend off any mind-states that would interfere with that focus. This means that the two activities have to work in tandem.

• The description of the first activity falls into two parts: the act of remaining focused and the objects of the focus, which are the four frames of reference.

*The act of remaining focused.* The beginning task in establishing mindfulness is to remain focused on any one of four topics as a frame of reference. The phrase, "remaining focused on" is nowhere defined in the Canon, but the Pāli term *(anupassanā = anu* [follow] + *passanā* [seeing]) is commonly used for two types of meditative practice: keeping watch over a particular topic in the midst of other experiences, and looking for a particular quality in experiences as they arise.

Both types of anupassanā are relevant in the practice of establishing mindfulness. An example of the first type comes in the standard satipaṭṭhāna formula. "Remaining focused on the body in and of itself," for example, means keeping track of the body or a particular aspect of the body as a frame of reference in the midst of all your sensory experiences. Even when another topic looms large in your awareness, you try to keep track of where the body is in the midst of that awareness, or of how that other topic and the body interact. In this way, the body remains your frame of reference regardless of whatever else may be happening. The same principle applies when remaining focused on feelings, the mind, or dhammas in and of themselves.

As for the second type of anupassanā—looking for a particular quality in experiences as they arise—an example would be the practice of looking for inconstancy *(anicca)* in all phenomena. This, as we will see below, is one of the steps by which mindfulness is established through breath meditation.

*Four frames of reference.* The four topics to remain focused on are body, feelings, mind, and dhammas. These topics fall into two sets.

—The first set covers three topics: "body," i.e., the physical body; "feelings," i.e., feeling tones of pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain; and "mind," i.e., mind-states, such as a mind-state with passion or a mind-state without passion. These three topics are precisely the elements that, when they are brought together properly, comprise a state of jhāna: the mind filling the body with bright awareness, together with a feeling of pleasure or neither pleasure nor pain.

—The second set covers one topic, "dhammas." It's a set because, even though it formally counts as a single frame of reference, it actually contains five frames: the five hindrances, the five clinging-aggregates, the sixfold internal and external sense media, the seven factors for awakening, and the four noble truths.

As under right effort, the word *dhamma* here means mental quality, act, or phenomenon. Its role as a frame of reference is to name individual dhammas that, on the skillful side, can bring body, feelings, and mind to a state of jhāna and foster discernment based on it; or that, on the unskillful side, can obstruct both jhāna and discernment. As we will see, the implicit message of the lists framing these dhammas is to remind you that skillful dhammas should be recognized and fostered, and unskillful ones comprehended and abandoned.

*Dhamma* can also mean "teaching," but the discussion of dhammas in and of themselves in MN 118 (§257) shows that the term here means actual acts, qualities, and objects occurring in your experience—the sutta mentions the dhamma of equanimity—and not just teachings *about* dhammas.

The duty of mindfulness is to remember to remain focused on any one of these four frames of reference *in and of itself*. The Pāli passage expresses this idea by saying, literally, "body in the body," "feelings in feelings," etc., with the locative case—a grammatical case indicating location, often translated as "in"—also meaning "with regard to " or "with reference to." In other words, each of these topics is viewed solely with reference to itself, on its own terms, without subsuming it under another frame of reference. For example, when you stay focused on the body in and of itself, you're viewing it not in terms of how it functions in the world—whether it looks good to other people or is strong enough to do the work you want to do in the world—but simply on its own terms as a body.

The fact that there are four frames of reference can give the impression that they involve four alternative meditation exercises, but MN 118 shows that they can all be brought to completion by focusing on one topic—the breath—which comes under the heading of "body." This is possible because—when the mind is focused properly on the breath—feelings, mind-states, and dhammas will all be present at the same point, and their skillful versions will all be developed together. SN 35:206 (§280) makes a similar point, showing that to strengthen sense restraint—which comes under dhammas as a frame of reference, in the exercise of getting rid of any fetters around the six sense media—you have to keep mindfulness of the body established at all times.

This means that any of the four frames of reference can be applied as you practice mindfulness of the body, and your choice as to which frame to apply will be largely a question of emphasis. Ideally, you will choose a frame that gives you a handle on the particular problem you're facing. In some cases, the problem is best attacked from the angle of the body, as when there's something wrong with the way you're relating to the breath. In other cases, the problem might be better attacked from the angle of feelings, the mind, or dhammas. In all cases, once you've determined the proper angle, the solution will lie in using lessons associated with that frame to engender and develop skillful dhammas, and to prevent and abandon unskillful ones, in line with the four types of right effort.

• The second activity in establishing mindfulness, *subduing greed and distress with reference to the world*, surrounds and protects the first, like a fence. As with the first, its description contains two words that require explanation: in this case, "subduing" and "world."

*Subduing*. The Pāli verb here, *vineyya*, is related to the word for "discipline" *(vinaya)*. This suggests that greed and distress are not yet uprooted in this part of the practice. They are simply held in check. The tense of the verb—it's an absolutive—can mean either "having subdued" or "subduing." In other words, the activity is either already accomplished or in the process of being accomplished. Both meanings are appropriate here, in that greed and distress have to be brought under a measure of control simply to begin establishing mindfulness. Because they are not yet uprooted, they have to be continually put aside as they arise.

*World*. The Pāli word for world or cosmos, *loka*, can mean either the physical world outside, or the world of the mind inside. In other words, it can cover the worlds of becoming both on the small scale and on the large scale.

Any greed or distress related to either level of "world" has to be subdued if you are to stay with your proper frame of reference. Otherwise, you'll get distracted by inner or outer becomings, which will destroy your focus. For instance, when focused on the body in and of itself, you can't allow your frame of reference to shift to desires for the outer world in which the body moves and to which it relates. At the same time, you can't allow any desires related to your inner thought worlds to distract you from your focus on the body.

In some cases, the act of subduing greed and distress with reference to the world may require that you temporarily shift your focus to any of the four frames of reference on the external level, as suggested by the refrain in MN 10, which states that any of the frames of reference can be viewed either internally or externally. The idea of taking an external frame of reference can be interpreted in two ways. (1) DN 18 shows that it can refer to the psychic powers that some meditators develop in connection with concentration, allowing them to know the bodies, feelings, and mind-states of others. (2) An external focus can also be adopted by any meditator, with or without psychic powers, to reflect on the fact that what you are experiencing in terms of your body, feelings, etc., is common to all beings, and that what other beings are experiencing also applies to you.

The reflection on the universality of aging, illness, and death in §38 would be an example of the sort of reflection that starts internally and extrapolates externally. As you reflect on the fact that not only you, but all beings in all levels of the cosmos are subject to these things, it helps to undercut any fascination with being reborn even on the most pleasant and refined levels. An example of the sort of reflection that starts externally and extrapolates internally would be the corpse contemplation described in MN 10, in which you visualize a corpse and then remind yourself that your body is subject to the same unavoidable fate. This helps to undercut attachment to the body-in-the-world, and brings your focus back to simply the body in and of itself.

Whether this external contemplation is done through psychic powers or ordinary powers of inference, its purpose is the same: to develop a sense of saṁvega for the universality of suffering and stress, to lessen the appeal of the world, and to strengthen your resolve to return to your inner frame of reference.

Another technique for subduing greed and distress with reference to the world is offered by §63, whose definition of "world" is actually a strategy: If you can see the world in question—whether inside or out—simply as the six senses, the data they transmit, and the feelings they engender, you deflate and deconstruct your sense of the world so that it no longer appears to be a place that merits either greed or distress. This is one of the ways in which right view informs this particular aspect of establishing mindfulness.

*Ardent, alert, and mindful.* The qualities that have to be brought to bear on the two activities of establishing mindfulness are three: alertness *(sampajañña)*, mindfulness *(sati)*, and ardency *(ātappa)*.

• Alertness is never defined in the suttas, but is illustrated by examples showing that it's the ability to be aware of what you are doing in the present moment (§§247–248). In other words, it's not simply a general awareness of the present; instead, it focuses specifically on the question of your actions—in body, speech, and mind—along with their consequences.

• Mindfulness, in this case, means your active memory: the things you keep in mind to remember where to stay focused in the present moment and what to do with whatever arises in relationship to that focus.

• Ardency is another term that is not defined in the suttas but is illustrated by examples (§§244–246). In this case, the examples show that it is identical with right effort. Because the Pāli term for ardency, *ātappa*, is related to *ottappa*—compunction, or the fear of the consequences of unskillful actions—the two are commonly paired, especially in poetry. As a result, ardency carries connotations of heedfulness and vigilance in avoiding any actions that would lead to harm.

In this way, all three of these qualities, as sub-factors for right mindfulness, are informed by right view and right resolves: Alertness keeps focused on what right view identifies as the important problem of the present moment—your actions; mindfulness keeps in mind the lessons of right view to apply to that problem; and ardency, informed by right resolve,

makes the right effort to carry out those lessons for the sake of a true and blameless happiness.

So even though the act of establishing mindfulness is primarily concerned with getting the mind into concentration, it contains elements of discernment as well. This illustrates the point made by §53, that there is no jhāna without discernment.

**Wrong mindfulness.** Although the suttas mention wrong mindfulness (§18; §288), they nowhere define it. However, two analogies specifically contrast the territory of the establishings of mindfulness with the territory of the five strings of sensuality (§§250–251). This implies that at least one instance of wrong mindfulness would be the habit of focusing on the attractions of sensually pleasant objects with the purpose of creating more passion for them.

**Stages in the practice.** MN 10 and SN 47:40 (§252) list three stages in mindfulness practice: the establishing of mindfulness, the development of the establishing of mindfulness, and a third stage, which they do not name, but which, following the phrasing in MN 10, might be called the mere-remembrance stage. The first two stages have a reciprocal relationship, in that they help each other progress. The third stage depends on mastery of the first two.

The *establishing of mindfulness* corresponds to the formula we have been discussing so far. This formula, as we have noted, emphasizes the role of mindfulness in developing concentration.

The *development of the establishing of mindfulness* emphasizes the role of mindfulness in developing discernment. It is described in this formula, taking the first frame of reference as an example:

> "There is the case where a monk remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world."

The phrasing of this formula contains two details worth noticing. First, the frame of reference in each instance is expressed in the locative case,

which, as we noted above, can mean either *in* or *with regard to / with reference to*. Both meanings are relevant here. You can either watch the processes of origination and passing away as it happens *in* that frame, or you watch those processes as they happen in other frames while at the same time observing how they relate to the frame you have chosen.

For example, you can observe processes of origination and passing away as they happen in the body while you stay focused on the body itself. Or you can watch how events in the body—or your own focus on the body—have an impact on the origination and passing away of feelings and mind-states as experienced in the present, and how *their* origination and passing away have an impact on the body. Another alternative is that you can notice if the mind is focused snugly with the body and, if not, which dhammas are interfering with its staying focused, so that you can do away with those dhammas and solve the problem.

Similar principles apply to the other frames of reference as well. For example, with feelings: You can notice how the way you breathe influences feelings of pleasure or pain, how feelings of pleasure or pain influence the way you breathe, how feelings of pleasure or pain influence states of mind, how certain hindrances are keeping the mind from staying focused on a feeling, or how you can counteract those hindrances with the appropriate factors for awakening (§269).

The second important detail to notice is that this passage uses the term "origination" *(samudaya)*. This is sometimes mistranslated as "arising," giving the impression that you simply watch passively as phenomena come and go. However, the word *samudaya* actually carries the meaning of *causation*, which means that you must also ferret out exactly what is causing those phenomena to come and go. As any scientist knows, detecting a causal relationship involves more than simply watching. You have to make experimental changes in your environment to test what is and is not affecting the phenomenon in which you're interested. If, for example, you suspect that your diet is having an impact on your health, you have to eat different foods systematically to see what effect they have on how healthy you become.

Similarly, to keep watch on the origination of phenomena with reference, say, to the sense of the body, you have to make adjustments in

your physical and mental actions to see which actions are causing which results.

Now, in the pursuit of the path, the quest to understand cause and effect is not an end in itself. The work of discernment is to see which causes are skillful and which are not, so as to abandon unskillful causes and foster skillful ones. In this way, it fulfills the duties of right view on all its levels. Discernment directs this work, but the work in turn is what allows discernment to attain higher and higher levels of right view, from the mundane to the transcendent and beyond.

This observation is borne out by SN 47:40, which states that you develop this discernment stage of mindfulness practice by cultivating all the factors of the path. This is especially clear in the case of right concentration: Only when you are mindful to observe how events in body and mind have an impact on the mind can concentration practice be possible, and only through being mindful to develop concentration in this way can discernment reach its highest levels.

We will discuss in the next chapter some of the ways in which discernment grows by engaging in the practice of concentration. Here it's enough to note that the role of mindfulness in this second stage is to keep focused on remembering to be alert to how skillful and unskillful fabrications are caused and how they pass away, and then to bring that knowledge to bear on your ardency to open the mind to increasingly higher levels of release, first by inducing concentration and then by going beyond it.

It's in this way that the three qualities of ardency, alertness, and mindfulness apply to this second stage of mindfulness practice—the development of the establishing of mindfulness—no less than to the first; and it's in this way that the first two stages of mindfulness practice work together. Even though the first stage is primarily concerned with establishing concentration, and the second with developing discernment, they each contain elements of both. Their difference is largely one of emphasis. This difference in emphasis can be illustrated by seven analogies used in the suttas.

The first stage is described in six analogies: the analogies of the quail and the monkey, who get into danger by leaving their ancestral territory, and who find safety within that territory (§§250–251); the analogy of the

forest elephant, who is bound to a large post in the ground to break it of its forest habits (§255); the analogy of the six animals tethered to a post (§279); the analogy of the person whose head is on fire and who has to focus all his mindfulness on putting the fire out (§265); and the analogy of the man with the bowl filled with oil placed on his head, whose head will be cut off if he spills even a drop of oil (§249). In all six cases, the analogies make the point that you have to place clear limits on the mind to keep it away from sensuality and other unskillful dhammas. This is the function of the first stage, which—as we will see in the next chapter—corresponds to the fact that, to get the mind into right concentration, you first have to seclude it from sensuality and unskillful dhammas. This is one of the ways in which the establishing of mindfulness relates directly to the practice of right concentration.

The second stage is described in the analogy of the cook, who gains a reward by being sensitive to the tastes of his employer, and by varying his offerings to respond to what the employer likes (§256). In the same way, the second stage of mindfulness practice involves using discernment to adjust and experiment with the various types of fabrication needed to bring the mind to concentration, to keep it there, to develop it, and then to go beyond concentration, as its tastes and abilities may change.

For example, MN 128 (§236) provides a particularly detailed description of one way in which discernment, through experimentation, helps to bring the unbalanced, unconcentrated mind to the point where it's ready to enter the first jhāna. MN 121 (§316) shows how discernment, through exploring cause and effect, helps the concentrated mind develop higher levels of concentration and eventually go beyond them. AN 9:36 (§312) shows how discernment uses the mental fabrication of perception to help the mind lose its taste for the jhānas and develop a taste for the deathless instead.

The first two stages of mindfulness practice contain elements of both mundane and transcendent right view. The first stage contains elements of mundane right view in that its instructions make heavy use of the terms "I" and "me" ("I will breathe in experiencing the entire body"; "I am walking"; "There is sensual desire present within me"). At the same time, it works toward transcendent right view in that the instructions show how to put aside any sense of "world." The second stage contains elements of

transcendent right view in that it deals totally in terms of patterns of cause and effect, regarding events simply as events without reference to "I" or "my." However, as we will see in the next chapter, the mastery of concentration, even though it doesn't need explicit reference to "me" or "I," is a state of becoming, and so will require at least a residual sense of "I" to be in charge of its mastery. Only when you fully master concentration and discernment can all traces of "I" be dropped. So this stage, too, contains residual elements of mundane right view.

Only on the third and final stage of mindfulness practice—the stage of mere remembrance—are all traces of "I" absent. This stage is described in the following formula, again taking the first frame of reference as an example:

> "Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, unsustained by [not clinging to] anything in the world." — *MN 10*

This is mindfulness for the stage of the path when all the path-factors have done their work, and there is no need to further develop the duties of the four noble truths. This stage corresponds to the final level of right view, in which the only remaining duty is to let go; and to the final level of right effort, where all alternatives of coming, going, and staying in place are abandoned. With no more work to do, mindfulness can drop all the categories of analysis provided by transcendent right view, and simply recognize what is present, not clinging to any sense of "world" at all and not adding anything to what is sensed (§134). As §135 shows, this means not even applying concepts of existence or non-existence to the world or to the self. This is where everything is relinquished, in line with the final step of breath meditation, and total freedom can be attained.

**Guidance from discernment.** The discernment factors of the path—in addition to the general principles with which they inform the three stages of mindfulness practice—also provide specific instructions for how to deal with problems that may arise in the course of establishing mindfulness for the purpose of developing right concentration and bringing the mind to release.

As we noted above, the problems you face at any one point while meditating will determine which of the four frames of reference to use in

applying right effort to attack the problem. Mindfulness can then remember the instructions offered by the discernment factors of the path as they apply to that particular frame of reference. Two major suttas—MN 10 (§258) and MN 118 (§257)—provide alternative frameworks for bringing discernment to bear on each of the four frames of reference, and other suttas provide additional instructions within those two frameworks.

*MN 10*. As mentioned above, MN 10 focuses primarily on one aspect of the establishing of mindfulness: what it means to remain focused on a particular frame of reference. As a result, its guidance comes primarily in the form of memory aids: lists of body contemplations, types of feelings, types of mind-states, and sets of dhammas. Bearing these lists in mind, you can use them to recognize events as they arise in body and mind, and—once you've recognized them—remember instructions from other suttas as to how they are to be dealt with or used.

• For example, with regard to the *body:* MN 10 lists different ways of focusing on the body that can be adopted according to need. One of the practices—mindfulness of breathing—is useful as a home base for developing jhāna. Two practices—alertness to bodily postures and discernment of physical activities while you're engaging in them—are useful as foundations for exercising sense restraint as you go through the day (§280), to make sure you don't let the sights, sounds, etc., of the day provoke unskillful mind-states that will then get in the way of settling the mind into jhāna when you sit down again for formal concentration practice.

Three practices—contemplation of body parts, contemplations of elements, and contemplation of the decomposition of the body after death—are useful for counteracting pride and lust in relationship to the body. As §260 points out, lust for another person's body begins with attraction to your own, so these contemplations aim at undercutting lust by first taking apart your sense of fascination with the body you now have. AN 4:163 (§25) shows that these contemplations can also be used as alternative themes for jhāna by people whose defilements are strong and require strong antidotes. SN 54:9, however, warns that these contemplations can also lead to excessive revulsion, and that—in the event that they do—you should revert to mindfulness of breathing as a way of dispelling that revulsion, just as the first rains of the rainy season disperse the dust of the dry.

• With regard to *feelings*, MN 10 lists the three basic kinds of feelings—pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain—and then divides each into two sorts: feelings of-the-flesh and feelings not-of-the-flesh, which we discussed in Chapter 1. This list acts as an aid for recalling the instructions in SN 22:79 (§120) that feelings are fabricated, so that—when encountering a particular type of feeling—you can focus on fabricating an appropriate feeling not-of-the-flesh: a pain not-of-the-flesh to motivate yourself to stick to the practice, or a pleasure not-of-the-flesh to sustain the practice and give it energy (§264). This is in line with the principles of the middle way discussed in Chapter 1, and with the instructions in DN 21 (§263), that only those feelings should be pursued that help skillful dhammas to increase and unskillful dhammas to decline.

• As for *mind-states*, MN 10 starts with a list of the three basic unskillful roots and their opposites (§130), followed by pairs of mind-states that are relevant to the development of concentration, discernment, and release. In one case, the pair consists of two unskillful states—constricted and scattered—with the implied instruction that it's necessary to find a balance between the two (§267). The other pairs, however, couple skillful mind-states with their less skillful counterparts. Examples include concentrated and unconcentrated, released and not released. The pairs are arranged so that the level of skill grows progressively higher. The implication here is that the unskillful member of each pair should be abandoned in favor of the skillful member, and that skill is to be developed to higher and higher levels.

• In the area of *dhammas*, MN 10 gives five lists: the five hindrances, the five clinging-aggregates, the sixfold internal and external sense-media, the seven factors for awakening, and the four noble truths. In the case of the hindrances, sense-media, and factors for awakening, the sutta explicitly states the duties involved: the hindrances and the fetters associated with the sense-media are to be abandoned to the point where they will never arise again, and the factors for awakening are to be brought to the culmination of their development. However, given that the four noble truths have clear duties, and the five clinging-aggregates constitute the first truth, these sets have their implicit duties as well (see Chapter 1).

These lists of dhammas can usefully be applied to different aspects of the practice: The four noble truths provide an overall context as to what is to be

developed or abandoned throughout the practice. At the same time, as transcendent right view becomes more firmly established, it provides guidance for how to bring about the final act of dispassion on the path. This point is reflected in DN 22 (§282), which expands on MN 10's discussion of this frame of reference by detailing the many possible locations where craving can be focused. The list of locations is long, and covers all the factors of dependent co-arising from fabrication through craving. The implicit message of the list is that craving can be focused on many levels, and that to thoroughly remove passion for it, you have to be sensitive to cravings on many levels at once—even the craving for craving itself.

Within the larger framework of the duties of the four noble truths, the remaining lists provide frameworks for recognizing which dhammas are to be comprehended, which are to be abandoned, and which are to be developed. For instance, the six sense-media provide a useful framework for restraint of the senses throughout the day, as an aid in remembering what to abandon when a sight or sound provokes passion or desire. The five hindrances—dhammas to be abandoned so that the mind can enter concentration—and the seven factors for awakening—dhammas to be developed to master concentration—are especially relevant in formal concentration practice. And finally, the five clinging-aggregates provide a useful framework for comprehending and dispelling distraction during the practice of concentration, and for comprehending the concentration itself in the final stages of the path.

In these ways, the lists provided by MN 10 and DN 22 serve as memory aids through which mindfulness channels the guidance of right view and right resolve to keep right effort on track.

*MN 118*. The Buddha's instructions for mindfulness of breathing in MN 118 transmit the guidance of right view to right mindfulness in a different form. Here the instructions are more direct, and are shaped largely by the teaching on the three forms of fabrication.

Mindfulness of breathing involves sixteen steps in all, divided into four sets of four, called tetrads. In each of the steps, the instructions are expressed in the form of verbal fabrications that should accompany each in-and-out breath: "I will train myself to breathe" with such-and-such a purpose in mind. The general pattern of the first three tetrads is that you first sensitize yourself to a particular frame of reference, then learn to see it

in terms of fabrication, and finally calm the fabrication. The tetrads on feelings and mind-states show explicitly that, before calming fabrication, you first have to energize it. This step is not explicitly mentioned in the first tetrad, on the body, but a later passage in the sutta states that the body grows calm after first being energized by rapture *(pīti*, which can also be translated as "refreshment" or "fullness"), so the step of energizing should be understood as occurring implicitly in the first tetrad as well.

By focusing on calming fabrication in this way, these tetrads develop concentration by fostering two qualities in tandem: insight *(vipassanā)* and tranquility *(samatha)*, the ability to reach mental calm. They foster insight by teaching you to view your experience of the breath and mind in terms of fabrication, which in turn prepares you to apply the vipassanā questions from §116 (see Chapter 3) to those fabrications in the fourth tetrad. At the same time, the skill of calming fabrication induces tranquility, giving you a steady and secure basis for applying those questions in a way that leads to genuine release.

Although the tetrads are listed in linear order, they actually deal with aspects of the practice that occur side-by-side from the very beginning. For this reason, they are best regarded as providing alternate points of view for you to adopt as you keep the mind with the breath. Your choice of which point of view to use will depend—as noted above—on the problem at hand.

• The first tetrad, which corresponds to the body as a frame of reference, starts with instructions to sensitize yourself to the length of the breath. Because the first two steps related to feelings as a frame of reference will focus on breathing in a way that fosters rapture and pleasure, it's wise to observe at this point which type of breathing is more pleasant: long or short.

All the remaining steps in all the tetrads are called "trainings": You train yourself to breathe in a way that masters a particular skill. The first training is to breathe sensitive to the entire body. This enables you to see the impact of the breath on the body, making real the teaching that the breath is the primary bodily fabrication. It also prepares you for the fourth step, in which you calm bodily fabrication, i.e., allow the in-and-out breath—without forcing it—to grow more and more still. This can be done skillfully only by maintaining a full-body awareness. This fourth step, as noted in AN 10:20

and AN 9:31 (footnote to §257), can lead ultimately to the fourth jhāna, where in-and-out breathing stops on its own.

• The second tetrad, which corresponds to feelings as a frame of reference, makes use of the observation that alertness to in-and-out breathing creates feelings. This knowledge is then used to breathe in-and-out creating sensations of rapture or refreshment *(pīti)* and feelings of pleasure—both of which would be classified as not-of-the-flesh (§261)—after which you become sensitive to the role of these feelings, along with perceptions, as mental fabrications in the process of developing mindfulness of breathing. In the fourth step of this tetrad, you calm mental fabrication, i.e., you use perceptions and induce feelings that can lead the mind to greater and greater states of calm. SN 36:11 (§315) indicates that the total calming of mental fabrication occurs at the very highest stages of concentration, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

However, even before reaching those stages of concentration, the four steps in this tetrad show in outline form how to deal with feelings of pain encountered in meditation: First you breathe in a way to induce feelings of rapture and pleasure; then, if pain still remains in a part of the body, you question and replace the perceptions that allow that pain to have an impact on the mind.

• The third tetrad, which corresponds to the mind as a frame of reference, shows how the mind is to be brought to a state of balance and freedom. You sensitize yourself to the state of the mind and then, depending on whichever direction it has fallen out of balance, you gladden it, steady it, or release it from whatever is burdening it. In the beginning phases, when the breath has yet to be mastered, this may involve using other meditation exercises, such as the recollection of the Buddha (§266), that employ perceptions to help gladden the mind when its energy level is down, steady it when its energy is scattered (§267), and release it from unskillful trains of thought.

SN 47:10 (§253) discusses two ways of gladdening and steadying the mind: *directing* and *not directing*. In the case of "not directing," you simply let go of external things and find yourself automatically focused on any of the four frames of reference. This is the approach to follow when the mind settles down easily. "Directing" is for when, as the sutta says, you try to stay with any of the frames of reference but you feel a fever associated with that

frame, or the mind is either scattered or sluggish. In this case, you direct the mind to another theme that gladdens it. The Commentary recommends any of the six recollections (§266) but the four sublime attitudes (§69) can also serve this purpose. Once the mind is gladdened, it grows concentrated. Once it is concentrated, you can drop that theme and you will find yourself in the second jhāna (see the following chapter), apparently focused back on any of the four frames of reference.

As you master the breath, and the processes of bodily, verbal, and mental fabrication that go with it, you can use these fabrications—the way you breathe, the way you induce pleasure and rapture through the breath, and the perceptions you hold around the breath—to accomplish the same ends, so as to bring the mind to more and more refined stages of gladness, steadiness, and release.

• The fourth tetrad, which corresponds to dhammas as a frame of reference, details the steps of *anupassanā*—the act of remaining focused—that are needed to accomplish the last step of the third tetrad, the release of the mind. The pattern here follows the pattern for vipassanā that §116 recommends for developing the value judgments that lead to escape: Look for the drawbacks of whatever the mind is clinging to, and see that they outweigh the allure of clinging, so that the mind can gain escape through fostering the dhamma of dispassion.

In the beginning stages of concentration practice, the four steps in this tetrad are useful for subduing greed and distress with regard to anything that might pull you out of concentration. First, you remain focused on the inconstancy of the distraction—and this, following the three perceptions, can include perceiving it as stressful and not-self. After that, you remain focused on the sense of dispassion that arises from applying those perceptions; on the resulting cessation of the distraction; and then on the relinquishment of the distraction—and of all the contemplations that led to that relinquishment—so that you can return to your theme of concentration.

Once concentration has been solidified, the same four steps can be used to release the mind from the factors of the lower jhānas, so that it can enter the higher ones (§365). Ultimately, these four steps can be developed on an even more refined level to release the mind even from concentration and discernment, at the final stage of the path.

MN 118 thus shows how right view about fabrication—and right resolve for bringing the mind to the well-being of deep inner calm—can inform the practice of right mindfulness all the way to the verge of awakening.

**Lessons for discernment.** In keeping with the fact that right mindfulness and right effort are so closely related to each other, the lessons that right mindfulness offers to the discernment factors of the path are similar to those offered by right effort: tactical, hands-on experience in how to carry out the strategies of fabrication that right view recommends. Because its duty is to bring the mind all the way to the mastery of concentration, though, right mindfulness also provides more refined insights into the actual workings of the mind and into the subtleties of skillful fabrication. This fact is especially striking in three areas:

• The process of energizing and calming both mind and body in the stages of breath meditation show that the exertion of a fabrication needn't leave the mind exhausted or frazzled. Instead, when mastered as a skill, the exertion of the three fabrications ideally leads to energy, calm, and great pleasure.

• The fabrication of feelings not-of-the-flesh, as they are needed, exercises your discernment into what counts as "just right" in the conduct of the middle way.

• As you master the tactical issues of settling the mind, you gain the ability to discern the processes of origination and passing away in purely impersonal terms, without reference to self or world. As you become more sensitive to these processes, you also become more sensitive to any subtle residual sense of self or world that may surround your attempts to develop transcendent right view. This provides an experiential basis that allows right view to detect and drop *all* the categories of becoming—"self" and "world"—allowing it to advance to its final level.

In this way, the practice of right mindfulness doesn't merely confirm the principles of right view. It enables right view to comprehend the subtleties of fabrication in a way that brings right view closer to its aim: the ending of all suffering and stress.

## Readings

§ 240. "Just as the royal frontier fortress has a gatekeeper—wise, competent, intelligent—to keep out those he doesn't know and to let in those he does, for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones is mindful, endowed with excellent proficiency in mindfulness, remembering & recollecting what was done and said a long time ago. With mindfulness as his gatekeeper, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity." — *AN 7:63*

§ 241. "And which is the faculty of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is mindful, endowed with excellent proficiency in mindfulness, remembering & recollecting what was done and said a long time ago. He remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves… the mind in & of itself… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness." — *SN 48:10*

§ 242. "One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one's right mindfulness.… One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve… to abandon wrong speech & to enter & remain in right speech… to abandon wrong action & to enter & remain in right action… to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter & remain in right livelihood: This is one's right mindfulness." — *MN 117*

§ 243. "This holy life is lived… with mindfulness as its governing principle.… And how is mindfulness the governing principle? The mindfulness that 'I will make complete any training with regard to good conduct that is not yet complete, or I will protect with discernment any training with regard to good conduct that is complete' is well-established right within. The mindfulness that 'I will make complete any training with regard to the basics of the holy life that is not yet complete, or I will protect with discernment any training with regard to the basics of the holy life that

is complete' is well-established right within. The mindfulness that 'I will scrutinize with discernment any dhamma that is not yet scrutinized, or I will protect with discernment any dhamma that has been scrutinized' is well-established right within. The mindfulness that 'I will touch through release any dhamma that is not yet touched, or I will protect with discernment any dhamma that has been touched' is well-established right within.

"This is how mindfulness is the governing principle." — *AN 4:245*

*Ardency*

§ 244. Ven. Mahā Kassapa: "And how is one ardent? There is the case where a monk, (thinking,) 'Unarisen evil, unskillful dhammas arising in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,' arouses ardency. (Thinking,) 'Arisen evil, unskillful dhammas not being abandoned in me…' … 'Unarisen skillful dhammas not arising in me …' … 'Arisen skillful dhammas ceasing in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,' he arouses ardency. This is how one is ardent." — *SN 16:2*

§ 245. "A person without ardency, without compunction, is incapable of self-awakening, incapable of unbinding, incapable of attaining the unsurpassed safety from the yoke. A person ardent & compunctious is capable of self-awakening, capable of unbinding, capable of attaining the unsurpassed safety from the yoke." — *Iti 34*

§ 246. "If, while he is walking, there arises in a monk a thought of sensuality, a thought of ill-will, or a thought of harmfulness, and he does not quickly abandon, dispel, demolish, or wipe that thought out of existence, then a monk walking with such a lack of ardency & compunction is called continually & continuously lethargic & low in his persistence. [Similarly if he is standing, sitting, or lying down.]

"But if, while he is walking, there arises in a monk a thought of sensuality, a thought of ill-will, or a thought of harmfulness, and he quickly abandons, dispels, demolishes, & wipes that thought out of existence, then a monk walking with such ardency & compunction is called continually & continuously resolute, one with persistence aroused. [Similarly if he is standing, sitting, or lying down.]" — *Iti 110*

*Alertness*

§ 247. "And how is a monk alert? When going forward & returning, he makes himself alert; when looking toward & looking away… when bending & extending his limbs… when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe & his bowl… when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring… when urinating & defecating… when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself alert. This is how a monk is alert." — *SN 36:7*

§ 248. "And how is a monk alert? There is the case where feelings are known to the monk as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Perceptions are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. This is how a monk is alert. — *SN 47:35*

*Mindfulness as a Focused Quality*

§ 249. The Blessed One said, "Suppose, monks, that a large crowd of people comes thronging together, saying, 'The beauty queen! The beauty queen!' And suppose that the beauty queen is highly accomplished at singing & dancing, so that an even greater crowd comes thronging, saying, 'The beauty queen is singing! The beauty queen is dancing!' Then a man comes along, desiring life & shrinking from death, desiring pleasure & abhorring pain. They say to him, 'Now, look here, mister. You must take this bowl filled to the brim with oil and carry it on your head in between the great crowd & the beauty queen. A man with a raised sword will follow right behind you, and wherever you spill even a drop of oil, right there will he cut off your head.' Now, what do you think, monks? Would that man, not paying attention to the bowl of oil, bring heedlessness outside?"

"No, lord."

"I have given you this simile to convey a meaning. The meaning is this: The bowl filled to the brim with oil stands for mindfulness immersed in the body. Thus you should train yourselves: 'We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, hand it the reins, take it as a basis,

steady it, consolidate it, and undertake it well.' That is how you should train yourselves." — *SN 47:20*

§ 250. "Once a hawk suddenly swooped down on a quail and seized it. Then the quail, as it was being carried off by the hawk, lamented, 'O, just my bad luck and lack of merit that I was wandering out of my proper range and into the territory of others! If only I had kept to my proper range today, to my own ancestral territory, this hawk would have been no match for me in battle.'

"'But what is your proper range?' the hawk asked. 'What is your own ancestral territory?'

"'A newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up.'

"So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, let go of the quail. 'Go, quail, but even when you have gone there you won't escape me.'

"Then the quail, having gone to a newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up and climbing up on top of a large clump of earth, stood taunting the hawk, 'Now come and get me, you hawk! Now come and get me, you hawk!'

"So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, folded its two wings and suddenly swooped down toward the quail. When the quail knew, 'The hawk is coming at me full speed,' it slipped behind the clump of earth, and right there the hawk shattered its own breast.

"This is what happens to anyone who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others.

"For this reason, you should not wander into what is not your proper range and is the territory of others. In one who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others, Māra gains an opening, Māra gains a foothold. And what, for a monk, is not his proper range and is the territory of others? The five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Sounds cognizable by the ear… Aromas cognizable by the nose… Flavors cognizable by the tongue… Tactile sensations cognizable by the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing,

enticing, linked to sensual desire. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others.

"Wander, monks, in what is your proper range, your own ancestral territory. In one who wanders in what is his proper range, his own ancestral territory, Māra gains no opening, Māra gains no foothold. And what, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory? The four establishings of mindfulness. Which four? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves… mind in & of itself… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory." — *SN 47:6*

§ 251. "There are in the Himalayas, the king of mountains, difficult, uneven areas where neither monkeys nor human beings wander. There are difficult, uneven areas where monkeys wander, but not human beings. There are level stretches of land, delightful, where both monkeys and human beings wander. In such spots hunters set a tar trap in the monkeys' tracks, in order to catch some monkeys. Those monkeys who are not foolish or careless by nature, when they see the tar trap, will keep their distance. But any monkey who is foolish & careless by nature comes up to the tar trap and grabs it with its paw, which then gets stuck there. Thinking, 'I'll free my paw,' he grabs it with his other paw. That too gets stuck. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws,' he grabs it with his foot. That too gets stuck. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws and my foot,' he grabs it with his other foot. That too gets stuck. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws and my feet as well,' he grabs it with his mouth. That too gets stuck. So the monkey, snared in five ways, lies there whimpering, having fallen on misfortune, fallen on ruin, a prey to whatever the hunter wants to do with him. Then the hunter, without releasing the monkey, skewers him right there, picks him up, and goes off as he likes.

"This is what happens to anyone who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others." — *SN 47:7*

*Stages in the Practice*

§ 252. "I will teach you the establishing of mindfulness, the development of the establishing of mindfulness, and the path of practice leading to the development of the establishing of mindfulness. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.

"Now, what is the establishing of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves… mind in & of itself… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is called the establishing of mindfulness.

"And what is the development of the establishing of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to feelings, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to feelings, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to feelings—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the mind, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the mind, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the mind—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is called the development of the establishing of mindfulness.

"And what is the path of practice to the development of the establishing of mindfulness? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called the path of practice to the development of the establishing of mindfulness." — *SN 47:40*

§ 253. "Ānanda, there is the case of a monk who remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, a fever based on the body arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme [Commentary: such as recollection of the Buddha]. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, gladness is born within him. In one who is gladdened, rapture is born. In one whose heart is enraptured, the body grows calm. His body calm, he feels pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, 'I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw [my mind from the inspiring theme].' He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, 'I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.' [Similarly with the other establishings of mindfulness.]

"This, Ānanda, is development based on directing.

"And what is development based on not directing? A monk, when not directing his mind to external things, discerns, 'My mind is not directed to external things. It is not attentive to what is in front or behind. It is released & undirected. And then I remain focused on the body in & of itself. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.'

"When not directing his mind to external things, he discerns, 'My mind is not directed to external things. It is not attentive to what is in front or behind. It is released & undirected. And then I remain focused on feelings… mind… dhammas in & of themselves. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.'

"This, Ānanda, is development based on not directing." — *SN 47:10*

§ 254. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said

to the Blessed One: "It would be good if the Blessed One would teach me the Dhamma in brief so that, having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone in seclusion: heedful, ardent, & resolute."

"But it is in just this way that some worthless men make a request but then, having been told the Dhamma, think they should tag along right behind me."

"May the Blessed One teach me the Dhamma in brief! May the One Well-gone teach me the Dhamma in brief! It may well be that I will understand the Blessed One's words. It may well be that I will become an heir to the Blessed One's words."

"Then, monk, you should train yourself thus: 'My mind will be established inwardly, well-composed. No evil, unskillful dhammas, once they have arisen, will remain consuming the mind.' That's how you should train yourself.

"Then you should train yourself thus: 'Goodwill, as my awareness-release… Compassion, as my awareness-release… Empathetic joy, as my awareness-release… Equanimity, as my awareness-release, will be developed, pursued, given a means of transport, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, & well-undertaken.' …

"When this concentration is thus developed, thus well-developed by you, you should then train yourself thus: 'I will remain focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture… not accompanied by rapture… endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity. [Similarly with the other three establishings of mindfulness.]

"When this concentration is thus developed, thus well-developed by you, then wherever you go, you will go in comfort. Wherever you stand, you will stand in comfort. Wherever you sit, you will sit in comfort. Wherever you lie down, you will lie down in comfort."

Then that monk, having been admonished by the admonishment from the Blessed One, got up from his seat and bowed down to the Blessed One,

circled around him, keeping the Blessed One to his right side, and left. Then, dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, having directly known & realized it for himself in the here-&-now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And thus he became another one of the arahants. — *AN 8:63*

§ 255. "Having abandoned the five hindrances—imperfections of awareness that weaken discernment—the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings… mind… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. Just as if an elephant trainer were to plant a large post in the ground and were to bind a forest elephant to it by the neck in order to break it of its forest habits, its forest memories & resolves, its distraction, fatigue, & fever over leaving the forest, to make it delight in the town and to inculcate in it habits congenial to human beings; in the same way, these four establishings of mindfulness are bindings for the awareness of the disciple of the noble ones, to break him of his household habits, his household memories & resolves, his distraction, fatigue, & fever over leaving the household life, for the attainment of the right method and the realization of unbinding.

"Then the Tathāgata trains him further: 'Come, monk, remain focused on the body in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with the body. Remain focused on feelings in & of themselves, but do not think any thoughts connected with feelings. Remain focused on the mind in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with mind. Remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves, but do not think any thoughts connected with dhammas.' With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters the second jhāna." — *MN 125*

§ 256. "Now, suppose that there is a wise, competent, skillful cook who has presented a king or a king's minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He picks up on the theme [*nimitta*, sign, signal]

of his master, thinking, 'Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry or he praises that curry. Today my master likes mainly sour curry.… Today my master likes mainly bitter curry… mainly peppery curry… mainly sweet curry… alkaline curry… non-alkaline curry… salty curry… Today my master likes non-salty curry, or he reaches out for non-salty curry, or he takes a lot of non-salty curry, or he praises non-salty curry.' As a result, he is rewarded with clothing, wages, & gifts. Why is that? Because the wise, competent, skillful cook picks up on the theme of his own master.

"In the same way, there is the case where a wise, competent, skillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself… feelings in & of themselves… the mind in & of itself… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on dhammas in & of themselves, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He picks up on that theme. As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here-&-now, together with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the wise, competent, skillful monk picks up on the theme of his own mind." — *SN 47:8*

§ 257. "And how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination?

[1] "On whatever occasion a monk breathing in long discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, discerns, 'I am breathing out long'; or breathing in short, discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, discerns, 'I am breathing out short'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in… &… out sensitive to the entire body'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in… &… out calming bodily fabrication'[1]: On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—the in-&-out breath—is classed as a body among bodies, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

[2] "On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in… &… out sensitive to rapture'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out

sensitive to pleasure'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out sensitive to mental fabrication'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out calming mental fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on *feelings* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful— subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—careful attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

[3] "On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&…out sensitive to the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out gladdening the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out steadying the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out releasing the mind': On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *mind* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful— subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I don't say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of lapsed mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

[4] "On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&…out focusing on inconstancy'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out focusing on dispassion'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out focusing on cessation'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in…&… out focusing on relinquishment': On that occasion the monk remains focused on *dhammas* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful— subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one who watches carefully with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination.

"And how are the four establishings of mindfulness developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination?

[1] "On whatever occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion his mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When his mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[2] "Remaining mindful in this way, he examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that dhamma with discernment. When he remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that dhamma with discernment, then *analysis of dhammas* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[3] "In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that dhamma with discernment, persistence is aroused unflaggingly. When persistence is aroused unflaggingly in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that dhamma with discernment, then *persistence* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[4] "In one whose persistence is aroused, a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises. When a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then *rapture* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[5] "For one enraptured at heart, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of a monk enraptured at heart grow calm, then *calm* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[6] "For one who is at ease—his body calmed—the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind of one who is at ease—his body calmed—becomes concentrated, then *concentration* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[7] "He carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When he carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity, *equanimity* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development. [Similarly with the other three establishings of mindfulness: feelings, mind, & dhammas.]

"This is how the four establishings of mindfulness are developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination.

"And how are the seven factors for awakening developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination? There is the case where a monk develops *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops *analysis of dhammas* as a factor for awakening… *persistence* as a factor for awakening… *rapture* as a factor for awakening… *calm* as a factor for awakening… *concentration* as a factor for awakening… *equanimity* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go.

"This is how the seven factors for awakening are developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words. — *MN 118*

### Note

1. "And how is a monk calmed in his bodily fabrication? There is the case where a monk, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is how a monk is calmed in his bodily fabrication." — *AN 10:20*

"When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breaths have ceased." — *AN 9:31*

§ 258. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in the Kuru country. Now, there is a town of the Kurus called Kammasadhamma. There the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Monks."

"Venerable sir," the monks replied.

The Blessed One said: "This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding—in other words, the four establishings of mindfulness. Which four?

"There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings… mind… dhammas in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

BODY

"And how does a monk remain focused on the body in & of itself?

[1] "There is the case where a monk—having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building—sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect and establishing mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

"Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body'; he trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication [the in-&-out breath]'; he trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.' Just as a dexterous lathe-turner or lathe-turner's apprentice, when making a long turn, discerns that he is making a long turn, or when making a short turn discerns that he is making a short turn; in the same way the monk, when breathing in long, discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.'… He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication'; he trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[2] "And further, when walking, the monk discerns, 'I am walking.' When standing, he discerns, 'I am standing.' When sitting, he discerns, 'I am sitting.' When lying down, he discerns, 'I am lying down.' Or however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it.

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[3] "And further, when going forward & returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward & looking away… when bending & extending his limbs… when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe & his bowl… when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring… when urinating & defecating… when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert.

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[4] "And further… just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain—wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice—and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, 'This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice,' in the same way, the monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth,

skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[5] "And further… just as a dexterous butcher or butcher's apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it up into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body—however it stands, however it is disposed—in terms of properties: 'In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[6] "And further, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground—one day, two days, three days dead—bloated, livid, & festering, he applies it to this very body, 'This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate.' …

"Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, & various other creatures… a skeleton smeared with flesh & blood, connected with tendons… a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons… a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons… bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions—here a hand

bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib, there a chest bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull… the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells… piled up, more than a year old… decomposed into a powder: He applies it to this very body, 'This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

### FEELINGS

"And how does a monk remain focused on feelings in & of themselves? There is the case where a monk, when feeling a painful feeling, discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling.' When feeling a pleasant feeling, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.'

"When feeling a painful feeling of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling of-the-flesh.' When feeling a painful feeling not of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling not of-the-flesh.' When feeling a pleasant feeling of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling of-the-flesh.' When feeling a pleasant feeling not of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling not of-the-flesh.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of-the-flesh.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of-the-flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of-the-flesh.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on feelings in & of themselves, or externally on feelings in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on feelings in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to feelings, on the phenomenon of

passing away with regard to feelings, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to feelings. Or his mindfulness that 'There are feelings' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, unsustained by [not clinging to] anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on feelings in & of themselves.

MIND

"And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in & of itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns, 'The mind has passion.' When the mind is without passion, he discerns, 'The mind is without passion.' When the mind has aversion, he discerns, 'The mind has aversion.' When the mind is without aversion, he discerns, 'The mind is without aversion.' When the mind has delusion, he discerns, 'The mind has delusion.' When the mind is without delusion, he discerns, 'The mind is without delusion.'

"When the mind is constricted, he discerns, 'The mind is constricted.' When the mind is scattered, he discerns, 'The mind is scattered.' When the mind is enlarged, he discerns, 'The mind is enlarged.' When the mind is not enlarged, he discerns that the mind is not enlarged. When the mind is surpassed, he discerns, 'The mind is surpassed.' When the mind is unsurpassed, he discerns, 'The mind is unsurpassed.' When the mind is concentrated, he discerns, 'The mind is concentrated.' When the mind is not concentrated, he discerns, 'The mind is not concentrated.' When the mind is released, he discerns, 'The mind is released.' When the mind is not released, he discerns, 'The mind is not released.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on the mind in & of itself, or externally on the mind in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the mind in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the mind, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the mind, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the mind. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a mind' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, unsustained by [not clinging to] anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the mind in & of itself.

DHAMMAS

"And how does a monk remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves?

[1] "There is the case where a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the **five hindrances.** And how does a monk remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the five hindrances? There is the case where, there being sensual desire present within, a monk discerns that 'There is sensual desire present within me.' Or, there being no sensual desire present within, he discerns that 'There is no sensual desire present within me.' He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen sensual desire. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of sensual desire once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of sensual desire that has been abandoned. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining hindrances: ill will, sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty.]

"In this way he remains focused internally on dhammas in & of themselves, or externally on dhammas in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on dhammas in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas. Or his mindfulness that 'There are dhammas' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the five hindrances.

[2] "And further, the monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the **five clinging-aggregates.** And how does he remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the five clinging-aggregates? There is the case where a monk (discerns): 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling… Such is perception… Such are fabrications… Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on dhammas in & of themselves, or externally on dhammas in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on dhammas in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, or on the

phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas. Or his mindfulness that 'There are dhammas' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the five clinging-aggregates.

[3] "And further, the monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the **sixfold internal & external sense media.** And how does he remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal & external sense media? There is the case where he discerns the eye, he discerns forms, he discerns the fetter that arises dependent on both. He discerns how there is the arising of an unarisen fetter. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of a fetter once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of a fetter that has been abandoned. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining sense media: ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.]

"In this way he remains focused internally on dhammas in & of themselves, or externally on dhammas in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on dhammas in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas. Or his mindfulness that 'There are dhammas' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal & external sense media.

[4] "And further, the monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the **seven factors for awakening.** And how does he remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for awakening? There is the case where, there being mindfulness as a factor for awakening present within, he discerns that 'Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is present within me.' Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor for awakening present within, he discerns that 'Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is not present within me.' He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for

awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors for awakening: analysis of dhammas, persistence, rapture, calm, concentration, & equanimity.]

"In this way he remains focused internally on dhammas in & of themselves, or externally on dhammas in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on dhammas in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas. Or his mindfulness that 'There are dhammas' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for awakening.

[5] "And further, the monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the **four noble truths.** And how does he remain focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the four noble truths? There is the case where he discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.'

"In this way he remains focused internally on dhammas in & of themselves, or externally on dhammas in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on dhammas in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to dhammas, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to dhammas, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to dhammas. Or his mindfulness that 'There are dhammas' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & remembrance. And he remains independent, not clinging to anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on dhammas in & of themselves with reference to the four noble truths.

### CONCLUSION

"Now, if anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for seven years, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either

gnosis right here-&-now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.

"Let alone seven years. If anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for six years… five… four… three… two years… one year… seven months… six months… five… four… three… two months… one month… half a month, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here-&-now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.

"Let alone half a month. If anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for seven days, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here-&-now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.

"'This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding—in other words, the four establishings of mindfulness.' Thus was it said, and in reference to this was it said."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words. — *MN 10*

*Guidance from Discernment*

§ 259. **The body.** "And what is the perception of drawbacks? There is the case where a monk—having gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling—reflects thus: 'This body has many pains, many drawbacks. In this body many kinds of disease arise, such as: seeing-diseases, hearing-diseases, nose-diseases, tongue-diseases, body-diseases, head-diseases, ear-diseases, mouth-diseases, teeth-diseases, cough, asthma, catarrh, fever, aging, stomach-ache, fainting, dysentery, grippe, cholera, leprosy, boils, ringworm, tuberculosis, epilepsy, skin-diseases, itch, scab, psoriasis, scabies, jaundice, diabetes, hemorrhoids, fistulas, ulcers; diseases arising from bile, from phlegm, from the wind-property, from combinations of bodily humors, from changes in the weather, from uneven care of the body, from attacks, from the result of kamma; cold, heat, hunger, thirst, defecation, urination.' Thus he remains focused on drawbacks with regard to this body. This is called the perception of drawbacks." — *AN 10:60*

§ 260. "A woman attends inwardly to her feminine faculties, her feminine gestures, her feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voice, feminine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, she attends outwardly to masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voices, masculine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, she wants to be bonded to what is outside her, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in her femininity, a woman goes into bondage with reference to men. This is how a woman does not transcend her femininity.

"A man attends inwardly to his masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voice, masculine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he attends outwardly to feminine faculties, feminine gestures, feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voices, feminine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he wants to be bonded to what is outside him, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in his masculinity, a man goes into bondage with reference to women. This is how a man does not transcend his masculinity.

"This is how there is bondage.

"And how is there lack of bondage? A woman does not attend inwardly to her feminine faculties… feminine charms. She is not excited by that, not delighted by that… does not attend outwardly to masculine faculties… masculine charms. She is not excited by that, not delighted by that… does not want to be bonded to what is outside her, does not want whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Not delighting, not caught up in her femininity, a woman does not go into bondage with reference to men. This is how a woman transcends her femininity.

"A man does not attend inwardly to his masculine faculties… masculine charms. He is not excited by that, not delighted by that… does not attend outwardly to feminine faculties… feminine charms. He is not excited by that, not delighted by that… does not want to be bonded to what is outside him, does not want whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Not delighting, not caught up in his masculinity, a man does not go

into bondage with reference to women. This is how a man transcends his masculinity.

"This is how there is lack of bondage." — *AN 7:48*

§ 261. **Feelings.** "Monks, there is rapture of-the-flesh, rapture not-of-the-flesh, and rapture more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh. There is pleasure of-the-flesh, pleasure not-of-the-flesh, and pleasure more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh. There is equanimity of-the-flesh, equanimity not-of-the-flesh, and equanimity more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh. There is liberation of-the-flesh, liberation not-of-the-flesh, and liberation more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is rapture of-the-flesh? There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Sounds cognizable via the ear… Aromas cognizable via the nose… Flavors cognizable via the tongue… Tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Now, whatever rapture arises in dependence on these five strings of sensuality, that is called rapture of-the-flesh.

"And what is rapture not-of-the-flesh? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This is called rapture not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is the rapture more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh? Whatever rapture arises in an effluent-ended monk as he is reflecting on his mind released from passion, reflecting on his mind released from aversion, reflecting on his mind released from delusion, that is called rapture more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is pleasure of-the-flesh? There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Sounds cognizable

via the ear… Aromas cognizable via the nose… Flavors cognizable via the tongue… Tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Now, whatever pleasure arises in dependence on these five strings of sensuality, that is called pleasure of-the-flesh.

"And what is pleasure not-of-the-flesh? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' This is called pleasure not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is the pleasure more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh? Whatever pleasure arises in an effluent-ended monk as he is reflecting on his mind released from passion, reflecting on his mind released from aversion, reflecting on his mind released from delusion, that is called pleasure more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is equanimity of-the-flesh? There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Sounds cognizable via the ear… Aromas cognizable via the nose… Flavors cognizable via the tongue… Tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire. Whatever equanimity arises in dependence on these five strings of sensuality, that is called equanimity of-the-flesh.

"And what is equanimity not-of-the-flesh? There is the case where a monk, with the abandoning of pleasure & stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joy & distress—enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. This is called equanimity not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is the equanimity more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh? Whatever equanimity arises in an effluent-ended monk as he is

reflecting on his mind released from passion, reflecting on his mind released from aversion, reflecting on his mind released from delusion, that is called equanimity more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is liberation of-the-flesh? Liberation associated with form is of-the-flesh. What is liberation not-of-the-flesh? Liberation associated with the formless is not-of-the-flesh.

"And what is the liberation more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh? Whatever liberation arises in an effluent-ended monk as he is reflecting on his mind released from passion, reflecting on his mind released from aversion, reflecting on his mind released from delusion, that is called liberation more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh." — *SN 36:31*

§ 262. "'The eighteen explorations for the intellect should be known': Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? Seeing a form via the eye, one explores a form that can act as the basis for joy, one explores a form that can act as the basis for distress, one explores a form that can act as the basis for equanimity. Hearing a sound via the ear… Smelling an aroma via the nose… Tasting a flavor via the tongue… Feeling a tactile sensation via the body… Cognizing an idea via the intellect, one explores an idea that can act as the basis for joy, one explores an idea that can act as the basis for distress, one explores an idea that can act as the basis for equanimity. The eighteen explorations for the intellect should be known': Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said." — *MN 137*

§ 263. "'Joy is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? When one knows of a feeling of joy, 'As I pursue this joy, unskillful dhammas increase, and skillful dhammas decline,' that sort of joy is not to be pursued. When one knows of a feeling of joy, 'As I pursue this joy, unskillful dhammas decline, and skillful dhammas increase,' that sort of joy is to be pursued. And this sort of joy may be accompanied by directed thought & evaluation or free of directed thought & evaluation. Of the two, the latter is the more refined. 'Joy is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

"'Grief is of two sorts…

"'Equanimity is of two sorts, I tell you: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? When one knows of a feeling of equanimity, 'As I pursue this equanimity, unskillful dhammas increase, and skillful dhammas decline,' that sort of equanimity is not to be pursued. When one knows of a feeling of equanimity, 'As I pursue this equanimity, unskillful dhammas decline, and skillful dhammas increase,' that sort of equanimity is to be pursued. And this sort of equanimity may be accompanied by directed thought & evaluation or free of directed thought & evaluation. Of the two, the latter is the more refined. 'Equanimity is of two sorts, I tell you: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said." — *DN 21*

§ 264. "'The thirty-six emotions to which beings are attached should be known': Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? Six kinds of house-based happiness & six kinds of renunciation-based happiness; six kinds of house-based distress & six kinds of renunciation-based distress; six kinds of house-based equanimity & six kinds of renunciation-based equanimity.

"And what are the six kinds of house-based happiness? The happiness that arises when one regards as an acquisition the acquisition of forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, connected with worldly baits—or when one recalls the previous acquisition of such forms after they have passed, ceased, & changed: That is called house-based happiness. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"And what are the six kinds of renunciation-based happiness? The happiness that arises when—experiencing the inconstancy of those very forms, their change, dispassioning, & cessation—one sees with right discernment as it actually is that all forms, past or present, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change: That is called renunciation-based happiness. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"And what are the six kinds of house-based distress? The distress that arises when one regards as a non-acquisition the non-acquisition of forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, connected with worldly baits—or when one recalls the previous non-acquisition of such forms after they have passed, ceased, & changed: That is called house-

based distress. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"And what are the six kinds of renunciation-based distress? The distress coming from the longing that arises in one who is filled with longing for the unexcelled liberations when—experiencing the inconstancy of those very forms, their change, dispassioning, & cessation—he sees with right discernment as it actually is that all forms, past or present, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change and he is filled with this longing: 'O when will I enter & remain in the dimension that the noble ones now enter & remain in?' This is called renunciation-based distress. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"And what are the six kinds of house-based equanimity? The equanimity that arises when a foolish, deluded person—a run-of-the-mill, uninstructed person who has not conquered his limitations or the results of action[1] & who is blind to danger[2]—sees a form with the eye. Such equanimity does not go beyond the form, which is why it is called house-based equanimity. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"And what are the six kinds of renunciation-based equanimity? The equanimity that arises when—experiencing the inconstancy of those very forms, their change, dispassioning, & cessation—one sees with right discernment as it actually is that all forms, past or present, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change: This equanimity goes beyond form, which is why it is called renunciation-based equanimity. [Similarly with sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, & ideas.]

"'The thirty-six states to which beings are attached should be known': Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

"'With regard to them, depending on this, abandon that': Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said?

"Here, by depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation-based happiness, abandon & transcend the six kinds of house-based happiness. Such is their abandoning, such is their transcending. By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation-based distress, abandon & transcend the six kinds of house-based distress. Such is their abandoning, such is their transcending. By depending & relying on the six kinds of

renunciation-based equanimity, abandon & transcend the six kinds of house-based equanimity. Such is their abandoning, such their transcending.

"By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation-based happiness, abandon & transcend the six kinds of renunciation-based distress. Such is their abandoning, such is their transcending. By depending & relying on the six kinds of renunciation-based equanimity, abandon & transcend the six kinds of renunciation-based happiness. Such is their abandoning, such their transcending.

"There is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity; and there is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

"And what is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity? There is equanimity with regard to forms, equanimity with regard to sounds…smells…tastes…tactile sensations [& ideas: this word appears in one of the recensions]. This is equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity.

"And what is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness? There is equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of space, equanimity dependent on the sphere of the infinitude of consciousness… dependent on the sphere of nothingness… dependent on the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness.

"By depending & relying on equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness, abandon & transcend equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.

"By depending & relying on non-fashioning *[atammayatā]*, abandon & transcend the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness. Such is its abandoning, such its transcending.

"'Depending on this, abandon that': Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said." — *MN 137*

## Notes

1. See AN 3:101 (§65).

2. A person who is "blind to danger" is one who does not see the drawbacks of sensual pleasure or attachment to the body. For such a person,

moments of equanimity are usually a dull spot in the midst of the quest for sensual pleasure. This is why such moments do not go beyond the sensory stimulus that generated them.

§ 265. **Mind.** "Even if a monk is not skilled in the ways of the minds of others [not skilled in reading the minds of others], he should train himself: 'I will be skilled in reading my own mind.'

"And how is a monk skilled in reading his own mind? Imagine a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, examining the image of her own face in a bright, clean mirror or bowl of clear water: If she saw any dirt or blemish there, she would try to remove it. If she saw no dirt or blemish there, she would be pleased, her resolves fulfilled: 'How fortunate I am! How clean I am!' In the same way, a monk's self-examination is very productive in terms of skillful dhammas [if he conducts it in this way]: 'Do I usually remain covetous or not? With thoughts of ill will or not? Overcome by sloth & drowsiness or not? Restless or not? Uncertain or gone beyond uncertainty? Angry or not? With soiled thoughts or unsoiled thoughts? With my body aroused or unaroused? Lazy or with persistence aroused? Unconcentrated or concentrated?'

"If, on examination, a monk knows, 'I usually remain covetous, with thoughts of ill will, overcome by sloth & drowsiness, restless, uncertain, angry, with soiled thoughts, with my body aroused, lazy, or unconcentrated,' then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head; in the same way, the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful dhammas.

"But if, on examination, a monk knows, 'I usually remain uncovetous, without thoughts of ill will, free of sloth & drowsiness, not restless, gone beyond uncertainty, not angry, with unsoiled thoughts, with my body unaroused, with persistence aroused, & concentrated,' then his duty is to make an effort in establishing ['tuning'] those very same skillful dhammas to a higher degree for the ending of effluents." — *AN 10:51*

§ 266. "There is the case where you recollect the *Tathāgata:* 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Tathāgata. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal *[attha]*, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.…

"Then there is the case where you recollect the *Dhamma:* 'The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here-&-now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.'…

"Then there is the case where you recollect the *Saṅgha:* 'The Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well…who have practiced straight-forwardly…who have practiced methodically…who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types (of noble disciples) when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples: deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.' …

"Then there is the case where you recollect your own *virtues:* '(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, conducive to concentration.' …

"Then there is the case where you recollect your own *generosity:* 'It is a gain, a great gain for me, that—among people overcome with the stain of possessiveness—I live at home, my awareness cleansed of the stain of possessiveness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms.' …

"Then you should recollect the *devas:* 'There are the Devas of the Four Great Kings, the Devas of the Thirty-three, the Devas of the Hours, the

Contented Devas, the Devas Delighting in Creation, the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others, the Devas of Brahmā's retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever conviction they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever virtue they were endowed with… Whatever learning they were endowed with… Whatever generosity they were endowed with… Whatever discernment they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, and discernment found both in himself and the devas, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the (qualities of the) devas. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated." —*AN 11:13*

§ 267. "One develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on intent *[citta]* & the fabrications of exertion, thinking, 'This intent of mine will be neither overly sluggish nor overly active, neither inwardly constricted nor outwardly scattered.'…

"And how is intent overly sluggish? Whatever intent is accompanied by laziness, conjoined with laziness: That is called overly sluggish intent.

"And how is intent overly active? Whatever intent is accompanied by restlessness, conjoined with restlessness: That is called overly active intent.

"And how is intent inwardly constricted? Whatever intent is accompanied by sloth & drowsiness, conjoined with sloth & drowsiness. That is called inwardly constricted intent.

"And how is intent outwardly scattered? Whatever intent is stirred up by the five strings of sensuality, outwardly dispersed & dissipated: That is called outwardly scattered intent." — *SN 51:20*

§ 268. **Dhammas.** *Factors for awakening.* "Monks, on any occasion when the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to develop calm as a

factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is hard to raise up by those dhammas. Just as if a man, wanting to make a small fire blaze up, were to place wet grass in it, wet cow dung, & wet sticks; were to give it a spray of water and smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would make the small fire blaze up?"

"No, lord."

"In the same way, monks, on any occasion the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to develop calm as a factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is hard to raise up by those dhammas.

"Now, on any occasion when the mind is sluggish, that is the right time to develop analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, rapture as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is easy to raise up by those dhammas. Just as if a man, wanting to make a small fire blaze up, were to place dry grass in it, dry cow dung, & dry sticks; were to blow on it with his mouth and not smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would make the small fire blaze up?

"Yes, lord.

"In the same way, monks, on any occasion when the mind is sluggish, that is the right time to develop analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, rapture as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is easy to raise up by those dhammas.

"Now, on any occasion when the mind is restless, that is the wrong time to develop analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, rapture as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is hard to still with those dhammas. Just as if a man, wanting to put out a large fire, were to place dry grass in it, dry cow dung, & dry sticks; were to blow on it with his mouth and not smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would put it out?"

"No, lord."

"In the same way, monks, on any occasion when the mind is restless, that is the wrong time to develop analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, rapture as a factor for

awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is hard to still with those dhammas.

"Now, on occasions when the mind is restless, that is the right time to develop calm as a factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is easy to still with those dhammas. Just as if a man, wanting to put out a large fire, were to place wet grass in it, wet cow dung, & wet sticks; were to give it a spray of water and smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would put it out?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, monks, when the mind is restless, that is the right time to develop calm as a factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is easy to still with those dhammas.

"As for mindfulness, I tell you, that serves every purpose." — *SN 46:53*

§ 269. *Feeding the factors for awakening.* "Now, what is the food for the arising of unarisen *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness… once it has arisen? There are dhammas that act as a foothold for mindfulness as a factor for awakening [well-purified virtue & views made straight—SN 47:16]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *analysis of dhammas* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of dhammas… once it has arisen? There are dhammas that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of dhammas as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of dhammas… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *persistence* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the

food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *rapture* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen? There are dhammas that act as a foothold for rapture as a factor for awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *calm* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen? There is physical calm & there is mental calm. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen calm as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *concentration* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen? There are themes for tranquility, themes for non-distraction [these are the four establishings of mindfulness]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen.

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *equanimity* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity… once it has arisen? There are dhammas that act as a foothold for equanimity as a factor for awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity… once it has arisen.

*Starving the hindrances.* "Now, what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen *sensual desire,* or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen? There is the theme of unattractiveness. To foster appropriate attention to it: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen.

"And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen *ill will,* or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is awareness-release [through goodwill, compassion, empathetic joy, or equanimity]. To foster

appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen.

"And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen *sloth & drowsiness*, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen.

"And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen *restlessness & anxiety*, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is stillness of awareness. To foster appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen.

"And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen *uncertainty*, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are dhammas that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen." — *SN 46:51*

§ 270. "These are the five hindrances & obstructions that overcome awareness & weaken discernment. Which five? Sensual desire is a hindrance & obstruction that overcomes awareness & weakens discernment. Ill will… Sloth & drowsiness… Restlessness & anxiety… Uncertainty is a hindrance & obstruction that overcomes awareness & weakens discernment.…

"Suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it: If a man were to open watercourses leading off from both sides, the current in the middle of the river would be interrupted, diverted, & dispersed. The river would not go far, its current would not be swift, and it would not carry everything with it. In the same way, if a monk has not rid himself of these five hindrances… there is no possibility that he can know what is for his own benefit, or the benefit of others, or both, or that he should come to realize a superior human attainment, a truly noble knowledge & vision.…

"But suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it: If a man were to close off the watercourses leading off from both sides, the current in the middle of the river would not be interrupted, diverted, or dispersed. The river would go far, its current swift, carrying everything with it. In the same way, if a monk has rid himself of these five hindrances… there is the possibility that he can know what is for his own benefit, or the benefit of others, or both, and that he should come to realize a superior human attainment, a truly noble knowledge & vision." — *AN 5:51*

§ 271. *Hindrances: Ill will.* "These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely. Which five?

"When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop goodwill for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop compassion for that individual… equanimity toward that individual… one should pay him no mind & pay him no attention.… When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should direct one's thoughts to the fact of his being the product of his kamma: 'This venerable one is the doer of his kamma, heir of his kamma, born of his kamma, related by his kamma, and is dependent on his kamma. Whatever kamma he does, for good or for evil, to that will he fall heir.' Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

"These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely." — *AN 5:161* *[See also §160.]*

§ 272. "There are these ten ways of subduing hatred. Which ten? 1) Thinking, 'He has worked for my loss. But what should I expect?' one subdues hatred. 2) Thinking, 'He is working for my loss. But what should I expect?… 3) He is going to work for my loss. But what should I expect?… 4) He has worked for the loss of people who are dear & pleasing to me. But what should I expect?… 5) He is working for the loss of people who are dear & pleasing to me. But what should I expect?… 6) He is going to work for the loss of people who are dear & pleasing to me. But what should I

expect?… 7) He has worked for the profit of people who are not dear or pleasing to me. But what should I expect?… 8) He is working for the profit of people who are not dear or pleasing to me. But what should I expect?… 9) He is going to work for the profit of people who are not dear or pleasing to me. But what should I expect?' one subdues hatred. 10) One does not get worked up over impossibilities. These are ten ways of subduing hatred." — *AN 10:80*

§ 273. 'He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me'
–for those who brood on this,
hostility isn't stilled.

He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me'–
for those who don't brood on this,
hostility is stilled.

Hostilities aren't stilled
through hostility,
regardless.
Hostilities are stilled
through non-hostility:
this, an unending truth. — *Dhp 3–5*

§ 274. *Hindrances: Sloth & drowsiness.* Once the Blessed One was living among the Bhaggas in the Deer Park at Bhesakala Forest, near Crocodile Haunt. At that time Ven. Mahā Moggallāna [prior to his awakening] sat nodding near the village of Kallavalaputta, in Magadha. The Blessed One saw this with his purified divine eye, surpassing the human, and as soon as he saw this—just as a strong man might extend out his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Deer Park… appeared right in front of Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, and sat down on a seat laid out. Seated, the Blessed One said to Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, "Are you nodding, Moggallāna? Are you nodding?"

"Yes, lord."

"Well then, Moggallāna, whatever perception you have in mind when drowsiness descends on you, don't attend to that perception, don't pursue it. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then recall to your awareness the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it, re-examine it & ponder it over in your mind. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then repeat aloud in detail the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then pull both you earlobes and rub your limbs with your hands. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then get up from your seat and, after washing your eyes out with water, look around in all directions and upward to the major stars & constellations. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then attend to the perception of light, resolve on the perception of daytime, [dwelling] by night as by day, and by day as by night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, develop a brightened mind. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then—percipient of what lies in front & behind—set a distance to meditate walking back & forth, your senses inwardly immersed, your mind not straying outwards. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then—reclining on your right side—take up the lion's posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with your mind set on getting up. As soon as you wake up, get up quickly, with the thought, 'I won't stay indulging in the pleasure of lying down, the pleasure of reclining, the pleasure of drowsiness.'

"Thus, Moggallāna, should you train yourself." — *AN 7:58*

§ 275. *The six sense media.* Once, Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita were living near Vārāṇasī, at Isipatana in the Deer Park. Then Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita, in the late afternoon, left his seclusion and went to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Sāriputta, "Now tell me, friend Sāriputta, is the eye the fetter of forms, or are forms the fetter of the eye? Is the ear.… Is the nose.… Is the tongue.… Is the body.… Is the intellect the fetter of ideas, or are ideas the fetter of the intellect?"

"No, my friend. The eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds.… The nose is not the fetter of aromas.… The tongue is not the fetter of flavors.… The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations.… The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of the intellect. Whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there.

"Suppose that a black ox and a white ox were joined with a single collar or yoke. If someone were to say, 'The black ox is the fetter of the white ox, the white ox is the fetter of the black'—speaking this way, would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, my friend. The black ox is not the fetter of the white ox, nor is the white ox the fetter of the black. The single collar or yoke by which they are joined: That is the fetter there."

"In the same way, the eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds.…The nose is not the fetter of aromas.…The tongue is not the fetter of flavors.… The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations.… The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of the intellect. Whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there.

"If the eye were the fetter of forms, or if forms were the fetter of the eye, then this holy life for the right ending of stress & suffering would not be proclaimed. But because whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them is the fetter there, that is why this holy life for the right ending of stress & suffering is proclaimed.

"If the ear were the fetter.…

"If the nose were the fetter.…

"If the tongue were the fetter.…

"If the body were the fetter.…

"If the intellect were the fetter of ideas, or if ideas were the fetter of the intellect, then this holy life for the right ending of stress & suffering would not be proclaimed. But because whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them is the fetter there, that is why this holy life for the right ending of stress & suffering is proclaimed.

"And through this line of reasoning one may know how the eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye.… There is no desire or passion in the Blessed One. The Blessed One is well-released in mind.

"There is an ear in the Blessed One.…

"There is a nose in the Blessed One.…

"There is a tongue in the Blessed One.…

"There is a body in the Blessed One.…

"There is an intellect in the Blessed One. The Blessed One knows ideas with the intellect. There is no desire or passion in the Blessed One. The Blessed One is well-released in mind.

"It is through this line of reasoning that one may know how the eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye, but whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds.… The nose is not the fetter of aromas.… The tongue is not the fetter of flavors.… The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations.… The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of the intellect, but whatever desire-passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there." — *SN 35:191*

§ 276. Then Ven. Migajala went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "'A person living alone. A person living alone,' thus it is said. To what extent, lord, is one a person living alone, and to what extent is one a person living with a companion?"

"Migajala, there are forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire—and a monk relishes them, welcomes them, & remains fastened to them. As he relishes

them, welcomes them, & remains fastened to them, delight arises. There being delight, he is impassioned. Being impassioned, he is fettered. A monk joined with the fetter of delight is said to be a person living with a companion.

"There are sounds cognizable via the ear… aromas cognizable via the nose… flavors cognizable via the tongue… tactile sensations cognizable via the body… ideas cognizable via the intellect—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire—and a monk relishes them, welcomes them, & remains fastened to them. As he relishes them, welcomes them, & remains fastened to them, delight arises. There being delight, he is impassioned. Being impassioned, he is fettered. A monk joined with the fetter of delight is said to be a person living with a companion.

"A person living in this way—even if he frequents isolated forest & wilderness dwellings, with an unpopulated atmosphere, lying far from humanity, appropriate for seclusion—is still said to be living with a companion. Why is that? Because craving is his companion, and it has not been abandoned by him. Thus he is said to be a person living with a companion.

"Now, there are forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire—and a monk does not relish them, welcome them, or remain fastened to them. As he doesn't relish them, welcome them, or remain fastened to them, delight ceases. There being no delight, he is not impassioned. Being not impassioned, he is not fettered. A monk disjoined from the fetter of delight is said to be a person living alone.

"There are sounds cognizable via the ear… aromas cognizable via the nose… flavors cognizable via the tongue… tactile sensations cognizable via the body… ideas cognizable via the intellect—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, linked to sensual desire—and a monk does not relish them, welcome them, or remain fastened to them. As he doesn't relish them, welcome them, or remain fastened to them, delight ceases. There being no delight, he is not impassioned. Being not impassioned, he is not fettered. A monk disjoined from the fetter of delight is said to be a person living alone.

"A person living in this way—even if he lives near a village, associating with monks & nuns, with male & female lay followers, with kings & royal ministers, with sectarians & their disciples—is still said to be living alone. A person living alone is said to be a monk. Why is that? Because craving is his companion, and it has been abandoned by him. Thus he is said to be a person living alone." — *SN 35:63*

§ 277. "And how does a monk dress wounds? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or details by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful dhammas such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices for its restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. [Similarly with the other sense media.]

"This is how a monk dresses wounds." — *MN 33*

§ 278. "This is Nanda's guarding of the doors of his senses: If he should look to the east, he looks focusing his entire awareness, (thinking,) 'As I am looking thus to the east, greed & distress, evil unskillful dhammas, will not flow out.' That's how he is alert there. If he should look to the west… the north… the south… above… below… to the intermediate directions, he looks focusing his entire awareness, (thinking,) 'As I am looking thus to the intermediate directions, greed & distress, evil unskillful dhammas, will not flow out.' That's how he is alert there. This is Nanda's guarding of the doors of his senses." — *AN 8:9*

§ 279. "And how does restraint of the senses, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of the three courses of right conduct? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a pleasant form with the eye, does not hanker after it, does not delight in it, does not give rise to passion for it. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released. On seeing an unpleasant form with the eye, he is not upset, his mind is not unsettled, his feelings are not wounded, his mind does not become resentful. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released. [Similarly with the other sense media.]

"This is how restraint of the senses, when developed & pursued, leads to the culmination of the three courses of right conduct." — *SN 46:6*

§ 280. "And what is lack of restraint? There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is obsessed with pleasing forms, is repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness unestablished, with limited awareness. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release where any evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

"Hearing a sound with the ear.…

"Smelling an aroma with the nose.…

"Tasting a flavor with the tongue.…

"Touching a tactile sensation with the body.…

"Cognizing an idea with the intellect, he is obsessed with pleasing ideas, is repelled by unpleasing ideas, and remains with body-mindfulness unestablished, with limited awareness. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release where any evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

"Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope. Catching a snake, he would bind it with a strong rope. Catching a crocodile… a bird… a dog… a hyena… a monkey, he would bind it with a strong rope. Binding them all with a strong rope, and tying a knot in the middle, he would set chase to them.

"Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat. The snake would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the anthill.' The crocodile would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the water.' The bird would pull, thinking, 'I'll fly up into the air.' The dog would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the village.' The hyena would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the charnel ground.' The monkey would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the forest.' And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would submit, they would surrender, they would come under the sway of whichever among them was the strongest. In the same way, in any monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is undeveloped & unpursued, the eye pulls toward pleasing forms, while unpleasing forms are repellent. The ear pulls toward pleasing sounds.… The nose pulls toward pleasing

aromas.… The tongue pulls toward pleasing flavors.… The body pulls toward pleasing tactile sensations.… The intellect pulls toward pleasing ideas, while unpleasing ideas are repellent. This, monks, is lack of restraint.

"And what is restraint? There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is not obsessed with pleasing forms, is not repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness established, with immeasurable awareness. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release where all evil, unskillful dhammas that have arisen utterly cease without remainder. [Similarly with the other sense media.]

"Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope… and tether them to a strong post or stake.

"Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat.… And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would stand, sit, or lie down right there next to the post or stake. In the same way, in any monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is developed & pursued, the eye doesn't pull toward pleasing forms, and unpleasing forms are not repellent. The ear doesn't pull toward pleasing sounds… the nose doesn't pull toward pleasing aromas… the tongue doesn't pull toward pleasing tastes… the body doesn't pull toward pleasing tactile sensations… the intellect doesn't pull toward pleasing ideas, and unpleasing ideas are not repellent. This, monks, is restraint.

"The 'strong post or stake' is a term for mindfulness immersed in the body.

"Thus you should train yourselves: 'We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, give it a means of transport, give it a grounding. We will steady it, consolidate it, and set about it properly.' That's how you should train yourselves." — *SN 35:206* *[See also §249.]*

§ 281. *The five clinging-aggregates.* "Develop concentration, monks. A concentrated monk discerns in line with what has come to be. And what does he discern in line with what has come to be? The origination & disappearance of form. The origination & disappearance of feeling…

perception… fabrications. The origination & disappearance of consciousness.

"And what is the origination of form… feeling… perception… fabrications? What is the origination of consciousness?

"There is the case where one relishes, welcomes, & remains fastened. To what? One relishes form, welcomes it, & remains fastened to it. While one is relishing form, welcoming it, & remaining fastened to it, delight arises. Any delight in form is clinging. With that clinging as a condition there is becoming. With becoming as a condition there is birth. With birth as a condition then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all come into play. Thus is the origination of this entire mass of suffering & stress. [Similarly with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness.] …

"And what is the disappearance of form… feeling… perception… fabrications? What is the disappearance of consciousness?

"There is the case where one does not relish, welcome or remain fastened. To what? One does not relish form, welcome it, or remain fastened to it. While one is not relishing form, welcoming it, or remaining fastened to it, one's delight in form ceases. From the cessation of that delight, clinging ceases. From the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases. From the cessation of becoming, birth ceases. From the cessation of birth, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Thus is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering & stress." [Similarly with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness.] — *SN 22:5*

§ 282. *The four noble truths.* "And what is the noble truth of the origination of stress? The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., sensuality-craving, becoming-craving, and non-becoming-craving.

"And where does this craving, when arising, arise? And where, when dwelling, does it dwell? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when settling, it settles.

"And what is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving,

when arising, arises. That is where, when settling, it settles.

"The ear.... The nose.... The tongue.... The body.... The intellect....

"Forms.... Sounds.... Aromas.... Tastes.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas....

"Eye-consciousness.... Ear-consciousness.... Nose-consciousness.... Tongue-consciousness.... Body-consciousness.... Intellect-consciousness....

"Eye-contact.... Ear-contact.... Nose-contact.... Tongue-contact.... Body-contact.... Intellect-contact....

"Feeling born of eye-contact.... Feeling born of ear-contact.... Feeling born of nose-contact.... Feeling born of tongue-contact.... Feeling born of body-contact.... Feeling born of intellect-contact....

"Perception of forms.... Perception of sounds.... Perception of aromas.... Perception of tastes.... Perception of tactile sensations.... Perception of ideas....

"Intention for forms.... Intention for sounds.... Intention for aromas.... Intention for tastes.... Intention for tactile sensations.... Intention for ideas....

"Craving for forms.... Craving for sounds.... Craving for aromas.... Craving for tastes.... Craving for tactile sensations.... Craving for ideas....

"Thought directed at forms.... Thought directed at sounds.... Thought directed at aromas.... Thought directed at tastes.... Thought directed at tactile sensations.... Thought directed at ideas....

"Evaluation of forms.... Evaluation of sounds.... Evaluation of aromas.... Evaluation of tastes.... Evaluation of tactile sensations.... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when settling, it settles.

"This is called the noble truth of the origination of stress.

"And what is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless dispassioning & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

"And where, when being abandoned, is this craving abandoned? And where, when ceasing, does it cease? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"And what is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"The ear.... The nose.... The tongue.... The body.... The intellect....

"Forms.... Sounds.... Aromas.... Tastes.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas....

"Eye-consciousness.... Ear-consciousness.... Nose-consciousness.... Tongue-consciousness.... Body-consciousness.... Intellect-consciousness....

"Eye-contact.... Ear-contact.... Nose-contact.... Tongue-contact.... Body-contact.... Intellect-contact....

"Feeling born of eye-contact.... Feeling born of ear-contact.... Feeling born of nose-contact.... Feeling born of tongue-contact.... Feeling born of body-contact.... Feeling born of intellect-contact....

"Perception of forms.... Perception of sounds.... Perception of aromas.... Perception of tastes.... Perception of tactile sensations.... Perception of ideas....

"Intention for forms.... Intention for sounds.... Intention for aromas.... Intention for tastes.... Intention for tactile sensations.... Intention for ideas....

"Craving for forms.... Craving for sounds.... Craving for aromas.... Craving for tastes.... Craving for tactile sensations.... Craving for ideas....

"Thought directed at forms.... Thought directed at sounds.... Thought directed at aromas.... Thought directed at tastes.... Thought directed at tactile sensations.... Thought directed at ideas....

"Evaluation of forms.... Evaluation of sounds.... Evaluation of aromas.... Evaluation of tastes.... Evaluation of tactile sensations.... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"This is called the noble truth of the cessation of stress." — *DN 22*

CHAPTER NINE

# *Right Concentration*

Right concentration is the third concentration path-factor, and the final factor of the path as a whole. As MN 117 (§48) notes, all the other path-factors serve as its supports and requisites—although, as we will see, right concentration supports the other factors as well.

The suttas' definitions of concentration focus on two words*: cittassa ek'aggatā,* singleness of mind, and *jhāna,* absorption. However, not every case of singleness or jhāna counts as right concentration. As §290 points out, it's possible to be absorbed in sensual desire or ill will, but that sort of absorption would be wrong concentration. To count as right, concentration has to be secluded from two things: sensuality—which here, as under right resolve, means passion for sensual resolves (§147); and unskillful dhammas, which correspond to the wrong path-factors, from wrong view up through wrong mindfulness (§288). The word "secluded" here means that these dhammas are not necessarily uprooted from the mind, but they do not intrude on the state of concentration.

**Singleness of mind.** The Pāli term for singleness—*ek'aggatā*—is a compound of two words—*eka,* one, and *agga,* summit, meeting place—plus the suffix *–tā,* which would correspond to –ness in English. Because *agga* can also mean "tip" or "top-most point," this term has sometimes been translated as "one-pointedness." This translation, in turn, has lead to the interpretation that the mind in right concentration has to be reduced to a single point of awareness, in which thinking is impossible and there is no awareness of the five senses or even of the body. However, there are four reasons for assuming that *agga* here means "meeting place," in which case "singleness" would simply mean that the mind is gathered around one object, and does not have to be reduced to a single point. The reasons are these:

1) In §287, the Buddha lists five qualities that enable a person, when listening to the True Dhamma, to "alight on assuredness, on the rightness of skillful dhammas." Two of the qualities are:

> "One listens to the Dhamma with an unscattered mind, an *ek'agga* mind.
> "One attends appropriately."

Because appropriate attention means contemplating experiences in terms of the four noble truths (see §229), this passage shows that when the mind is *ek'agga*, it's not only able to hear. It can also think at the same time. If it couldn't hear or think, it couldn't make sense of the Dhamma talk. So even if we translate *ek'agga* as "one-pointed," the one-pointed mind is not so pointy that it can't think or hear sounds. This would defeat the purpose of listening to the Dhamma and would get in the way of "alighting on assuredness."

2) The similes that the suttas use to describe the fourth and highest jhāna, which we will discuss below, speak of awareness filling the body. If the purpose of jhāna were to blot out awareness of the body, the simile would have been misleading and the Buddha wouldn't have chosen to use it at all. Some writers have suggested that the word "body" in that simile means, not the physical body, but a mental body. However, §286 presents the simile in the context of its discussion of mindfulness of the body, and because "body" throughout the rest of that discussion means the physical body, it must have the same meaning here.

3) The suttas do discuss states of concentration that, when attained in a pure form, remove the meditator from all contact with the five senses. However, only the formless attainments—and never the four jhānas—are said to have this feature. So we have to conclude that a meditator doesn't necessarily lose contact with the five senses when in the four jhānas.

4) As we will see in the discussion of how jhāna is used to develop discernment, an important feature of the four jhānas is that they can be analyzed, in terms of appropriate attention, while you are still in jhāna. In fact, this is one of the primary routes to awakening. If the mind were reduced to a point so small that it couldn't think, that would close off this route to awakening.

So the evidence from the Canon indicates that *cittassa ek'aggatā*, singleness of mind, should be interpreted as a mind gathered around a single object with a full-body awareness and the ability to exercise appropriate attention—alighting on the Dhamma in the same way as a person who brings these qualities of mind to a Dhamma talk.

**Jhāna.** The standard formula for right concentration in SN 45:8 (§46) describes it as four jhānas.

> "There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.
>
> "With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance.
>
> "With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.'
>
> "With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain."

Other descriptions of jhāna in the suttas—as in AN 8:63 (§254)—mention an intermediate stage between the first and second jhāna, in which there is no directed thought but there is still a modicum of evaluation. None of the suttas explain this discrepancy, but apparently it simply reflects the fact that the mind can settle down in a variety of ways.

The jhāna formula describes the mental activities involved in each of the jhānas, but it doesn't tell you how to get into the first jhāna, nor does it even mention the object—or "theme," *nimitta*—on which the mind is focused. However, as §283 points out, the themes of right concentration are the four establishings of mindfulness, so the best place in the suttas to look for directions on how to enter the first jhāna would be in the directions

for establishing mindfulness of the body (§258; §286), or the instructions for mindfulness of breathing (§257). AN 8:63 (§163) shows that the four brahma-vihāras can serve the same purpose.

MN 125 (§255) indicates one way in which the establishing of mindfulness can lead to the first jhāna. Once you've established mindfulness, say, on the body for a long enough period of time, and with enough skill, to the point where your "distraction, fatigue, & fever" over leaving sensual memories and resolves has subsided, you then remain focused on any of the establishings of mindfulness but do not think any thoughts about your frame of reference. This, it says, brings you to the second jhāna—which indicates that, prior to that point, you were in the first jhāna. This means that the first jhāna is reached while you are skillfully settling down in any of the establishings of mindfulness.

SN 47:10 (§253) indicates another way of entering the second jhāna, which we mentioned in the preceding chapter: If the mind feels a "fever" associated with any of the four frames of reference, it can use an alternative inspiring theme—such as recollection of the Buddha—to induce a state of gladness and concentration. Once concentration is attained, you can drop that theme, and—because you are no longer engaging in directed thought and evaluation—you enter a state of concentration equivalent to the second jhāna.

Once the mind has settled down with any of these themes to the point where it resembles the description of the first or second jhāna, you can use the remaining descriptions in the jhāna formula as directions for how to deepen your concentration.

The discussions of concentration in AN 8:63 and the discussion of mindfulness of breathing in MN 118 indicate that—if jhāna is attained based on the four frames of reference or the four brahma-vihāras—there is no need to change the mind's object when moving from one jhāna to the next. What changes is simply the mind's relationship to its object and the amount of activity needed to keep the mind focused. The higher the jhāna, the less the activity and the more peaceful the concentration.

Other suttas make this point by defining the jhānas in terms of the mental activities that are present in each, with the number of activities decreasing with each higher jhāna. MN 43 (§289) defines the first jhāna in terms of five factors: directed thought, evaluation, rapture, pleasure, &

singleness of mind. As we noted in Chapter 4, the directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna are identical with noble right resolve. This shows how a certain amount of discernment is needed in order to get into the first jhāna and to stay there. MN 111 (§313) notes that directed thought and evaluation are dropped in the second jhāna; rapture is dropped in the third, while pleasure turns to equanimity-pleasure; and in the fourth jhāna, equanimity-pleasure is replaced by a feeling of equanimity and an "unconcern due to calm." In other words, the mind at that level is so calm that it feels no need to concern itself with anything at all.

MN 111 also lists other mental activities that are present in all four jhānas, although it also notes that you would need exceptional discernment—on a par with Ven. Sāriputta's—to ferret them all out. Those activities are: singleness of mind, contact, feeling, perception, intention, consciousness, desire, decision, persistence, mindfulness, equanimity, & attention. The sutta doesn't say how the equanimity in this list differs from the feeling of equanimity of the fourth jhāna, but apparently it denotes equanimity not as a feeling, but as a balanced, observant state of mind.

The suttas show that there are only two external physical correlates to the different jhānas: You can't be in the first jhāna while speaking (§315); and when you enter the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breathing grows still (footnote to §257; §315; AN 10:72).

In every case where the suttas describe the mind's progress from one level of jhāna to another, it's the result of a deliberate choice. After being established in one of the jhānas for a while, you begin to notice that it contains an element of disturbance, and that the mind's stillness would be greater if you could drop a factor of that jhāna that's relatively gross. On doing so, you enter the next higher jhāna. This doesn't mean that it's impossible to progress through the jhānas without being clearly aware of what you've done. It simply means that, for the purpose of gaining the discernment leading to awakening, it's best to be alert to what you're doing, for it's through this sort of alertness that you gain insight into the processes of fabrication.

It also means that, when moving from one jhāna to another, it's possible to engage in a moment of evaluation, however brief, to effect the move, even when moving among levels of jhāna that, in themselves, are free of directed thought and evaluation.

**Similes.** MN 119 (§286)—along with several other suttas, such as DN 2 and AN 5:28 (§296)—provides a series of similes for the four jhānas that are very helpful in getting an idea of what each jhāna entails.

> *The first jhāna:* "Just as if a dexterous bathman or bathman's apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without—would nevertheless not drip; in the same way, the monk permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion."
>
> *The second jhāna:* "Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and with the skies supplying abundant showers time & again, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate & pervade, suffuse & fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; in the same way, the monk permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration."
>
> *The third jhāna:* "Just as in a lotus pond, some of the lotuses, born & growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated & pervaded, suffused & filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; in the same way, the monk permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture."
>
> *The fourth jhāna:* "Just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; in the same way, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness."

In all of these similes, water represents pleasure; and movement, rapture. Thus the amount of water in the second and third similes, as compared to the amount in the first, indicates that the pleasure in these two jhānas is much stronger and more pervasive than the pleasure in the first. The stillness of the lotuses in the third simile, and of the sitting man in the fourth, indicate that although rapture may be refreshing on the earlier levels of jhāna, its absence—after it has done its work—is very peaceful and calm.

Other details in the similes also make important points about the differences and relationships among the jhānas. For example, the activity of the bathman in the simile for the first jhāna symbolizes the activity of directed thought and evaluation, which figures out how to spread the sense of pleasure and rapture throughout the body. This is unlike the movement of the spring water in the simile for the second jhāna, which involves no conscious effort. Also unlike the movement of the spring water, which is totally immersed in the water of the lake, the bathman is not totally immersed in the water that he is kneading into the bath powder. This symbolizes the fact that the mind is not totally immersed and surrounded by pleasure in the first jhāna, but stands somewhat apart from it. Only in the second jhāna is the mind totally immersed in a sense of oneness with its object, which is apparently the meaning of the phrase, "unification of awareness" *(cetaso ekodi-bhāva)* in the description of the second jhāna.

At the same time, however, without the efforts of the bathman, the water would not get thoroughly worked into the ball of bath powder, and there would be no body-filling pleasure into which the mind could get immersed in the second jhāna. So the work of directed thought and evaluation, instead of being a mere instability in the first jhāna, actually accomplishes a necessary task in preparing the way for the mind to enter the higher jhānas. And as MN 117 notes, in doing this work, directed thought and evaluation are performing the work of noble right resolve (§48). In this way, the simile of the bathman—who has to be sensitive to the right combination of water and bath powder—conveys a message similar to the simile of the cook in §256, who has to be sensitive to the needs and tastes of his employer. Both similes portray the work of discernment in preparing the mind to enter and remain in concentration. And, because evaluation can play a role in moving from one jhāna to a

higher one, both similes can also be applied to the work of discernment in being sensitive to what needs to be done to refine one's mastery of concentration as well.

**Formless attainments.** Many suttas, when discussing the levels of right concentration, list not only four jhānas but also five additional attainments that the suttas call the "formlessnesses beyond forms," and that modern discussions call the "formless jhānas." Because some suttas show how the discernment that leads to awakening can be gained based on any of these formless attainments, they count as right concentration, too. MN 140 (§317) explains that these attainments are simply applications of the equanimity found in the fourth jhāna to formless themes. Other passages in the Canon indicate that it's possible to attain these formless attainments without having gone through the four jhānas (§311; SN 14:11), but here we will limit our discussion to the cases in which they build on the fourth jhāna.

The standard description of these five levels is this:

> "With the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not attending to perceptions of multiplicity, (perceiving,) 'Infinite space,' he enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space.
>
> "With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) 'Infinite consciousness,' he enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness.
>
> "With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) 'There is nothing,' he enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness.
>
> "With the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, he enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.
>
> "With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling." — *AN 9:32*

Some suttas—such as MN 121 (§316) and SN 40:9—mention another stage of concentration, called the themeless concentration of awareness

*(animitta-ceto-samādhi)*, that can also be used as a basis for awakening:

> "The monk—not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness." — *MN 121*

Because this themeless concentration of awareness, like the cessation of perception and feeling, follows on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, there is the question as to whether the two stages are identical. MN 44 (§314) suggests that they're not, saying that "themeless contact" is one of the first contacts that a meditator experiences on emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling. This suggests that the themeless concentration lies on the threshold of the cessation of perception and feeling, but is not identical with it.

The description of the first of these formless attainments—the dimension of the infinitude of space—suggests that it builds on the fourth jhāna as follows: When in-and-out breathing grows still in the fourth jhāna, it doesn't fabricate a sense of the presence of the body. At that point, the only connection to the sense of the body is the mind's label or perception of "body" or "form." When that perception is dropped, there is nothing in your awareness to indicate the boundary between body and space, so what remains is a perception of "space" with no clear sense of boundary.

As §316 explains, progress through the remaining formless states follows the same pattern as progress through the four jhānas: You note an element of disturbance in the mode of perception holding you in that state and you drop it in favor of a more peaceful mode of perception.

The main difference between the four jhānas and the formless attainments is that, in the case of the four jhānas, the object remains the same while the mind's relationship to the object changes, whereas in the formless attainments, the object changes as well. As for the relationship to the object, the first two formless attainments, like all the jhānas beginning with the second, are characterized by a quality of oneness. AN 10:29 notes, however, that the oneness of consciousness is the highest state of oneness (§335). To advance to the dimension of nothingness, that sense of oneness has to be dropped. And as for the attainments beyond that, the suttas

hardly describe them at all, aside from noting that, unlike all the states up through the dimension of nothingness, they are not perception attainments (§312). To understand how to reach these attainments, they recommend, find someone who is well-practiced in them and ask how that person has experienced them.

Another difference between the four jhānas and the formless attainments, which we mentioned above, is that when you are in the formless attainments in their pure form, you have no sense of input from the five senses. However, a story from the explanations to Pārājika 4 (§308) indicates that it is possible to experience the formless attainments in an impure form, in which input from the senses, and even perceptions about that input, can be experienced at the same time. Because this impure form is attributed to Ven. Moggallāna, an arahant who was the Buddha's foremost disciple in terms of psychic powers, it ranks as a legitimate form of right concentration.

**Wrong concentration.** We have already noted one type of wrong concentration: absorption in unskillful mind-states such as sensual desire or ill will. Another type of concentration that is apparently wrong is the state of non-perception, mentioned in DN 1 and DN 15. This is an intense concentration in which the mind has blotted out all perceptions. Nowhere in the suttas is it portrayed as a basis for discernment, and DN 1 states that it can lead to a post-mortem state in which mindfulness is impossible—suggesting why it is never listed as a form of right concentration.

**The uses of concentration.** AN 4:41 (§291) lists four "developments" of concentration:

> "There is the development of concentration that, when developed & pursued, leads to a pleasant abiding in the here & now. There is the development of concentration that… leads to the attainment of knowledge & vision. There is the development of concentration that… leads to mindfulness & alertness. There is the development of concentration that, when developed & pursued, leads to the ending of effluents."

At first glance, it might seem that the developments mentioned here are four different types of concentration, but when we look at the various

passages in other suttas that describe how concentration can lead to these results, we find that they all, implicitly or explicitly, are based on the four jhānas. The difference lies in the uses to which the stillness and clarity of jhāna are applied.

• *A pleasant abiding.* This is the most immediate and visceral use for concentration: to provide a pleasure not-of-the-flesh (§261; §§292–294). This pleasure is inherent in the jhānas, and as §22 and §295 note, it's not a simple matter of pure indulgence. Without this pleasure, the mind will have no other escape from pain than through sensuality. In addition, if the mind has no access to the non-sensual pleasure of the jhānas, then no matter how much it may have contemplated the drawbacks of sensuality, it won't be able to release itself from sensual craving and clinging. In this way, the pleasure of jhāna acts as an aid to the discernment factors of the path. At the same time—given that sensuality is one of the major causes inducing people to break the precepts—access to a non-sensual pleasure strengthens your ability to follow the virtue factors of the path as well.

This means that the pleasure of jhāna plays an important role in developing all the factors of the path. In terms of the similes of the fortress in AN 7:63 (§219; §240; §293), this pleasure is the food that strengthens the gatekeeper of right mindfulness and the soldiers of right effort so that, in line with their function as described in MN 117, they can perform their duties in protecting the fortress from enemy invaders.

The drawback of this kind of pleasure is, as §309 notes, that you may find yourself so satisfied with it that you don't feel moved to put an end to any self-identity you build around it. As a result, you won't make the effort to attain true release. Much has been written about this drawback, to the point where some people are afraid even to attempt jhāna, but it's important to remember that this attachment is far less dangerous than its alternative: attachment to sensuality. It's also easier to overcome. If you keep in mind the principles of right view—that all states of concentration are fabricated, and that the only true happiness is unfabricated—you can develop concentration in the direction of the ending of the effluents, as explained below, and leave this attachment behind.

• *Knowledge & vision.* This phrase means the attainment of psychic powers, such as the ability to read minds, to know one's past lifetimes, and to see how beings die and are reborn in line with their kamma. Of the

various uses of concentration, this is the only one that is not absolutely necessary for awakening. SN 12:70, for instance, describes a number of arahants who gained full release without attaining any of these powers. As §296 notes, these powers arise, based on the practice of jhāna, "whenever there is an opening," meaning that if your kamma is such that you will attain these powers, the opening will appear, allowing you to develop them. If the opening doesn't appear, it's a sign that you have no kamma in that direction.

Even though these powers are an unnecessary part of the path, they still have their uses: It's possible, by contemplating them wisely, to use them—especially those associated with rebirth and past lifetimes—to develop a strong sense of saṁvega. Seeing the long, long course of saṁsāra portrayed graphically can be a strong incentive to desire an end to the process (§§89–90).

Still, it's important to note that the Canon, when discussing cases where monks exercise any of these powers, tends to treat the events in a humorous way, showing the drawbacks that can come from exercising these powers unwisely. In this way, it discourages undue fascination with these powers so that they don't pull you off the path.

• *Mindfulness & alertness.* When the mind is still and clear, it's in a position to see the arising and passing away of feelings, perceptions, and thoughts with great precision and clarity. This is particularly the case when directed thought and evaluation are settling the mind into the first jhāna or moving it from one jhāna to the next. This aid to alertness then functions as an aid to mindfulness, allowing it to direct ardency more quickly and accurately in its work of fulfilling the duties of right view to deal with whatever is appearing in the mind. Ultimately, the equanimity of the fourth jhāna provides such a stable and balanced foundation for mindfulness that, as the standard formula for right concentration says, the fourth jhāna is where mindfulness becomes pure.

When mindfulness and alertness are strengthened through concentration in this way, they help to keep you focused on analyzing your state of mind in terms of the four frames of reference. This helps to prevent some of the subtle defilements that can develop around concentration if you let your frame of reference shift back to the world. MN 113 (§310) points to a particular problem that can occur as you master any of the

concentration attainments: the tendency to exalt yourself over people who haven't reached that attainment. As it points out, once you build suppositions around your concentration, it turns into something else. But if you are mindful to view your attainment in terms of the four frames of reference, you can avoid fashioning a sense of self around it. Through non-fashioning—i.e., not supposing yourself in any way—you are in a position to attain the deathless.

• *The ending of effluents.* This use of concentration builds on the concentration that aids mindfulness and alertness, and refers specifically to the work of discernment in using concentration to attain total release.

As we noted under the discussion of the third and fourth tetrads of mindfulness of breathing, release happens in several stages. First, you apply the vipassanā investigation recommended in §116 to discern which factors in body and mind are preventing the mind from getting into concentration in the first place, and then focus on weighing their allure and their drawbacks so as to release the mind from those factors and replace them with more skillful ones. This is in line with the principle stated in §298, that insight is needed to get the mind into jhāna.

Once the mind is firmly in concentration, the next step is to detect which factors might arise to pull it out of concentration, and to use the same sort of strategies to undercut them. At the same time, you have to be mindful to detect and foster the qualities that keep the mind *in* steady concentration. Then the following step is to detect which factors in the lower jhānas are getting in the way of reaching the higher jhānas, and to release the mind from those as well.

Although the release on these levels is not total, the fact that you are engaged in mastering the various ways that the different jhānas are fabricated from your sense of the body, or form, along with feelings, perceptions, fabrications, and consciousness, gives you a very precise and practical experience of how these fabrications shape your experience of the present moment. This practical experience is what puts you in a position, when your concentration is solid enough, to start investigating *these* fabrications in terms of the vipassanā framework provided by §116—to see how they originate and pass away, their allure, their drawbacks, and finally the escape from them through dispassion. This is in line with the principle

paired with the above principle in §298, that jhāna is needed to develop insight.

The suttas discuss two ways in which the escape from the fabrications of jhāna can be found: either by contemplating a state of jhāna while you are in it, or by contemplating the passing away and arising of fabrications as you go between the different levels of jhāna. In both approaches, you see how jhāna, no matter how refined, is a type of becoming, and you induce dispassion for that becoming without slipping into the mistake of wishing for the jhāna not to become. Your analysis of the jhāna in terms of its building blocks simply as they have come to be, before you fashion them into another becoming (§129), is what allows you to escape the dangers of craving for becoming and craving for non-becoming. In that way, the total release can occur.

The first approach—analyzing the jhāna while you are in it—is symbolized in §296 by the man who, sitting down, observes a man who is lying down, or a man standing observing a man who is sitting. In other words, you step slightly out of the jhāna—this is especially necessary in the jhānas and formless attainments where directed thought and evaluation are absent—to observe the jhāna in terms of the aggregates. As §313 notes, you can do this sort of contemplation without totally leaving the jhāna in any of the levels of right concentration up through the dimension of nothingness.

AN 9:36 (§312) supplies more detail as to how this can be done. You analyze the jhāna to see how it is fabricated of aggregates: all five aggregates in the case of the four jhānas, and the four mental aggregates of feeling, perception, fabrications, and consciousness in the case of the formless attainments. Then you apply perceptions to those aggregates that induce dispassion for them. As this dispassion grows sufficiently strong, you incline the mind to a higher happiness, the happiness of the unfabricated. Standing right there, and—through the final level of right view and right effort—allowing that inclination to fall away, you can reach the ending of the effluents.

However, if you take delight or passion in the discernment of the deathless, you reach one of the lower noble attainments. To take delight or passion in this way is to cling, which in turn creates a subtle level of becoming, with a subtle level of self. This is why, to counteract it, the

Buddha teaches that the perception of not-self—unlike the perceptions of inconstancy and stress—must be applied not just to fabrications, but to *all* phenomena, fabricated or not (§§121–122). That way, everything can be abandoned: not just the jhāna you have been contemplating, but also the discernment, fostered by the final level of right view, that opened the way to the deathless (§138). Even the perception of not-self—because it's one of the aggregates—has to be abandoned as well. Only by completely letting go in this way can release be complete.

SN 36:11 (§315) suggests how the second approach—analyzing the fabrications that go into the jhānas while moving between them—can be done. You notice, as you go from the lower levels of jhāna to the higher ones, that the three types of fabrication fall away, in the same way that when you place a piece of rock in a smelter, the different metals in the rock—tin, lead, zinc, silver, and gold—melt out separately when their separate melting points are reached. Verbal fabrications grow still in the second jhāna, bodily fabrications grow still in the fourth, and mental fabrications grow still in the cessation of perception and feeling. Alternatively, you can watch these fabrications reactivate as you leave the higher levels of concentration and return to the lower ones (§314). In either sequence, you can then apply the same sort of contemplation to these fabrications as you would when analyzing them within a particular jhāna, and—when dispassion is strong enough—attain release.

MN 121 (§316) provides an alternative way of understanding this second approach. As you enter a particular level of concentration, you note that it's empty of some of the disturbances present in the preceding level, but that it still has a modicum of disturbance based on the perception and other concentration factors on which your current level is based. When you try to lessen the disturbance, you enter the next higher level. As you keep repeating this process, you finally reach a stage empty not only of the disturbances of concentration, but also of the disturbance of the effluents, when awakening occurs.

This process of entry into emptiness bears many similarities with the reflection on actions that the Buddha recommends to Rāhula in §45, with "harm" on that level of investigation being replaced by "disturbance" on this. This similarity underlines the wisdom of viewing concentration as a type of action, rather than as contact with a metaphysical principle.

The tendency to mistake the equanimity or non-duality of concentration for a metaphysical absolute can happen on any of the levels from the second jhāna on up, but it's especially seductive on the formless levels, such as the non-duality of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, or the equanimity of the dimensions of nothingness or neither perception nor non-perception (§§335–336). If you can be mindful instead to regard these attainments as the result of actions—and therefore fabricated—you'll have the tools for understanding how to transcend them.

**Lessons from & for discernment.** All four of these uses of concentration illustrate clearly the reciprocal relationship between the discernment path-factors on the one hand, and right concentration on the other.

When you develop concentration for the purpose of a pleasant abiding here and now, right view provides insight into fabrication that enables you to enter right concentration, while noble right resolve—in its role as directed thought and evaluation—helps you to adjust the mind and its object so that they can stay snugly together, using the resulting pleasure to saturate the body. At the same time, the discernment factors—as long as you keep them in mind—warn you not to mistake the pleasure of concentration for the higher well-being of unbinding.

If you develop concentration for the purpose of knowledge and vision, discernment reminds you to regard those powers with a detached sense of humor, so that you don't develop undue pride around them or waste time playing with them and neglecting the goal.

Similarly, when you develop concentration for the purpose of mindfulness and alertness, right view keeps you focused on seeing events as events, in terms of the four frames of reference, and prevents you from diverting your frame of reference to the world and ruining your concentration attainments by developing pride around them. Right view also provides you with a vocabulary to distinguish different kinds of events, so that you can pinpoint exactly where craving has created a location around which becoming has coalesced.

When you develop concentration for the purpose of ending the effluents, right view and right resolve help you to refine your concentration to higher and higher levels by pointing out the ways in which the various levels are

fabricated. Then, once you have mastered concentration, you can then use this same knowledge to develop dispassion for concentration on all levels—seeing it in terms of the five aggregates or the three types of fabrication—and so gain total release.

In return, each of these uses of concentration strengthens the discernment factors of the path, helping them to reach their final levels on the verge of awakening.

The pleasure that comes from the first use of concentration allows you to use your discernment effectively in overcoming attachment to sensuality.

The sense of saṁvega that can come from using psychic powers wisely can strengthen your right resolve to find a way beyond suffering.

The improved mindfulness and sharpened alertness that come from the third use of concentration can make you more sensitive to the processes of fabrication as they are happening, both so that you can clearly recognize when skillful or unskillful states are arising, and so that—as the path develops—you don't mistake a fabricated state of mind for the unfabricated.

Finally, when using concentration to put an end to the effluents, you refine your sense of what constitutes happiness, at the same time discerning the limits of how far fabrication can go. This insight inclines the mind to be willing to abandon everything it has gained from even the most skillful fabrications, in exchange for an unfabricated happiness. At the same time, it enables you to recognize the unfabricated as unfabricated when you encounter it.

### Readings

§ 283. Visākha: "Now, what is concentration, what dhammas are its themes, what dhammas are its requisites, and what is its development?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "Singleness *[ekʻaggatā]* of mind is concentration; the four establishings of mindfulness are its themes; the four right exertions are its requisites; and any cultivation, development, & pursuit of these dhammas is its development." — *MN 44*

§ 284. The Blessed One said: "Now what, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors—right view, right resolve, right

speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness—is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions." — *MN 117*

§ 285. "And what is the faculty of concentration? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, making it his object to let go, attains concentration, attains singleness of mind. Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joy & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called the faculty of concentration." — *SN 48:10*

§ 286. "Breathing in long, he [the monk] discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.' And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & concentrated. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.…

"And further, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. Just as if a dexterous bathman or bathman's apprentice

would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without—would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates… this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & concentrated. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

"Then, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and with the skies supplying abundant showers time & again,[1] so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate & pervade, suffuse & fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates… this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & concentrated. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

"Then, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a lotus pond, some of the lotuses, born & growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated & pervaded, suffused & filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so,

the monk permeates… this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & concentrated. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

"Then, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. Just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & concentrated. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body." — *MN 119*

NOTE

1. Reading, *Devo ca kālena kālaṁ sammādhāraṁ anuppaveccheyya,* with the Thai edition.

*What is singleness?*

§ 287. "Monks, endowed with five dhammas, even though listening to the True Dhamma, one is incapable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful dhammas. Which five?

"One holds the talk in contempt.

"One holds the speaker in contempt.

"One holds oneself in contempt.

"One listens to the Dhamma with a scattered mind, a mind not gathered into one *[aneḳ'agga-citto].*

"One attends inappropriately."

"Endowed with these five dhammas, even though listening to the True Dhamma, one is incapable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful dhammas.

"Endowed with (the) five (opposite) dhammas when listening to the True Dhamma, one is capable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful dhammas. Which five?

"One doesn't hold the talk in contempt.

"One doesn't hold the speaker in contempt.

"One doesn't hold oneself in contempt.

"One listens to the Dhamma with an unscattered mind, a mind gathered into one *[ek'agga-citto]*.

"One attends appropriately."

"Endowed with these five dhammas when listening to the True Dhamma, one is capable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful dhammas." — *AN 5:151*

*What is sensuality?*

§147 (see above).

§ 288. "And what, monks, are unskillful dhammas? Wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration." — *SN 45:22*

§ 289. Ven. Sāriputta: "Five factors are abandoned in the first jhāna, and with five is it endowed. There is the case where, in a monk who has attained the first jhāna, sensual desire is abandoned, ill will is abandoned, sloth & drowsiness is abandoned, restlessness & anxiety is abandoned, uncertainty is abandoned. And there occur directed thought, evaluation, rapture, pleasure, & singleness of mind." — *MN 43*

§ 290. Vassakāra the brahman: "Once, Ven. Ānanda, Master Gotama was staying near Vesālī in the Peaked Roofed Pavilion in the Great Wood. I went to him at the Peaked Roofed Pavilion in the Great Wood, and there he spoke in a variety of ways on mental absorption *[jhāna]*. Master Gotama

was both endowed with mental absorption & made mental absorption his habit. In fact, he praised mental absorption of every sort."

Ven. Ānanda: "It wasn't the case, brahman, that the Blessed One praised mental absorption of every sort, nor did he criticize mental absorption of every sort. And what sort of mental absorption did he not praise? There is the case where a certain person dwells with his awareness overcome by sensual passion, seized with sensual passion. He doesn't discern the escape, as it actually is present, from sensual passion once it has arisen. Making that sensual passion the focal point, he absorbs himself with it, besorbs, resorbs, & supersorbs himself with it.

"He dwells with his awareness overcome by ill will…

"He dwells with his awareness overcome by sloth & drowsiness…

"He dwells with his awareness overcome by restlessness & anxiety…

"He dwells with his awareness overcome by uncertainty, seized with uncertainty. He doesn't discern the escape, as it actually is present, from uncertainty once it has arisen. Making that uncertainty the focal point, he absorbs himself with it, besorbs, resorbs, & supersorbs himself with it. This is the sort of mental absorption that the Blessed One did not praise." — *MN 108*

§ 291. "There are these four developments of concentration. Which four? There is the development of concentration that, when developed & pursued, leads to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now. There is the development of concentration that… leads to the attainment of knowledge & vision. There is the development of concentration that… leads to mindfulness & alertness. There is the development of concentration that, when developed & pursued, leads to the ending of effluents.

"And what is the development of concentration that, when developed & pursued, leads to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now? There is the case where a monk [enters and remains in the four jhānas]. This is the development of concentration that… leads to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now.

"And what is the development of concentration that… leads to the attainment of knowledge & vision? There is the case where a monk attends to the perception of light and is resolved on the perception of daytime [at any hour of the day]. Day is the same as night, night is the same as day. By

means of an awareness open & unhampered, he develops a brightened mind. This is the development of concentration that… leads to the attainment of knowledge & vision.

"And what is the development of concentration that… leads to mindfulness & alertness? There is the case where feelings are known to the monk as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Perceptions are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. This is the development of concentration that… leads to mindfulness & alertness.

"And what is the development of concentration that… leads to the ending of effluents? There is the case where a monk remains focused on arising & falling away with reference to the five clinging-aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling… Such is perception… Such are fabrications… Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' This is the development of concentration that… leads to the ending of effluents.

"These are the four developments of concentration." — *AN 4:41*

§ 292. "When elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants go ahead of a wilderness tusker foraging for food and break off the tips of the grasses, the wilderness tusker feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants devour the wilderness tusker's bunches of branches, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants go ahead of the wilderness tusker on his way down to his bath and stir up the mud in the water with their trunks, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When cow-elephants go along as the wilderness tusker is bathing and bang up against his body, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted.

"Then the thought occurs to the wilderness tusker, 'I now live hemmed in by elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants. I feed off grass with broken-off tips. My bunches of branches are devoured. I drink muddied water. Even when I bathe, cow-elephants go along and bang up against my body. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?'

"So at a later time he lives alone, apart from the crowd. He feeds off grass with unbroken tips. His bunches of branches are undevoured. He drinks unmuddied water. When he bathes, cow-elephants don't go along and bang up against his body. The thought occurs to him, 'Before, I lived hemmed in by elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants. I fed off grass with broken-off tips. My bunches of branches were devoured. I drank muddied water. Even when I bathed, cow-elephants would go along and bang up against my body. But now I live alone, apart from the crowd. I feed off grass with unbroken tips. My bunches of branches are undevoured. I drink unmuddied water. When I bathe, cow-elephants don't go along and bang up against my body.' Breaking off a branch with his trunk and scratching his body with it, gratified, he allays his itch.

In the same way, when a monk lives hemmed in with monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples, the thought occurs to him, 'I now live hemmed in by monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?'

"So he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a wilderness, the shade of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a heap of straw. After his meal, returning from his alms round, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore.… Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Gratified, he allays his itch. [And similarly with the remaining levels of concentration.]" — *AN 9:40*

§ 293. "Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of grass, timber & water for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, enters & remains in the first jhāna… for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on unbinding.

"Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of rice & barley for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those

without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones… enters & remains in the second jhāna… for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on unbinding.

"Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of sesame, green gram, & other beans for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones… enters & remains in the third jhāna… for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on unbinding.

"Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of tonics—ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, molasses, & salt—for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones… enters & remains in the fourth jhāna… for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on unbinding." — *AN 7:63*

§ 294. "When a disciple of the noble ones enters & remains in seclusion & rapture, there are five possibilities that do not exist at that time: The pain & distress dependent on sensuality do not exist at that time. The pleasure & joy dependent on sensuality do not exist at that time. The pain & distress dependent on what is unskillful do not exist at that time. The pleasure & joy dependent on what is unskillful do not exist at that time. The pain & distress dependent on what is skillful do not exist at that time. *[See §204.]* When a disciple of the noble ones enters & remains in seclusion & rapture, these five possibilities do not exist at that time." — *AN 5:176*

*Concentration & Insight*

§ 295. "Even though a disciple of the noble ones has clearly seen with right discernment as it has come to be that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, still—if he has not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful dhammas, or something more peaceful than that—he can be tempted by sensuality. But when he has clearly seen with right discernment as it has come to be that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and he has attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful

dhammas, or something more peaceful than that, he cannot be tempted by sensuality." — *MN 14*

§ 296. "Now what, monks, is five-factored noble right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters and remains in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness.

"Just as if a man were sitting wrapped from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; in the same way, the monk sits, permeating his body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. This is the fourth development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

"And further, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned [well-penetrated] by means of discernment.

"Just as if one person were to reflect on another, or a standing person were to reflect on a sitting person, or a sitting person were to reflect on a person lying down; in the same way, monks, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned [well-penetrated] by means of discernment. This is the fifth development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

"When a monk has developed and pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the qualities to be known & realized that he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them right there whenever there is an opening.

"Suppose that there were a water jar, set on a stand, brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to tip it in any way at all, would water spill out?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, when a monk has developed and pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the

qualities to be known & realized that he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them right there whenever there is an opening.

"Suppose there were a rectangular water tank—set on level ground, bounded by dikes—brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to loosen the dikes anywhere at all, would water spill out?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, when a monk has developed and pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the qualities to be known & realized that he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them right there whenever there is an opening.

"Suppose there were a chariot on level ground at four crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with whips lying ready, so that a skilled driver, a trainer of tamable horses, might mount and—taking the reins with his left hand and the whip with his right—drive out and back, to whatever place and by whichever road he liked; in the same way, when a monk has developed and pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the qualities to be known & realized that he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, he wields manifold supranormal powers. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, he hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, he knows the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with his own awareness. He discerns a mind with passion as a mind with passion, and a mind without passion as a mind without passion. He discerns a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,

and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion. He discerns a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion, and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion. He discerns a restricted mind as a restricted mind, and a scattered mind as a scattered mind. He discerns an enlarged mind as an enlarged mind, and an unenlarged mind as an unenlarged mind. He discerns an excelled mind [one that is not at the most excellent level] as an excelled mind, and an unexcelled mind as an unexcelled mind. He discerns a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind, and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind. He discerns a released mind as a released mind, and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, he recollects his manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction and expansion, (recollecting,) 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus he remembers his manifold past lives in their modes and details. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, he sees—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destination, a heavenly world.' Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—he sees

beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening.

"If he wants, then with the ending of effluents, he enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here-&-now. He can witness this right there whenever there is an opening."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words. — *AN 5:28*

§ 297. "These two dhammas have a share in clear knowing. Which two? Tranquility *[samatha]* & insight *[vipassanā]*.

"When tranquility is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned.

"When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned."

"Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus from the dispassioning [fading] of passion is there awareness-release. From the dispassioning of ignorance is there discernment-release." — *AN 2:29–30*

§ 298. "If a monk would wish, 'May I attain—whenever I want, without strain, without difficulty—the four jhānas that are heightened mental states, pleasant abidings in the here-&-now,' then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

"If a monk would wish, 'May I—with the ending of effluents—remain in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for myself right in the here-&-now,' then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings." — *AN 10:71*

§ 299. "The individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, should approach an individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and ask him: 'How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquility of awareness, he should approach an individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness… and ask him, 'How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, his duty is to make an effort in establishing ['tuning'] those very same skillful dhammas to a higher degree for the ending of effluents." — *AN 4:94*

§ 300. "A monk endowed with these five dhammas is incapable of entering & remaining in right concentration. Which five? He cannot withstand [the impact of] sights, he cannot withstand sounds… aromas… tastes… tactile sensations. A monk endowed with these five dhammas is not capable of entering & remaining in right concentration.

"A monk endowed with these five dhammas is capable of entering & remaining in right concentration. Which five? He can withstand [the impact of] sights… sounds… aromas… tastes… tactile sensations. A monk

endowed with these five dhammas is capable of entering & remaining in right concentration." —*AN 5:113*

§ 301. "A monk who has not abandoned these six dhammas is incapable of entering & remaining in the first jhāna. Which six? Sensual desire, ill will, sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, uncertainty, and not seeing well with right discernment, as they have come to be, the drawbacks of sensual pleasures.…

"A monk who has not abandoned these six dhammas is incapable of entering & remaining in the first jhāna. Which six? Thoughts of sensuality, thoughts of ill will, thoughts of harmfulness, perceptions of sensuality, perceptions of ill will, perceptions of harmfulness." — *AN 6:73–74*

§ 302. "A monk endowed with these six dhammas is capable of mastering strength in concentration. Which six?

"There is the case where a monk is skilled in the attaining of concentration, in the maintenance of concentration, & in the exit from concentration. He is deliberate in doing it, persevering in doing it, and amenable to doing it.

"A monk endowed with these six dhammas is capable of mastering strength in concentration." — *AN 6:72*

§ 303. "There are these gross impurities in gold: dirty sand, gravel, & grit. The dirt-washer or dirt-washer's apprentice, having placed [the gold] in a vat, washes it again & again until he has washed them away.

"When he is rid of them, there remain the moderate impurities in the gold: coarse sand & fine grit. He washes the gold again & again until he has washed them away.

"When he is rid of them, there remain the fine impurities in the gold: fine sand & black dust. The dirt-washer or dirt-washer's apprentice washes the gold again & again until he has washed them away.

"When he is rid of them, there remains just the gold dust. The goldsmith or goldsmith's apprentice, having placed it in a crucible, blows on it again & again to blow away the dross. The gold, as long as it has not been blown on again & again to the point where the impurities are blown away, as long as it is not refined & free from dross, is not pliant, malleable, or luminous. It is

brittle and not ready to be worked. But there comes a time when the goldsmith or goldsmith's apprentice has blown on the gold again & again until the dross is blown away. The gold… is then refined, free from dross, plaint, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle, and is ready to be worked. Then whatever sort of ornament he has in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—the gold would serve his purpose.

"In the same way, there are these gross impurities in a monk intent on heightened mind: misconduct in body, speech, & mind. These the monk—aware & able by nature—abandons, destroys, dispels, wipes out of existence. When he is rid of them, there remain in him the moderate impurities: thoughts of sensuality, ill will, & harmfulness. These he… wipes out of existence. When he is rid of them there remain in him the fine impurities: thoughts of his caste, thoughts of his home district, thoughts related to not wanting to be despised. These he… wipes out of existence.

"When he is rid of them, there remain only thoughts of the Dhamma. His concentration is neither peaceful nor refined, it has not yet gained calm or attained unity, and is kept in place by the fabrication of forceful restraint. But there comes a time when his mind grows steady inwardly, settles down, grows unified & concentrated. His concentration is peaceful & refined, has gained calm & attained unity, and is no longer kept in place by the fabrication of forceful restraint. Then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening." — *AN 3:102*

§ 304. "Just as if a goldsmith or goldsmith's apprentice were to set up a smelter. Having set up the smelter, he would fire the receptacle. Having fired the receptacle, he would take hold of some gold with his tongs and place it in the receptacle. Periodically he would blow on it, periodically sprinkle it with water, periodically examine it closely. If he were solely to blow on it, it is possible that the gold would burn up. If he were solely to sprinkle it with water, it is possible that the gold would grow cold. If he were solely to examine it closely, it is possible that the gold would not come to full perfection. But when he periodically blows on it, periodically sprinkles it with water, periodically examines it closely, the gold becomes pliant, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle, and is ready to be worked.

Then whatever sort of ornament he has in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—the gold would serve his purpose.

"In the same way, a monk intent on heightened mind should attend periodically to three themes: he should attend periodically to the theme of concentration; he should attend periodically to the theme of uplifted energy; he should attend periodically to the theme of equanimity. If the monk intent on heightened mind were to attend solely to the theme of concentration, it is possible that his mind would tend to laziness. If he were to attend solely to the theme of uplifted energy, it is possible that his mind would tend to restlessness. If he were to attend solely to the theme of equanimity, it is possible that his mind would not be rightly concentrated for the ending of effluents. But when he attends periodically to the theme of concentration, attends periodically to the theme of uplifted energy, attends periodically to the theme of equanimity, his mind is pliant, malleable, luminous, and not brittle. It is rightly concentrated for the ending of effluents." — *AN 3:103*

§ 305. "Suppose there was a mountain cow—foolish, incompetent, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming on rugged mountains—and she were to think, 'What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before, to eat grass I have never eaten before, to drink water I have never drunk before!' She would lift her hind hoof without having placed her front hoof firmly and (as a result) would not get to go in a direction she had never gone before, to eat grass she had never eaten before, or to drink water she had never drunk before. And as for the place where she was standing when the thought occurred to her, 'What if I were to go where I have never been before… to drink water I have never drunk before,' she would not return there safely. Why is that? Because she is a foolish, incompetent mountain cow, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming on rugged mountains.

"In the same way, there are cases where a monk—foolish, incompetent, unfamiliar with his pasture, unskilled in… entering & remaining in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation—doesn't stick with that theme, doesn't develop it, pursue it, or establish himself firmly in it. The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, were to

enter & remain in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance.' He is not able… to enter & remain in the second jhāna.… The thought occurs to him, 'What if I… were to enter & remain in the first jhāna.… He is not able… to enter & remain in the first jhāna. This is called a monk who has slipped & fallen from both sides, like the mountain cow, foolish, incompetent, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming on rugged mountains.

"But suppose there was a mountain cow—wise, competent, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming on rugged mountains—and she were to think, 'What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before, to eat grass I have never eaten before, to drink water I have never drunk before!' She would lift her hind hoof only after having placed her front hoof firmly and (as a result) would get to go in a direction she had never gone before… to drink water she had never drunk before. And as for the place where she was standing when the thought occurred to her, 'What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before… to drink water I have never drunk before,' she would return there safely. Why is that? Because she is a wise, competent mountain cow, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming on rugged mountains.

"In the same way, there are some cases where a monk—wise, competent, familiar with his pasture, skilled in… entering & remaining in the first jhāna… sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it. The thought occurs to him, 'What if I… were to enter & remain in the second jhāna.…' Without jumping at the second jhāna, he —with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations—enters & remains in the second jhāna. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it. The thought occurs to him, 'What if I… were to enter & remain in the third jhāna'.… Without jumping at the third jhāna, he… enters & remains in the third jhāna. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it. The thought occurs to him, 'What if I… were to enter & remain in the fourth jhāna'.… Without jumping at the fourth jhāna, he… enters & remains in the fourth jhāna. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it.

"The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not attending to perceptions of multiplicity, (perceiving,) "Infinite space," were to enter & remain in the dimension of the infinitude of space.' Without jumping at the sphere of the infinitude of space, he… enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it.

"The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) "Infinite consciousness," were to enter & remain in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness.' Without jumping at the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, he… enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it.

"The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the complete transcending of the sphere of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) "There is nothing," were to enter & remain in the dimension of nothingness.' Without jumping at the dimension of nothingness, he… enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues, it & establishes himself firmly in it.

"The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, were to enter & remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Without jumping at the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he… enters & remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He sticks with that theme, develops it, pursues it, & establishes himself firmly in it.

"The thought occurs to him, 'What if I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, were to enter & remain in the cessation of perception & feeling.' Without jumping at the cessation of perception & feeling, he… enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling.

"When a monk enters & emerges from that very attainment, his mind is pliant & malleable. With his pliant, malleable mind, limitless concentration is well developed. With his well developed, limitless concentration, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know &

realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening." — *AN 9:35*

§ 306. Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "Discernment & consciousness, friend: What is the difference between these dhammas that are conjoined, not disjoined?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Discernment & consciousness, friend: Of these dhammas that are conjoined, not disjoined, discernment is to be developed, consciousness is to be fully comprehended." …

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "Friend, what can be known with the purified intellect-consciousness divorced from the five (sense) faculties?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Friend, with the purified intellect-consciousness divorced from the five faculties, the dimension of the infinitude of space can be known (as) 'infinite space,' the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness can be known (as) 'infinite consciousness,' the dimension of nothingness can be known (as) 'There is nothing.'

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "With what does one know a dhamma that can be known?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "One knows a dhamma that can be known with the eye of discernment."

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "And what is the purpose of discernment?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "The purpose of discernment is direct knowledge, its purpose is full comprehension, its purpose is abandoning." — *MN 43*

§ 307. Ven. Ānanda said, "It's amazing, friends, it's astounding, how the Blessed One who knows and sees, the worthy one, rightly self-awakened, has attained and recognized an opening in a confined place for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and distress, for the attainment of the right method, and for the realization of unbinding, where the eye will be, and those forms, and yet one will not be sensitive to that dimension; where the ear will be, and those sounds… where the nose will be, and those aromas… where the tongue will be, and those flavors… where the body will be, and those tactile sensations, and yet one will not be sensitive to that dimension."

When this was said, Ven. Udāyin said to Ven. Ānanda, "Is one percipient when not sensitive to that dimension, my friend, or unpercipient?"

"One is percipient when not sensitive to that dimension, my friend, not unpercipient."

"When not sensitive to that dimension, my friend, one is percipient of what?"

"There is the case where, with the complete transcending of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not attending to perceptions of multiplicity, (perceiving,) 'Infinite space,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. Percipient in this way, one is not sensitive to that dimension [i.e., the dimensions of the five physical senses].

"And further, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) 'Infinite consciousness,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. Percipient in this way, too, one is not sensitive to that dimension.

"And further, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) 'There is nothing,' one enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. Percipient in this way, too, one is not sensitive to that dimension.

"Once, friend, when I was staying in Sāketa at the Game Refuge in the Black Forest, the nun Jaṭila-Bhāgikā went to where I was staying, and on arrival—having bowed to me—stood to one side. As she was standing there, she said to me: 'The concentration whereby—neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed—still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of what?'

"I said to her, 'Sister, the concentration whereby—neither pressed down nor forced back, nor kept in place by the fabrications of forceful restraint—still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of gnosis [arahantship].' Percipient in this way, too, one is not sensitive to that dimension." — *AN 9:37*

§ 308. Then Ven. Mahā Moggallāna addressed the monks: "Just now, friends, having attained the imperturbable concentration on the bank of the Sappinikā River, I heard the sound of elephants plunging in, crossing over, & making a trumpeting call."

The monks were offended and annoyed and spread it about, "Now, how can Ven. Moggallāna say, 'Just now, friends, having attained the imperturbable concentration on the bank of the Sappinikā River, I heard the sound of elephants plunging in, crossing over, & making a trumpeting call'? He's claiming a superior-human state." They reported this matter to the Blessed One, (who said,) "There is that concentration, monks, but it is not purified. Moggallāna spoke truly, monks. There is no offense for him." — *Pr 4*

§ 309. "Just as if a man were to grasp a branch with his hand smeared with resin, his hand would stick to it, grip it, adhere to it; in the same way, the monk enters & remains in a certain peaceful awareness-release. He attends to the cessation of self-identification, but as he is attending to the cessation of self-identification his mind doesn't leap up, grow confident, steadfast, or firm in the cessation of self-identification. For him the cessation of self-identification is not to be expected.…

"Just as if a man were to grasp a branch with a clean hand, his hand would not stick to it, grip it, or adhere to it; in the same way, the monk enters & remains in a certain peaceful awareness-release. He attends to the cessation of self-identification, and as he is attending to the cessation of self-identification his mind leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & firm in the cessation of self-identification. For him the cessation of self-identification is to be expected.

"Just as if there were a waste-water pool that had stood for countless years, where a man were to block all the inlets and open all the outlets, and the sky were to not rain down in good streams of rain: The breaching of the waste-water pool's embankment would not be expected; in the same way, the monk enters & remains in a certain peaceful awareness-release. He attends to the breaching of ignorance, but as he is attending to the breaching of ignorance his mind doesn't leap up, grow confident, steadfast, or firm in the breaching of ignorance. For him the breaching of ignorance is not to be expected.

"Just as if there were a waste-water pool that had stood for countless years, where a man were to open all the inlets and block all the outlets, and the sky were to rain down in good streams of rain: The breaching of the waste-water pool's embankment would be expected; in the same way, the monk enters & remains in a certain peaceful awareness-release. He attends to the breaching of ignorance, and as he is attending to the breaching of ignorance his mind leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & firm in the breaching of ignorance. For him the breaching of ignorance is to be expected." — *AN 4:178*

§ 310. "A person of no integrity… enters & remains in the first jhāna. He notices, 'I have gained the attainment of the first jhāna, but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the first jhāna.' He exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhāna and disparages others. This is the dhamma of a person of no integrity.

"A person of integrity notices, 'The Blessed One has spoken of non-fashioning *[atammayatā]* even with regard to the attainment of the first jhāna, for by whatever means they suppose it, it becomes otherwise from that.' So, making non-fashioning his focal point, he neither exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhāna nor disparages others. This is the dhamma of a person of integrity.

[Similarly with the other levels of jhāna up through the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.]

"A person of integrity, completely transcending the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. When he sees with discernment, his effluents are ended. This is a monk who doesn't suppose anything, doesn't suppose anywhere, doesn't suppose in any way." — *MN 113*

§ 311. "And further, Ānanda, the disciple of the noble ones, having gone into the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or into an empty dwelling, considers this: 'This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self.' Practicing & frequently abiding in this way, his mind acquires confidence in that dimension. There being full confidence, he either attains the dimension of nothingness now or else is committed to discernment. With the break-up

of the body, after death, it's possible that this leading-on consciousness of his will go to the dimension of nothingness….

"There is the case, Ānanda, where a monk, having practiced in this way—(thinking,) 'It should not be and it should not occur to me; it will not be; it will not occur to me. What is, what has come to be, that I abandon'—obtains equanimity. He relishes that equanimity, welcomes it, remains fastened to it. As he relishes that equanimity, welcomes it, remains fastened to it, his consciousness is dependent on it, clings to it. With clinging, Ānanda, a monk is not totally unbound."

"In clinging, where does that monk cling?"

"The dimension of neither perception nor non-perception."

"Then, indeed, in clinging, he clings to the supreme clinging."

"In clinging, Ānanda, he *does* cling to the supreme clinging; for this—the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—is the supreme clinging. There is (however,) the case where a monk, having practiced in this way—'It should not be and it should not occur to me; it will not be; it will not occur to me. What is, what has come to be, that I abandon'—obtains equanimity. He doesn't relish that equanimity, doesn't welcome it, doesn't remain fastened to it. As he doesn't relish that equanimity, doesn't welcome it, doesn't remain fastened to it, his consciousness is not dependent on it, doesn't cling to/is not sustained by it. Without clinging/sustenance, Ānanda, a monk is totally unbound."

"It's amazing, lord. It's astounding. For truly, the Blessed One has declared to us the way to cross over the flood by going from one support to the next. But what is the noble liberation?"

"There is the case, Ānanda, where a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'Sensuality here-&-now; sensuality in lives to come; sensual perceptions here-&-now; sensual perceptions in lives to come; forms here-&-now; forms in lives to come; form-perceptions here-&-now; form-perceptions in lives to come; perceptions of the imperturbable; perceptions of the dimension of nothingness; perceptions of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception: That is an identity, to the extent that there is an identity. This is deathless: the liberation of the mind through lack of clinging/sustenance.'" — *MN 106*

§ 312. "Suppose that an archer or archer's apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: 'This is peace, this is exquisite—the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.'

"Staying right there, he reaches the ending of effluents. Or, if not, then—through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the five lower fetters [self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices, sensual passion, and irritation]—he is due to arise spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.… [Similarly with the second, third, and fourth jhāna.]

"… Suppose that an archer or archer's apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: 'This is peace, this is exquisite — the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.'

"Staying right there, he reaches the ending of effluents. Or, if not, then—through this very Dhamma-passion, this very Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the five lower fetters—he is due to arise spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never

again to return from that world.… [Similarly with the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness and the dimension of nothingness.]

"Thus, as far as the perception-attainments go, that is as far as gnosis-penetration goes. As for these two dimensions—the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception & the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling—I tell you that they are to be rightly explained by those monks who are meditators, skilled at attainment, skilled at attainment-emergence, who have attained & emerged in dependence on them." — *AN 9:36*

§ 313. "Monks, Sāriputta is wise, of great discernment, deep discernment, wide… joyous… rapid… quick… penetrating discernment. For half a month, Sāriputta clearly saw insight *[vipassanaṁ vipassi]* into dhammas one after another. This is what occurred to Sāriputta through insight into dhammas one after another:

"There was the case where Sāriputta—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Whatever dhammas there are in the first jhāna—directed thought, evaluation, rapture, pleasure, singleness of mind, contact, feeling, perception, intention, consciousness, desire, decision, persistence, mindfulness, equanimity, & attention—he ferreted them out one after another. Known to him they arose, known to him they became established, known to him they subsided. He discerned, 'So this is how these dhammas, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.' He remained unattracted & unrepelled with regard to those dhammas, independent, detached, released, dissociated, with an awareness rid of barriers. He discerned that 'There is a further escape,' and pursuing it, he confirmed that 'There is.' [Similarly with the remaining concentration attainments up through the dimension of nothingness, although with the second jhāna, directed thought & evaluation are dropped from the list; with the third jhāna, rapture drops out and pleasure becomes equanimity-pleasure; with the fourth jhāna, equanimity-pleasure becomes a feeling of equanimity and an unconcern due to calmness; with each of the formless dimensions, the feeling of equanimity and unconcern due to calmness is replaced with the

relevant dimension, although equanimity remains toward the end of the list in each case.]

"And further, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, Sāriputta entered & remained in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He emerged mindfully from that attainment. On emerging mindfully from that attainment, he regarded the past dhammas that had ceased & changed: 'So this is how these dhammas, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.' He remained unattracted & unrepelled with regard to those dhammas, independent, detached, released, dissociated, with an awareness rid of barriers. He discerned that 'There is a further escape,' and pursuing it, he confirmed that 'There is.'

"And further, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, Sāriputta entered & remained in the cessation of feeling & perception. And when he saw with discernment, his fermentations were totally ended. He emerged mindfully from that attainment. On emerging mindfully from that attainment, he regarded the past dhammas that had ceased & changed: 'So this is how these dhammas, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.' He remained unattracted & unrepelled with regard to those dhammas, independent, detached, released, dissociated, with an awareness rid of barriers. He discerned that 'There is no further escape,' and pursuing it, he confirmed that 'There isn't.'" — *MN 111*

§ 314. Visākha: "But when a monk is attaining the cessation of perception & feeling, which things cease first: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, or mental fabrications?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "When a monk is attaining the cessation of perception & feeling, friend Visākha, verbal fabrications cease first, then bodily fabrications, then mental fabrications." …

Visākha: "But when a monk is emerging from the cessation of perception & feeling, which things arise first: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, or mental fabrications?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "When a monk is emerging from the cessation of perception & feeling, friend Visākha, mental fabrications arise first, then bodily fabrications, then verbal fabrications."

Visākha: "When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, lady, how many contacts make contact?"

Sister Dhammadinnā: "When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, friend Visākha, three contacts make contact: contact with emptiness, contact with the themeless, & contact with the undirected." — *MN 44*

§ 315. "And I have also taught the step-by-step cessation of fabrications. When one has attained the first jhāna, speech has ceased. When one has attained the second jhāna, directed thoughts & evaluations [verbal fabrications] have ceased. When one has attained the third jhāna, rapture has ceased. When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breathing [bodily fabrication] has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of space, the perception of forms has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of neither-perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has ceased. When one has attained the cessation of perception & feeling, perception & feeling [mental fabrications] have ceased. When a monk's effluents have ended, passion has ceased, aversion has ceased, delusion has ceased." — *SN 36:11*

§ 316. "Just as this palace of Migāra's mother is empty of elephants, cattle, & mares, empty of gold & silver, empty of assemblies of women & men, and there is only this non-emptiness—the singleness based on the Saṅgha of monks; even so, Ānanda, a monk—not attending to the perception [mental note] of village, not attending to the perception of human being—attends to the singleness based on the perception of wilderness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of village are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of

wilderness.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of village. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Further, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of human being, not attending to the perception of wilderness—attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth. Just as a bull's hide is stretched free from wrinkles with a hundred stakes, even so—without attending to all the ridges & hollows, the river ravines, the tracts of stumps & thorns, the craggy irregularities of this earth—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of wilderness are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of wilderness. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Further, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of wilderness, not attending to the perception of earth—attends to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space… to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness… to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of nothingness…to the singleness based on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception… to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its themeless concentration of awareness.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of the dimension of nothingness are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of nothingness. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. There is only this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Further, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its themeless concentration of awareness.

"He discerns that 'This themeless concentration of awareness is fabricated & mentally fashioned.' And he discerns that 'Whatever is fabricated & mentally fashioned is inconstant & subject to cessation.' Thus knowing, thus seeing, his heart is released from the effluent of sensuality, the effluent of becoming, the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances would exist based on the effluent of sensuality…the effluent of becoming…the effluent of ignorance, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the effluent of sensuality…becoming…ignorance. And there is just this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is

this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, pure—superior & unsurpassed.

"Ānanda, whatever contemplatives and brahmans who in the past entered & remained in an emptiness that was pure, superior, & unsurpassed, they all entered & remained in this very same emptiness that is pure, superior, & unsurpassed. Whatever contemplatives and brahmans who in the future will enter & remain in an emptiness that will be pure, superior, & unsurpassed, they all will enter & remain in this very same emptiness that is pure, superior, & unsurpassed. Whatever contemplatives and brahmans who at present enter & remain in an emptiness that is pure, superior, & unsurpassed, they all enter & remain in this very same emptiness that is pure, superior, & unsurpassed.

"Therefore, Ānanda, you should train yourselves: 'We will enter & remain in the emptiness that is pure, superior, & unsurpassed.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Ānanda delighted in the Blessed One's words. — *MN 121*

§ 317. "There remains only equanimity: pure & bright, pliant, malleable, & luminous. Just as if a dexterous goldsmith or goldsmith's apprentice were to prepare a furnace, heat up a crucible, and, taking gold with a pair of tongs, place it in the crucible: He would blow on it time & again, sprinkle water on it time & again, examine it time & again, so that the gold would become refined, well-refined, thoroughly refined, flawless, free from dross, pliant, malleable, & luminous. Then whatever sort of ornament he had in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—it would serve his purpose. In the same way, there remains only equanimity: pure & bright, pliant, malleable, & luminous. One discerns that 'If I were to direct equanimity as pure & bright as this toward the dimension of the infinitude of space, I would develop the mind along those lines, and thus this equanimity of mine—thus supported, thus sustained—would last for a long time. One discerns that 'If I were to direct equanimity as pure and bright as this toward the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness… the dimension of nothingness… the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, I would develop the mind along those lines, and thus this equanimity of mine—thus supported, thus sustained—would last for a long time.'

"One discerns that 'If I were to direct equanimity as pure & bright as this toward the dimension of the infinitude of space and to develop the mind along those lines, that would be fabricated. One discerns that 'If I were to direct equanimity as pure and bright as this toward the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness… the dimension of nothingness… the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception and to develop the mind along those lines, that would be fabricated.' One neither fabricates nor mentally fashions for the sake of becoming or un-becoming. This being the case, one doesn't cling to anything in the world. Not clinging, one is not agitated. Unagitated, one is totally unbound right within. One discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"Sensing a feeling of pleasure, one discerns that it is fleeting, not grasped at, not relished. Sensing a feeling of pain.… Sensing a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one discerns that it is fleeting, not grasped at, not relished. Sensing a feeling of pleasure, one senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain.… Sensing a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one senses it disjoined from it. When sensing a feeling limited to the body, one discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.' When sensing a feeling limited to life, one discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to life.' One discerns that 'With the break-up of the body, after the termination of life, all that is experienced, not being relished, will grow cold right here.'

"Just as an oil lamp burns in dependence on oil & wick; and from the termination of the oil & wick—and from not being provided any other sustenance—it goes out unnourished; in the same way, when sensing a feeling limited to the body, one discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.' When sensing a feeling limited to life, one discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to life.' One discerns that 'With the break-up of the body, after the termination of life, all that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here.'

"Thus a monk so endowed is endowed with the highest determination for discernment, for this—the knowledge of the passing away of all suffering & stress—is the highest noble discernment.

"His release, being founded on truth, does not fluctuate, for whatever is deceptive is false; unbinding—the undeceptive—is true. Thus a monk so

endowed is endowed with the highest determination for truth, for this—unbinding, the undeceptive—is the highest noble truth." — *MN 140*

CHAPTER TEN

# *The Stream to Unbinding*

As we have seen, as the path develops, the various path-factors support and strengthen one another to the point where they overlap. This tendency becomes more pronounced when right concentration has been sufficiently mastered that discernment can analyze it for the purpose of going beyond it. At that point, all eight factors of the noble path are present and begin to coalesce into one: Right view is what analyzes the state of concentration in terms of fabrication; right resolve aims at using the analysis to gain higher levels of happiness; right speech, right action, and right livelihood are present in the sense that the wrong versions of these path-factors are absent; right effort abandons everything that right view sees as leading to suffering, and right mindfulness directs the activities of all the other factors.

As right view develops to its highest level—in which all fabrications are abandoned—right effort also develops to its highest level, in which even the choices of staying in place and moving are also abandoned. As the path-factors converge on their highest level, their coalescence becomes complete. This brings about a moment, called the stream (§319), in which everything is dropped—no intentions are formed, and even the act of attention falls away. This stream then flows to an opening to the unfabricated.

As AN 9:36 (§312) points out, if there is no passion or delight for the Dhamma experienced at this point, the resulting awakening will be complete. However, if the mind latches on to any passion or delight for the deathless, it will attain only a lesser level of awakening. AN 9:36 identifies that level as non-return, the third level of awakening, but other suttas indicate that even with stream-entry, the first level of awakening, there is a vision of the deathless (§§320–321).

The texts describe this vision as the arising of the Dhamma eye. What the Dhamma eye sees is described in a standard formula throughout the

Canon: "Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation." At first glance, this may not seem to be that remarkable an insight. However, the texts make clear that this insight is not a matter of belief, reflection, or inference, but of direct seeing. And for this insight to arise spontaneously in the mind, there must be a glimpse not only of the causal nature of phenomena, but also of what stands in opposition to "all that is subject to origination"—i.e., something *not* subject to origination: the unfabricated—deathlessness.

As a result of this vision, three fetters fall away from the mind: uncertainty, self-identity views, and grasping at habits and practices.

• The glimpse of the deathless is what does away with *uncertainty:* You see for sure that the Buddha was right, that the noble eightfold path does lead to the end of suffering and stress, and that no other path could possibly lead there (§323).

• The fact that none of the aggregates are present in the experience of the deathless is what does away with *self-identity views*. From this point on, you will see no compulsion to construct a self-identity in any way around any of the aggregates. As §110 shows, this means that you won't see yourself as any of the aggregates, as owning any of the aggregates, as being within any of the aggregates, or as having any of the aggregates within you. This last option rules out even the possibility of identifying with the idea of an infinite or interconnected self that contains or surrounds the aggregates. As §229 shows, the abandoning of self-identity views means that not only do you abandon the idea that "I have a self," but also the idea that "I don't have a self." You lose interest in questions about the existence or non-existence of the self.

• The fact that you have seen the futility of engaging in questions about the existence of the self means that you will no longer construct a sense of self around your activities. In the words of §164, you will still be virtuous, but you won't define yourself around your virtues, exalting yourself for following the precepts or disparaging others for not. This is what does away with *grasping at habits and practices*.

However, even though the mind is freed from these three fetters, it is not totally unfettered, for the texts identify a total of ten fetters that keep the mind bound to the processes of further becoming. In addition to the first three, these are: sensual desire, ill will, passion for form, passion for

what is formless, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance (§324). Only on the fourth level of awakening, arahantship, do all ten fetters fall away. As a number of suttas say, on the lower levels of awakening you may have seen the Dhamma, but you don't yet dwell "touching it with your body" (§323; §326). In other words, you have yet to experience it in a lasting, all-around way. This means that there is more work to be done.

**The arahant's path.** Different passages from the suttas indicate the nature of this work in different ways. Some of them, such as Ven. Khemaka's simile in §327, focus on the issue raised above, in conjunction with AN 9:36: As long as there is still a sense of passion and delight in the Dhamma, that passion creates a subtle level of becoming, with a subtle level of self. Even though this self is not identified with any of the aggregates, as "I am this," there is still a lingering sense of "I am." Ven. Khemaka compares this lingering sense to the scent of a cleaning agent that lingers in a cloth after it has been washed. In other words, even though you no longer define yourself around the aggregates or even around the virtues you have fully mastered, a sense of self still lingers around the activities of the path that need to be further developed. Only when they are fully developed will the scent go away.

According to §325, the factors that remain to be developed are concentration and discernment, which for a stream-enterer have been developed only to a moderate degree. This point is supported by MN 117's description of the arahant's tenfold path, together with SN 48:46's description of how the extra path-factors are developed. According to MN 117 (§48), the arahant's path contains all the factors of the noble eightfold path plus two more: right knowledge and right release. SN 48:46 (§330) indicates that these two factors are developed through a noble level of, respectively, the faculties of discernment and concentration.

*Right knowledge* is never explicitly defined in the suttas. However, the descriptions of full awakening scattered through the suttas show that it consists of several components: First is knowledge that the duties with regard to the four noble truths have been completed (§106). Second is the knowledge that the effluents have also been comprehended under the same fourfold rubric as the four truths about suffering: the effluents themselves, the origination of effluents, the cessation of effluents, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of effluents (§30; §333). This removes the

effluents that remain in the mind after stream-entry: sensuality, becoming, and ignorance.

This knowledge leads to *right release*, which §307, in harmony with §329, describes as a type of concentration: "the concentration whereby—neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed—still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated."

This concentration is called the unprovoked awareness-release (§7; §§338–339). "Awareness-release" is a term used throughout the Canon to indicate states of concentration, based on the fact that, in ordinary concentration, the mind is temporarily liberated from passion for sensuality. However, the unprovoked awareness-release is totally liberated from passion once and for all.

The reason why such a release is called "unprovoked" comes from the Buddhist theory of *dhātu*, or properties, underlying events in nature and in the mind. According to this theory, the physical properties are four: earth (solidity), liquid, heat, and wind (motion). Three of them—liquid, heat, and wind—are potentially active. When they are aggravated, agitated, or provoked—the Pāli term here, *'pakuppati'*, is used also on the psychological level, where it means angered or upset—they act as the underlying cause for natural activity. When the provocation ends, the corresponding activity subsides (see §115).

A similar theory attributes the irruption of mental states to the provocation of the properties of sensuality, form, or formlessness (SN 14:12).

Even unbinding is described as a property (§360). However, there is a crucial distinction in how unbinding is attained, in that the unbinding property is never provoked. Any events that depend on the provocation of a property are inherently unstable and inconstant, subject to change when the provocation ends. But because true release is not caused by the provocation of anything, it is not subject to change.

This is where the unprovoked awareness-release differs from other attainments that are sometimes mistaken for it. The Canon lists two examples of these wrong forms of release—wrong, that is, only when they are mistaken for total release: the attainment of a universal perception of white, in which all forms, inside and out, seem to glow with a white light;

and the attainment of the non-dual totality of consciousness (§335). These attainments are high-level states of concentration but, like all the jhānas and formless attainments, they are fabricated and so subject to change. Although they are conducive to liberation, it's necessary to develop dispassion even for them if you are to reach genuine release.

As §336 points out—and here it corroborates the lessons of §312 and §327—passion for attainments like these involves a subtle sense of "I am," and that sense, which corresponds to the fetter of conceit, is precisely what taints the attainment with clinging and so with a subtle level of stress. The duty thus falls to discernment to ferret out and destroy the last remnant of ignorance around that clinging.

This is why the standard description of an arahant's release calls it both an awareness-release and a discernment-release (§325; §334), in that discernment is needed to ensure that the awareness-release is unprovoked. In other words, it's not the case that awareness-release is one thing, and discernment-release something else. As §340 points out, discernment-release is a release in which discernment thoroughly comprehends any of the levels of jhāna or the formless attainments after they have been attained. And as §312 shows, this thorough comprehension includes comprehension even of the passion that might arise with the resulting experience of the deathless. When that passion is finally comprehended—and there is no passion even for dispassion (§358)—then the last remaining sense of "I am" is uprooted. At that point, the path—even the discernment that enabled you to reach dispassion—is also abandoned. And with the total abandoning of everything, total awakening is reached.

**After awakening.** In the standard descriptions of the realizations that follow on awakening, the first thing noticed, after the fact of release, is that there is no more birth (§30; §123; §137; §231; §254; §§316–317). This is because there is no more craving to create a location—in any of the possible stations of consciousness or dimensions (§341)—to act as a nucleus or seed of becoming. This explains why an arahant is described as "everywhere released" (§342). Such a person is also totally undefined. As §111 and §113 note, beings are defined by their obsessions and passions. With no remaining obsessions or passions, there is no way that an arahant can be defined even as a "being." It's for this reason that the Buddha was so consistent in putting aside the question of whether a fully awakened

person, after death, could be described as existing, not existing, both, or neither (§132; §348): When you can't even say *what* a person is, there's no way of discussing whether or not that "what" exists. Because beings are also defined by their need to feed (§112), the fact that arahants do not qualify as beings means that their attainment is hunger-free (§376). Totally freed, even from the bounds of definition, arahants are totally unbound.

In line with the fact that "unbinding" refers to the extinguishing of a fire, §360 compares a living arahant to a fire with fuel remaining, and an arahant after death to a fire with no fuel remaining. AN 6:43 (§361) expands on this image by comparing the living arahant to a fire that has gone out but whose embers are still warm. The passage doesn't complete the image, but the implication is that an arahant after death is like a fire that has gone so totally out that its embers have grown cold.

While the embers are still warm, arahants still experience things as pleasing and displeasing, and they are still sensitive to pleasure and pain, but as §22, §317, and §359 note, they experience these things disjoined from them. They still act on intentions, but they have learned to "burn" any seed created by those intentions, so that they are no longer creating any kamma that will result in future becoming (§344). This is one of the reasons why unbinding is said to be the end of kamma.

Even though there is no more work for arahants to do in terms of the path, they still practice factors of the path, both for the sake of others—the suttas are filled with stories of the Buddha and his arahant disciples practicing concentration so as to help in the work of spreading the Dhamma—as well as for their own sake: to foster mindfulness and alertness, and a pleasant abiding in the here and now. For instance, they still engage in the perceptions conducive to dispassion for the aggregates (§347), and they continue practicing the establishings of mindfulness and jhāna (§§345–346), although the formula describing their mindfulness practice is different from the standard formula for those still on the path:

> "They remain focused on the body in & of itself… feelings in & of themselves… the mind in & of itself… dhammas in & of themselves—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & gathered into one, disjoined from the body." — *SN 47:4*

In particular, notice that, on this level, the arahant experiences the frame of reference disjoined from it. At the same time, because mindfulness and concentration are fully mastered at this level, mindfulness is not mentioned in this formula, and concentration is automatic. Also, there is no need to subdue greed and distress with reference to the world because all greed and distress are gone.

As for the experience of unbinding, the texts repeatedly emphasize that it cannot be properly defined (§§350–351). Even the attempt to ask whether there is anything remaining or not remaining in that attainment, they say, is an example of objectification (§349), i.e., the type of thinking that builds on the perception, "I am the thinker" (Sn 4:14). Because this type of thinking simply leads to more becoming, speculations of this sort can actually get in the way of reaching unbinding.

Nonetheless, the suttas do describe several aspects of unbinding, enough to show that it is a worthwhile goal. Five of these aspects stand out, corresponding to the epithets for unbinding listed in SN 43 (§380) and scattered through several other passages of the Canon.

• The first aspect is that unbinding is experienced as a type of *consciousness* (§370). This consciousness is said to be "without surface," meaning that it makes contact with no object at all, not even consciousness itself. SN 22:87 terms this "unestablished consciousness." SN 12:64 explains these designations with a simile: a beam of light that lands nowhere, causing nothing to reflect it. This is why one of the epithets for unbinding is "the surfaceless."

Unlike the consciousness aggregate, consciousness without surface is not known through the six senses. This is why unbinding is said to be subtle and hard-to-see (§380). Yet because this consciousness is a form of knowing, §348 states that it is a mistake to say that arahants do not know or see. In fact, arahants know and see to such a heightened pitch that they are beyond uncertainty and even the need for conviction (§328; §369; SN 48:44).

Consciousness without surface is also unlike the consciousness aggregate in that it is totally outside of space and time. This is why §§373–374 state that it contains no coming nor going nor staying in place, as these activities would assume time; and that it has no here nor there nor between-the-two, as these concepts assume space. Existing outside of space

and time, this consciousness is endless, which is why it's also called "unrestricted awareness" and the "unprovoked awareness-release" (§338; §378). Although this consciousness is luminous, it should not be confused with the radiant mind of AN 1:51–52 because, unlike that mind, this consciousness can be neither developed nor defiled. And as we noted above, it should not be confused with the non-dual consciousness totality nor with the perception of whiteness, because those states are fabricated, whereas consciousness without surface is not.

• This relates to the second aspect of unbinding: its *truth*. Because it is unfabricated, it doesn't change into anything else. Ever. After all, it is outside of time. This is why §376 calls it undeceptive; §374 calls it unwavering; §380 calls it permanence, ageless, undecaying, deathless, unbent (i.e., not tending in any direction), and true. Because unbinding is a state *(pada)* rather than a being *(satta)*, it does not have to be defined by attachment, so the texts do not hesitate to say that it unequivocally "is" (§373). MN 140 (§317) calls it the highest noble truth.

Because unbinding is so changeless, the person who attains it is "Such," i.e., unagitated, independent, unaffected by the arising or passing away of anything related to the six senses (§360). Unlike equanimity, which is an activity of the mind, Suchness involves no effort or activity at all. This is another reason why unbinding is said to be the ending of kamma. Because it is effortless, this Suchness lies beyond questions of control and lack of control, which is why questions of self and not-self are also irrelevant when applied to the awakened one. Such a person is simply Such.

• The third positive aspect of unbinding is that it is the ultimate *sukha*—a term that can be translated as pleasure, happiness, ease, or bliss. Unbinding, as experienced in this lifetime, is invariably described as pleasurable. This is why §380 calls unbinding bliss, the exquisite, and the unafflicted. Just as consciousness without surface is totally apart from the consciousness aggregate, the bliss of unbinding is totally apart from the pleasure that comes under the feeling aggregate. Given that unbinding is unfabricated, it has no need for nutriment. Thus this bliss has nothing lacking, which is another reason why the arahant is said to be hunger-free (§376). And because this bliss is unconditioned, it's not affected even by the arahant's death, which is why §380 calls unbinding peace, rest, the secure, security, island, shelter, harbor, and refuge.

• However, even though unbinding is pleasant, arahants do not cling to this pleasure, and so they are not limited by it. This is why they are said to be beyond both pleasure and pain (§377), and also why they are said to be free: free from the slightest disturbance, free from fabrication, free from the fires of passion, aversion, and delusion, free even from passion for dispassion (§§357–358), and—as noted above—free even from the confines of space and time. For this reason, the fourth positive aspect of unbinding—and the one most emphasized in the suttas—is that it is *total freedom*. This freedom is indicated in a general sense by the two most common epithets for unbinding: the term "unbinding" itself, and release. Because, in line with the underlying metaphor of the extinguishing of fire, freedom comes from letting go, the remaining epithets for this freedom focus on the fact that unbinding is free from all the clinging defilements that cause suffering and stress: It's effluent-free, attachment-free, free from longing (§368), non-objectification, the ending of craving, dispassion. It's purity. As §343 indicates, the freedom of the arahant whose mind is released is no different from that of the Buddha himself.

• In all the above aspects—consciousness, truth, bliss, and freedom—unbinding excels everything that there is. This is why its fifth aspect is its *excellence*. In MN 44's terms, nothing lies on the other side of unbinding. There is nothing to equal it, much less to exceed or surpass it (§356). This is why §380 calls it the amazing, the astounding, the ultimate, and the beyond.

And, as everyone who has attained it can aver, it is realized in only one way: as a fruit of the noble path in both its eight-factored and ten-factored forms. As we have noted above, the path doesn't cause unbinding—just as the road to the Grand Canyon doesn't cause the Grand Canyon—but following it can take you there. The Buddha has done the work of providing a sufficient map to guide you in that direction. All of the path-factors are clearly laid out. If you see that they lead to a worthwhile goal, then the remaining work is up to you, to give rise to them within yourself. When they are complete, those factors will yield their fruit, taking you to the edge of the Canyon. From that point on, you are everywhere released: Like the birds in space, your path will leave no trace. You can fly.

## Readings

*The Stream*

§ 318. "Just as the ocean has a gradual shelf, a gradual slope, a gradual inclination, with a sudden drop-off only after a long stretch; in the same way, this Dhamma & Vinaya has a gradual training, a gradual performance, a gradual practice, with a penetration to gnosis only after a long stretch." — *Ud 5:5*

§ 319. "Sāriputta, 'The stream, the stream': Thus it is said. And what, Sāriputta, is the stream?"

"This noble eightfold path, lord, is the stream: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration."

"Very good, Sāriputta! Very good! This noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is the stream." — *SN 55:5*

§ 320. To Upāli the householder, as he was sitting right there, there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: *Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation*. Then—having seen the Dhamma, having reached the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, gained a footing in the Dhamma, having crossed over & beyond doubt, having had no more questioning—Upāli the householder gained fearlessness and was independent of others with regard to the Teacher's message. — *MN 56*

§ 321. [Immediately after attaining the stream] Sāriputta the wanderer went to Moggallāna the wanderer. Moggallāna the wanderer saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, said, "Bright are your faculties, my friend; clean & pure your complexion. Could it be that you have attained the deathless?"

"Yes, my friend, I have." — *Mv I.23.5*

§ 322. "There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One… verified confidence in the Dhamma… verified confidence in the Saṅgha…. He/she is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted,

unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration." — *AN 10:92*

§ 323. "There is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner [i.e., a person who has attained at least stream-entry, but has not yet reached arahantship], standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner,' and whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept [i.e., an arahant], can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner'? There is the case where a monk is a learner. He discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.' This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And further, the monk who is a learner reflects, 'Is there outside of this (Dhamma & Vinaya) any contemplative or brahman who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One?' And he discerns, 'No, there is no contemplative or brahman outside of this who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And further, the monk who is a learner discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction… persistence… mindfulness… concentration… discernment. He sees clear through with discernment their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation, but he does not touch them with his body. This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept'? There is the case where a monk who is an adept discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction… persistence… mindfulness… concentration… discernment. He touches with his body and sees clear through with discernment what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are. This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"And further, the monk who is an adept discerns the six sense faculties: the faculty of the eye… ear… nose…tongue… body… intellect. He discerns, 'These six sense faculties will disband entirely, everywhere, & in every way without remainder, and no other set of six sense faculties will arise anywhere or in any way.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'" — *SN 48:53*

§ 324. "There are these ten fetters. Which ten? Five lower fetters & five higher fetters. And which are the five lower fetters? Self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices, sensual desire, & ill will. These are the five lower fetters. And which are the five higher fetters? Passion for form, passion for what is formless, conceit, restlessness, & ignorance. These are the five higher fetters. And these are the ten fetters." — *AN 10:13*

§ 325. "There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, he is a stream-winner, never again destined for states of woe, certain, headed for self-awakening.

"There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, he is a once-returner, who—on returning only once more to this world—will put an end to stress.

"There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the wasting away of the five lower fetters, he is due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world.

"There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, wholly accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the ending of effluents, he dwells in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known and realized them for himself right in the here-&-now.

"Those who are partially accomplished attain a part; those who are wholly accomplished, the whole. The training rules, I tell you, are not in vain." — *AN 3:87*

§ 326. Ven. Paviṭṭha: "Nārada, my friend, putting aside conviction, putting aside preference, putting aside tradition, putting aside reasoning through analogies, putting aside an agreement through pondering views: Do you have truly personal knowledge that, 'The cessation of becoming is unbinding'?"

"Yes, Paviṭṭha my friend. Putting aside conviction… preference… tradition… reasoning through analogies… an agreement through pondering views, I do have truly personal knowledge that, 'The cessation of becoming is unbinding.'"

"Then, Ven. Nārada, you are an arahant whose effluents are ended."

"My friend, although I have seen properly with right discernment, as it has come to be, that 'The cessation of becoming is unbinding,' still I am not an arahant whose effluents are ended. It's as if there were a well along a road in a desert, with neither rope nor water bucket. A man would come along overcome by heat, oppressed by the heat, exhausted, dehydrated, & thirsty. He would look into the well and would have knowledge of 'water,' but he would not dwell touching it with his body. In the same way, although I have seen properly with right discernment, as it has come to be, that 'The cessation of becoming is unbinding,' still I am not an arahant whose effluents are ended." — *SN 12:68*

§ 327. Ven. Khemaka: "Friends, it's just like the scent of a blue, red, or white lotus: If someone were to call it the scent of a petal or the scent of the color or the scent of a filament, would he be speaking correctly?"

Some elder monks: "No, friend."

"Then how would he describe it if he were describing it correctly?"

"As the scent of the flower: That's how he would describe it if he were describing it correctly."

"In the same way, friends, it's not that I say 'I am form,' nor do I say 'I am other than form.' It's not that I say, 'I am feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness,' nor do I say, 'I am something other than consciousness.' With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, 'I am' has not been overcome, although I don't assume that 'I am this.' …

"Just like a cloth, dirty & stained: Its owners give it over to a washerman, who scrubs it with salt earth or lye or cow-dung and then rinses it in clear water. Now, even though the cloth is clean & spotless, it still has a lingering residual scent of salt earth or lye or cow-dung. The washerman gives it to the owners, the owners put it away in a scent-infused wicker hamper, and its lingering residual scent of salt earth, lye, or cow-dung is fully obliterated.

"In the same way, friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, he still has with regard to the five clinging-aggregates a lingering residual 'I am' conceit, an 'I am' desire, an 'I am' obsession. But at a later time he keeps focusing on arising & passing away with regard to the five clinging-aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling.… Such is perception.… Such are

fabrications.... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' As he keeps focusing on the arising & passing away of these five clinging-aggregates, the lingering residual 'I am' conceit, 'I am' desire, 'I am' obsession is fully obliterated." — *SN 22:89*

§ 328. "Monks, there are these five faculties. Which five? The faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns, as they have come to be, the origination, the passing away, the allure, the drawbacks, and the escape from these five faculties, he is called a disciple of the noble ones who has attained the stream: never again destined for the lower realms, certain, headed for self-awakening...."

"When—having discerned, as they have come to be, the origination, the passing away, the allure, the drawbacks, and the escape from these five faculties—a monk is released from lack of clinging/sustenance, he is called an arahant whose effluents are ended, who has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, laid to waste the fetter of becoming, and who is released through right gnosis." — *SN 48:3–4*

*Right Knowledge, Right Release*

§ 329. "'All phenomena have release as their heartwood.'" — *AN 10:58*

§ 330. "It's through the development & pursuit of two faculties that a monk whose effluents are ended declares gnosis: 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.' Through which two? Through noble discernment & noble release. Whatever is his noble discernment is his faculty of discernment. Whatever is his noble release is his faculty of concentration." — *SN 48:46*

§ 331. "Thus for him, having thus developed the noble eightfold path, the four establishings of mindfulness go to the culmination of their development. The four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for awakening go to the culmination of their development. (And) for him these two dhammas occur in tandem: tranquility *[samatha]* & insight *[vipassanā]*.

"He comprehends through direct knowledge whatever dhammas are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever dhammas are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, develops through direct knowledge whatever dhammas are to be developed through direct knowledge, and realizes through direct knowledge whatever dhammas are to be realized through direct knowledge.

"And what dhammas are to be comprehended through direct knowledge? 'The five clinging-aggregates,' should be the reply. Which five? Form as a clinging-aggregate… feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness as a clinging-aggregate. These are the dhammas that are to be comprehended through direct knowledge.

"And what dhammas are to be abandoned through direct knowledge? Ignorance & craving for becoming: These are the dhammas that are to be abandoned through direct knowledge.

"And what dhammas are to be developed through direct knowledge? Tranquility & insight: These are the dhammas that are to be developed through direct knowledge.

"And what dhammas are to be realized through direct knowledge? Clear knowing & release: These are the dhammas that are to be realized through direct knowledge." — *MN 149*

§ 332. "And how is it that when a monk develops the noble eightfold path, pursues the noble eightfold path, he comprehends through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, realizes through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be realized through direct knowledge, and develops through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be developed through direct knowledge?

"There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops right resolve… right speech… right action… right livelihood… right effort… right mindfulness… right concentration dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in letting go. This is how—when a monk develops the noble eightfold path, pursues the noble eightfold path—he comprehends through direct knowledge whatever

phenomena are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, realizes through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be realized through direct knowledge, and develops through direct knowledge whatever phenomena are to be developed through direct knowledge." — *SN 45:159*

§ 333. "With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, the monk directs it to the knowledge of the ending of effluents. Just as if there were a pool of water in a mountain glen—clear, limpid, & unsullied—where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, & pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about & resting, and it would occur to him, 'This pool of water is clear, limpid, & unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, & pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about & resting.' In the same way, the monk discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the way leading to the cessation of stress… These are effluents… This is the origination of effluents… This is the cessation of effluents… This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.' His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.' This, too, is a reward of the contemplative life, visible here-&-now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime. And as for another visible fruit of the contemplative life, higher & more sublime than this, there is none." — *DN 2*

§ 334. "And what is mental sagacity? There is the case where a monk who—with the ending of effluents—enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized it for himself right in the here-&-now. This is called mental sagacity." — *AN 3:123*

§ 335. **Wrong release.** "There are these ten totality-dimensions. Which ten? One perceives the earth-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual *[advayaṁ]*, immeasurable. One perceives the water-totality… the fire-

totality… the wind-totality… the blue-totality… the yellow-totality… the red-totality… the white-totality… the space-totality… the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual, immeasurable. These are the ten totality-dimensions. Now, of these ten totality-dimensions, this is supreme: when one perceives the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual, immeasurable. And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.…

"One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. Just as the morning star is white, white in its color, white in its features, white in its glow, or just as Vārāṇasī muslin, smooth on both sides, is white, white in its color, white in its features, white in its glow, in the same way one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. Mastering them, he is percipient of 'I know; I see.' This is the eighth dimension of (mental) mastery.

"These are the eight dimensions of mental mastery. Now, of these eight dimensions of mastery, this is supreme: when one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior." — *AN 10:29*

§ 336. "There is the case, monks, where a certain contemplative or brahman, with the relinquishing of speculations about the past and the relinquishing of speculations about the future, from being totally not determined on the fetters of sensuality, surmounting the rapture of seclusion, surmounting pleasure not-of-the-flesh, and surmounting the

feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, envisions that 'I am at peace, I am unbound, I am without clinging/sustenance!'

"With regard to this, the Tathāgata discerns that 'This venerable contemplative or brahman, with the relinquishing of speculations about the past and the relinquishing of speculations about the future, from being totally not determined on the fetters of sensuality, surmounting the rapture of seclusion, surmounting pleasure not-of-the-flesh, and surmounting the feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, envisions that "I am at peace, I am unbound, I am without clinging/sustenance!" Yes, he affirms a practice conducive to unbinding. But still he clings, clinging to a speculation about the past; or he clings, clinging to a speculation about the future; or he clings, clinging to a fetter of sensuality; or he clings, clinging to the rapture of seclusion; or he clings, clinging to pleasure not-of-the-flesh; or he clings, clinging to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain. And the fact that he envisions that "I am at peace, I am unbound, I am without clinging/sustenance!"—that in itself points to his clinging. With regard to that—fabricated, gross—there is still the cessation of fabrications: There *is* this.' Knowing that, seeing the escape from it, the Tathāgata has gone beyond it.

"Thus, monks, the Tathāgata has awakened to the unexcelled state of foremost peace: liberation through lack of clinging/sustenance, having known, as they have come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawbacks of—and escape from—the six media of contact." — *MN 102*

§ 337. Ven. Ānanda: "TigerPaws, these four factors for exertion with regard to purity have been rightly expounded by the Blessed One who knows & sees—the Worthy One, the Rightly Self-awakened One—for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding. Which four? The factor for exertion with regard to purity of virtue, the factor for exertion with regard to purity of mind, the factor for exertion with regard to purity of view, and the factor for exertion with regard to purity of release.

"And what, TigerPaws, is the factor for exertion with regard to purity of virtue? There is the case where a monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of

activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. This is called purity of virtue. (The thought,) 'I will make complete this sort of purity of virtue when it is not yet complete, or I will protect it here & there with discernment when it is complete': Any desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness there is called the factor for exertion with regard to purity of virtue.

"And what, TigerPaws, is the factor for exertion with regard to purity of mind? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas—enters & remains in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called purity of mind. (The thought,) 'I will make complete this sort of purity of mind when it is not yet complete, or I will protect it here & there with discernment when it is complete': Any desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness there is called the factor for exertion with regard to purity of mind.

"And what, TigerPaws, is the factor for exertion with regard to purity of view? There is the case where a monk discerns, as it has come to be, that *'This is stress… This the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress… This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'* This is called purity of view. (The thought,) 'I will make complete this sort of purity of view when it is not yet complete, or I will protect it here & there with discernment when it is complete': Any desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness there is called the factor for exertion with regard to purity of view.

"And what, TigerPaws, is the factor for exertion with regard to purity of release? That same noble disciple—endowed with this factor for exertion with regard to purity of virtue, this factor for exertion with regard to purity of mind, and this factor for exertion with regard to purity of view—makes his mind dispassionate with regard to phenomena that are conducive to passion, and liberates his mind with regard to phenomena that are conducive to liberation. He—having made his mind dispassionate with regard to phenomena that are conducive to passion, and having liberated his mind with regard to phenomena that are conducive to liberation—touches right release. This is called purity of release. (The thought,) 'I will

make complete this sort of purity of release when it is not yet complete, or I will protect it here & there with discernment when it is complete': Any desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness there is called the factor for exertion with regard to purity of release." — *AN 4:194*

§ 338. "There is the case where a certain son of good family, out of conviction, goes forth from the home life into homelessness, (thinking,) 'I am beset by birth, by aging-&-death, by sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs, beset by stress, overcome with stress. Perhaps the end of this entire mass of stress might be discerned!' Having thus gone forth, he encounters gain, offerings, & fame. He is not gratified with that gain, offerings, & fame, his resolve not fulfilled. He is not intoxicated with that gain, offerings, & fame, not heedless about it, and does not fall into heedlessness. Being heedful, he achieves consummation in virtue. He is gratified with that consummation in virtue, but his resolve is not fulfilled. Because of that consummation in virtue he does not exalt himself or disparage others. He is not intoxicated with that consummation in virtue, not heedless about it, and does not fall into heedlessness. Being heedful, he achieves consummation in concentration. He is gratified with that consummation in concentration, but his resolve is not fulfilled. Because of that consummation in concentration he does not exalt himself or disparage others. He is not intoxicated with that consummation in concentration, not heedless about it, and does not fall into heedlessness. Being heedful, he achieves knowledge & vision. He is gratified with that knowledge & vision, but his resolve is not fulfilled. Because of that knowledge & vision he does not exalt himself or disparage others. He is not intoxicated with that knowledge & vision, not heedless about it, and does not fall into heedlessness. Being heedful, he achieves a non-occasional liberation [Commentary: all the transcendent attainments, from the fruit of stream-entry through the fruit of arahantship]. And it is impossible, monks, there is no opportunity, for that monk to fall from that non-occasional release.

"Monks, this holy life doesn't have as its reward gain, offerings, & fame, doesn't have as its reward consummation of virtue, doesn't have as its reward consummation of concentration, doesn't have as its reward knowledge & vision, but the unprovoked awareness-release: That is the purpose of this holy life, that is its heartwood, that its final end." — *MN 29*

§ 339. Citta the householder: "Passion, venerable sir, is a making of measurement, aversion a making of measurement, delusion a making of measurement. For a monk whose effluents are ended these have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. To the extent that there are immeasurable awareness-releases, the unprovoked awareness-release is declared supreme. And that unprovoked awareness-release is empty of passion, empty of aversion, empty of delusion." — *SN 41:7*

§ 340. Ven. Udāyin: "'Discernment-released, discernment-released,' it is said. To what extent is one described by the Blessed One as discernment-released?"

Ven. Ānanda: "There is the case, my friend, where a monk, secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. And he knows it through discernment. It's to this extent that one is described by the Blessed One as released through discernment, though with a sequel. [Similarly with the other levels of jhāna and formless attainments through the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.]

"Then, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And as he sees with discernment, the effluents waste totally away. And he knows it through discernment. It's to this extent that one is described by the Blessed One as discernment-released without a sequel."

Ven. Udāyin: "'Released both ways, released both ways,' it is said. To what extent is one described by the Blessed One as released both ways?"

Ven. Ānanda: "There is the case, my friend, where a monk, secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful dhammas, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He remains touching with his body in whatever way there is an opening there, and he knows it through discernment. It's to this extent that one is described by the Blessed One as released both ways, though with a sequel. [Similarly with the other levels of

jhāna and formless attainments through the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.]

"Then, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And as he sees with discernment, the effluents waste totally away. He remains touching with his body in whatever way there is an opening there, and he knows it through discernment. It's to this extent that one is described by the Blessed One as released both ways without a sequel." — *AN 9:44–45*

§ 341. "Ānanda, there are these seven stations of consciousness and two dimensions. Which seven?

"There are beings with multiplicity of body and multiplicity of perception, such as human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms. This is the first station of consciousness.

"There are beings with multiplicity of body and singularity of perception, such as the devas of the Brahmā hosts generated by the first [jhāna] and [some] beings in the four realms of deprivation. This is the second station of consciousness.

"There are beings with singularity of body and multiplicity of perception, such as the Radiant Devas. This is the third station of consciousness.

"There are beings with singularity of body and singularity of perception, such as the Beautiful Black Devas. This is the fourth station of consciousness.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of multiplicity, (perceiving,) 'Infinite space,' arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of space. This is the fifth station of consciousness.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) 'Infinite consciousness,' arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. This is the sixth station of consciousness.

"There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) 'There is nothing,' arrive at

the dimension of nothingness. This is the seventh station of consciousness.

"The dimension of non-percipient beings and, second, the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. [These are the two dimensions.]

"Now, as for the first station of consciousness—beings with multiplicity of body and multiplicity of perception, such as human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms: If one discerns that [station of consciousness], discerns its origination, discerns its passing away, discerns its allure, discerns its drawbacks, discerns the escape from it, would it be proper, by means of that [discernment] to take delight there?"

"No, lord."

[Similarly with each of the remaining stations of consciousness and two dimensions.]

"Ānanda, when knowing—as they have come to be—the origination, passing away, allure, drawbacks of—and escape from—these seven stations of consciousness and two dimensions, a monk is released through lack of clinging, he is said to be a monk discernment-released.

"Ānanda, there are these eight emancipations. Which eight?

"Possessed of form, one sees forms. This is the first emancipation.

"Not percipient of form internally, one sees forms externally. This is the second emancipation.

"One is intent only on the beautiful. This is the third emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of perceptions of [physical] form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of multiplicity, (perceiving,) 'Infinite space,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. This is the fourth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) 'Infinite consciousness,' one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. This is the fifth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) 'There is nothing,' one enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, one enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh emancipation.

"With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, one enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth emancipation.

"Now, when a monk attains these eight emancipations in forward order, in reverse order, in forward and reverse order, when he attains them and emerges from them wherever he wants, however he wants, and for as long as he wants, when through the wasting away of effluents he enters and remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized it for himself in the here-&-now, he is said to be a monk released in both ways. And as for another release in both ways, higher or more sublime than this, there is none." — *DN 15*

§ 342. In one who
has gone the full distance,
is free from sorrow,
is everywhere
fully released,
has abandoned all bonds:
no fever is found. — *Dhp 90*

§ 343. "Monks, the Tathāgata—the worthy one, the rightly self-awakened one, who from disenchantment with form, from dispassion, from cessation, from lack of clinging (for form) is released—is termed 'rightly self-awakened.' And a discernment-released monk—who from disenchantment with form, from dispassion, from cessation, from lack of clinging (for form) is released—is termed 'discernment-released.' [Similarly with the aggregates of feeling, perception, fabrications, and consciousness.]

"So what difference, what distinction, what distinguishing factor is there between one rightly self-awakened and a monk discernment-released?"

"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 to him.

The Blessed One said, "The Tathāgata—the worthy one, the rightly self-awakened one—is the one who gives rise to the path (previously) unarisen,

who engenders the path (previously) unengendered, who points out the path (previously) not pointed out. He knows the path, is expert in the path, is adept at the path. And his disciples now keep following the path and afterwards become endowed with the path.

"This is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing between one rightly self-awakened and a monk discernment-released." — *SN 22:58*

§ 344. "Monks, these three are causes for the origination of actions. Which three? Greed is a cause for the origination of actions. Aversion is a cause for the origination of actions. Delusion is a cause for the origination of actions.

"Any action performed with greed—born of greed, caused by greed, originating from greed: Wherever one's selfhood turns up, there that action will ripen. Where that action ripens, there one will experience its fruit, either in this very life that has arisen or further along in the sequence. [Similarly with actions performed with aversion or delusion.]

"Just as when seeds are not broken, not rotten, not damaged by wind & heat, capable of sprouting, well-buried, planted in well-prepared soil, and the rain-god would offer good streams of rain. Those seeds would thus come to growth, increase, & abundance. In the same way, any action performed with greed… performed with aversion… performed with delusion—born of delusion, caused by delusion, originating from delusion: Wherever one's selfhood turns up, there that action will ripen. Where that action ripens, there one will experience its fruit, either in this very life that has arisen or further along in the sequence.

"These are three causes for the origination of actions.

"Now, these three are [further] causes for the origination of actions. Which three? Non-greed is a cause for the origination of actions. Non-aversion is a cause for the origination of actions. Non-delusion is a cause for the origination of actions.

"Any action performed with non-greed—born of non-greed, caused by non-greed, originating from non-greed: When greed is gone, that action is thus abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. [Similarly with actions performed with non-aversion and non-delusion.]

"Just as when seeds are not broken, not rotten, not damaged by wind & heat, capable of sprouting, well-buried, planted in well-prepared soil, and a man would burn them with fire and, burning them with fire, would make them into fine ashes. Having made them into fine ashes, he would winnow them before a high wind or wash them away in a swift-flowing stream. Those seeds would thus be destroyed at the root, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.

"In the same way, any action performed with non-greed… performed with non-aversion… performed with non-delusion—born of non-delusion, caused by non-delusion, originating from non-delusion: When delusion is gone, that action is thus abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.

"These, monks, are three causes for the origination of action." — *AN 3:34*

§ 345. "Monks, even those who are arahants—whose effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis—even they remain focused on the body in & of itself—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & gathered into one, disjoined from the body. They remain focused on feelings in & of themselves… on the mind in & of itself… on dhammas in & of themselves—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & gathered into one, disjoined from dhammas." — *SN 47:4*

§ 346. "One enters & remains in the first jhāna… the second jhāna… the third jhāna… the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. Such is my instruction, brahman, to those monks who are in training, who have not attained the heart's goal but remain intent on the unsurpassed safety from the yoke. But as for those monks who are arahants—whose effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis

—these dhammas lead both to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now and to mindfulness & alertness." — *MN 107*

§ 347. "An arahant should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. Although, for an arahant, there is nothing further to do, and nothing to add to what has been done, still these things—when developed & pursued—lead both to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now, and to mindfulness & alertness." — *SN 22:122*

§ 348. "If anyone were to say with regard to a monk whose mind is thus released that 'The Tathāgata exists after death,' is his view, that would be mistaken; that 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death'… that 'The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death'… that 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death' is his view, that would be mistaken. Why? Having directly known the extent of designation and the extent of the objects of designation, the extent of expression and the extent of the objects of expression, the extent of description and the extent of the objects of description, the extent of discernment and the extent of the objects of discernment, the extent to which the cycle revolves: Having directly known that, the monk is released. The view that, 'Having directly known that, the monk released does not see, does not know': That would be mistaken." — *DN 15*

§ 349. Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "With the remainderless dispassioning & cessation of the six spheres of contact [vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, & intellection] is it the case that there is anything else?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Don't say that, my friend."

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "With the remainderless dispassioning & cessation of the six spheres of contact, is it the case that there is not anything else?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Don't say that, my friend."

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "…is it the case that there both is & is not anything else?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Don't say that, my friend."

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "…is it the case that there neither is nor is not anything else?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Don't say that, my friend."

Ven. Mahā Koṭṭhita: "Being asked… if there is anything else, you say, 'Don't say that, my friend.' Being asked… if there is not anything else… if there both is & is not anything else… if there neither is nor is not anything else, you say, 'Don't say that, my friend.' Now, how is the meaning of this statement to be understood?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Saying, '… is it the case that there is anything else?' objectifies the non-objectified. Saying '… is it the case that there is not anything else… is it the case that there both is & is not anything else… is it the case that there neither is nor is not anything else?' objectifies the non-objectified. However far the six spheres of contact go, that is how far objectification goes. However far objectification goes, that is how far the six spheres of contact go. With the remainderless dispassioning & cessation of the six spheres of contact, there comes to be the cessation of objectification, the stilling of objectification." — *AN 4:173*

§ 350. Just as the destination of a glowing fire
struck with a [blacksmith's] iron hammer,
gradually growing calm,
isn't known:

Even so, there's no destination to describe
for those rightly released
–having crossed over the flood
of sensuality's bond–
for those who've attained
unwavering bliss. — *Ud 8:10*

*§ 351. The Buddha:*

One free from passion
for all sensuality
relying on nothingness, letting go of all else,
released in the highest emancipation of perception:
He stays there unaffected.

*Upasīva:*

If, All-around Eye, he stays there,
unaffected for many years,
right there
would he be cooled & released?
Would his consciousness be like that?

*The Buddha:*

As a flame overthrown by the force of the wind
goes to an end
that cannot be classified,
so the sage freed from the name-body
goes to an end
that cannot be classified.

*Upasīva:*

One who has reached the end:
Does he not exist,
or is he for eternity
free from dis-ease?
Please, sage, declare this to me
as this phenomenon has been known by you.

*The Buddha:*

One who has reached the end
has no criterion
by which anyone would say that—
for him it doesn't exist.
When all phenomena are done away with,
all means of speaking
are done away with as well. — *Sn 5:6*

§ 352. Not hoarding,
having comprehended food,

their pasture–emptiness
& freedom without sign:
their course,
like that of birds through space,
can't be traced.

Effluents ended,
independent of nutriment,
their pasture–emptiness
& freedom without sign:
their trail,
like that of birds through space,
can't be traced. — *Dhp 92–93*

*Fruit*

§ 353. "'All phenomena gain footing in the deathless.

"'All phenomena have unbinding as their final end.'" — *AN 10:58*

§ 354. "Monks, these three are fabricated characteristics of what is fabricated. Which three? Arising is discernable, passing away is discernable, alteration *[literally,* other-ness] while staying is discernable.

"These are three fabricated characteristics of what is fabricated.

"Now, these three are unfabricated characteristics of what is unfabricated. Which three? No arising is discernable, no passing away is discernable, no alteration while staying is discernable.

"These are three unfabricated characteristics of what is unfabricated." — *AN 3:47*

§ 355. "As for any contemplatives or brahmans who know, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress'; who know, as it has come to be, that 'This is the origination of stress'… 'This is the cessation of stress'… 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress': They don't revel in fabrications leading to birth; don't revel in fabrications leading to aging; don't revel in fabrications leading to death; don't revel in fabrications leading to sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. Not reveling in fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair,

they don't fabricate fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. Not fabricating fabrications leading to birth… aging… death… sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, they don't drop into the darkness of birth. They don't drop into the darkness of aging, don't drop into the darkness of death, don't drop into the darkness of sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. They are released from birth, aging, death, sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. They are released, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"Therefore, monks, your duty is the contemplation, 'This is stress… This is the origination of stress… This is the cessation of stress.' Your duty is the contemplation, 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'" — *SN 56:46*

§ 356. The exquisite deathless—ending, dispassion—
discovered by the Sakyan Sage in concentration:
There is nothing
to equal
that Dhamma. — *Sn 2:1*

§ 357. Not drunk on enticements,
nor given to pride,
he's gentle, quick-witted,
beyond conviction & dispassion. — *Sn 4:10*

§ 358. The brahman
gone beyond territories,
has nothing that
—on knowing or seeing—
he's grasped.
Unimpassionate for passion,
not impassioned for dispassion,
he has nothing here
that he's grasped as supreme. — *Sn 4:4*

§ 359. Ven. Nandaka: "Just as if a skilled butcher or butcher's apprentice, having killed a cow, were to carve it up with a sharp carving knife so that—without damaging the substance of the inner flesh, without damaging the substance of the outer hide—he would cut, sever, & detach only the skin

muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between. Having cut, severed, & detached the outer skin, and then covering the cow again with that very skin, if he were to say that the cow was joined to the skin just as it had been, would he be speaking rightly?"

Some nuns: "No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because if the skilled butcher or butcher's apprentice, having killed a cow, were to… cut, sever, & detach only the skin muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between; and… having covered the cow again with that very skin, then no matter how much he might say that the cow was joined to the skin just as it had been, the cow would still be disjoined from the skin."

Ven. Nandaka: "This simile, sisters, I have given to convey a message. The message is this: The substance of the inner flesh stands for the six internal media; the substance of the outer hide, for the six external media. The skin muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between stand for passion & delight. And the sharp knife stands for noble discernment—the noble discernment that cuts, severs, & detaches the defilements, fetters, & bonds in between." — *MN 146*

§ 360. "Monks, there are these two unbinding properties. Which two? The unbinding property with fuel remaining, & the unbinding property with no fuel remaining.

"And what is the unbinding property with fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose effluents have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis. His five sense faculties still remain and, owing to their being intact, he experiences the pleasing & the displeasing, and is sensitive to pleasure & pain. His ending of passion, aversion, & delusion is termed the unbinding property with fuel remaining.

"And what is the unbinding property with no fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose effluents have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis. For him, all that is sensed, being unrelished, will grow cold right here. This is termed the unbinding property with no fuel remaining."

These two

proclaimed
by the one with vision,
Unbinding properties
the one independent,
the one who is Such:
one property, here in this life,
with fuel remaining
from the destruction of [craving],
the guide to becoming,
and that with no fuel remaining,
after this life,
in which all becoming
totally ceases.

Those who know
this unfabricated state,
their minds released
through the destruction of [craving],
the guide to becoming,
they, attaining the Dhamma's core,
delighting in ending,
have abandoned all becoming:
they, the Such. — *Iti 44*

§ 361. A great blazing fire
unnourished grows calm,
and though its embers exist
is described as *unbound:*
Conveying an instructive meaning,
this image is taught by the observant.
Great nāgas will recognize
the nāga as taught by the nāga
as free from passion,
free from aversion,
free from delusion,
effluent-free.
His body discarded, the nāga
will totally unbind,

effluent-free. — *AN 6:43*

§ 362. "If the thought should occur to you that—when defiling dhammas are abandoned and bright dhammas have grown, and one enters & remains in the culmination & abundance of discernment, having directly known & realized it for oneself in the here-&-now—one's abiding is stressful/painful, you should not see it in that way. When defiling dhammas are abandoned and bright dhammas have grown, and one enters & remains in the culmination & abundance of discernment, having directly known & realized it for oneself in the here-&-now, there is joy, rapture, calm, mindfulness, alertness, and a pleasant/happy abiding." — *DN 9*

§ 363. "And what is the pleasure more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh? Whatever pleasure arises in an effluent-ended monk as he is reflecting on his mind released from passion, reflecting on his mind released from aversion, reflecting on his mind released from delusion, that is called pleasure more not-of-the-flesh than that not-of-the-flesh." — *SN 36:31*

§ 364. There's no fire like passion,
no loss like anger,
no pain like the aggregates,
no ease other than peace.

Hunger: the foremost illness.
Fabrications: the foremost pain.
For one knowing this truth
as it actually is,
    Unbinding
is the foremost ease.

Freedom from illness: the foremost good fortune.
Contentment: the foremost wealth.
Trust: the foremost kinship.
Unbinding: the foremost ease. — *Dhp 202–204*

§ 365. I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Sāriputta was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Forest, the Squirrels' Feeding Sanctuary. There he

said to the monks, "This unbinding is pleasant, friends. This unbinding is pleasant."

When this was said, Ven. Udāyin said to Ven. Sāriputta, "But what is the pleasure here, my friend, where there is nothing felt?"

"Just that is the pleasure here, my friend: where there is nothing felt. There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, accompanied by sensuality, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear… aromas cognizable via the nose… tastes cognizable via the tongue… tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, accompanied by sensuality, enticing. Whatever pleasure or joy arises in dependence on these five strings of sensuality, that is sensual pleasure.

"Now, there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the first jhāna.… If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *sensuality,* that is an affliction for him. Just as pain arises as an affliction in a healthy person; in the same way, the attention to perceptions dealing with sensuality that beset the monk is an affliction for him. Now, the Blessed One has said that whatever is an affliction is stress. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant.

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the second jhāna.… If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *directed thought,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the third jhāna.… If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *rapture,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the fourth jhāna.… If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *equanimity,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *form,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. If, as he remains there, he is

beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of the infinitude of space,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness,* that is an affliction for him.…

"Then there is the case where a monk… enters & remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of nothingness,* that is an affliction for him. Now, the Blessed One has said that whatever is an affliction is stress. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant.

"Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And, having seen (that) with discernment, his effluents are completely ended. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant." — *AN 9:34*

§ 366. "Now, it's possible, Ānanda, that some wanderers of other persuasions might say, 'Gotama the contemplative speaks of the cessation of perception & feeling and yet describes it as pleasure. What is this? How is this?' When they say that, they are to be told, 'It's not the case, friends, that the Blessed One describes only pleasant feeling as included under pleasure. Wherever pleasure is found, in whatever terms, the Blessed One describes it as pleasure.'" — *SN 36:19*

§ 367. Some Nigaṇṭha ascetics: "It's not the case that pleasure is to be attained through pleasure. Pleasure is to be attained through pain. For if pleasure were to be attained through pleasure, then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha would attain pleasure, for he lives in greater pleasure than you, friend Gotama.

The Buddha: "Surely the venerable Nigaṇṭhas said that rashly and without reflecting… for instead, I should be asked, 'Who lives in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or Master Gotama?'"

"Yes, friend Gotama, we said that rashly and without reflecting.… but let that be. We now ask you, Master Gotama: Who lives in greater pleasure:

King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or Master Gotama?"

"In that case, Niganṭhas, I will question you in return. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Can King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha—without moving his body, without uttering a word—dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for seven days & nights?" — "No, friend."

"… for six days & nights… for five days & nights… for a day & a night?" — "No, friend."

"Now, I—without moving my body, without uttering a word—can dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for a day and a night… for two days & nights… for three… four… five… six… seven days & nights. So what do you think? That being the case, who dwells in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or I?"

"That being the case, Master Gotama dwells in greater pleasure than King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha." — *MN 14*

§ 368. "And further, a sage at peace isn't born, doesn't age, doesn't die, is unagitated, and is free from longing. He has nothing whereby he would be born. Not being born, will he age? Not aging, will he die? Not dying, will he be agitated? Not being agitated, for what will he long?" — *MN 140*

§ 369. "And further, there is the case where a monk might say, 'Although "I am" is gone, and I do not assume that "I am this," still the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity keeps overpowering my mind.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that—when "I am" is gone, and "I am this" is not assumed—the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity would keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity: the uprooting of the conceit, "I am".'" — *AN 6:13*

§ 370. "'Having directly known earth as earth, and having directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the earthness of earth, I wasn't earth, I wasn't in earth, I wasn't coming from earth, I wasn't "Earth is mine." I didn't affirm earth.…

"'Having directly known liquid as liquid… fire as fire… wind as wind… beings as beings… devas as devas… Pajāpati [deva rulers] as Pajāpati… Brahmā as Brahmā… the Radiant (devas) as the Radiant (devas)… the Beautiful Black (devas) as the Beautiful Black (devas)… the Sky-fruit (devas) as the Sky-fruit (devas)… the Conqueror as the Conqueror… [these last four are higher-level Brahmās on the levels of form and formlessness].

"'Having directly known the All as the All, and having directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the Allness of the All, I wasn't the All, I wasn't in the All, I wasn't coming forth from the All, I wasn't "The All is mine." I didn't affirm the All.

> "'Consciousness without surface,
> endless, radiant all around,

has not been experienced through the earthness of earth… the liquidity of liquid… the fieriness of fire… the windiness of wind… the allness of the all.'" — *MN 49*

§ 371. "What is the All? Simply the eye & forms, ear & sounds, nose & aromas, tongue & flavors, body & tactile sensations, intellect & ideas. This, monks, is termed the All. Anyone who would say, 'Repudiating this All, I will describe another,' if questioned on what exactly might be the grounds for his statement, would be unable to explain, and furthermore, would be put to grief. Why? Because it lies beyond range." — *SN 35:23*

§ 372. "Monks, that dimension should be experienced where the eye [vision] ceases and the perception of form fades. That dimension should be experienced where the ear ceases and the perception of sound fades… where the nose ceases and the perception of aroma fades… where the tongue ceases and the perception of flavor fades… where the body ceases and the perception of tactile sensation fades… where the intellect ceases and the perception of idea/phenomenon fades: That dimension should be experienced." — *SN 35:117*

§ 373. "There is that dimension, monks, where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind; neither dimension of the infinitude of space, nor dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, nor dimension of nothingness, nor dimension of neither perception nor non-perception;

neither this world, nor the next world, nor sun, nor moon. And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor staying; neither passing away nor arising: unestablished, unevolving, without support [mental object]. This, just this, is the end of stress." — *Ud 8:1*

§ 374. "One who is dependent has wavering. One who is independent has no wavering. There being no wavering, there is calm. There being calm, there is no yearning. There being no yearning, there is no coming or going. There being no coming or going, there is no passing away or arising. There being no passing away or arising, there is neither a here nor a there nor a between-the-two. This, just this, is the end of stress." — *Ud 8:4*

§ 375. In whom there's no craving
–the sticky ensnarer–
to lead him anywherever at all;
awakened, his pasture endless,
    pathless:
by what path will you lead him astray? — *Dhp 180*

§ 376. With the stilling of consciousness, the monk
  hunger-free
  is totally unbound.…

While those who comprehend contact,
delighting in stilling through discernment,
  they, by breaking through contact,
  hunger-free
  are totally unbound.…

See the world, together with its devas:
supposing not-self to be self.
Entrenched in name-&-form,
they suppose that 'This is true.'
In whatever terms they suppose it,
it turns into something other than that,
  and that's what's false about it:
  Changing,
it's deceptive by nature.
Undeceptive by nature

is unbinding:
That the noble ones know
    as true.
They, by breaking through
    to the truth,
hunger-free
are totally unbound. — *Sn 3:12*

§ 377. Where water, earth,
fire, & wind
have no footing:
There the stars don't shine,
        the sun isn't visible.
There the moon doesn't appear.
There darkness is not found.
And when a sage,
        a brahman through sagacity,
        has realized [this] for himself,
then from form & formless,
        from bliss & pain,
            he is freed. — *Ud 1:10*

§ 378. "Freed, disjoined, & released from ten things, Bahuna, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness. Which ten? Freed, disjoined, & released from form, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness. Freed, disjoined, & released from feeling… Freed, disjoined, & released from perception… Freed, disjoined, & released from fabrications… Freed, disjoined, & released from consciousness… Freed, disjoined, & released from birth… Freed, disjoined, & released from aging… Freed, disjoined, & released from death… Freed, disjoined, & released from stress… Freed, disjoined, & released from defilement, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness.

"Just as a red, blue, or white lotus born in the water and growing in the water, rises up above the water and stands with no water adhering to it, in the same way the Tathāgata—freed, disjoined, & released from these ten things—dwells with unrestricted awareness." — *AN 10:81*

§ 379. Just this

is the path
–there is no other–
to purify vision.
Follow it,
and that will be Māra's
bewilderment.

Following it,
you put an end
to suffering & stress.
I have taught you this path
having known
–for your knowing–
the extraction of arrows.

It's for you to strive
ardently.
Tathagatas simply
point out the way.
Those who practice,
absorbed in jhana:
from Māra's bonds
they'll be freed. — *Dhp 274–276*

§ 380. "Whatever is the ending of passion, the ending of aversion, the ending of delusion: That is called—

the unfabricated,
the unbent,
the effluent-free,
the true, the beyond,
the subtle, the very-hard-to-see,
the ageless, permanence, the undecaying,
the surfaceless, non-objectification,
peace, the deathless,
the exquisite, bliss, rest,
the ending of craving,
the amazing, the astounding,
the secure, security,

unbinding,
the unafflicted, dispassion, purity,
release, the attachment-free,
the island, shelter, harbor, refuge,

the ultimate.

"And what is the path going to the unfabricated… the ultimate? The noble eightfold path.

"Thus, monks, I have taught you the unfabricated and the path going to the unfabricated.… I have taught you the ultimate and the path going to the ultimate. Whatever a sympathetic teacher should do—seeking the welfare of his disciples, out of sympathy for them—that have I done for you. Over there are the roots of trees; over there, empty dwellings. Practice jhāna, monks. Don't be heedless. Don't later fall into regret. This is our message to you all." — *SN 43*

# *Glossary*

*Arahant:* A "worthy one" or "pure one;" a person whose mind is free of defilement and thus is not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

*Āmisa:* "Of the flesh," i.e., dependent on sensuality. Antonym: *Nirāmisa.*

*Āsava:* Effluent; fermentation. Three qualities—sensuality, becoming, and ignorance—that "flow out" of the mind and create the flood of the round of death and rebirth. In some texts, views are added as an additional āsava.

*Asura:* A member of a race of beings who, like the Titans in Greek mythology, battled the devas for sovereignty in heaven and lost.

*Atammayatā:* Non-fashioning, i.e., the non-fashioning of a sense of self around any experience or activity.

*Avijjā:* Ignorance; lack of skill.

*Bodhisatta:* "A being (striving) for awakening;" the term used to describe the Buddha before he actually became Buddha, from his first aspiration to Buddhahood until the time of his full awakening. Sanskrit form: *Bodhisattva.*

*Brahman:* In common usage, a brahman is a member of the priestly caste, which claimed to be the highest caste in India, based on birth. In a specifically Buddhist usage, "brahman" can also mean an arahant, conveying the point that excellence is based, not on birth or race, but on the qualities attained in the mind.

*Brahmā:* An inhabitant of the heavenly realms of form or formlessness.

*Deva (-tā):* Literally, "shining one." An inhabitant of the terrestrial or heavenly realms higher than the human.

*Dhamma:* (1) Event; action; (2) a phenomenon in and of itself; (3) mental quality; (4) doctrine, teaching. Sanskrit form: *Dharma.*

*Dukkha:* Suffering; stress; pain.

*Gandhabba:* Celestial musician, the lowest level of the celestial devas, often portrayed as tricksters who are obsessed with sex.

*Gotama:* The Buddha's clan name.

*Iddhipāda:* Base of power. The Canon describes the four bases of power as qualities that can be dominant in the practice of concentration: desire, persistence, intent, and discrimination.

*Jhāna:* Mental absorption. A state of strong concentration focused on a single sensation or mental notion. This term is derived from the verb *jhāyati,* which means to burn with a steady, still flame.

*Kamma:* Intentional act. Sanskrit form: Karma.

*Khandha:* Aggregate; physical and mental phenomena as they are directly experienced; the raw material for a sense of self: *rūpa*—physical form; *vedanā*—feelings of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain; *saññā*—perception, mental label; *saṅkhāra*—fabrication, thought construct; and *viññāṇa*—sensory consciousness, the act of taking note of sense data and ideas as they occur. Sanskrit form: *Skandha.*

*Māra:* The personification of temptation, mortality, and all forces, within and without, that create obstacles to release from saṁsāra.

*Nāga:* A magical serpent, technically classed as a common animal, but possessing many of the powers of a deva, including the ability to take on human shape. Sometimes this term is used metaphorically, in the sense of "Great One," to indicate an arahant.

*Nibbāna:* Literally, the "unbinding" of the mind from passion, aversion, and delusion, and from the entire round of death and rebirth. As this term also denotes the extinguishing of a fire, it carries connotations of stilling, cooling, and peace. "Total nibbāna" in some contexts denotes the experience of awakening; in others, the final passing away of an arahant. Sanskrit form: *Nirvāṇa.*

*Nigaṇṭha:* Literally, one without ties. An ascetic in the Jain religion.

*Pāli:* The oldest complete extant Canon of the Buddha's teachings and—by extension—the language in which it was composed.

*Pāṭimokkha:* Basic code of monastic discipline, composed of 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns.

*Sakya:* The Buddha's family name.

*Saṁsāra:* Transmigration; the process of wandering through repeated states of becoming, with their attendant death and rebirth.

*Saṁvega:* A sense of dismay or terror over the meaninglessness and futility of life as it is ordinarily lived, combined with a strong sense of urgency in looking for a way out.

*Saṅgha:* On the conventional *(sammati)* level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns. On the ideal *(ariya)* level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry.

*Sukha:* Ease; pleasure; happiness; bliss.

*Sutta:* Discourse. Sanskrit form: *Sūtra.*

*Tādin:* "Such," an adjective to describe one who has attained the goal. It indicates that the person's state is indefinable but not subject to change or influences of any sort.

*Tathāgata:* Literally, "one who has become authentic *(tatha-āgata)* or is truly gone *(tathā-gata)":* an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his arahant disciples.

*Upādāna:* Clinging; the act of taking sustenance.

*Vinaya:* The monastic discipline, whose rules and traditions comprise six volumes in printed text.

*Vipassanā:* Insight.

*Yakkha:* Spirit; a lower level of deva—sometimes friendly to human beings, sometimes not—often dwelling in trees or other wild places.

# *Abbreviations*

*PĀLI SUTTAS:*

| | |
|---|---|
| *AN* | *Aṅguttara Nikāya* |
| *Dhp* | *Dhammapada* |
| *DN* | *Dīgha Nikāya* |
| *Iti* | *Itivuttaka* |
| *Khp* | *Khuddakapāṭha* |
| *MN* | *Majjhima Nikāya* |
| *SN* | *Saṁyutta Nikāya* |
| *Sn* | *Sutta Nipāta* |
| *Thag* | *Theragāthā* |
| *Thig* | *Therīgāthā* |
| *Ud* | *Udāna* |

*PĀLI VINAYA:*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Cv* | *Cullavagga* |
| *Mv* | *Mahāvagga* |
| *Pc* | *Pācittiya* |
| *Pr* | *Pārājika* |
| *Sg* | *Saṅghādisesa* |

References to DN, Iti, and MN are to discourse. Those to Dhp are to verse. Those to Pc, Pr, and Sg are to rule number. References to other texts are to section *(saṁyutta, nipāta,* or *vagga)* and discourse in the suttas, and section and sub-sections in Cv and Mv. Numbering for AN and SN follows the Thai Edition of the Pāli Canon.

All translations from these texts are by the author, and are based on the Royal Thai Edition of the Pāli Canon (Bangkok: Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya, 1982).

# *Further Readings*

*(available on dhammtalks.org)*

**On preliminaries to the path:** "Affirming the Truths of the Heart"; "An All-around Eye"; "Beyond All Directions"; "Danger is Normal"; "Faith in Awakening"; "Freedom from Fear"; "The Lessons of Gratitude"; "No Strings Attached"; "Opening the Door to the Dhamma"; "The Power of Judgment"

**On appropriate attention:** *Skill in Questions*; "Food for Awakening"; "Untangling the Present"

**On kamma:** *The Karma of Mindfulness*; *Merit*; "Karma"; "The Seeds of Karma : 21 Questions on Karma & Rebirth"

**On rebirth:** *The Truth of Rebirth*

**On the four noble truths:** "Life Isn't Just Suffering"; "The Weight of Mountains"; "Five Piles of Bricks"; "What's Noble about the Noble Truths?"; "Truths with Consequences"; "Ignorance"

**On becoming:** *The Paradox of Becoming*; "The Arrows of Thinking"; "Samsāra"; "Samsāra Divided by Zero"

**On the three perceptions:** *Selves & Not-self*; "No Self or Not-self?"; "The Not-self Strategy"; "The Wisdom of the Ego"; "All About Change"

**On dependent co-arising:** *The Shape of Suffering*; "We Are Not One"

**On right resolve:** *The Sublime Attitudes*; "Trading Candy for Gold"

**On virtue:** "Educating Compassion"; "Getting the Message"; "The Healing Power of the Precepts"

**On right effort:** "The Joy of Effort"; "Pushing the Limits"

**On mindfulness:** *Frames of Reference*; *Right Mindfulness*; *Mindful of the Body*; "The Agendas of Mindfulness"; "Mindfulness Defined"; "Under Your Skin"

**On concentration:** *Keeping the Breath in Mind*; *Inner Strength*; *With Each & Every Breath*; "Jhāna Not by the Numbers"; "The Integrity of Emptiness"; "Silence Isn't Mandatory"

**On insight:** *Straight from the Heart*; *Discernment*; "One Tool Among Many"

**On the path in general:** *The Wings to Awakening*

**On interpreting the Dhamma:** *Buddhist Romanticism*; "Freedom from Buddha Nature"; "Lost in Quotation"

**On stream-entry:** *Into the Stream*; "The Buddha's Last Word"

**On nibbāna:** *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*; "Purity of Heart"; "The Essence of the Dhamma"; "A Verb for Nirvāṇa"