

*Recognizing the
Dhamma*



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A STUDY GUIDE
prepared by

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Introduction

Shortly after her ordination, the Buddha's step-mother, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, asked him for a short Dhamma-instruction that would guide her in her solitary practice. He responded with eight principles for recognizing what qualifies as Dhamma and Vinaya, and what does not. The commentary tells us that after her instruction, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in no long time became an arahant.

The eight principles have been widely cited ever since. One Thai writer has called them the “constitution of Buddhism,” as they form the standards against which the validity of any interpretation of the Dhamma or Vinaya must be judged. Perhaps the most important point that these principles make is that any teaching has to be judged by the results that come when putting it into practice. They are an excellent illustration of the teachings given in the well-known Kālāma Sutta ([AN 3:66](#)), as well as in the teachings that the Buddha gave to his son, Rāhula ([MN 61](#)).

These eight principles can be divided into three groups as to their focus. The first two—dispassion and being unfettered—focus on the final goal of the practice. Three principles—contentment, persistence, and shedding—focus on internal means to the goal. The remaining three—seclusion, modesty, and being unburdensome—focus on the impact one's practice has on other people. In this way these principles foster a fully rounded perspective on how one's practice should be judged.

The Canon illustrates these principles not only with abstract discussions but also with stories, and the stories are often more memorable than the discussions. Thus this study guide differs from its companions in that it is predominantly composed of stories. Bear in mind as you read the stories that they are often framed in somewhat extreme terms to drive their points home. Sister Subhā [[§1.6](#)], Kālī [[§2.10](#)], Prince Dīghāvu [[§3.5](#)], and the monk whose limbs are being removed by a saw [[§2.10](#)] would not be as memorable if their stories were framed in more realistic terms.

Also bear in mind that there is some overlap among the principles, and that a passage may illustrate more than one at a time. Thus, for instance, in the story of Ven. Isidatta [[§2.11](#)], his answer to Citta's question analyzes the fetter of self-identity views, while his behavior illustrates the principles of modesty and non-entanglement.

The most extensive overlap is between the principle of dispassion and that of not being fettered, as passion in its various forms covers three of the ten fetters that bind a person to the round of rebirth. Thus the section on dispassion contains passages dealing with how to overcome the three “passion fetters”—sensual passion, passion for the sense of form experienced in the jhānas of form, and passion for the sense of formlessness experienced in the formless jhānas—whereas the section on being unfettered treats the remaining seven fetters.

For further reading, see the [Udāna](#)—a canonical text composed of stories with comments by the Buddha himself—which illustrates all eight of the principles listed here.

The Eight Principles

I have heard that at on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Vesālī, in the Peaked Roof Hall in the Great Forest.

Then Mahāpajāpati Gotamī went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, stood to one side. As she was standing there she said to him: “It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would teach me the Dhamma in brief such that, having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.”

“Gotamī, the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead:

- to passion, not to dispassion;
- to being fettered, not to being unfettered;
- to accumulating, not to shedding;
- to self-aggrandizement, not to modesty;
- to discontent, not to contentment;
- to entanglement, not to seclusion;
- to laziness, not to aroused persistence;
- to being burdensome, not to being unburdensome’:

You may categorically hold, ‘This is not the Dhamma, this is not the Vinaya, this is not the Teacher’s instruction.’

“As for the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead:

- to dispassion, not to passion;
- to being unfettered, not to being fettered;
- to shedding, not to accumulating;
- to modesty, not to self-aggrandizement;
- to contentment, not to discontent;
- to seclusion, not to entanglement;
- to aroused persistence, not to laziness;
- to being unburdensome, not to being burdensome’:

You may categorically hold, ‘This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī delighted at his words.

— [AN 8:53](#)

Dispassion

§ 1.1 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Gayā, at Gayā Head, with 1,000 monks. There he addressed the monks:

“Monks, the All is aflame. What All is aflame? The eye is aflame. Forms are aflame. Consciousness at the eye is aflame. Contact at the eye is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

“The ear is aflame. Sounds are aflame....

“The nose is aflame. Aromas are aflame....

“The tongue is aflame. flavors are aflame....

“The body is aflame. Tactile sensations are aflame....

“The intellect is aflame. Ideas are aflame. Consciousness at the intellect is aflame. Contact at the intellect is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I say, with birth, aging & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

“Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with consciousness at the eye, disenchanted with contact at the eye. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: With that, too, he grows disenchanted.

“He grows disenchanted with the ear....

“He grows disenchanted with the nose....

“He grows disenchanted with the tongue....

“He grows disenchanted with the body....

“He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with consciousness at the intellect, disenchanted with contact at the intellect. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: He grows disenchanted with that too. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With full release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is depleted, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, the hearts of the 1,000 monks, through no clinging/not being sustained, were fully released from effluents [*āśava*].
— [*SN 35:28*](#)

§ 1.2 “And how does a monk guard the doors of his senses? On seeing a form with the eye, he 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 qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. On hearing a sound with the ear ... On smelling an odor with the nose... On tasting a flavor with the tongue... On touching a tactile sensation with the body... On cognizing an idea with the intellect, he does not grasp at any theme or details by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the intellect—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. Endowed with this noble restraint over the sense faculties, he is inwardly sensitive to the pleasure of being blameless. This is how a monk guards the doors of his senses.”
— [*DN 2*](#)

§ 1.3 “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 has come to be, then avoiding the equanimity coming from multiplicity, dependent on multiplicity, he develops the equanimity coming from singleness, dependent on singleness,¹ 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 has come to be, 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 has come to be, 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 has come to be, 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 has come to be, 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 has come to be, 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 has come to be, 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.”

NOTE: 1. [MN 137](#) identifies “equanimity based on multiplicity” as equanimity with regard to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations. It identifies “equanimity based on singleness” as the four formless attainments. In the context of this sutta, however, the Commentary defines equanimity based on

singleness as the fourth jhāna, and this interpretation seems correct. Toward the end of this passage, the equanimity based on singleness functions as the basis for the three knowledges, a function that is normally filled by the fourth jhāna.

— MN 54

§ 1.4 “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, 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.

“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, fostering desire, enticing. 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, fostering desire, enticing. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others.

“Wander, monks, in your proper range, your own ancestral territory. In one who wanders in 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—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory.”

— [*SN 47:7*](#)

§ 1.5 Sister Nandā:

“Sick, putrid, unclean:
look, Nanda, at this physical heap.
Through contemplation of the foul,
develop your mind,
make it one, well-centered.

As this [your body], so that.
As that, so this.
It gives off a foul stench,
the delight of fools.”

Considering it thus,
untiring, both day & night,
I, with my own discernment
dissecting it,
saw.

And as I, heedful,
examined it aptly,
this body—as it actually is—
was seen inside & out.

Then was I disenchanted with the body

& dispassionate within:
Heedful, detached,
calmed was I.

Unbound.

— *Thig 5:4*

§ 1.6 As Subhā the nun was going through Jīvaka's delightful mango grove, a libertine [a goldsmith's son] blocked her path, so she said to him:

'What wrong have I done you
that you stand in my way?
It's not proper, my friend,
that a man should touch
a woman gone forth.
I respect the Master's message,
the training pointed out by the one well-gone.
I am pure, without blemish:
 Why do you stand in my way?
You—your mind agitated, impassioned;
I—unagitated, unimpassioned,
with a mind entirely freed:
 Why do you stand in my way?'

'You are young & not bad-looking,
what need do you have for going forth?
Throw off your ochre robe—
 Come, let's delight in the flowering grove.
A sweetness they exude everywhere,
the towering trees with their pollen.
The beginning of spring is a pleasant season—
 Come, let's delight in the flowering grove.
The trees with their blossoming tips
moan, as it were, in the breeze:
What delight will you have
if you plunge into the grove alone?
Frequented by herds of wild beasts,

disturbed by elephants rutting & aroused:
you want to go
 unaccompanied
into the great, lonely, frightening grove?
Like a doll made of gold, you will go about,
like a goddess in the gardens of heaven.
With delicate, smooth Kāsi fabrics,
you will shine, O beauty without compare.
I would gladly do your every bidding
if we were to dwell in the glade.
For there is no creature dearer to me
 than you, O nymph with the languid regard.
If you do as I ask, happy, come live in my house.
Dwelling in the calm of a palace,
 have women wait on you,
 wear delicate Kasi fabrics,
 adorn yourself with garlands & creams.
I will make you many & varied ornaments
 of gold, jewels, & pearls.
Climb onto a costly bed,
scented with sandalwood carvings,
with a well-washed coverlet, beautiful,
spread with a woolen quilt, brand new.
Like a blue lotus rising from the water
where there dwell non-human beings,
you will go to old age with your limbs unseen,
if you stay as you are in the holy life.'

'What do you assume of any essence,
here in this cemetery grower, filled with corpses,
this body destined to break up?
What do you see when you look at me,
 you who are out of your mind?'

'Your eyes
are like those of a fawn,
like those of a sprite in the mountains.

Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight
 grows all the more.
Like tips they are, of blue lotuses,
in your golden face
 —spotless:
Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight
 grows all the more.
Even if you should go far away,
I will think only of your pure,
 long-lashed gaze,
for there is nothing dearer to me
than your eyes, O nymph with the languid regard.'

'You want to stray from the road,
you want the moon as a plaything,
you want to jump over Mount Sineru,
you who have designs on one born of the Buddha.
For there is nothing anywhere at all
in the cosmos with its gods,
that would be an object of passion for me.
I don't even know what that passion would be,
 for it's been killed, root & all, by the path.
Like embers from a pit—scattered,
like a bowl of poison—evaporated,
 I don't even see what that passion would be,
 for it's been killed, root & all, by the path.
Try to seduce one who hasn't reflected on this,
or who has not followed the Master's teaching.
But try it with this one who knows
 and you suffer.
For in the midst of praise & blame,
 pleasure & pain,
my mindfulness stands firm.
Knowing the unattractiveness
 of things compounded,
my mind cleaves to nothing at all.
I am a follower of the one well-gone,

riding the vehicle of the eightfold way:
My arrow removed, effluent-free,
I delight, having gone to an empty dwelling.
For I have seen well-painted puppets,
hitched up with sticks & strings,
made to dance in various ways.
When the sticks & strings are removed,
thrown away, scattered, shredded,
smashed into pieces, not to be found,
 in what will the mind there make its home?
This body of mine, which is just like that,
when devoid of dhammas doesn't function.
When, devoid of dhammas, it doesn't function,
 in what will the mind there make its home?
Like a mural you've seen, painted on a wall,
smeared with yellow orpiment,
there your vision has been distorted,
meaningless your human perception.
Like an evaporated mirage,
like a tree of gold in a dream,
like a magic show in the midst of a crowd—
 you run blind after what is unreal.
Resembling a ball of sealing wax,
set in a hollow,
with a bubble in the middle
and bathed with tears,
eye secretions are born there too:
The parts of the eye
are rolled all together
in various ways.'

Plucking out her lovely eye,
with mind unattached
she felt no regret.
'Here, take this eye. It's yours.'
Straightaway she gave it to him.
Straightaway his passion faded right there,

and he begged her forgiveness.
'Be well, follower of the holy life.
This sort of thing
won't happen again.
Harming a person like you
is like embracing a blazing fire.
It's as if I have seized a poisonous snake.
So may you be well. Forgive me.'

And released from there, the nun
went to the excellent Buddha's presence.
When she saw the mark of his excellent merit,
her eye became
as it was before.

— *Thig 14*

§ 1.7 Now at that time Ven. Anuruddha, going through the Kosalan countryside on his way to Sāvatthī, arrived in the evening at a certain village. And at that time a rest house had been set up by a woman in that village. So Ven. Anuruddha went to the woman and, on arrival, said to her, "If it is no inconvenience for you, sister, I will stay for one night in the rest house."

"You are welcome to stay, venerable sir."

Then other travelers went to that woman and, on arrival, said, "If it is no inconvenience for you, lady, we will stay for one night in the rest house."

"This master has arrived first. If he gives his permission, you may stay."

So the travelers went to Ven. Anuruddha and on arrival said to him, "If it is no inconvenience for you, venerable sir, we will stay for one night in the rest house."

"You are welcome to stay, friends."

Now it so happened that the woman had fallen in love with Ven. Anuruddha at first sight, so she went to him and said, "The master will not be comfortable, crowded with these people. It would be good if I were to prepare a bed inside for the master."

Ven. Anuruddha consented by remaining silent.

Then the woman, having herself prepared a bed inside for Ven. Anuruddha, having put on her jewelry and scented herself with perfumes, went to him and said, "Master, you are beautiful, good-looking, and appealing. I, too, am beautiful, good-looking, & appealing. It would be good if I were to be your wife."

When this was said, Ven. Anuruddha remained silent. So a second time... A third time she said to him, "Master, you are beautiful, good-looking, & appealing. I too am beautiful, good-looking, & appealing. Please take me together with all my wealth."

A third time, Ven. Anuruddha remained silent. So the woman, having slipped off her upper cloak, paraded up & down in front of him, stood, sat down, & then lay down right in front of him. But Ven. Anuruddha, keeping control of his faculties, didn't as much as glance at her or say even a word.

Then the thought occurred to her: "Isn't it amazing! Isn't it astounding! Many men send for me at a price of 100 or even 1,000 (a night), but this contemplative, even when I myself beg him, doesn't want to take me together with all of my wealth!" So, putting her upper cloak back on and bowing her head at his feet, she said to him: "Venerable sir, a transgression has overcome me in that I was so foolish, so muddle-headed, & so unskillful as to act in such a way. Please accept this confession of my transgression as such, so that I may restrain myself in the future."

"Yes, sister, a transgression overcame you in that you were so foolish, so muddle-headed, & so unskillful as to act in such a way. But because you see your transgression as such and make amends in accordance with the Dhamma, we accept your confession. For 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."

Then, when the night had passed, the woman, with her own hand, served & satisfied Ven. Anuruddha with excellent staple and non-staple food. When Ven. Anuruddha had eaten & removed his hand from his bowl, she sat to one side. As she was sitting there, Ven. Anuruddha instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged her with a talk on Dhamma. Then the woman, having been instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged by Ven. Anuruddha with a talk on Dhamma, said to him, "Magnificent, venerable sir! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what had been overturned,

were to reveal what was hidden, were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see shapes, in the same way Ven. Anuruddha has—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. May the master remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward for life.”

— *Pācittiya 6*

§ 1.8 “Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, he enters and remains in the first jhāna: rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born from seclusion. Just as if a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and 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. This is a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime.

“Furthermore, with the stilling of directed thoughts and evaluations, he enters and remains in the second jhāna: rapture and pleasure born of concentration, singleness of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and 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 and again, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, suffuse and 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. This, too, is a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime.

“And furthermore, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters and remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a lotus pond, some of the lotuses, born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated and pervaded, suffused and 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. This, too, is a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime.

“And furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys and distresses—he enters and 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. This, too, great king, is a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime.”

— DN 2

§ 1.9 “I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the first jhāna.’ Thus it has been said. In reference to what was it said?... 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 the effluents. Or, if not, then through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and through the total wasting away of the five lower fetters [see § 2.1]—he is due to be reborn (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

“‘I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the first jhāna.’ Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with the other levels of jhāna up through the sphere of nothingness.]

“Thus, as far as the perception-attainments go, that is as far as gnosis-penetration goes. As for these two spheres—the attainment of the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception & the attainment of the cessation of feeling & perception—I tell you that they are to be rightly explained by those monks who are meditators, skilled in attaining, skilled in attaining & emerging, who have attained & emerged in dependence on them.”

— [AN 9:36](#)

§ 1.10 “[On attaining the fourth level of jhāna] there remains only equanimity: pure & bright, pliant, malleable & luminous. Just as if a skilled 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 periodically, sprinkle water on it periodically, examine it periodically, 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. He [the meditator] 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. [Similarly with the remaining formless states.]’

"He 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.' [Similarly with the remaining formless states.] He neither fabricates nor wills for the sake of becoming or un-becoming. This being the case, he is not sustained by anything in the world/does not cling to anything in the world. Unsustained, he is not agitated. Unagitated, he is totally unbound right within. He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

— MN 140

Being Unfettered

§ 2.1 “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 passion, and 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, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters. And these are the ten fetters.”

— [*AN 10:13*](#)

§ 2.2 “There are in this community of monks, monks who, with the total ending of [the first] three Fetters, are stream-winners, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening....

“There are... monks who, with the total ending of [the first] three fetters and the thinning out of passion, aversion, & delusion, are once-returners. After returning only once to this world they will put an end to stress....

“There are... monks who, with the total ending of the first five Fetters, are due to be reborn (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world....

“There are... 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.”

— [*MN 118*](#)

§ 2.3 “And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing? There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person... 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, and the arisen effluent of sensuality increases; the unarisen effluent of becoming... the unarisen effluent of ignorance arises, and the arisen effluent of ignorance

increases.... 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 bound?'

"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 stress.

"The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones...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 fit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality does not arise, and the arisen effluent of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of becoming...the unarisen effluent of ignorance does not arise, and the arisen effluent of ignorance is 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: identity-view, uncertainty, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing."

— [MN 2](#)

§ 2.4 “There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person... assumes form to be the self. That assumption is a fabrication. Now what is the cause, what is the origination, what is the birth, what is the coming-into-existence of that fabrication? To an uninstructed, run- of-the-mill person, touched by that which is felt born of contact with ignorance, craving arises. That fabrication is born of that. And that fabrication is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. That craving... That feeling... That contact... That ignorance is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. It is by knowing & seeing in this way that one without delay puts an end to the effluents.

“Or he doesn’t assume form to be the self, but he assumes the self as possessing form... form as in the self... the self as in form.

“Now that assumption is a fabrication. What is the cause ... of that fabrication? To an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person, touched by that which if felt born of contact with ignorance, craving arises. That fabrication is born of that. And that fabrication is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. That craving... That feeling... That contact... That ignorance is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. It is by knowing & seeing in this way that one without delay puts an end to the effluents.

[Similarly with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness.]

“Or... he may have a view such as this: “This self is the same as the cosmos. This I will be after death, constant, lasting, eternal, not subject to change.” This eternalist view is a fabrication.... Or... he may have a view such as this: “I would not be, neither would there be what is mine. I will not be, neither will there be what is mine.” This annihilationist view is a fabrication.... Or... he may be doubtful & uncertain, having come to no conclusion with regard to the true Dhamma. That doubt, uncertainty, & coming-to-no-conclusion is a fabrication.

“What is the cause... of that fabrication? To an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person, touched by that which is felt born of contact with ignorance, craving arises. That fabrication is born of that. And that fabrication is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. That craving... That feeling ... That contact... That ignorance is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. It is by knowing & seeing in this way that one without delay puts an end to the effluents.”

— [SN 22:81](#)

§ 2.5 “Imagine a bowl of water mixed with lac, yellow orpiment, indigo, or crimson, such that a man with good eyesight examining the reflection of his face in it would not be able to know or see his face as it actually is. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by *sensual passion*, overcome with sensual passion, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from sensual passion once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one’s own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both....

“Now imagine a bowl of water heated on a fire, boiling & bubbling over, such that a man with good eyesight examining the reflection of his face in it would not be able to know or see his face as it actually is. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by *ill will*, overcome with ill will, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from ill will once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one’s own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both....

“Now imagine a bowl of water covered with algae & slime, such that a man with good eyesight examining the reflection of his face in it would not be able to know or see his face as it actually is. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by *sloth & drowsiness*, overcome with sloth & drowsiness, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one’s own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both....

“Now imagine a bowl of water ruffled by the wind, disturbed, & covered with waves, such that a man with good eyesight examining the reflection of his face in it would not be able to know or see his face as it actually is. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by *restlessness & anxiety*, overcome with restlessness & anxiety, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one’s own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both....

“Now imagine a bowl of water stirred up, turbid, muddied, & left in the dark, such that a man with good eyesight examining the reflection of his face in it would not be able to know or see his face as it actually is. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by *uncertainty*,

overcome with uncertainty, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from uncertainty once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both."

— SN 46:55

§ 2.6 "Suppose that a man, taking a loan, invests it in his business affairs. His business affairs succeed. He repays his old debts and there is extra left over for maintaining his wife. The thought would occur to him, 'Before, taking a loan, I invested it in my business affairs. Now my business affairs have succeeded. I have repaid my old debts and there is extra left over for maintaining my wife.' Because of that he would experience joy & happiness.

"Now suppose that a man falls sick—in pain & seriously ill. He does not enjoy his meals, and there is no strength in his body. As time passes, he eventually recovers from that sickness. He enjoys his meals and there is strength in his body. The thought would occur to him, 'Before, I was sick.... Now I am recovered from that sickness. I enjoy my meals and there is strength in my body.' Because of that he would experience joy & happiness.

"Now suppose that a man is bound in prison. As time passes, he eventually is released from that bondage, safe & sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him, 'Before, I was bound in prison. Now I am released from that bondage, safe & sound, with no loss of my property.' Because of that he would experience joy & happiness.

"Now suppose that a man is a slave, subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes. As time passes, he eventually is released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, freed, able to go where he likes. The thought would occur to him, 'Before, I was a slave.... Now I am released from that slavery, subject to myself, not subject to others, freed, able to go where I like.' Because of that he would experience joy & happiness.

"Now suppose that a man, carrying money & goods, is traveling by a road through desolate country. As time passes, he eventually emerges from that desolate country, safe & sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him, 'Before, carrying money & goods, I was traveling by a

road through desolate country. Now I have emerged from that desolate country, safe & sound, with no loss of my property.' Because of that he would experience joy & happiness.

"In the same way, when these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a road through desolate country. But when these five hindrances are abandoned in himself, he regards it as unindebtedness, good health, release from prison, freedom, a place of security."

— [MN 39](#)

§ 2.7 *Puṇṇikā*:

I'm a water-carrier, cold,
always going down to the water
from fear of my mistresses' beatings,
harassed by their anger & words.
But you, brāhman,
 what do you fear
that you're always going down to the water
with shivering limbs, feeling great cold?

The Brāhman:

Punnika, surely you know.
You're asking one doing skillful kamma
& warding off evil.
Whoever, young or old, does evil kamma
is, through water ablution,
from evil kamma set free.

Puṇṇikā:

Who taught you this
— the ignorant to the ignorant —
'One, through water ablution,
is from evil kamma set free?'
In that case, they'd all go to heaven:
 all the frogs, turtles,
 serpents, crocodiles,
 & anything else that lives in the water.

Sheep-butchers, pork-butchers,
fishermen, trappers,
thieves, executioners,
& any other evil doers,
would, through water ablution,
be from evil kamma set free.
If these rivers could carry off
the evil kamma you've done in the past,
they'd carry off your merit as well,
and then you'd be
 completely left out.
Whatever it is that you fear,
that you're always going down to the water,
 don't do it.
Don't let the cold hurt your skin."

The Brāhman:

I've been following the miserable path, good lady,
and now you've brought me
 back to the noble.
I give you this robe for water-ablution.

Puṇṇikā:

Let the robe be yours. I don't need it.
If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
then don't do any evil kamma,
in open, in secret.
But if you do or will do
any evil kamma,
you'll gain no freedom from pain,
even if you fly up & hurry away.
If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
go to the Awakened One for refuge,
go to the Dhamma & Saṅgha.
Take on the precepts:

That will lead to your liberation.

— *Thig 12*

§ 2.8 “These seven things—pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy’s aim—come to a man or woman who is angry. Which seven?

“There is the case where an enemy wishes of an enemy, ‘O, may this person be ugly!’ Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy’s good looks. Now, when a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—then even though 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. This is the first thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy’s aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

“Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, ‘O, may this person sleep badly!’ Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy’s restful sleep. Now, 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, all because he is overcome with anger. This is the second thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy’s aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

“Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, ‘O, may this person not profit!’ Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy’s profits. Now, 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, all because he is overcome with anger. This is the third thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy’s aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

“Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, ‘O, may this person not have any wealth!’ Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy’s wealth. Now, 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] all because he is overcome with anger. This is the fourth thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

"Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, 'O, may this person not have any reputation!' Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy's reputation. Now, when a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—whatever reputation he has gained from being heedful, it falls away, all because he is overcome with anger. This is the fifth thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

"Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, 'O, may this person not have any friends!' Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy's having friends. Now, when a person is angry—overcome with anger, oppressed with anger—his friends, companions, & relatives will avoid him from afar, all because he is overcome with anger. This is the sixth thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

"Furthermore, an enemy wishes of an enemy, 'O, may this person, on the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad bourn, a lower realm, hell!' Why is that? An enemy is not pleased with an enemy's going to heaven. Now, 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 bourn, a lower realm, hell, all because he was overcome with anger. This is the seventh thing pleasing to an enemy, bringing about an enemy's aim, that comes to a man or woman who is angry.

"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 angry person is ugly & sleeps poorly.
Gaining a profit, he turns it into a loss,
having done damage with word & deed.
A person overwhelmed with anger
destroys his wealth.
Maddened with anger,
he destroys his status.
Relatives, friends, & colleagues avoid him.
Anger brings loss.
Anger inflames the mind.
He doesn't realize
that his danger is born from within.
An angry person doesn't know
his own benefit.
An angry person doesn't see
the Dhamma.
A man conquered by anger
is in a mass of darkness.
He takes pleasure in bad deeds
as if they were good,
but later, when his anger is gone,
he suffers as if burned with fire.
He is spoiled, blotted out,
like fire enveloped in smoke.

When anger spreads,
when a man becomes angry,
he has no shame, no fear of evil,
is not respectful in speech.
For a person overcome with anger,
nothing gives light.

I'll list the deeds that bring remorse,
that are far from the teachings.

Listen!

An angry person
kills his father,

kills his mother,
kills brāhmans
& people run-of-the-mill.

It's because of a mother's devotion
that one sees the world,
yet an angry run-of-the-mill person
can kill this giver of life.

Like oneself, all beings
hold themselves most dear,
yet an angry person, deranged,
can kill himself in many ways:
with a sword, taking poison,
hanging himself by a rope
in a mountain glen.

Doing these deeds
that kill beings and do violence to himself,
the angry person doesn't realize that he's ruined.
This snare of Māra, in the form of anger,
dwelling in the cave of the heart:
cut it out with self-control,
discernment, persistence, right view.
The wise man would cut out
each & every form of unskillfulness.

Train yourselves:
'May we not be blotted out.'

Free from anger & untroubled,
free from greed, without longing,
tamed, your anger abandoned,
effluent-free,
you will be unbound.

— [AN 7:60](#)

§ 2.9 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. Then the brāhman Akkosaka ["Insulter"] Bhāradvāja heard that a brāhman of the Bhāradvāja clan had gone forth from the home life into homelessness in the presence of the Blessed One. Angered & displeased, he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, insulted & cursed him with rude, harsh words.

When this was said, the Blessed One said to him: "What do you think, brāhman: Do friends & colleagues, relatives & kinsmen come to you as guests?"

"Yes, Master Gotama, sometimes friends & colleagues, relatives & kinsmen come to me as guests."

"And what do you think: Do you serve them with staple & non-staple foods & delicacies?"

"Yes, sometimes I serve them with staple & non-staple foods & delicacies."

"And if they don't accept them, to whom do those foods belong?"

"If they don't accept them, Master Gotama, those foods are all mine."

"In the same way, brāhman, that with which you have insulted me, who is not insulting; that with which you have taunted me, who is not taunting; that with which you have berated me, who is not berating: that I don't accept from you. It's all yours, brāhman. It's all yours."

"Whoever returns insult to one who is insulting, returns taunts to one who is taunting, returns a berating to one who is berating, is said to be eating together, sharing company, with that person. But I am neither eating together nor sharing your company, brāhman. It's all yours. It's all yours."

"The king together with his court know this of Master Gotama — 'Gotama the contemplative is an arahant' — and yet still Master Gotama gets angry."

[The Buddha:]

Whence is there anger
for one free from anger,
tamed,
living in tune —
one released through right knowing,

calmed
& Such.

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 this was said, the brāhman Akkosaka Bhāradvāja said to the Blessed One, “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what had been overturned, were to reveal what was hidden, were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way Master Gotama has—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. Let me obtain the going forth in Master Gotama's presence, let me obtain admission.”

Then the brāhman Akkosaka Bhāradvāja received the going forth & the admission in the Blessed One's presence. And not long after his admission—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, knowing & realizing 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 so Ven. Bhāradvāja became another one of the arahants.

— [SN 7:2](#)

§ 2.10 "Once, monks, in this same Sāvattihī, there was a lady of a household named Vedehikā. This good report about Lady Vedehikā had circulated: 'Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is calm.' Now, Lady Vedehikā had a slave named Kālī who was diligent, deft, & neat in her work. The thought occurred to Kālī the slave: 'This good report about my Lady Vedehikā has circulated: "Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is calm." Now, is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show? Why don't I test her?'

"So Kālī the slave got up after daybreak. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: 'Hey, Kālī!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up after daybreak?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?" Angered & displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: 'Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it's just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't I test her some more?'

"So Kālī the slave got up later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: 'Hey, Kali!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up later in the day?"

"No reason, madam."

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?" Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: 'Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it's just because I'm diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't

I test her some more?’

“So Kālī the slave got up even later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up even later in the day?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?’ Angered & displeased, she grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

Then Kālī the slave, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbors: ‘See, ladies, the gentle one’s handiwork? See the even-tempered one’s handiwork? See the calm one’s handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?’

“After that this evil report about Lady Vedehikā circulated: ‘Lady Vedehikā is vicious. Lady Vedehikā is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is violent.’

“In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, & calm. I don’t call a monk easy to admonish if he is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only by reason of robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick. Why is that? Because if he doesn’t get robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, then he isn’t easy to admonish and doesn’t make himself easy to admonish. But if a monk is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma, then I call him easy to admonish. Thus, monks, you should train yourselves: ‘We will be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“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— abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“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.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying lac, yellow orpiment, indigo, or crimson, saying, ‘I will draw pictures in space, I will make pictures appear.’ Now, what do you think—would he draw pictures in space & make pictures appear?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because space is formless & featureless. It’s not easy to draw pictures there and to make them appear. 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 space—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“Suppose that a man were to come along carrying a burning grass torch and saying, ‘With this burning grass torch I will heat up the river Ganges and make it boil.’ Now, what do you think—would he, with that burning grass torch, heat up the river Ganges and make it boil?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because the river Ganges is deep & enormous. It’s not easy to heat it up and make it boil with a burning grass torch. 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 river Ganges—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves.

"Suppose there were a catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and a man were to come along carrying a stick or shard and saying, 'With this stick or shard I will take this catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and I will make it rustle & crackle.' Now, what do you think—would he, with that stick or shard, take that catskin bag—beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling—and make it rustle & crackle?"

"No, lord. Why is that? Because the catskin bag is beaten, well-beaten, beaten through & through, soft, silky, free of rustling & crackling. It's not easy to make it rustle & crackle with a stick or shard. 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 a catskin bag—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

“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. 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.

“Monks, if you attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw, do you see any aspects of speech, slight or gross, that you could not endure?”

“No, lord.”

“Then attend constantly to this admonition on the simile of the saw. That will be for your long-term welfare & happiness.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

— [MN 21](#)

§ 2.11 On one occasion a large number of senior monks were living near Macchikāsaṇḍa in the Wild Mango Grove. Then Citta the householder¹ went to them and, on arrival, having bowed down to them, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to them: “Venerable sirs, may the senior monks acquiesce to tomorrow’s meal from me.”

The senior monks acquiesced by silence. Then Citta the householder, sensing the senior monks’ acquiescence, got up from his seat and, having bowed down to them, circumambulated them—keeping them to his right—and left.

When the night had passed, the senior monks put on their robes in the early morning and—taking their bowls & outer robes—went to Citta’s residence. There they sat down on the appointed seats. Citta the householder went to them and, having bowed down to them, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the most senior monk:

“Venerable sir, concerning the various views that arise in the world —‘The cosmos is eternal’ or ‘The cosmos isn’t eternal’; ‘The cosmos is finite’ or ‘The cosmos is infinite’; ‘The soul and the body are the same’ or ‘The soul is one thing, the body another’; ‘A Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘A Tathāgata doesn’t exist after death’ or ‘A Tathāgata both exists & doesn’t exist after death’ or ‘A Tathāgata neither exists nor doesn’t exist after death’; these along with the sixty-two views mentioned in the Brahmajāla [DN 1] —when what is present do these views come into being, and when what is absent do they not come into being?”

When this was said, the senior monk was silent. A second time... A third time Citta the householder asked, “Concerning the various views that arise in the world... when what is present do they come into being, and what is absent do they not come into being?” A third time the senior monk was silent.

Now on that occasion Ven. Isidatta was the most junior of all the monks in that Community. Then he said to the senior monk: “Allow me, venerable sir, to answer Citta the householder’s question.”

“Go ahead & answer it, friend Isidatta.”

“Now, householder, are you asking this: ‘Concerning the various views that arise in the world... when what is present do they come into being, and what is absent do they not come into being?’?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“Concerning the various views that arise in the world, householder... when self-identity view is present, these views come into being; when self-identity view is absent, they don’t come into being.”

“But, venerable sir, how does self-identity view come into being?”

“There is the case, householder, 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, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling. He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception. He assumes fabrications to be the self, or the self as

possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications. 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 view comes into being."

"And, venerable sir, how does self-identity view not come into being?"

"There is the case, householder, 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—does not 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 does not assume feeling to be the self.... He does not assume apperception to be the self.... He does not assume fabrications to be the self.... He does not 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 view does not come into being."

"Venerable sir, where does Master Isidatta come from?"

"I come from Avantī, householder."

"There is, venerable sir, a clansman from Avantī 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, Ven. 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 Ven. 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.

NOTE: 1. Citta the householder was a lay non-returner who had a fondness for posing difficult questions to monks.

— SN 41:3

§ 2.12

When dwelling on views
as “supreme,”
a person makes them
the utmost thing
in the world,
& from that, calls
all others inferior
and so he’s not free
from disputes.
When he sees his advantage
in what’s seen, heard, sensed,
or in habits & practices,
seizing it there
he sees all else
as inferior.

That, too, say the skilled,
is a binding knot: that
in dependence on which
you regard another
as inferior.

So a monk shouldn't be dependent
on what's seen, heard, or sensed,
or on habits & practices;
nor should he conjure a view in the world
in connection with knowledge
or habits & practices;
shouldn't take himself
to be "equal";
shouldn't think himself
inferior or superlative.

— Sn 4:5

§ 2.13

Whoever construes
'equal,'
'superior,' or
'inferior,'
by that he'd dispute;
whereas to one unaffected
by these three,
'equal,'
'superior,'
do not occur.

Of what would the brāhman say 'true'
or 'false,'
disputing with whom:
he in whom 'equal,' 'unequal' are not.
Having abandoned home,
living free from society,
the sage
in villages
creates no intimacies.
Rid of sensual passions, free
from yearning,
he wouldn't engage with people

in quarrelsome debate.

Those things
aloof from which
he should go about in the world:
the great one
wouldn't take them up
& argue for them.

As the prickly lotus
is unsmeared by water & mud,
so the sage,
 an exponent of peace,
 without greed,
is unsmeared by sensuality &
 the world.

An attainer-of-wisdom isn't
 measured
 made proud
by views or
by what is thought,
for he isn't affected by them.

He wouldn't be led
by action, learning;
doesn't reach a conclusion
 in any entrenchments.

For one dispassionate toward perception
there are no ties;
for one released by discernment,
 no
delusions.

Those who grasp at perceptions & views
go about butting their heads

in the world.

— [Sn 4:9](#)

§ 2.14 Ven. Sāriputta said, “Friends, just now as I was withdrawn in seclusion, this train of thought arose to my awareness: ‘Is there anything in the world with whose change or alteration there would arise within me sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair?’ Then the thought occurred to me: ‘There is nothing in the world with whose change or alteration there would arise within me sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair.’”

When this was said, Ven. Ānanda said to Ven. Sāriputta, “Sāriputta my friend, even if there were change & alteration in the Teacher would there arise within you no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair?”

“Even if there were change & alteration in the Teacher, my friend, there would arise within me no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair. Still, I would have this thought: ‘What a great being, of great might, of great prowess, has disappeared! For if the Blessed One were to remain for a long time, that would be for the benefit of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of sympathy for the world; for the welfare, benefit, & happiness of human & divine beings.’”

“Surely,” [said Ven. Ānanda,] “it’s because Ven. Sāriputta’s I-making & mine-making and latent tendencies to conceit have long been well uprooted that even if there were change & alteration in the Teacher, there would arise within him no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair.”

— [SN 21:2](#)

§ 2.15 Then Ven. Anuruddha went to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Sāriputta: “By means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human, I see the thousand-fold cosmos. My persistence is aroused & unsluggish. My mindfulness is established & unshaken. My body is calm & unaroused, my mind concentrated into singleness. And yet my mind is not released from the effluents through lack of clinging/sustenance.”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “My friend, when the thought occurs to you, ‘By means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human, I see the thousand-fold cosmos,’ that is related to your conceit. When the thought occurs to you,

‘My persistence is aroused & unsluggish. My mindfulness is established & unshaken. My body is calm & unperturbed; my mind concentrated into singleness,’ that is related to your restlessness. When the thought occurs to you, ‘And yet my mind is not released from the effluents through lack of clinging/sustenance,’ that is related to your anxiety. It would be well if—abandoning these three qualities, not attending to these three qualities—you directed your mind to the Deathless property.”

So after that, Ven. Anuruddha—abandoning those three qualities, not attending to those three qualities—directed his mind to the Deathless property. 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, knowing & realizing 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. Anuruddha became another one of the arahants.

— [*AN 3:131*](#)

§ 2.16 “And what is ignorance? Not knowing in terms of stress, not knowing in terms of the origination of stress, not knowing in terms of the cessation of stress, not knowing in terms of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.”

— [*SN 12:2*](#)

§ 2.17 “Just as if there were a pool of water in a mountain glen—clear, limpid, and unsullied—where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting, and it would occur to him, ‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.’ In the same way—with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability—the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the effluents. 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... 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, 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.' This, too, great king, is a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, more excellent than the previous ones and more sublime. And as for another visible fruit of the contemplative life, higher and more sublime than this, there is none."

— [DN 2](#)

Shedding

§ 3.1 *Jenta:*

I was
drunk with the intoxication
of my birth, wealth, & sovereignty.
Drunk with the intoxication
of my body's build, coloring, & form,
I wandered about,
regarding no one
as my equal or better,
 foolish, arrogant, haughty,
 my banner held high.
I—disrespectful, arrogant, proud—
bowed down to no one,
not even
 mother,
 father,
or those commonly held
in respect.

Then—seeing the ultimate leader,
supreme, foremost of charioteers,
 like a blazing sun,
arrayed with a squadron of monks—
casting away pride & intoxication
through an awareness serene & clear,
 I bowed down
 my
 head
to him, supreme
among all living beings.

Haughtiness & contempt
have been abandoned
—rooted out—
the conceit “I am” is extracted,
all forms of pride, destroyed.

— *Thag 6:9*

§ 3.2 *Sister Vimalā*:

Intoxicated with my complexion
figure, beauty, & fame;
haughty with youth,
I despised other women.
Adorning this body
embellished to delude foolish men,
I stood at the door to the brothel:
a hunter with snare laid out.
I showed off my ornaments,
and revealed many a private part.
I worked my manifold magic,
laughing out loud at the crowd.

Today, wrapped in a double cloak,
my head shaven,
having wandered for alms,
I sit at the foot of a tree
and attain the state of no-thought.
All ties—human & divine—have been cut.
Having cast off all effluents,
cooled am I, unbound.

— *Thig 5:2*

§ 3.3

This two-footed, filthy, evil-smelling,
filled-with-various-carcasses,

oozing-out-here-&-there body:
Whoever would think,
on the basis of a body like this,
to exalt himself or disparage another:

What is that
if not blindness?

— [*Sn 1:11*](#)

§ 3.4 The Blessed One said, “Once in the past the devas & asuras¹ 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,² 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 cow, 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."

NOTES

1. The devas & asuras were two groups of deities who fought for control of heaven (like the gods & titans in Greek mythology). The devas eventually won. The asuras, known for their fierce anger, later became classed as angry demons and, in some Buddhist cosmologies, are regarded as a class of being lower than human.

2. Vāsavant (*vocative*, Vāsava)—"Powerful"—is one of Sakka's epithets.

§ 3.5 Once, monks, in Vārānasī, Brahmadaṭṭa was the king of Kāśi—rich, prosperous, with many possessions, many troops, many vehicles, many territories, with fully-stocked armories & granaries. Dīghāti was the king of Kosala—poor, not very prosperous, with few possessions, few troops, few vehicles, few territories, with poorly-stocked armories & granaries. So Brahmadaṭṭa the king of Kāśi, raising a fourfold army, marched against Dīghāti the king of Kosala. Dīghāti the king of Kosala heard, “Brahmadaṭṭa the king of Kāśi, they say, has raised a fourfold army and is marching against me.” Then the thought occurred to him, “King Brahmadaṭṭa is rich, prosperous... with fully-stocked armories & granaries, whereas I am poor... with poorly-stocked armories & granaries. I am not competent to stand against even one attack by him. Why don’t I slip out of the city beforehand?” So, taking his chief consort, he slipped out of the city beforehand. Then King Brahmadaṭṭa, conquering the troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries of King Dīghāti, lived in lordship over them.

Meanwhile, King Dīghāti had set out for Vārānasī together with his consort and, traveling by stages, arrived there. There he lived with her on the outskirts of Vārānasī in a potter’s house, disguised as a wanderer. Not long afterwards, she became pregnant. She had a pregnancy wish of this sort: she wanted to see a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground at dawn, and to drink the water used for washing the swords. She said to King Dīghāti, “Your majesty, I am pregnant, and I have a pregnancy wish of this sort: I want to see a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground at dawn, and to drink the water used for washing the swords.” He said, “My queen, where is there for us—fallen on hard times—a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground, and water used for washing the swords?”

“If I don’t get this, your majesty, I will die.”

Now at that time the brāhmaṇa adviser to King Brahmadaṭṭa was a friend of King Dīghāti. So King Dīghāti went to him and, on arrival, said, “A lady friend of yours, old friend, is pregnant, and she has a pregnancy wish of this sort: she wants to see a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground at dawn, and to drink the water used for washing the swords.”

"In that case, let me see her."

So King Dīghīti's consort went to King Brahmadatta's brāhman adviser. When he saw her coming from afar, he rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder and, with his hands raised in salutation to her, exclaimed three times, "Surely the king of Kosala has come to your womb! Surely the king of Kosala has come to your womb! Don't be worried, my queen. You will get to see a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground at dawn, and to drink the water used for washing the swords."

Then he went to King Brahmadatta and, on arrival, said to him, "Your majesty, signs have appeared such that tomorrow at dawn a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, should stand on a parade ground and that the swords should be washed."

So King Brahmadatta ordered his people, "I say, then: Do as the brāhman adviser says." Thus King Dīghīti's chief consort got to see a fourfold army, armed & arrayed, standing on a parade ground at dawn, and got to drink the water used for washing the swords. Then, with the maturing of the fetus, she gave birth to a son, whom they named Dīghāvu [LongLife]. Not long afterwards, Prince Dīghāvu reached the age of discretion. The thought occurred to King Dīghīti, "This King Brahmadatta of Kāśi has done us great harm. He has seized our troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries. If he finds out about us, he will have all three of us killed. Why don't I send Prince Dīghāvu to live outside of the city?" So Prince Dīghāvu, having gone to live outside of the city, learned all the crafts.

Now at that time King Dīghīti's barber had gone over to King Brahmadatta. He saw King Dīghīti, together with his consort, living on the outskirts of Vārāṇasī in a potter's house, disguised as a wanderer. On seeing them, he went to King Brahmadatta and, on arrival, said to him, "Your majesty, King Dīghīti of Kosala, together with his consort, is living on the outskirts of Vārāṇasī in a potter's house, disguised as a wanderer."

So King Brahmadatta ordered his people, "I say, then: go fetch King Dīghīti together with his consort."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," they went and fetched King Dīghīti together with his consort.

Then King Brahmadatta ordered his people, "I say, then: having bound King Dīghīti & his consort with a stout rope with their arms pinned tightly against their backs, and having shaved them bald, march them to a harsh-

sounding drum from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, evict them out the south gate of the city and there, to the south of the city, cut them into four pieces and bury them in holes placed in the four directions."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," the king's people bound King Dīghīti & his consort with a stout rope, pinning their arms tightly against their backs, shaved them bald, and marched them to a harsh-sounding drum from street to street, crossroads to crossroads.

Then the thought occurred to Prince Dīghāvu, "It's been a long time since I saw my mother & father. What if I were to go see them?" So he entered Vārānasī and saw his mother & father bound with a stout rope, their arms pinned tightly against their backs, their heads shaven bald, being marched to a harsh-sounding drum from street to street, crossroads to crossroads. So he went to them. King Dīghīti saw Prince Dīghāvu coming from afar, and on seeing him, said, "Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance."

When this was said, the people said to him, "This King Dīghīti has gone crazy. He's talking nonsense. Who is Dīghāvu? Why is he saying, 'Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance'?"

"I'm not crazy or talking nonsense. He who knows will understand." Then a second time... a third time he said, "Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance."

A third time, the people said to him, "This King Dīghīti has gone crazy. He's talking nonsense. Who is Dīghāvu? Why is he saying, 'Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance'?"

"I'm not crazy or talking nonsense. He who knows will understand."

Then the king's people, having marched King Dīghīti together with his chief consort to a harsh-sounding drum from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, evicted them out the south gate of the city and there, to the south of the city, cut them into four pieces, buried them in holes placed in the four directions, stationed guards, and left.

Then Prince Dīghāvu, having entered Vārānasī, brought out some liquor and got the guards to drink it. When they had fallen down drunk, he collected sticks, made a pyre, raised the bodies of his mother & father onto the pyre, set fire to it, and then circumambulated it three times with his hands raised in salutation.

Now at that time, King Brahmadatta had gone up to the terrace on top of his palace. He saw Prince Dīghāvu circumambulating the pyre three times with his hands raised in salutation, and on seeing him, the thought occurred to him, "Doubtlessly this person is a relative or blood-kinsman of King Dīghīti. Ah, how unfortunate for me, for there is no one who will tell me what this means!"

Then Prince Dīghāvu, having gone into the wilderness and having cried & wept as much as he needed to, dried his tears and entered Vārānasī. Going to an elephant stable next to the king's palace, he said to the chief elephant trainer, "Teacher, I want to learn this craft."

"In that case, young man, you may learn it."

Then, rising in the last watch of the night, Prince Dīghāvu sang in a sweet voice and played the lute in the elephant stable. King Brahmadatta, also rising in the last watch of the night, heard the sweet-voiced singing & lute-playing in the elephant stable. On hearing it, he asked his people, "I say: Who was that, rising in the last watch of the night, singing in a sweet voice and playing a lute in the elephant stable?"

"Your majesty, a young man—the student of such-and-such an elephant trainer, rising in the last watch of the night, was singing in a sweet voice and playing a lute in the elephant stable."

"I say, then: Go fetch that young man."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," they went and fetched Prince Dīghāvu.

Then King Brahmadatta said to Prince Dīghāvu, "I say: Was that you rising in the last watch of the night, singing in a sweet voice and playing a lute in the elephant stable?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"I say then, my young man: Sing and play the lute."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," and seeking to win favor, Prince Dīghāvu sang with a sweet voice and played the lute.

Then King Brahmadatta said to him, "I say: You, my young man, are to stay and attend to me."

"As you say, your majesty," Prince Dīghāvu replied. Then he rose in the morning before King Brahmadatta, went to bed in the evening after him, did whatever the king ordered, always acting to please him, speaking politely to him. And it was not long before King Brahmadatta placed the prince close to him in a position of trust.

Then one day King Brahmadatta said to Prince Dīghāvu, "I say then, my young man: Harness the chariot. I'm going hunting."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," Prince Dīghāvu harnessed the chariot and then said to King Brahmadatta, "Your chariot is harnessed, your majesty. Now is the time for you to do as you see fit."

Then King Brahmadatta mounted the chariot, and Prince Dīghāvu drove it. He drove it in such a way that the king's entourage went one way, and the chariot another. Then, after they had gone far, King Brahmadatta said to Prince Dīghāvu, "I say then, my young man: Unharness the chariot. I'm tired. I'm going to lie down."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," Prince Dīghāvu unharnessed the chariot and sat down cross-legged on the ground. Then King Brahmadatta lay down, placing his head on Prince Dīghāvu's lap. As he was tired, he went to sleep right away. Then the thought occurred to Prince Dīghāvu: "This King Brahmadatta of Kāsi has done us great harm. He has seized our troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries. And it was because of him that my mother & father were killed. Now is my chance to wreak vengeance!" He drew his sword from his scabbard. But then he thought, "My father told me, as he was about to die, 'Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance.' It would not be proper for me to transgress my father's words." So he put his sword back in its scabbard. A second time... A third time the thought occurred to Prince Dīghāvu: "This King Brahmadatta of Kāsi has done us great harm. He has seized our troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries. And it was because of him that my mother & father were killed. Now is my chance to wreak vengeance!" He drew his sword from his scabbard. But then he thought, "My father told me, as he was about to die, 'Don't, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don't be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled

through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance.' It would not be proper for me to transgress my father's words." So once again he put his sword back in its scabbard.

Then King Brahmadatta suddenly got up—frightened, agitated, unnerved, alarmed. Prince Dīghāvu said to him, "Your majesty, why have you gotten up suddenly—frightened, agitated, unnerved, & alarmed?"

"I say, my young man: Just now as I was dreaming, Prince Dīghāvu—son of Dīghīti, king of Kosala—struck me down with a sword." Then Prince Dīghāvu, grabbing King Brahmadatta by the head with his left hand, and drawing his sword from its scabbard with his right, said, "I, your majesty, am that very Prince Dīghāvu, son of Dīghīti, king of Kosala. You have done us great harm. You have seized our troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries. And it was because of you that my mother & father were killed. Now is my chance to wreak vengeance!"

So King Brahmadatta, dropping his head down to Prince Dīghāvu's feet, said, "Grant me my life, my dear Dīghāvu! Grant me my life, my dear Dīghāvu!"

"Who am I that I would dare grant life to your majesty? It is your majesty who should grant life to me!"

"In that case, my dear Dīghāvu, you grant me my life and I grant you your life."

Then King Brahmadatta and Prince Dīghāvu granted one another their lives and, taking one another by the hands, swore an oath to do one another no harm.

Then King Brahmadatta said to Prince Dīghāvu, "In that case, my dear Dīghāvu, harness the chariot. We will go on."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," Prince Dīghāvu harnessed the chariot and then said to King Brahmadatta, "Your chariot is harnessed, your majesty. Now is the time for you to do as you see fit."

Then King Brahmadatta mounted the chariot, and Prince Dīghāvu drove it. He drove it in such a way that it was not long before they met up with the king's entourage.

Then King Brahmadatta, having entered Vārānasī, had his ministers & councilors convened and said to them, "I say, then. If you were to see Prince Dīghāvu, the son of Dīghīti, the king of Kāśi, what would you do to him?"

Different ministers said, “We would cut off his hands, your majesty” — “We would cut off his feet, your majesty” — “We would cut off his hands & feet, your majesty” — “We would cut off his ears, your majesty” — “We would cut off his nose, your majesty” — “We would cut off his ears & nose, your majesty” — “We would cut off his head, your majesty.”

Then the king said, “This, I say, is Prince Dīghāvu, the son of Dīghīti, the king of Kāsi. You are not allowed to do anything to him. It was by him that my life was granted to me, and it was by me that his life was granted to him.”

Then King Brahmadatta said to Prince Dīghāvu, “What your father said to you as he was about to die—‘Don’t, my dear Dīghāvu, be far-sighted. Don’t be near-sighted. For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance’—in reference to what did he say that?”

“What my father said to me as he was about to die—‘Don’t be far-sighted’—‘Don’t bear vengeance for a long time’ is what he was saying to me as he was about to die. And what he said to me as he was about to die—‘Don’t be near-sighted’—‘Don’t be quick to break with a friend’ is what he was saying to me as he was about to die. And what he said to me as he was about to die—‘For vengeance is not settled through vengeance. Vengeance is settled through non-vengeance’—My mother & father were killed by your majesty. If I were to deprive your majesty of life, those who hope for your majesty’s well-being would deprive me of life. And those who hope for my well-being would deprive them of life. And in that way vengeance would not be settled by vengeance. But now I have been granted my life by your majesty, and your majesty has been granted your life by me. And in this way vengeance has been settled by non-vengeance. That is what my father was saying to me as he was about to die.”

Then King Brahmadatta said, “Isn’t it amazing! Isn’t it astounding! How wise this Prince Dīghāvu is, in that he can understand in full the meaning of what his father said in brief!” So he returned his father’s troops, vehicles, lands, armories, & granaries to him, and gave him his daughter in marriage.

Such, monks, is the forbearance & gentleness of kings who wield the scepter, who wield the sword. So now let your light shine forth, so that you—who have gone forth in such a well-taught Dhamma & Vinaya—will be

their equal in forbearance & gentleness.

— Mv X.2.3-20

Modesty

§ 4.1 “‘This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, being modest, does not want it to be known that ‘He is modest.’ Being content, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is content.’ Being reclusive, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is reclusive.’ His persistence being aroused, he does not want it to be known that ‘His persistence is aroused.’ His mindfulness being established, he does not want it to be known that ‘His mindfulness is established.’ His mind being centered, he does not want it to be known that ‘His mind is centered.’ Being endowed with discernment, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is endowed with discernment.’ Enjoying non-complication, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is enjoying non-complication.’ ‘This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.”

— [*AN 8:30*](#)

§ 4.2 *Sumana*:

When I was seven
& newly gone forth,
having conquered with my power
the great powerful serpent,
I was fetching water for my preceptor
from the great lake, Anotatta,¹
when the Teacher saw me & said:

“Look, Sāriputta, at that one,
the young boy coming there,
carrying a pot of water,
well-centered within,
his practices—inspiring;

his bearing—admirable.
He's Anuruddha's novice,
mature in his powers,
made thoroughbred by a thoroughbred,
good by one who is good,
tamed by Anuruddha,
trained by one whose task
is done.

He,
 having reached the highest peace
 & realized the unshakable,
Sumana the novice
 wants this:
'Don't let anyone know me.'

NOTE: 1. Anotatta: A fabulous lake located in the Himalayas, famed for the purity of its cool waters. Sumana would have had to use his psychic powers to fetch water from there.

— *Thag 6:10*

§ 4.3 Now, at that time a costly block of sandalwood, from sandalwood heartwood, accrued to the Rājagaha financier. The thought occurred to him, "What if I were to have an alms bowl carved from this block of sandalwood? The chips will be for my own enjoyment, and I'll give the bowl as a gift." So the financier, having had a bowl carved from the block of sandalwood, having looped a string around it, having hung it from the top of a bamboo pole, having had the bamboo pole fastened on top of a series of bamboo poles, one on top of another, announced: "Any brāhman or contemplative who is an arahant with psychic powers: Fetch down the bowl and it is given to you."

Then Pūraṇa Kassapa went to the Rājagaha financier and, on arrival, said to him, "Because I am an arahant with psychic powers, give me the bowl." "If, venerable sir, you are an arahant with psychic powers, fetch down the bowl and it is given to you."

Then Makkali Gosāla... Ajita Kesakambalin... Pakudha Kaccāyana... Sañjaya Belatṭhaputta... Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta went to the Rājagaha financier and, on arrival, said to him, "Because I am an arahant with psychic powers, give me the bowl." "If, venerable sir, you are an arahant with psychic powers, fetch down the bowl and it is given to you."

Now at that time Ven. Mahā Moggallāna and Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, each having dressed early in the morning, each taking his robe and bowl, had gone into Rājagaha for alms. Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja was an arahant with psychic powers, and Ven. Mahā Moggallāna was an arahant with psychic powers. Then Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja said to Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: "Go, friend Moggallāna, and fetch down the bowl. That bowl is yours." Then Ven. Mahā Moggallāna said to Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja: "Go, friend Bhāradvāja, and fetch down the bowl. That bowl is yours."

So Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, rising up into the sky, took the bowl and circled three times around Rājagaha. Now at that time the Rājagaha financier was standing in his house compound with his wife and children, paying homage with his hands palm-to-palm over his heart, (saying,) "May Master Bhāradvāja land right here in our house compound." So Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja landed in the financier's house compound. Then the financier, having taken the bowl from Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja's hand, having filled it with costly non-staple foods, presented it to Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja. Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, taking the bowl, returned to the monastery.

People, hearing that "Master Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, they say, has fetched down the financier's bowl," followed right after him, making a shrill noise, a great noise. The Blessed One, hearing the shrill noise, the great noise, asked Ven. Ānanda, "Ānanda, what is that shrill noise, that great noise?"

"Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja has fetched down the Rājagaha financier's bowl, venerable sir. People, hearing that 'Master Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, they say, has fetched down the financier's bowl,' are following right after him, making a shrill noise, a great noise. That is the shrill noise, the great noise, that the Blessed One (hears)."

Then the Blessed One, with regard to this cause, to this incident, had the Community of bhikkhus convened and questioned Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja: "Is it true, as they say, Bhāradvāja, that you fetched down the financier's bowl?"

“Yes, venerable sir.”

The Awakened One, the Blessed One, rebuked him: “It’s not appropriate, Bhāradvāja, not fitting for a contemplative, improper, and not to be done. How can you display a superior human state, a wonder of psychic power, to lay people for the sake of a miserable wooden bowl? Just as a woman might expose her genitalia for the sake of a miserable wooden coin, so too have you displayed a superior human state, a wonder of psychic power, to lay people for the sake of a miserable wooden bowl.”

— Cv.V.8

§ 4.4 On one occasion a large number of senior monks were living near Macchikāsaṇḍa in the Wild Mango Grove. Then Citta the householder went to them and, on arrival, having bowed down to them, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to them: “Venerable sirs, may the senior monks acquiesce to tomorrow’s meal from me.”

The senior monks acquiesced by silence. Then Citta the householder, sensing the senior monks’ acquiescence, got up from his seat and, having bowed down to them, circumambulated them—keeping them to his right—and left.

When the night had passed, the senior monks put on their robes in the early morning and—taking their bowls & outer robes—went to Citta’s residence. There they sat down on the appointed seats. Then Citta the householder, with his own hand, served & satisfied them with exquisite milk-rice mixed with ghee. When the senior monks had finished eating and had rinsed their bowls & hands, they got up from their seats and left. Citta the householder, having said, “Give away the rest,” followed behind the senior monks.

Now on that occasion it was hot & sweltering. The senior monks went along with their bodies melting, as it were, from the meal they had finished. And on that occasion Ven. Mahaka was the most junior of all the monks in that Community. He said to the senior monk: “Wouldn’t it be nice, venerable elder, if a cool wind were to blow, and there were a thundering cloud, and rain would fall in scattered drops?”

“Yes, friend Mahaka, that would be nice....”

Then Ven. Mahaka willed a psychic feat such that a cool wind blew, a thundering cloud developed, and the rain fell in scattered drops. The thought occurred to Citta the householder, “Such is the psychic power of the most junior of all the monks in this Community!”

Then when Ven. Mahaka reached the monastery/park, he said to the senior monk, “Is that enough, venerable sir?”

“That’s enough, friend Mahaka—what you have done, what you have offered.”

Then the monks went to their separate dwellings, and Ven. Mahaka went to his.

Then Citta the householder went to Ven. Mahaka and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to him, “It would be good, venerable sir, if Master Mahaka would show me a superior human attainment, a miracle of psychic power.”

“In that case, householder, spread out your upper robe on the porch and put a pile of grass on it.”

Responding, “As you say, venerable sir,” Citta the householder spread out his upper robe on the porch and put a pile of grass on it.

Then Ven. Mahaka, having entered his dwelling and bolted the door, willed a psychic feat such that flame shot through the keyhole and the space around the door, burning up the grass but not the robe.

Then Citta the householder, having shaken out the robe, stood to one side—in awe, his hair standing on end. Ven. Mahaka came out of his dwelling and said, “Is that enough, householder?”

“That’s enough, venerable sir—what you have done, what you have offered. May Master Mahaka 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 Ven. Mahaka—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 41:4*](#)

Contentment

§ 5.1 “‘This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk is content with any old robe cloth at all, any old almsfood, any old lodging, any old medicinal requisites for curing sickness at all. ‘This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.”

— [AN 8:30](#)

§ 5.2 “And how is a monk content? Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with a set of robes to provide for his body and alms food to provide for his hunger. Wherever he goes, he takes only his barest necessities along. This is how a monk is content.”

— [DN 2](#)

§ 5.3 “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 does not, for the sake of robe cloth, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting cloth, he is not 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 does not, 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.

“Furthermore, the monk is content with any old almsfood at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old almsfood at all. He does not, for the sake of almsfood, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting almsfood, he is not 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 does not, 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.

“Furthermore, the monk is content with any old lodging at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old lodging at all. He does not, for the sake of lodging, do anything unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting lodging, he is not 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 does not, 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.”

— [AN 4:28](#)

§ 5.4 *MahāKassapa*:

Coming down from my dwelling place,
I entered the city for alms,
stood courteously next to a leper
eating his meal.
He, with his rotting hand,
tossed me a morsel of food,
and as the morsel was dropping,
a finger fell off
 right there.
Sitting next to a wall,
I ate that morsel of food,
and neither while eating it,
nor having eaten,
did I feel
any disgust.

Whoever has mastered
 left-over scraps for food,
 smelly urine for medicine,
 the foot of a tree for a dwelling,
 cast-off rags for robes:

He is a man
of the four directions.

* * *

This is enough for me—
desiring to do jhāna,
resolute, mindful;
enough for me—
desiring the goal,
resolute,
a monk;
enough for me—
desiring comfort,
resolute,
in training;
enough for me—
desiring my duty,
resolute,
Such.

* * *

There is no such pleasure for me
in the music of a five-piece band
as there is when my mind
is at one,
seeing the Dhamma
aright.

— *Thag 18*

§ 5.5 On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Āḷavī on a spread of leaves by a cattle track in a siṃsapā 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 siṃsapā 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 Verambha 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 horse-hair couch 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, made like a palmyra stump, 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 so that—burned with those aversion-born fevers—he would

sleep miserably?"

"Yes, lord."

"As for those aversion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that aversion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, 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 delusion 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, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

 "Always, always,
 he sleeps in ease:
 the brāhman 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](#)

§ 5.6 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Anupiyā in the Mango Orchard. Now at that time, Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, would repeatedly exclaim, “What bliss! What bliss!” A large number of monks heard Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, on going to a forest, to the foot 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 Kāligodha 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, he is repeatedly exclaiming, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’” They went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they told him: “Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha, lord, on going to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, repeatedly exclaims, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’ There’s no doubt but that Ven. Bhaddiya Kāligodha 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, he is repeatedly exclaiming, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’”

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, “Come, monk. In my name, call Bhaddiya, saying, ‘The Teacher calls you, my friend.’”

“As you say, lord,” the monk answered and, having gone to Ven. Bhaddiya, on arrival he said, “The Teacher calls you, my friend.”

“As you say, my friend,” Ven. Bhaddiya replied. Then he 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 a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, you repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’?”

“Yes, lord.”

“What meaning do you have in mind that you repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’?”

“Before, when I was a householder, maintaining the bliss of kingship, 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, and afraid. But now, on going alone to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident, and unafraid—

unconcerned, unruffled, my wants satisfied, with my mind like a wild deer.
This is the meaning I have in mind that I repeatedly exclaim, 'What bliss!
What bliss!'"

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that
occasion exclaimed:

In whom there exists
no provocation,
& for whom becoming & non-becoming
are overcome,
he is one—
beyond fear,
blissful,
without grief,
whom the devas can't see.

— [Ud 2:10](#)

Seclusion

§ 6.1 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time a certain lay follower from Icchānaṅgalaka had arrived in Sāvattthī on some business affairs. Having settled his affairs in Sāvattthī, he 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, "At long last you have managed to come here."

"For a long time I have wanted to come see the Blessed One, lord, but being involved in one business affair after another, I have not been able to do so."

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

How blissful it is, for one who has nothing
who has mastered the Dhamma,
is learned.

See him suffer, one who has something,
a person bound in body
with people.

— Ud 2:5

§ 6.2 "'This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one who is entangled.' Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, when living in seclusion, is visited by monks, nuns, lay men, lay women, kings, royal ministers, sectarians & their disciples. With his mind bent on seclusion, tending toward seclusion, inclined toward seclusion, aiming at seclusion, relishing renunciation, he converses with them only as much is necessary for them to take their leave. 'This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one in entanglement.' Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said."

— AN 8:30

§ 6.3 Now at that time a large number of monks, after the meal, on returning from their alms round, had gathered at the meeting hall and were 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, town, cities, the countryside; women & heroes; the gossip of the street & the well; talks of the dead; tales of diversity, the creation of the world & of the sea; talk of whether things exist or not.

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 made ready. As he sat down there, 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... tales of diversity, 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 having few wants, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-entanglement, on arousing persistence, on virtue, on concentration, on discernment, on release, and on the knowledge & vision of release. 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 10:69*](#)

§ 6.4 *MahāKassapa:*

One shouldn’t go about
surrounded, revered

by a company:
 one gets distracted;
 concentration
 is hard to gain.
Fellowship with many people
 is painful.
Seeing this,
 one shouldn't approve
 of a company.

A sage shouldn't visit families:
 one gets distracted;
 concentration
 is hard to gain.
He's eager & greedy for flavors,
 whoever misses the goal
 that brings bliss.

They know it's a bog—
 the reverence & veneration
 of families—
a subtle arrow, hard to extract.
Offerings are hard for a worthless man
 to let go. — *Thag 18*

§ 6.5

If, in your course, you don't meet
your equal, your better,
then continue your course,
 firmly,
 alone.
There's no fellowship with fools.
— *Dhp 61*

§ 6.6

Renouncing violence
for all living beings,
harming not even a one,
you would not wish for offspring,
 so how a companion?
Wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

For a sociable person
there are allurements;
on the heels of allurements, this pain.

Seeing allurements' drawback,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

One whose mind
is enmeshed in sympathy
for friends & companions,
neglects the true goal.
Seeing this danger in intimacy,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros....

If you gain a mature companion,
a fellow traveler, right-living & wise,
overcoming all dangers
 go with him, gratified,
 mindful.

If you don't gain a mature companion,
a fellow traveler, right-living & wise,
 go alone
like a king renouncing his kingdom,
like the elephant in the Mātāṅga wilds,
 his herd.

We praise companionship
—yes!

Those on a par, or better,
should be chosen as friends.
If they're not to be found,
 living faultlessly,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

Seeing radiant bracelets of gold,
well-made by a smith,
 clinking, clashing,
 two on an arm,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros,

[Thinking:]
"In the same way,
if I were to live with another,
there would be careless talk or abusive."
Seeing this future danger,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

Because sensual pleasures,
elegant, honeyed, & charming,
bewitch the mind with their manifold forms—
seeing this drawback in sensual strands—
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.
"Calamity, tumor, misfortune,
disease, an arrow, a danger for me."
Seeing this danger in sensual strings,
 wander alone, like a rhinoceros....

Avoid the evil companion
 disregarding the goal,
 intent on the out-of-tune way.
Don't take as a friend
someone heedless & hankering.
Wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

Consort with one who is learned,
 who maintains the Dhamma,
 a great & quick-witted friend.
Knowing the meanings,
subdue your perplexity,
(then) wander alone, like a rhinoceros....

Unstartled, like a lion at sounds.
Unsnared, like the wind in a net.
Unsmear'd, like a lotus in water:
wander alone, like a rhinoceros....

At the right time consorting
with the release through
 goodwill,
 compassion,
 empathetic joy,
 equanimity,
unobstructed by all the world,
 any world,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

Having let go of
 passion,
 aversion,
 delusion;
having shattered
 the fetters;
undisturbed at the ending of life,
wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

People follow & associate
 for a motive.
Friends without a motive these days
 are rare.
They're shrewd for their own ends, & impure.

Wander alone, like a rhinoceros.

— *Sn 1:3*

§ 6.7 Then a large number of monks went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they informed him: “Lord, there is a certain monk by the name of Elder who lives alone and extols the virtues of living alone.”

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, “Come, monk. In my name, call the monk named Elder, saying, ‘The Teacher calls you, my friend.’”

“As you say, lord,” the monk answered and, having gone to Ven. Elder, on arrival he said, “The Teacher calls you, my friend.”

“As you say, my friend,” Ven. Elder replied. Then he 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, Elder, that you live alone and extol the virtues of living alone?”

“Yes, lord.”

“But how do you live alone and extol the virtues of living alone?”

“Lord, alone I enter the village for alms, alone I return, alone I sit withdrawn [in meditation], alone I do walking meditation. That is how I live alone and extol the virtues of living alone.”

“There is that way of living alone, Elder. I don’t say that there isn’t. Still, listen well to you how your living alone is perfected in its details, and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” Ven. Elder responded.

The Blessed One said: “And how is living alone perfected in its details? There is the case where whatever is past is abandoned, whatever is future is relinquished, and any passion & desire with regard to states of being attained in the present is well subdued. That is how living alone is perfected in its details.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said it, the One Well-gone further said this:

“All-conquering,
all-knowing, intelligent;

with regard to all things,
 unadhering;
all-abandoning,
released in the ending of craving:
 him I call
 a man who lives
 alone."

— [*SN 21:10*](#)

§ 6.8

With craving his companion, a man
wanders on a long, long time.
Neither in this state here
nor anywhere else
does he go beyond
 the wandering-on.

Knowing this drawback—
that craving brings stress into play—
free from craving,
devoid of clinging,
mindful, the monk
lives the wandering life."

— [*Sn 3:12*](#)

Persistence

§ 7.1 “And what is the faculty of persistence? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. He generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This is called the faculty of persistence.”
— [*SN 48:10*](#)

§ 7.2 “As I was remaining heedful, ardent, & resolute... it occurred to me, ‘Excessive persistence arose in me, and because of the excessive persistence my concentration fell away.... Just as if a man might hold a quail tightly with both hands; it would die then & there. In the same way, excessive persistence arose in me.... I will act in such a way that... excessive persistence will not arise in me again.’

“As I was remaining heedful, ardent, & resolute... it occurred to me, ‘Sluggish persistence arose in me, and because of the sluggish persistence my concentration fell away.... Just as if a man might hold a quail loosely; it would fly out of his hand. In the same way, sluggish persistence arose in me.... I will act in such a way that... excessive persistence & sluggish persistence will not arise in me again.’”

— [*MN 128*](#)

§ 7.3 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 the 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 prepared seat. 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 the 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 vina?”

“Yes, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too taut, was your vina in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too loose, was your vina in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned to be right on pitch, was your vina 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, knowing & realizing 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](#)

§ 7.4 “And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, does not 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](#)

§ 7.5

As if struck by a sword,
as if his head were on fire,
a monk should live the wandering life
—mindful—
for the abandoning of sensual passion.

— [Thag 1:39](#)

§ 7.6 “Furthermore, the monk finds pleasure & delight in developing [skillful mental qualities], finds pleasure & delight in abandoning [unskillful mental qualities]. He does not, 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.”

— [AN 4:28](#)

§ 7.7 “And how is a monk devoted to wakefulness? There is the case where a monk during the day, sitting & pacing back & forth, cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. During the first watch of the night [dusk to 10 p.m.], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. During the second watch of the night [10 p.m. to 2 a.m.], reclining on his right side, he takes up the lion’s posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with his mind set on getting up [either as soon as he awakens or at a particular time]. During the last watch of the night [2 a.m. to dawn], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. This is how a monk is devoted to wakefulness.”

— [AN 4:37](#)

§ 7.8 *The Buddha:*

To me—
resolute in exertion
near the river Nerañjarā,
making a great effort,
doing jhāna
to attain rest from the yoke—

Namuci¹ came,
speaking words of compassion:
“You are ashen, thin.
Death is in
your presence.
Death

has 1,000 parts of you.

Only one part

is your life.

Live, good sir!

Life is better.

Alive,

you can do

acts of merit.

Your living the holy life,

performing the fire sacrifice,

will heap up much merit.

What use is exertion to you?

Hard to follow

—the path of exertion—

hard to do, hard

to sustain."

Saying these verses,

Māra stood in the Awakened One's presence.

And to that Māra, speaking thus,

the Blessed One

said this:

"Kinsman of the heedless,

Evil One,

come here for whatever purpose:

I haven't, for merit,

even the least bit of need.

Those who have need of merit:

those are the ones

Māra's fit to address.

In me are

conviction

austerity,

persistence,

discernment.
Why, when I'm so resolute
do you petition me
to live?
This wind could burn up
even river currents.

Why, when I'm resolute,
shouldn't my blood dry away?
As my blood dries up
gall & phlegm dry up.
As muscles waste away,
the mind grows clearer;
mindfulness, discernment,
concentration stand
more firm.
Staying in this way,
attaining the ultimate feeling,²
the mind has no interest
in sensual passions.
See:
a being's
purity!

Sensual passions are your first army.
Your second is called Discontent.
Your third is Hunger & Thirst.
Your fourth is called Craving.
Fifth is Sloth & Torpor.
Sixth is called Terror.
Your seventh is Uncertainty.
Hypocrisy & Stubbornness, your eighth.
Gains, Offerings, Fame, & Status
wrongly gained,
and whoever would praise self
& disparage others.

That, Namuci, is your army,
the Dark One's commando force.
A coward can't defeat it,
but one having defeated it
 gains bliss.
Do I carry muñja grass?³
I spit on my life.
Death in battle would be better for me
 than that I, defeated,
 survive.
Sinking here, they don't appear,
 some priests & contemplatives.
They don't know the path
by which those with good practices
 go.

Seeing the bannered force
 on all sides—
the troops, Māra
along with his mount—
I go into battle.
May they not budge me
 from
 my spot.
That army of yours,
that the world with its devas
 can't overcome,
I will smash with discernment—
as an unfired pot with a stone.

Making
 my resolve mastered,
 mindfulness well-established,
I will go about, from kingdom to kingdom,
training many disciples.
They—heedful, resolute,
doing my bidding—

despite your wishes, will go
where, having gone,
there's no grief."

Māra:

"For seven years, I've dogged
the Blessed One's steps,
but haven't gained an opening
in the One Self-awakened
& glorious.

A crow circled a stone
the color of fat

— 'Maybe I've found
something tender here.

Maybe there's something delicious' —
but not getting anything delicious there,
the crow went away.

Like the crow attacking the rock,
I weary myself with Gotama."

As he was overcome with sorrow,
his lute fell from under his arm.
Then he, the despondent spirit,
right there
disappeared.

NOTES

1. Māra.

2. The highest equanimity that can be attained through jhāna.

3. Muñja grass was the ancient Indian equivalent of a white flag. A warrior expecting that he might have to surrender would take muñja grass into battle with him. If he did surrender, he would lie down with the muñja grass in his mouth. The Buddha, in asking this rhetorical question, is indicating that he is not the type of warrior who would carry muñja grass. If defeated, he would rather die than surrender.

— *Sn 3:2*

§ 7.9 “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](#)

Being Unburdensome

§ 8.1 “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.”

— [MN 2](#)

§ 8.2 At that time the monks of Ālavī 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. MahāKassapa, 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 put on his robes and carrying his bowl & outer robe, he went into Āḷavī for alms. The people, on seeing Ven. MahāKassapa, were apprehensive, alarmed, ran away, took another route, faced another direction, closed the door. Then Ven. MahāKassapa, 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. MahāKassapa 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. MahāKassapa 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: “Misguided 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 fading 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?... Misguided 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 brāhman 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?’

‘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 will not detest me.’

“Monks, if Raṭṭhapāla the clansman can speak this way to his father, why not a stranger to a stranger?”

— *Saṅghādisesa 6*

Glossary

Arahant: “Worthy one; pure one.” A person who has cut all the fetters of the mind, and thus is not destined for future rebirth.

Āsava: Effluent; fermentation. Four qualities—sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance—that “flow out” or “bubble up” from the mind and create the flood of the round of death and rebirth.

Deva (*devatā*): Literally, “shining one.” An inhabitant of the heavenly and terrestrial realms higher than the human.

Dhamma: (1) Event; action; (2) a phenomenon in and of itself; (3) mental quality; (4) doctrine, teaching; (5) nibbāna (although there are passages describing nibbāna as the abandoning of all dhammas). Sanskrit form: *Dharma*.

hāna: 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 still, steady flame. Sanskrit form: *dhyāna*.

Ārā: Death and temptation personified.

āthāgata: Literally, “one who has become authentic (*tatha-āgata*)” or “one who 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.

vinaya: Discipline; the monastic code of conduct. The Buddha’s own name for his teaching was “This Dhamma-&-Vinaya.”

Abbreviations

References are to texts
from the Pali Canon:

<i>AN</i>	<i>Aṅuttara Nikāya</i>
<i>Cv</i>	<i>Cullavagga</i>
<i>Dhp</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
<i>DN</i>	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
<i>MN</i>	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
<i>Mv</i>	<i>Mahāvagga</i>
<i>SN</i>	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
<i>Sn</i>	<i>Sutta Nipāta</i>
<i>Thag</i>	<i>Theragāthā</i>
<i>Thig</i>	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
<i>Ud</i>	<i>Udāna</i>

References to DN and MN are to discourse (*sutta*).
The reference to Dhp is to verse. References to Mv and Cv are to chapter, section, and sub-section. References to other texts are to section (*saṃyutta*, *nipāta*, or *vagga*) and discourse.

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