
**Proposed Submission to Journal of the International
Association of Buddhist Studies (JIABS)**

by Norman Joseph Smith 2001

PO Box 95 Toowong Queensland 4066 Australia

josmith.1@bigfoot.com

Abbreviations

A	Anguttara Nikaaya
AA	Anguttara A.t.thakathaa
D	Diigha Nikaaya
Da	Dirghagama
DA	Diigha A.t.thakathaa
Dh	Dhammapada
Dul	??
Lal	Lalitavistara
M	Majjhima Nikaaya
Mdo	??
Mtu	Mahaavastu
S	Sam.yutta Nikaaya
Sn	Sutta Nipaata
T	Taisho Version of the Chinese Tripi.taka
Ud	Udaana
V	Vinaya Pi.taka

References

Paali references give PTS volume and page number, except for the Dh, for which they give verse number and Ud, which gives discourse (sutta), paragraph and PTS page number.

The 17 Versions of The Buddha's First Discourse

Introduction¹

The Paali name of the discourse said to be the first of the Buddha's many, is called the Dhammacakka-Pavattana-Sutta. It is held in very high esteem in Buddhist countries. In the great majority of its versions it contains an analysis of the Four Noble Truths, which are accepted by all schools of Buddhism as the teaching of the historical Buddha. At present we find many versions of this text with many shared features. In 1938 N Aiyaswami Sastri examined eleven texts considered to be versions of the first discourse of the Buddha². He, as most people, did not class the Paali discourse immediately following the one generally held to be the first discourse of the Buddha, or the discourse on the two extremes in the book of the twos in the Chinese Ekotaraagama as other possible versions, despite the fact that he suggests a reason for the different versions could be that the Buddha himself may have delivered it more than one time and in varying formats (p. 475). Sastri compares the different versions, but he only tries to explain some of the differences briefly.

It seems Sastri was not aware of the three other Chinese versions and another Sanskrit version has been found in Central Asia since Sastri's examination. In this paper I would like to have a closer look at the differences of the 11 texts Sastri identified as versions, plus the two he did not, which would have been available at the time, plus the other three Chinese texts and the new Sanskrit text already accepted as versions. This means we have 17 texts from all currently available sources that may be versions of the first discourse of the Buddha. I also intend to give a more detailed explanation of the differences identified.

In Paali we seem to have three versions of the text, two in the Sam.yutta Nikaaya, one following the other and one version in the Mahaavagga of the Vinaya Pi.taka. Six texts **in the Chinese** Buddhist canon seem to be translations of the discourse; four in the section on early discourses (Sutta Pi.taka), three of which Akanuma identifies as counterparts of the longest of the Paali texts³ and two in the section on discipline (Vinaya Pi.taka). **In Sanskrit** we seem to have three versions, two of which appear in the post

¹ My appreciation to Rod Bucknell and Primoz Pecenko of the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland for their encouragement and support of my work in producing this paper.

² Sastri N A, "The First Sermon of the Buddha", *New Indian Antiquary* vol. 1, no. 8, Nov. 1938, pp. 473-492.

³ Akanuma C, *The Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Aagamas and Paali Nikaayas*, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi 1990, p. 262.

canonical texts Mtu and Lal that is, compilations of the life story of the Buddha, which would be much later in origin. In **Tibetan** there are at least five versions.

The Paali sutta version could be questioned as a version of the first discourse since there is not much to indicate it is meant to be so. Internally the Twelve Aspects indicate it may be so, for as far as I know the only other place the Twelve Aspects are mentioned in the Paali canon is in the traditional Dhammacakka-Pavattana-Sutta, the sutta immediately before it. A difference internally is that the Buddha refers to "Tathaagatas" (in the plural) instead of "I/me", but the Buddha is seen to use "Tathaagata" (singular) when referring to himself in other places⁴. Externally the fact that it has been placed directly after the traditional Dhammacakka-Pavattana-Sutta could indicate that the compilers considered it a version of it. The discourse on the two extremes in the book of the twos in the Chinese Ekotaraagama could also be questioned as a version, but the setting of the discourse and the content are strong indications that it might be so.

I set out all the versions below with the codes used to signify each of the versions from here on, the references for each, and the approximate date of each (if known).

The Paali versions, which were written down about 500 years after the Buddha, i.e. around the first century BC, are:

Sutta (Discourse): P1, P2 : S v 420-5

Vinaya (Discipline): P3 : V i 10

Chinese versions with translation dates are:

Sutta:

C1 : T #109 (T vol. 2 p. 503b-c, 2nd Cent. AD),

C2 : T #99.379 (T vol. 2 pp. 103c-104a, 5th Cent. AD),

C3 : T #110 (T vol. 2 p. 504a-b, 8th Cent. AD), and

C6 : T #125.19.2 (T vol. 2 p. 593b-c, 4th Cent. AD).

Vinaya:

C4 : T #1428 (T vol. 22 pp. 788-9, 5th Cent. AD), and

C5 : T #1421 (T vol. 22 pp. 104-5, 5th Cent. AD).

Sanskrit versions:

S1 : Mtu. iii 330-5, S2 (late 2nd Cent. BC according to Peter Harvey, p. 89⁵),

S2 : Lal. 540 (416-8), (between 200 BC and 200 AD ibid p. 15), and

S3 : Gnoli⁶ who dates the characters to the 6th-7th century (p. xiii). N Dutt⁷

⁴ M iii 4-6

⁵ Harvey P, An Introduction to Buddhism, Teachings, History and Practices, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1992.

Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

dates the Gupta script of this text as from the 6th Cent. AD (p. i).

Tibetan versions:

The dates of the translation of the Tibetan texts from the Sanskrit are generally accepted as 8th Cent. AD. Not long after the great debate whether to follow Chinese or Indian Buddhism. According to Sastri (p. 476) from the Narthang Ed. of the Kanjur (Kangyur):

Sutta:

T1 : Mdo. xxvi 88-91,

T2 : Mdo. xxvi 431-4, and

T3 : Mdo. xxx 427-32 (this one is said to be translated from the Paali).

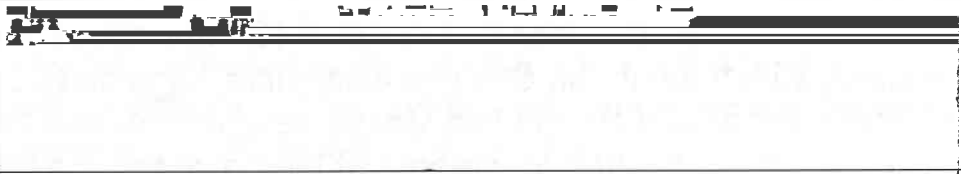




Vinaya:

T4 : Dul. iv ff 64-7, and

T5 : Dul. xi 69-72.

Sastri points out (p. 475) that some of the Tibetan sutta and vinaya texts are nearly identical and correspond as follows T1 = T4 and T2 = T5. This is also the case with the Paali versions: P1 = P3. It is probable that the sutta texts in these cases were just replications of the vinaya texts⁸. I shall take it as so. In this case there would be only two versions in Paali and three in Tibetan and the total would come to 14 distinct versions.

The system I have used to analyse the different versions is as follows. The detailed items below are according to P1.

Item 1	
Item 2	
Item 3	
Item 4	
Item 5	 as they really are, that Siddhattha claimed Full

⁶ Gnoli, The Gilgit Manuscript of the Sanghabhedavastu Part 1, 1977, pp. 134-9.

⁷ Dutt N, Gilgit Manuscripts Vol. III Part 2 Second Edition, 1984, Sri Satguru Publications, India.

⁸ Being an oral tradition originally, it is probable that the story of the Buddha was told chronologically, as a story. This can be seen in the Vinaya texts and the later Mahaaparinibbana sutta. Only later would the discourses (suttas) have been extracted and grouped according to various categories, probably first topically (as in the Sam.yutta Nikaaya) and then later by number of items (as in the Anguttara Nikaaya).

	Enlightenment (to be Buddha).
Item 6	Ko.n.dannyya's ⁹ Realisation of the Dhamma-Eye
Item 7	Naming of Ko.n.dannyya as Annyyaa Ko.n.dannyya (Knowing Ko.n.dannyya)
Item 8	The Gods' Proclamation at Hearing the Discourse
Item 9	Naming the Discourse
Item 10	Realisation of the Dhamma-Eye

Sastri groups discourses with the same combination of the above items into classes. He comes up with a total of three classes (p. 475). They are:

- Class I: T2, T5 and C3 containing "mere enumeration of the Four Truths into twelve aspects and declaration of Kau.n.dinya's awakening and nothing else".
- Class II: T1 and T4 containing "besides the above, the Buddha speaking of the two extremes to be avoided and a 'middle course to be resorted to, and also [sic] describing the nature of the Four Truths in a separate Dharmaparyaya..."
- Class III: he says "that description has been incorporated in the Sermon itself."

I also have grouped texts that have the same combination of the above items and have called those groups "classes" (following Sastri), but I use different classes to the ones Sastri does. For example T2 [=T5] and C3 have items four to nine and are classed together (my Class 3 below, but Sastri's Class I).

Sastri identifies only two Chinese counterparts (C1 and C3), but the other sutta versions, which are in the Chinese Samyukta Agama (C2) and the Chinese Ekotaraagama (C6), the first vinaya version (C4) and the additional Sanskrit version (S3), would form classes of their own too. So these four, with P2 (which Sastri did not identify as a version) make five texts, which form classes of their own due to their particular combination of items. So I have eight classes.

These are the classes I have identified:

1. P2
2. S3
3. T2 (=T5) and C3
4. C2
5. P1 (=P3), T3, S1, S2, C1, C5
6. C4
7. T1 (=T4)
8. C6.

⁹ I am using nnyy to indicate ~n~n, a dot before a consonant indicates retroflex and a dot after indicates nasalisation e.g. in Sam.yutta.

As can be seen, Class 5 is the class with texts from each language source. P2 is the other Paali text and C6 is the other Chinese text that I am taking as variants and they each form a class of their own. These are the only two texts in our corpus that have only one item.

The following comparative table is based on a table from Sastri's article¹⁰. In it I have put the classes in order of lowest number of items to highest, except for the last one (C6).

¹⁰ Sastri, 1938, p. 474
Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

Table 1

Item No.-> Class No. V	1 Two Extremes and the Middle Path	2 The Four Noble Truths	3a Definition of the Four Noble Truths	4 Twelve Aspects	5 Buddha's Declaration of Awakening	6 Ko.n.dan nya's realisation of Process-Eye	7a Naming Ko.n.dan nya as Annyyaa Ko.n-.dannyaa	8 God's Proclamations at hearing discourse	9 Naming the discourse	7b as 7a	3b as 3a	10 Realisation of the Process-Eye
1	---	Yes	---	Yes	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
2	---	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	---	---	---
3 (Sastri's Class I)	---	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes* [not in C3]	---	---
4	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (also 80,000 gods)	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	---	---
5 (Sastri's Class III)	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	Yes	---	Yes (not in C1)	Yes* (not in C1 and C5)	---
6	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	---	---	Yes
7 (Sastri's Cl. II)	Yes	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Yes	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

* Sastri has these items in brackets, but does not explain why. I guess it is to indicate that some versions have these items here and some in the earlier position, e.g. P1. Such a minor difference would not justify forming another class of texts.

The Layers

Grouping the classes in order of the lowest number of items to highest, except for Class 8 (C6), which has been put last, seems to reveal different layers of items. In discussing the layers I won't refer to Class 1 (P2) or Class 8 (C6) since they only have one item each.

Layer One: Items 4 to 6

Items 4 to 6 and 8 are common to all discourses. Item 8 is not being grouped in this layer.

Item 4

The Twelve Aspects (Item 4) are the same in all versions in which they occur except the earliest Chinese version (C1) and one Tibetan version (T3). In the former there seem to be twelve aspects, but the three phases are not clear. It seems they are just past, present and future. This unclarity may be an indication that the translator did not have a very good command of Indian languages, which would be understandable in that early part of Chinese Buddhist history or that the text was very different here. Sastri points out that T3 is also not clear at Item 4¹¹ where it seems there are only the second and third phases making a total of only eight aspects, though twelve are spoken of. Maybe the Tibetan translator or the text translated from identified the definitions of the Four Noble Truths with (as) the first phase.

The definitions of the Four Truths would fit very well as part of the first phase rather than as a separate item. The first phase without the definitions only tell us the names of the truths, or it just says that stress etc. are Noble Truths as in C1. Surely knowing that stress etc. are Noble Truths does not cause the arising of the benefits listed. K R Norman suggests that the definition passage was a later addition and I agree, but I suggest that it was originally part of the first phase and was lost possibly due to the use of "pe" (etc). In some other of our texts it is not clear if there are both Items 3 and 4. C2 seems to have Items 3 and 4 collapsed. It says that this is the 1st (etc) Noble Truth, as if it had been defined or was to be defined, but does not say what it is. This would be part of the first phase for it then gives the benefits as in all the other aspects. In what is clearly the second phase (immediately after) it says, this is the noble truth of stress, having been known, should be known again. Then for the other truths it says "having been known, should be...". In the third

¹¹ p. 488, paragraph 10

phase it says “having been know, has been...”. C3 has a similar situation. It indicates that phase one is paying right attention to the truths, phase two is paying right attention to the truths, which are [have been] understood and then which should be... and phase three is paying right attention to the truths, which are understood and which have been... .

Table 2

	Truth	Paali	Chinese
1 st phase, the names of the truths	1 st – the noble truth of stress 2 nd – the noble truth of stress’s arising 3 rd – the noble truth of stress’s ceasing 4 th – the noble truth of the path to the ending of stress	Dukkham. ariya saccam. Dukkhasamud ayam. a.s. Dukkha- nirodham. a.s. Dukkhanirodha gaamini pa.tipadaa a.s.	Ku3 sheng4 di4 ¹² Ku3 ji2 sheng4 di4 Ku3 mie4 sheng4 di4 Ku3 mie4 dao4 sheng4 di4
2 nd phase, the duty	1 st – to be known 2 nd – to be eliminated 3 rd – to be realised 4 th – to be cultivated	Parinnyeyya Pahaatabba Sacchikaa- tabba Bhaavetabba	Dang1 zhi1 Dang1 duan4 Dang1 zuo4 zheng4 Dang1 xiu1
3 rd phase, the accomp- lishment	1 st – has been known 2 nd – has been eliminated 3 rd – has been realised 4 th – has been cultivated	Parinnyyaata Pahiina Sacchikata Bhaavita	Yi3 zhi1 Yi3 duan4 Yi3 zuo4 zheng4 Yi3 xiu1

Differences in the Presentation of Item 4

Choong in his comparison of some sections of Paali SN and Chinese SA points out regarding this discourse, that in both sources “the Buddha teaches the Four Noble Truths in three aspects [called phases here]. The two versions agree in content but differ in sequence... This way of teaching the Four Noble Truths is called the three-turned, twelvefold”.¹³ He points out that in the Paali the Twelve Aspects are grouped by each individual noble truth, but in the Chinese the Twelve Aspects are grouped by each of the three phases (see Table 3 below). All the Chinese (except C4), Sanskrit and Tibetan versions are the same in this regard. We also find other places in the Paali texts groupings different from the Paali Dhammacakka suttas, but similar to the other versions, that is by the action needed to be undertaken¹⁴. In C4 of the

¹² This is the Pinyin system of transcription of Chinese with numbers to indicate the tones.

¹³ Choong, *Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism: A Comparative Study*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2000, pp. 236-7

¹⁴ M iii 289-290 : understand, abandon, develop, realise.

Dharmaguptaka Vinaya the grouping is as in the Paali.¹⁵

Arranging the twelve by phase fits better with the logic of how the twelve would be experienced. Logic demands that the Four Noble Truths be understood or known theoretically = the first phase, before the First Truth could be known (practically), the Second Truth eliminated, the Third Truth realised and the Fourth Truth cultivated = the second phase. This is clearest with the Fourth Truth, for how could a path be cultivated (second phase) that had not been first theoretically understood (first phase)? One Chinese version (C3) seems to say the Four Noble Truths have to be understood in the first phase and the first truth should be known, the second cut off, the third realised and the fourth practised. Other Paali texts identify knowledge of the Four Truths as Right View, the first step of the Noble Eightfold Path¹⁶ and that would have to be developed before realisation, which would come after developing concentration, the eighth step.

Therefore it is probable that the arrangement by phase was the original sequencing. If T3 is in fact a translation from the Paali as indicated by Sastri¹⁷ then it proves that the arrangement of the Paali has been changed since the translation was done, but the question remains as to why this change would have been made.

KR Norman makes the point that the definition passage of the Four Noble Truths in the longer Paali version is probably a later addition and that the words “Noble Truth” probably were also a later addition. His reasoning is: the Noble Truth (of the cause of stress) is not to be eradicated in the second phase, but the cause of stress itself is to be eradicated¹⁸, i.e. what the Noble Truth is about. I suggest that the term “Noble Truth” was only applied to the first phase rather than not at all. I could see it as part of the definition (Item 3) if that was included in the first phase.

Table 3

SN (by truth)	SA (by phase)
First Truth First Truth to be known First Truth has been known	First Truth Second Truth Third Truth Fourth Truth
Second Truth	

¹⁵ Dr Bucknell has told me that the Dharmaguptaka texts are very close to the Paali and this is another confirmation of this.

¹⁶ D ii 312 ; M iii 251

¹⁷ Sastri 193, p. 473

¹⁸ “The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Paali Syntax” in LA Hercus, FBJ Kuiper, T Rajapatirana, ER Skrzypczak, *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Faculty of Asian Studies Canberra, 1982, pp. 377-391.

Second Truth to be eliminated Second Truth has been eliminated	First Truth to be known Second Truth to be eliminated Third Truth to be realised Fourth Truth to be cultivated
Third Truth Third Truth to be realised Third Truth has been realised	First Truth has been known Second Truth has been eliminated Third Truth has been realised Fourth Truth has been cultivated
Fourth Truth Fourth Truth to be cultivated Fourth Truth has been cultivated	

Item 5 and 6

Item five, the Buddha's declaration of his enlightenment, also in the Vinaya's lead up to the First Discourse, is noteworthy when we consider the general interpretation of the Buddha's teaching that one would not make such a declaration, for it would be egotistic. In the Vinaya it is only the over-exaggeration of one's liberation that is seriously cautioned against¹⁹. The Buddha set the example that one could rightly talk of things if one sees them as they really are. Item six is also significant in that it identifies the efficacy of the Buddha's first discourse and his teaching in general, in that one of the group realised the fruit of Stream entry so soon.

Since Items 4-6 are common to texts in all classes except 1 and 8, I will call them the core items. Text one consists entirely of Item 4.

Layer Two: Items 7, 8 and 9

Item 7 is common to all except C1 either in its first position (7a) or its second position (7b). Item 8 is common to all discourses as with the core items (4-6). Receiving a "spiritual" name after some kind of initiation (Item 7) is a common practice in different religions, especially in India, as an external indication of some internal change, but I don't see the point in this regarding the Buddha's teaching. It even seems to verge on the side of ritual, which is discouraged in the early texts. The Buddha set the example for his teaching and he is not said to have taken on a new name after his enlightenment, unless we consider "Buddha" as a name. Generally it is considered to be a title. People addressed him as "ascetic Gotama" and he responded to that. Since this would have been a very common practice it is understandable that this could have been the first accretion to the original core items.

In the core items there is only one mention of the Dhammacakka - the Process-Wheel and that is in C5, the translation of which is from the 5th Century AD. In all the other versions there is mention of only the

¹⁹ Paaraajikaa #4 (V iii 86-9) and Paacittiyaa #8 (V iv 22-5) of the Paali tradition. Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

Dhammacakkhu, the Process-Eye. In the other versions the Dhammacakka is only mentioned in Item 8, except in the introduction to C1, i.e. before Item 1. We find both Dhammacakka²⁰ and Dhammacakkhu²¹ in other discourses, but the latter much more often than the former. The idea of a Dhammacakka tends to emphasise externals, but the idea of a Dhammacakkhu is definitely about an internal shift in view, a shift from wrong view to right view that would bring one onto the path, which in the end would entail non-clinging to all views.

The discourse is called Dharmacakra-sutra in the Sanskrit name of T2²². The Paali canon does not call P1 or P2 “the Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta”, but it calls them “Tathaagatena Vuttaa” (Spoken by the One-Thus-Come²³) at the start of both discourses and at the end in the Uddaana (summary)²⁴. This is curious since he would have spoken most of the discourses. There is no Uddaana in the PTS English translation²⁵. The section of discourses, which the discourse starts, is called the Dhammacakka Vagga both at the beginning and end of the PTS Roman script version²⁶. The non-canonical tradition refers to the discourse as the Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta²⁷ and T3 is called Dharmacakra-pravartana-sutra, which would support its claim to be a direct translation of the Paali²⁸ if we keep in mind that by the time of Tibetan translations the Paali commentarial tradition would have been well established. Malalasekera points out that in neither the sutta or vinaya versions is the name of the sutta given as Dhammacakkappavattana; the name occurs only in the Commentaries- J i.82; DA i.2; AA i 69, etc.²⁹ We do find in the Paali discourses at least one place where soon after his enlightenment the Buddha is purported to have said that he was going to the city of Kaasi “to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma”³⁰. This quote is in verse and in another place we are told that the words of poets are outside his teaching³¹. So we find that this text is not named by the Buddha as very few are, but it is named by the tradition.

I suggest that due to the similarity in sound of Dhammacakka and Dhammacakkhu and maybe in search of a (more meaningful?) name for the

²⁰ E.g. S i 191, M i 171, Sn 556

²¹ E.g. D i 62-84, M i 179-184, A v 204-9, S iv 47

²² Sastri 1938, p. 473

²³ Following the Chinese translation of “ru2 lai2”.

²⁴ S v 420, 431

²⁵ Kindred Saying vol. 5 p. 356

²⁶ S v 420, 431, but Bucknell said to me that he thought the one at the beginning had been supplied by the PTS editor and that traditionally it is at the end only.

²⁷ e.g. Peter Harvey, An Introduction to Buddhism, Teachings, History and Practices, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1992, p23; the PTS name of the discourse at Kindred Saying vol. 5 p. 356.

²⁸ Sastri 1938, p. 473

²⁹ ; Malalasekera, Dictionary of Paali Proper Names, The Paali Text Society, Luzac & Co Ltd, London, vol. 1 A-Dh, 1960, p. 1138

³⁰ M 26 : M i 171

³¹ S 20.7 : S ii 266-7

discourse, the name Dhammacakkhu was changed to Dhammacakka. This could also be related to a time of the development of a more externalised interpretation of the teaching, i.e. gods as external beings separate from us, not states of being that anyone on the path passes/may pass through.

The idea of passing through the Four Noble Truths three times does give an idea of a circular motion or development. This may have been influential in the development of the idea of a Dhammacakka – Process-Wheel. The idea of non-linear progression is common in India as opposed to the West's usual linear perspective, for example in the view of time. What if these two are two extremes and the middle path, in such an externalised representation of personal development, is a combination of the two, more like a spiral, where each pass takes one deeper?

The absence of the renaming of Ko.n.dannyya (Item 7) and the naming of the discourse (Item 9) from Class 5 texts may indicate a time when the naming of things was not so important and in regard to Item 9 it may indicate a transitional period from the idea of a Dhammacakka being started to the naming of the discourse as the Dhammacakka.... I suggest that the ritual of naming is an example of the development of Buddhist culture. The naming of the discourse may indicate the development of a Buddhist iconography; it may have developed around the same time as the formalised or standardised Noble Eightfold Path since there is a strong link between this and the eight-spoked wheel.

The involvement of the gods can be seen at different stages. It is not in the core Items 4 to 6, except one text C2 where 80.000 gods also realise the Process-Eye along with Ko.n.dannyya. In Item 8 in all versions we have the gods passing on the message from realm to realm. If Items 4-6 were original and 7 and 8 later additions, placing Item 9 after 8 would move away from the idea that 8 was an addition. If Item 9 was also an addition, then placing Item 7b after it would also would move away from the idea that 9 was an addition. It would therefore be likely that these items 7, 8 and 9 would be in the category of the earliest additions. Just because they might be later additions, does not necessarily mean that any talk of gods would be a later development.

K R Norman suggests that the version of the Four Noble Truth definition passage in the Paali Dhammacakka - Item 3a, (called the 'introductory set' by Norman) would be a later addition³². This is supported by the texts in Class 2, 3 and 7 since they lack the definition passage, but they do not support his statement that the earliest forms of the definition passage did not include the words "Noble Truth" because even though there is inconsistency in the use of the translations of those words in these other versions, those words are still there.

Layer Four: Item 1

Item 1 [the Two Extremes and the Middle Path] is not common to all versions. Class 2, 3 and 4 texts do not have this item. This discourse is well known in the Paali tradition for its explanation of the Middle Way as the one that avoids the Two Extremes. If it were the original main message of the discourse we might expect the discourse to appear in the book of the twos of the Anguttara Nikaaya (as well or instead), but we don't find it there. On the other hand we might expect it to appear in the book of the fours if the main message was the Four Noble Truths, but we don't find it there either³³. We do find at least one reference to this the supposed first discourse of the Buddha³⁴ where only the Four Noble Truths are mentioned as being taught. There is no mention in that reference to this discourse of the two extremes. The fact that the discourse is placed in the Sacca Sam.yutta (Collection on Truth) in the Paali and Chinese would reflect that those in the First Sangha Council may have thought that that is what it was about.

The talk on the Middle Way (Item 1) involves giving up indulgence in the sense pleasures and not practising self-mortification, which would be the basis of morality, but it goes no further. It does not cover concentration or wisdom. The Buddha is often portrayed as giving a gradual teaching³⁶ (starting with morality then concentration then going on to wisdom), which has been confirmed regarding the Paali texts by Bucknell³⁷. Therefore the talk on

³² Hercus et al. 1982, p. 388

³³ Actually we find NO discourse on the Four Noble Truths in the Book of the Fours. Maybe this is partly why Norman suggested they were a later addition.

³⁴ M iii 248

³⁵ V i 7, M i 170-1

³⁶ Ud 5.3 (PTS pg 49), Ud 5.5 (PTS pg 54) ; M i 479 ; M i 379-80

³⁷ Bucknell, Roderick, "The Buddhist Path To Liberation: An Analysis Of The Listing Of Stages", *Journal of Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta* Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

the Middle Way, dealing with morality, would more likely come before talk on the Four Noble Truths. Listening to such a talk on morality would be an occasion for the development of the first Jhaana (an initial level of concentration based on morality) as I have clarified it in this book. That would be an appropriate setting for (supportive conditions for understanding a) talk on the Four Noble Truths which would be in the domain of Wisdom.

The general principle of the majority deciding the teaching is one way and a minority remembering it another way is illustrated by one text in the Discipline³⁸, which tells us that when the Venerable Puraana, who seemed to be the leader of a group of at least 500 monks, was told on coming to Raajagaha to submit himself to the chanting of the Dhamma and Discipline that had just occurred (approximately three months after the end of the Awakened One's life), he said "Venerable Sirs, well chanted by the elders are the Dhamma and Discipline, but in that way I heard and received it in the Lord's presence, this is the same way I'll bear it in mind."

So maybe Item 1 was the first discourse and some monks, who were not in charge of the texts, remembered it this way. The majority in charge of the texts may have held that the Buddha first spoke on the Four Noble Truths and as the influence of the few monks became stronger, Item 1 could have been added to the Four Noble Truths discourse to keep everyone happy. The addition of sections to discourses would be rare, but not unheard of and it would be done with the best intentions, probably to ensure the full teaching is maintained. One such recent example is the addition of the longer section on the Four Noble Truths from the Diigha version to the Majjhima version of the Satipa.t.thaana sutta in the Burmese edition (Sixth Sangaayana)³⁹.

We find a separate discourse in the Chinese Ekottaraagama (C6) dealing with the two extremes and the Middle Way alone, which may indicate that it was originally a separate discourse. Of course the Twelve Aspects (Item 4) appears alone too as P2 and it could be said that it could have been given alone as the first discourse and even Items 5 and 6 (the Buddha's Declaration and Ko.n.dannyya's Realisation), identified as "core items" above, could be seen as later additions.

The Number Of Items Listed As Benefits

The First List Of Items Regarding The Middle Way

This is a section in P1 regarding the Middle Way: "Mendicants, not having

the International Association of Buddhist Studies, volume 7, 1984, pp. 7-40.

³⁸ V v 288-9

³⁹ Anaalayo, *The Satipa.t.thaana Sutta*, PhD Thesis for the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 2000, footnote 10, reduced copy p2.

gone to these two ends, the middle path has been realised by the One-Thus-Come [which] causes vision (cakkhu), knowledge (nyaa.na), leads to calm (upasamaaya), to super-knowledge (abhinnyayaaya), complete knowledge (sambodhaaya) and extinguishment (nibbaanaaya).” It has a list of what I call benefits. P2 does not have this list as it is part of Item 1, which does not occur in P2. The list in P1 has these six items:

Cakkhu	Nyaa.na	Upasama	Abhinnyaya	Sambodhi	Nibbaa.na
Vision	Knowledge	Calm	Super-knowledge	Complete knowledge	Extinguishment

Notice that Nyaa.na (knowledge) comes *before* Upasama (calm).

S3 has this list of items:

Cak.su	Jnyaa.na	Upasama	Abhijnya	Sambodha	Nirvaa.na
Vision	Knowledge	Calm	Super-knowledge	Complete knowledge	Extinguishment

So we see this matches the Paali exactly.

T1 and T3 have this list, which agrees with the Paali precisely:

Cak.su ⁴⁰	Jnyaa.na	Upasama	Abhijnyaa	Sambodha	Nirvaa.na
Vision	Knowledge	Calm	Super knowledge	Complete knowledge	Extinguishment

This supports the claim that T3 is a direct translation from the Paali. T2 does not have this list of items.

C4 also has a list of six items as follows:

Yan3 ming2	Zhi4 ming2	Yong3 ji4 xiu1 xi2	Shen2 tong1	Deng3 jue2	Nie4 pan2
Clear vision	Clear knowledge	Higher peace	Super-knowledge	Complete realisation	Extinguishment

And we see it matches P1 very well.

We find this list of five items in C6, which deals with the Middle Way only:

Yan3	Zhi4	Xiu1 xi2	Shen2 tong1		Ni2 pan4
Vision	Knowledge	Peace	Super-knowledge		Extinguishment

This matches the Paali (P1) except it leaves out an equivalent of Sambodhi.

It is interesting that both C4 and C6 match P1 in having Zhi1, which would be a translation for Nyaa.na, before Xiu1 xi2, which would be a translation for Upasama.

C5 also has five items as in this table:

⁴⁰ I have adopted a standard spelling throughout the Romanised Sanskrit, even though different texts differ slightly.

Yan3	Zhi4		Ming2	Jue2	Ni2 huan2
Vision	Knowledge		Clarity	Realisation	Extinguish- ment

And they seem to match up fairly well with P1, except there is no equivalent of Upasama.

C1 has a list of only three items:

Yan3				Hui4	Ni2 huan2
Vision				Wisdom	Extinguish ment

But the sequence is as expected. C1 is the earliest of our Chinese texts and was supposedly translated from the Sanskrit. So it is very curious why there are so few terms here. Since there are so few items in this list and the P1 list regarding the Twelve Insights has only five items (see on page 19) I wonder if the former list and the latter were swapped around in C1.

S1⁴¹ has two occurrences of the list:

The first occurrence is:

Cak.su	Upasama	Nirvidaa	Viraaga	Nirodha	'Sraama.nya	Sa.m-bodha	Nirvaa.na
Vision	Calm	Disgust	Dis-passion	Cessa-tion	Religious austeri-ty	Complete knowledg-e	Extingui- shment

This is interesting because it has no item Jnyaa.na after Cak.su and it has the additional items: Nirvidaa, Viraaga, Nirodha and 'Sraama.nya, all not seen in any other version in our corpus. Maybe these four items were considered a substitute for Jnyaa.na. 'Sraama.nya follows Nirvidaa, Viraaga, Nirodha and the familiar Paali series is Nibbidaa, Viraaga, Nirodha, Pa.tinissagga: distaste, fading, ceasing, relinquishment; so perhaps here 'Sraama.nya is understood as a synonym for Pa.tinissagga.

The second occurrence goes: "Cak.su, Jnyaa.na, Upasama, pe", which has the item Jnyaa.na that we would expect after Cak.su as seen above, but the "pe" (=etc) obscures what was meant to follow.

S2 does not give the list for the path, but gives this list in negative form for the two extremes to be avoided:

Brahmacarya	Nirvidaa	Viraaga	Nirodha	Abhijnyaa	Sambodhi	Nirvaa.na
Holy Life	Disgust	Dis-passion	Cessa-tion	Super knowledg-e	Complete knowledg-e	Extinguis- hment

Here Brahmacarya is a new item and Cak.su, Jnyaa.na (?) and Upasama are

⁴¹ S1 = Mahaavastu (pp. 18-19) and S2 = Lalitavistara (pp. 22-23) versions in roman script in Franklin Edgerton's Buddhist Sanskrit Reader, Delhi: Motilal, 1953
Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

missing? Brahmacharya is often associated with becoming a monk or nun, i.e. leaving the householder life, or going forth (pabbajjaa), an expression of morality or Right Livelihood, which often occurs in suttas when one develops the Dhamma-cakkhu, right at the beginning of the path⁴². So its place here is appropriate and maybe it is a substitute for Cak.su. Nirvidaa, Viraaga and Nirodha might once again be a substitute for Jnyaa.na. If that is the case then only Upasama is not accounted for. We have the usual three items at the end that we find in the Paali.

The List Of Items Regarding Each Of The Twelve Insights

This is the refrain in P1 after each of the Twelve Insights: "Through [this] previously unheard of process, there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me." The Paali (P1+2) lists five items that I call benefits:

Cakkhu	Nyaa.na	Pannyaa	Vijjaa	Aaloko	
Vision	Knowledge	Wisdom	Gnosis	Light	

It is curious why Aaloko is placed at the end, inferring that it might be higher than Vijjaa. Maybe this is related to the practice of Aalokasannyaa and its position changed at a time when the practice was at its height? Or maybe there was an additional item(s) following it that has been lost.

C6 is the only text in our corpus that does not have the Twelve Insights (Item 4) and the list of benefits arising from each.

C4 and C5 have both lists, which are different **in both texts** (??). The second list is like this in both texts:

Zhi4	Yan3	Jue2	Ming2	Tong1	Hui4
Knowledge	Vision	Realisation	Clarity	Super-knowledge	Wisdom

Compared with the P1+2 the first two items have been swapped around, there is an additional item (which one??) and no obvious equivalent of Aaloko. Ming2 has the meaning of bright and therefore could be an equivalent of Aaloko. If Ming2 (one meaning is "bright") were the equivalent of Aaloko (light), the fact that Ming2 comes earlier would support the suggestion that earlier on there were items that followed Aaloko.

C2 and C3 do not have Item 1 therefore there is only this list regarding Item 4:

Yan3	Zhi4		Ming2		Jue2
Vision	Knowledge		Clarity		Realisation

So we see the expected sequence of the first two items and the last item. Again there is no equivalent of Aaloko (light), unless Ming2 (as "bright") was intended as the translation here.

⁴² D i 62-84, 100, 124, 147, 157-8, 171-4, 181-4, 206-9, 214-5, 232-3, 249-251; M i 179-184, 196, 344-8; M ii 38-9; M iii 33-36; A v 201, 204-9.

C1 also has both lists, which are different. We have seen the first as above and now we look at the second list. C1 lists items inconsistently for the each of the Twelve Insights into the Four Noble Truths as in this table:

Yan3	Chan2	Si1	Hui4	Jian4	Jue2 *
Yan3 guan1	Chan2	Si1	Hui4	Jian4	Jue2 *
Yan3 guan1	Chan2	Xing2	Hui4	Jian4	Jue2 *
Dao4 yan3	Chan2	Si1	Hui4		Jue2
Yan3	Chan2		Hui4		Jue2
Vision	Calm	Knowledge	Wisdom	Insight	Realisation

(* These have suo3 nian4 after them.)

There seem to be six items in this list and these six curiously compare well with the list of six items in P1 regarding the Middle Way, i.e. the first list we examined. The only difference is that Chan2, which could translate Upasama, comes before Si1, which could translate Nyaa.na. I would suggest that the Chinese has the more original sequence since the Calm then Insight sequence is generally known and understood even in the Paali tradition. C1 has both Item 1 and 4 and it would seem that the two lists of items may have been swapped around.

T1 and T2 both have this list:

Cak.su	Jnyaa.na		Vidyaa	Buddhi	Bodhi
Vision	Knowledge		Gnosis	Wisdom	Knowing

The only notable things here are having no equivalent of Panynyaa and Buddhi taking the place Aaloko takes in the Paali, unless we move Vidyaa, Buddhi and Bodhi to the left and thereby have a blank space at the end which is filled by Wisdom (Hui4 or possibly Jue2) in the Chinese.

T3 has this list:

Cak.su	Jnyaa.na	Prajnyaa	Vidyaa	Aaloka	
Vision	Knowledge	Wisdom	Gnosis	Light	

Which agrees totally with the Paali, supporting once again that T3 is a translation of the Paali.

S1 has this list:

Jnyaa.na	Cak.su	Vidyaa	Buddhi	Bhuuri	Prajnyaa	Aaloka
Vision	Knowledge	Gnosis	Knowing	Wisdom	Wisdom	Light

Compared to the Paali it has two extra items, Bodhi and Bhuuri (wisdom?) and all the other items that the Paali has, but in a different order. The first two are reversed, as are Vidyaa and Prajnyaa. Aaloka is last as with the Paali.

S2 has this list:

Jnyaa.na	Cak.su	Vidyaa	Bhuuri	Medhaa	Prajnyaa	Aaloka
Knowledge	Vision	Gnosis	Wisdom	Intelligence	Wisdom	Light

This list is quite similar to S1 in its comparison to the Paali. We see that Buddhi is replaced by Medhaa (intelligence) and the position swapped with Bhuuri of S1.

S1 and S2 are similar to C4 and C5 in that Jnyaa.na and Cak.su have been swapped around in comparison to the Paali. This supports the claim that some Chinese texts were translated from the Sanskrit.

S3 has this list of items:

Cak.su	Jnyaa.na		Vidyaa		Buddhi
Vision	Knowledge		Gnosis		Wisdom

This is quite similar to the Paali. Prajnyaa is missing before Vidyaa and Aaloko is missing or is replaced with Buddhi, since both occur in the other Sanskrit versions, I would tend to conclude that it has been left out.

Conclusion

We have many texts that could be considered the first discourse of the Buddha and from the study of the 17 we have at hand we can see that The Twelve Aspects (Item 4) is common to them all except C6. The Twelve Aspects, The Buddha's Declaration and Ko.n.dannyya's Realisation (Items 4, 5 and 6) common to the majority (all except C6 and P2). These common items would indicate a version of the discourse that would have been an early ancestor of the ones we have now, probably dating back to a time before the divisions into schools, i.e. the time of the Second Council (approximately 100 years after the end of the life of the Buddha).

All texts in Classes 5, 6 and 7 have both Items 1 and 4. Both of these items have two different lists of benefits. I take this, along with the existence of Item 1 as a separate discourse in the Chinese (C6), as evidence that Item 1 was originally a separate discourse that was later prefixed to the more original Dhammacakka-sutta and that Items 4 to 6 were the core items that would have formed the more original Dhammacakka-sutta. This may have been done in a period of time when the majority or the elders of the Bhikkhu Sangha saw other Bhikkhus going off into extreme views. If that were the case it would make sense to promote the middle way as very important along side the Four Noble Truths as the essence of the Buddha's teaching.

If this were the case then S3 would be the version in our corpus closest to the early ancestor Dhammacakka-sutta, with Items 7 and 8 as the earliest additions. This would mean that both the Chinese and Sanskrit sources have texts (C6 and S3) that would be closer to the original than the Paali (P1). This would make clear the importance of the comparison of different source documents in the attempt to establish what the Buddha really taught. It does not invalidate the claim that the Paali canon is the oldest and most complete

extant canon. It just would mean that changes could be made inside that oldest extant canon, as we have seen with the addition to the Majjhima Satipa.t.thaana Sutta by the Sixth Sangaayana in Burma. It is interesting that the most recent find should be the text that would seem to a copy of the most original teaching. I think it is fitting that an Indian text occupies this place, seeing as the Buddha lived and taught in India.

The gradual teaching method of the Buddha would mean that the “original” Dhammacakka-sutta would not have been the first discourse, being mainly talk on the Four Noble Truths, which would be in the domain of wisdom. Bucknell has shown that consistency in teaching method was maintained throughout the (discourses ascribed to the Buddha in) Paali cannon, i.e. there was a gradual discourse on morality, then concentration and then wisdom. Morality is covered by Item 1 with talk on avoiding sensual indulgence, but we do not have any talk on concentration, not even a brief mention of it, after morality and before wisdom (as in many other discourses). I suggest that may be due to a bias against meditation in the study monks that would have maintained the texts⁴³. That which is considered to be the second discourse⁴⁴ is about that aspect of wisdom particular to Buddhas⁴⁵ and so could be an extension of talk on the Four Noble Truths, which are also said to be particular to the Ones-Thus-Come⁴⁶.

I suggest the reason for the additions of non-core items would have been due to less attention being placed on the personal study AND practice of the core items, especially Item 4. This would have been very well established by the time of the development of external symbolism (iconography and images) of the Buddha and his teaching, i.e. about three hundred years after the Buddha – a highly devotional period. This is supported by the fact that the word “Dhammacakka” only appears in the core items of C5, a text translated about the time of Buddhaghosa, 1000 years after the Buddha. The development of symbolism would be linked to the tendency to not look internally, but to look externally for a refuge, which the Buddha taught against⁴⁷.

Item 4 could be seen as the essentials of the Buddha’s message for it was the complete penetration into The Twelve Aspects that he identified as the factor that constituted his complete and full awakening. Where study and practice of essentials is under-emphasised, theories or interpretations regarding the essentials could easily proliferate. We see this is the case in talking about Insight Knowledges in the Theravaada Vipassanaa meditation tradition, which relies heavily on the Buddhaghosa’s famous commentarial

⁴³ A iii 355

⁴⁴ Anattaa-lakkhana-sutta S iii 67-8 : V i 12

⁴⁵ M i 66

⁴⁶ A iv 185, Ud 5.3 (PTS pg 49) ; M i 379-80

⁴⁷ D ii 100, iii 58

work, the Visuddhimagga. In that book 18 Insight Knowledges are taught and to my knowledge no mention is made of the Twelve Insight Knowledges as found in the Dhammacakka-sutta. Warnings have been given about the conditions to the loss of the teaching, one ascribed to the Buddha about people busying themselves with non-essentials not gaining the essentials⁴⁸ and some from later texts about when the transmission of the teaching would break down⁴⁹. I suggest the above-proposed additions are an example of both of these. I think it would be a great service to humanity to see how Buddhaghosa's 18 Insight Knowledges compare with the twelve ascribed to the Buddha in the Dhammacakka-sutta. I hope such a project is undertaken in the future. It may be that they are just another presentation of the path, but then again, they may not be. As the Buddha encouraged, "Make a thorough investigation!"⁵⁰

It is in the third phase of the Four Noble Truths that one realises that what was to be done has been done. This is significant when we keep in mind the often-heard exclamation of the Arahant (Accomplished One) "Done is what had to be done." This leads to the speculation that the Twelve Insights may match with the stages of liberation in this way:

First Phase: Understanding the Definition of the Four Noble Truths	Stream Enterer
Second Phase: Something (still) needs to be done	Once-returner and Non-returner
Third Phase: It has been done	Accomplished One

Finally I am confident this kind of comparison of versions of texts will prove very useful in identifying the development of different schools of Buddhism via interpretations of the Buddha's Teaching and in identifying which texts belong to which schools.

⁴⁸ Dhammapada 11, 12

⁴⁹ A i 72-73 ; S ii 266-7 ; A iii 100-8 ; ascribed to a commentary (p67) and the Lotus Sutra (p153) by Peter Harvey, An Introduction to Buddhism, Teachings, History and Practices, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1992

⁵⁰ Ref??

Translation⁵¹ of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C1)

[The Preamble]

So have I heard:

Once when the Awakened One sat under a tree⁵² in Baaraa.nasii's greater-metropolitan-area⁵³ in the Deer Park⁵⁴ there were a thousand mendicants and a large gathering of gods to one side of the sky⁵⁵. At that time there was a natural process wheel that flew to the Awakened One and that turned in front of him. The Awakened One stroked the wheel with his hand and said:

Previously uncountable sufferings came to me. I experienced immeasurable stress as name and form cycling on. The mind of delusion and lust has stopped. Now I have liberated my mind from the influxes and fetters. All roots have stopped. Birth and death have been cut off. I will not be recycled in the five destinations⁵⁶.

The wheel then rose up while the Awakened One told the mendicants⁵⁷ [this]:

[Item 1 – The Middle Path]

In the world there are two practices of indulging in extremes. These ways of practice are not suitable for doing the task for a disciple who has left home life for good. What are the two? One is to dwell in desire and passion with impure aspirations. The second is depending on grasping in sensuality⁵⁸ with which one cannot progress earnestly. For this reason one who goes back cannot rate as a real follower of the Awakened One's ways.

⁵¹ Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was (since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian) and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

⁵² The other Ch. version and the Paali say "dwelled at" instead of "sat under a tree", but maybe this is referring to the "tree dweller's practice".

⁵³ This may sound a bit modern and that is my application of the Buddha's advice to teach in one's own language.

⁵⁴ This version leaves out "at the Place the Sages Stay – Isipatana".

⁵⁵ The "five mendicants" of the other Ch. Version and the Paali are not mentioned, but we have a much larger crowd. It is not clear if 1000 is the count of both the mendicants and gods or only of the former.

⁵⁶ It is interesting that only five are mentioned. In the Indian tradition, there are six. Maybe the sixth one was the Human realm and it was left out because the Buddha could have been said to inhabit it at the time of speaking.

⁵⁷ No mention of the gods here.

⁵⁸ The difference and how there are **two** extremes here, is not very clear.

If a mendicant does not dwell with desire and passion [or] grasping in sensuality, he can experience the middle [path]. The One-Thus-Come completely and rightly awakened, attained to vision and wisdom, avoided the two extremes and realised extinguishment⁵⁹.

When he has known deeply stress as a noble truth, he is concentrated, experiences vision, calm, knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation, that awareness⁶⁰ causes liberation of mind⁶¹.

When he has known deeply stress's arising [and its] ceasing as noble truths, he [is concentrated,⁶²] experiences vision, calm, knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation, that awareness⁶³ causes liberation of mind.

So also with the noble truth of [the path to stress's] ceasing.

[Item 3 – The 4NT Definitions]

What is stress? It is birth, ageing, sickness, grief, lamentation, despair, association with the hated, separation from that which is desired [and] not getting what one seeks. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging are stress.

What is the arising of stress? It comes from desire the reason and cause for pleasure in rebecoming. Not leaving taking pleasure and delight now there and there⁶⁴. [That is] sensual desire, desire for form and desire for formlessness. This is the arising of stress.

What is stress's cessation? It is the realisation coming from desire to rebecome, which is happy. Not experiencing dwelling in excess, remainderless awareness⁶⁵, dispassion, rejecting it to not consider it again. This is stress's⁶⁶ cessation.

⁵⁹ The text gives a transcription for Nirvaa.na.

⁶⁰ The text has "suo3 nian4" here.

⁶¹ I will follow the English translation of the list of the benefits of realising the Twelve Insights as given in the table on page 20, consistently throughout this translation.

⁶² This is inserted to match previous paragraph and the bigger picture of the Buddha's teaching.

⁶³ The text has "suo3 nian4" here.

⁶⁴ I have not used "here and there", which would be better sounding, because I think that would miss the point of always looking elsewhere and being NOT satisfied with the here and now, i.e. "The grass is always greener on the other side" syndrome.

⁶⁵ The text has "nian4" here.

⁶⁶ The text has "ji2 – arising [and]" here which I omit for it has already been dealt with.

What is the way to the ending of stress⁶⁷? It is the practice of the Noble Eight[fold] Way. Right View, Thought, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness and Concentration. This is the⁶⁸ path to the ceasing of stress.

[Item 4 - The Twelve Aspects]

Moreover mendicants, stress is a noble⁶⁹ truth. The arising of stress is a noble truth. Stress's arising's cessation is a noble truth. The path to the Stress's arising's cessation⁷⁰ is a noble truth. When I had not yet heard before, in the past, thi
knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation, that awareness⁷¹ causes liberation of mind. Because I had not yet heard in the present this process of the Four Noble Truths⁷², I ought to experience vision, calm, knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation, causing liberation of mind. As long as [I did] not hear all about this process of the Four Noble Truths in the future, [I ought to have] experienced vision, calm, knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation, causing liberation of mind.

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

These are the four truths in three phases and twelve modes and not knowing [them] purely I did not among all those in the world, all rulers⁷³ and men, gods, demons, recluses and priests know and proclaim that I experienced the way of morality, concentration, wisdom and liberation. Knowing and seeing completely these the four highest [attainments], there is no more future birth, [I am] far from the world not again to suffer.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

When the Awakened One said this, In Venerable Knowing⁷⁴ Ko.n.dannyya and 80,000,000 gods the stainless, dustless⁷⁵ process eye arose. The

⁶⁷ The text seems to have a word for word translation here “dukkha nirodha gaamini pati padaa - ku3 ji2 jin4 yu2 shou4 dao4”. The “ji2-arising” is extra, but is paired with “jin4-cessation” throughout this discourse. The “yu2-desire” does not seem to make sense here, but maybe there was a mix up between “gaamini-going” and “kaamini-desiring”.

⁶⁸ The text has “noble truth of the” here.

⁶⁹ Or “real”.

⁷⁰ As note 67.

⁷¹ The text has “suo3 nian4” here.

⁷² The first has been covered, and the other three are hereby covered.

⁷³ The Indian word for god (deva) is also used for kings and princes, i.e. rulers.

⁷⁴ The text has a transcription for Annyya (Knowing) here, which would be made in retrospect, since in the other versions it was only after attaining the Process-eye that his name was prefixed with Annyya. This text does not have the separate item of the renaming of Ko.n.dannyya except for this reference. Maybe this was an attempt to incorporate it by the translator/author.

⁷⁵ I follow the Indian here in that “stainless and dustless” refer to the process-eye, not the mendicant and the gods.

influxes of those 1000 mendicants finished and their minds were liberated. They all realised the stage of Accomplishment⁷⁶. Then in addition they all turned [their view to] “All processes that arise are bound to cease”.

[Item 8 – The God’s Proclamation]

The many gods made known the process wheel in its three turns. Of the gods in the world, living in the Process Realm⁷⁷, none did not hear it all. It first reached the Four Great Kings, then the Thirty-three⁷⁸ gods, Yama gods, Tusita gods, gods delighting in other’s creations⁷⁹, gods delighting in their own creations. It reached the limit of the Brahma world. So in an instant all of them heard.

At that time the Awakened One’s Realm⁸⁰ of three thousand world systems and ten million two thousand earthly gods all shook tremendously. They were the Awakened One’s divine helpers to start to turn in Baaraa.nasii⁸¹ the highest process wheel not yet turned and proclaimed to a countless degree of gods and men who realised the path.

[Closure]

After the Awakened One said this, all were very happy.

[Item 9 – Naming the Discourse]

This is the discourse of the Awakened One [first] speaking and turning the process wheel.

⁷⁶ The text gives “A luo2 han4” a transcription for Arahant-(ship)

⁷⁷ “fa3 di4” taken as Dhamma bhumi

⁷⁸ This and the next two “dao1 li4” “yan4 (mo2)” and “duo1 shu4” taken as transcriptions.

⁷⁹ “bu4 jiao1 li4” taken as “ni-maana-rati” and then next “hua4 ying1 sheng1” taken as “para-nimita-vasavasi” and both are translated from the Indian.

⁸⁰ “fo2 jie4” taken as Buddha bhumi

⁸¹ “Use” is in the text here.

Translation⁸² of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C2)

[The Preamble]

So have I heard:

Once the Awakened One dwelt at Baaraa.nasii in the Deer Park at The Place the Sages Stay. At that time the World Honoured One told the five mendicants:

[Item 3/4 – The 4NT Definition and The Twelve Aspects]

This is the noble truth of stress⁸³ ...

This is the [noble truth of the] arising of stress...

This is the [noble truth of the] ceasing of stress...

This is the noble truth of the path to the ceasing of stress...

...which is a process I had not ever⁸⁴ heard before, when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation.

And again,

This noble truth of⁸⁵ stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically⁸⁶], should be known again [experientially⁸⁷].

⁸⁸This noble truth of the arising of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge,

⁸² Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was [since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian] and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

⁸³ The definitions are not given as in the Indian and the earlier Chinese version.

⁸⁴ The text sometimes has “ceng2” translated as “ever” and sometimes not, throughout.

⁸⁵ The text has “noble truth” for each in this group of four. The phrase “when rightly considered” and “having been known” in each item of this rotation would refer to the noble truth. The “should be...” would refer to what the noble truth is about. Otherwise logic would dictate that the phrases “noble truth” should not be included, because for example, as seen more clearly later, it is stress that should be cut off etc, not the noble truth/s. See K R Norman’s article “The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Paali Syntax” in *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Faculty of Asian Studies Canberra, Australia 1982.

⁸⁶ That is in the previous rotation through right consideration. The editor of the Chinese text has replaced zhi4-knowledge (n) here with zhi1-to know (v). I disagree and take the original to mean a theoretical knowing, or knowledge - a noun, which can be gotten from others, whereas the second knowing is a verb, a practice to be done, which cannot be gotten from others and which would be done after having established the first – knowledge.

⁸⁷ That is in this rotation.

⁸⁸ “And again” appears in the text, but is omitted here.

understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], should be cut off [experientially].

This noble truth of the ceasing of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], should be realised [experientially].

This noble truth of the path of the ceasing of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], should be practised [experientially].

And again, Mendicants!

This noble truth of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], has been known fully [experientially].

This noble truth of the arising of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], has been cut off fully [experientially].

This noble truth of the ceasing of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], has been realised fully [experientially].

This noble truth of the path of the ceasing of stress, which is a process I had not ever heard before and when rightly considered, gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, having been known [theoretically], has been practised fully [experientially].

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

Mendicants, as long as, with regard to these Four Noble Truths for liberation, for coming out, for departing, in three phases and twelve modes, there did not arise, vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, so long I did not finally declare myself to have received unsurpassed-right-full-enlightenment⁸⁹ amongst all the gods, demons, rulers⁹⁰, recluses, priests and [their] disciples⁹¹. With regard to [these] Four Noble Truths for liberation, for coming out⁹², [for departing⁹³], in three phases and twelve modes, there arose, vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation, therefore I declared myself to have

⁸⁹ In both places the text gives a transcription of “Anuttara-Sammaasambodhi”.

⁹⁰ The Indian word for god (deva) is also used for kings and princes, i.e. rulers.

⁹¹ Wen2 fa3 zhong4 (saavakas – listeners) is understood here to be disciples of anyone, as with mendicants (bi3qiu1/bhiksus) above.

⁹² The text reverses the order of the two previous items in comparison to the previous mention.

⁹³ As in the above paragraph.

received⁹⁴ unsurpassed-right-full-enlightenment amongst all the gods, demons, rulers, recluses, priests and [their] disciples.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

When the World Honoured One taught this process, Venerable Ko.n.dannyya and 80,000 gods, attained the pure vision of the process far from dust, apart from dirt⁹⁵.

[Item 7 – The Renaming]

At that time The World Honoured One asked Venerable Ko.n.dannyya, “Do you know the process or not?” [Venerable] Ko.n.dannyya said to the Awakened One, “I know, World Honoured One.” Again, he asked Venerable Ko.n.dannyya, “Do you know the process or not?” Venerable Ko.n.dannyya⁹⁶ said to the Awakened One, “I know, Well-Gone-One.” Because Venerable Ko.n.dannyya knew the process he was therefore called Knowing⁹⁷ Ko.n.dannyya.

[Item 8 – The Gods’ Proclamation]

Venerable Knowing Ko.n.dannyya knew the process [and] the earth spirits raised their voices and chanted the words, “Benevolent Ones, the World Honoured One in Baaraa.nasii’s greater-metropolitan-area in the Deer Park at The Place the Sages Stay has, out of compassion for the world, [turned] the process wheel of the three phases and twelve modes, which has never been turned by any recluse, priest, ruler, demon or god, which abundantly benefits the many, for⁹⁸ the peace and happiness of the many, for abundantly increasing benefit⁹⁹, for the gain and peace of rulers¹⁰⁰ and men, to increase the retinue of the gods and decrease the retinue of the demons.

⁹⁴ The text has “and become” which is omitted here.

⁹⁵ The two phrases “far from dust” and “apart from dirt” in the Chinese seem to describe the gods and Venerable Ko.n.dannyya, but such a description of the mendicant would seem strange. I follow the Indian here.

⁹⁶ Suddenly the text gives the name “Ju1lin2” from here on. Could this be a transliteration of Ko.n.dannyya’s clan name? Or just the technique of the translator using another way the name is transcribed to ensure the readers know who is referred to? The Buddha’s name also changes.

⁹⁷ The text has a transcription for Annyya (Knowing).

⁹⁸ The text has “which”.

⁹⁹ The Chinese word here (yi4) has been taken as a standard translation for the Indian word (artha, attha), which has two meanings (meaning and benefit). The Chinese word does not have both these meanings of the Indian word, but only the first along with other unrelated meanings to the Indian word. Unfortunately in some cases, like here, the meaning of the Chinese word taken as the standard translation does not quite fit and one may try to apply another of the meanings of the Chinese word, but it often makes more sense to apply the other of the Indian meanings, as in this case. That is “benefit” as the other meaning of the Indian word fits better here, rather than any of the other meanings of the Chinese word yi4. See the notes on mechanical translation on p.326 of Thich Minh Chan’s “The Chinese MA and the Paali MN” Delhi: Motilal 1991.

¹⁰⁰ The Indian word for god (deva) is also used for kings and princes, i.e. rulers.

The earth spirits chanted and having heard, the sky spirits and gods: the four great¹⁰¹ king gods, the thirty three gods, the painless gods, the happy-dweller gods, the gods delighting in their own creations¹⁰², the gods satisfied in others' creations¹⁰³; passed on the chant, rolling it on from one to the next. In a moment of time in the heavenly world, Brahma gods reverberated the sound of the chanted words, "Benevolent Ones, the World Honoured One in Baaraa.nasii's greater-metropolitan-area in the Deer Park at The Place the Sages Stay has, out of compassion for the world¹⁰⁴, [turned] the process wheel of the three phases and twelve modes, which has never been turned by any recluse, priest, ruler, demon or god¹⁰⁵, which abundantly benefits the many, for¹⁰⁶ the peace and happiness of the many, for abundantly increasing benefit¹⁰⁷, for the gain and peace of rulers and men¹⁰⁸, to increase the retinue of the gods and decrease the retinue of the demons.

[Item 9 – Naming the Discourse]

The World Honoured One in Baaraa.nasii's greater-metropolitan-area in the Deer Park at The Place the Sages Stay has turned the process wheel. Therefore this discourse is called "The Discourse of Turning the Process Wheel"¹⁰⁹.

[Closure]

The Awakened One gave this discourse. The mendicants heard what the

¹⁰¹ The text has tian1 (天) here, but I think this is a misprint and should be da4 (大) in line with the Indian texts.

¹⁰² Or those "delighting in created mansions" see "The Buddha and His Teaching" by Naarada Mahaa Thera p254.

¹⁰³ Or those "who make others' creations serve their own ends" see "The Buddha and His Teaching" by Naarada Mahaa Thera p254.

¹⁰⁴ The text does not have the phrase "out of compassion for the world" here, which appears earlier, but it has "also in the world hear process" in near proximity to the place we would expect the former phrase. These two phrases are very similar. They share two words "in-the world". Of the other characters, the first character of each is very similar and there are some similarities in the second and third characters of each phrase. The major difference is the extra character of "fa3 - process" in the latter phrase. Part of the latter phrase "wen2 fa3 - hear process" appears earlier in another listing of beings, where the Buddha talks about realising Unsurpassed Supreme Enlightenment, with the word for crowd as "wen2 fa3 zhong4 – saavakas". Maybe the original text or a copy of it was not clear at this point and he translator or a later scribe tried to make sense of it by referring to what went before not realising it was the phrase "out of compassion for the world".

¹⁰⁵ Phrase omitted here, see previous footnote.

¹⁰⁶ The text has "which".

¹⁰⁷ As footnote 99.

¹⁰⁸ The text has "for all gods and men", but I read it as in the previous section for internal consistency.

¹⁰⁹ These words are not ascribed to the Buddha and they are not part of the Paali version, but the living Paali tradition (not the texts) calls their counterpart discourse by the same name, i.e. Dhamma-cakka-pavattana-sutta. I suggest the idea of the Dhamma-cakka – Process-wheel (ascribed to the gods) came from this discourse and was based on the words Dhamma-cakkhu – Process-eye/vision that are ascribed to the Buddha.

Awakened One said, were very happy and respectfully left ¹¹⁰.

¹¹⁰ This final paragraph is in the Chinese version only and is a stock ending for discourses in this collection [SA], but it is not in the Paali or Sanskrit versions and is not ascribed to the Buddha. This suggests it is a later addition as is also suggested by the use of the word "jing1" for discourse in the previous sentence.

Translation¹¹¹ of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C3)

[The Preamble]

So have I heard:

Once the Fortunate One¹¹² dwelt at Baaraa.nasii at The Place the Sages Drop In, in the Deer Feeding Forest. At that time the World Honoured One told the five mendicants¹¹³:

[Item 4 – The Twelve Aspects]

Oh¹¹⁴ mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress, which was a process [not] heard [before¹¹⁵], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to these noble truths of stress' arising, stress' ceasing, the path to stress' ceasing, which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress, which is understood, which should be known and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress arising, which is understood, which should be cut off and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress' ceasing, which is understood, which should be realised and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

¹¹¹ Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was [since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian] and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

¹¹² The text gives a transcription for "Bhagavan".

¹¹³ Bi3qiu1/bhiksu or mendicant is considered to be a general term here, not a Buddhist specific term.

¹¹⁴ The text has "you" here and throughout.

¹¹⁵ I insert "not" and "before" throughout in line with the other Chinese and some Indian versions. Maybe the first syllable (the negating one) of the first two identical syllables of the Indian word for "not hear-ananussutesu" was missed. At least one Indian version has "puurve anussuteh: = heard before",
Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of the path to stress' ceasing, which is understood, which should be practised and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress, which is understood, which has been known and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress' arising, which is understood, which has been eradicated and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of stress' ceasing, which is understood, which has been cut off and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

Oh mendicants, paying right attention to this noble truth of the path to stress' ceasing, which is understood, which has been practised and which was a process [not] heard [before], enables vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation to arise.

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

Oh mendicants, as long as I did not understand these four noble truths, in three phases and twelve modes, for so long vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation all did not arise and I therefore did not proclaim among the gods, demons, rulers, recluses, priests and all people in the world, I realised the purification of mind from afflictions, liberation, unsurpassed awakening.

Oh mendicants, when I understood these four noble truths, in three phases and twelve modes, then vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation all arose and I therefore proclaimed among the gods, demons, rulers, recluses, priests and all people in the world, I realised the purification of mind from afflictions, liberation, unsurpassed awakening.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

While the World Honoured One said this, Venerable Ko.n.dannyya and 80,000 gods realised the stainless and dustless¹¹⁶ pure process vision.

¹¹⁶ I follow the Indian here where, "stainless and dustless" refer to the process vision not the mendicant and Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

[Item 7 – The Renaming]

The Awakened One asked Ko.n.dannyya, “Do you know the process?” He answered, “I know, World Honoured One.” [The Awakened One asked Ko.n.dannyya again,] “Do you know the process?” He answered, “I know, Well Gone One.” Because Ko.n.dannyya understood the process, he was then called Knowing Ko.n.dannyya.

[Item 8 - The God’s Proclamation]

At this time and place dwelt a Yaksha who heard what the Awakened One said. In a loud voice he went out and told people and gods, “Benevolent Ones, you ought to know that the Awakened One while dwelling at Baaraa.nasii at the Place the Sages Drop In, in the Deer Feeding Forest... (say in full¹¹⁷)... three phases and twelve modes process wheel¹¹⁸. Through this he has been able among gods, men, demons, rulers, recluses and priests, all beings in the world, to bring about great benefit and has caused companions in the Holy Life to quickly reach the place of peace, isolation [from] and extinction [of defilements]. Humans and gods increase and prosper [while] demons decrease and diminish. Therefore that Yaksha told: the sky gods, the Four Great Kings. Hearing they all came to know.

In this way in a moment it was relayed across the six realms. In a moment, a tick, a second, [it reached] up to the gods [and] all heard the sound. Having heard, the gods repeated all everywhere what had been said... (say in full as before).

[Item 9 – Naming the Discourse]

Therefore the name of this discourse is the three-phased process wheel. When the mendicants and the eighty ¹¹⁹ [thousand] gods heard what the Awakened One said, they all left happily.

[Closure]

The Awakened One taught the three-phased process wheel discourse.

the gods.

¹¹⁷ It is not clear what to say in full.

¹¹⁸ “Process Wheel” is not in the Buddha’s words. So it is a little unclear what is to be said in full. Not even “Process Vision” is in his words according to this version. It is the latter I suggest elsewhere, that was later taken as the former.

¹¹⁹ I suggest a misprint, I read ba1 = eight, instead of ren2 = people and add wan4 = 10,000 to match up with what went before.

Translation¹²⁰ of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C4)

[So have I heard:

Once the Fortunate One dwelt at Baaraa.nasii at The Place the Sages Drop In, in the Deer Feeding Forest. At that time the World Honoured One told the five mendicants¹²¹.]¹²²

[Item 1 – The Middle Path]

Mendicants [those] who have left the family [should] not go near the two extremes [of] addiction to sensual indulgence or self-mortification, [which] is not virtuous and noble, tiring body and mind [and] not beneficial.

Mendicants, in addition to these two extremes¹²³ there is the middle way, [which] makes clear vision, clear knowledge, higher peace, super knowledge, complete realisation, the realisation of extinguishment¹²⁴. What is it that [I] call the middle way, [which] makes clear vision, clear knowledge, higher peace, super knowledge, complete realisation, the realisation of extinguishment? This Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right thought¹²⁵, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right remembrance, right concentration. This is called the middle way, [which] makes clear vision, clear knowledge, higher peace, super knowledge, complete realisation, the realisation of extinguishment¹²⁶.

[Items 3 and 4 – The 4NT Definitions and The Twelve Aspects]

There are four noble truths. What are they that are called the noble truths? Stress is a noble truth, the arising of stress is a noble truth, the ceasing of stress is a noble truth and the exit from stress is a noble truth.

¹²⁰ Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was [since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian] and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

¹²¹ Bi3qiu1/bhiksu or mendicant is considered to be a general term here, not a Buddhist specific term.

¹²² This, the common opening for discourses is not present in the Discipline-Vinaya version/s. The latter is a chronological narrative. The setting and audience as indicated here are established earlier on in the story.

¹²³ The text has 'yi3' a participle indicating the past here, which I omit.

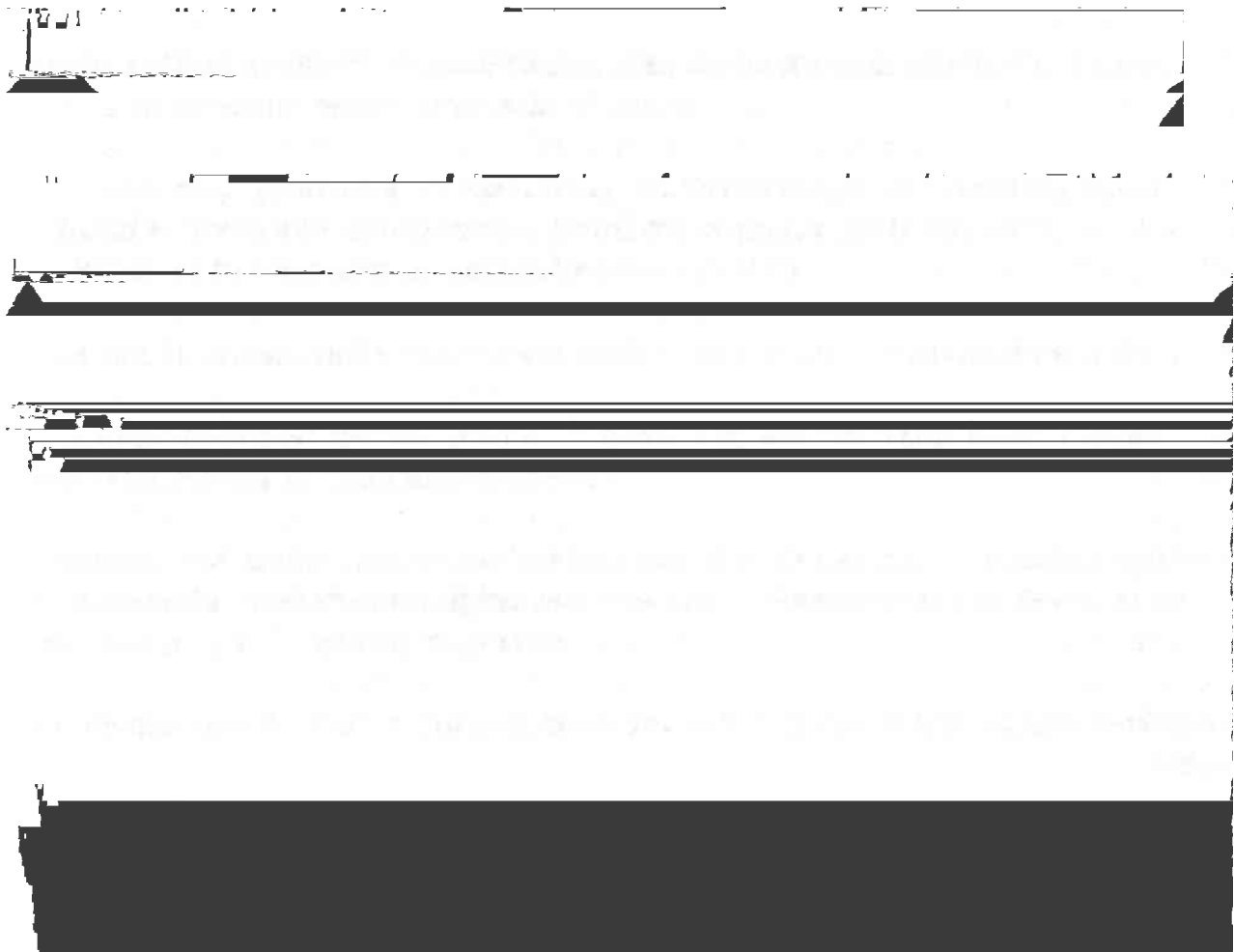
¹²⁴ The texts has "sha1 men2 nie4 pan2", I just read it as nie4 pan2 = Nibbaana.

¹²⁵ Through out the text has 'ye4' usually meaning 'work' or 'action' in the second position, but I substitute 'thought' in line with the Paali.

¹²⁶ The first two occurrences of this list of benefits are identical. This third occurrence varies with a couple of words. Instead of "de2 deng3 jue2, cheng2" there is "deng3 zheng4 jue2, cheng2", not a major difference.

What is called the noble truth of stress? Birth is stress, ageing is stress, sickness is stress, death is stress, associating with the disliked¹²⁷ is stress, being separate from the liked is stress, not getting what one wants is stress, that is to say, in summary, the five aggregates of fuel are stress. That is what is called the noble truth of stress.

Moreover, [this] noble truth of stress ought to be known and I have known this [and] the eightfold path ought to be practised: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right remembrance, right concentration.



¹²⁷ Reading seng1 僧, meaning a Buddhist mendicant/monk/priest, as zeng1 憎, meaning hatred, as is usually found in other texts on this topic.

¹²⁸ The Chinese has “yuan2 ai4 ben3 suo3 sheng1” (cause desire before which birth) for the Paali “yaayam. ta.nhaa ponobbhavikaa” (that desire related to again becoming). This seems to confuse: ben3 = before = pubbe in Paali, for puna/pono = again, and bhava = becoming for sheng1 = birth. So it has ben3 (suo3) sheng1 = before-birth (with suo3=which inserted) instead of fu4 you3 = re-becoming. I follow the Paali here.

¹²⁹ There is no mention of taking delight there and there, or of the three kinds of desire (kaama ta.nhaa, bhava ta.nhaa, and vibhava ta.nhaa), as in the Paali.

¹³⁰ The four characters I translate as non-attachment (wu2 you3 chao2 ku1) seem to be a mechanical translation of anaalayo by splitting an- from aalaya, which would mean “no resting place”. “chao2 ku1” means den or lair and the first of these two characters may be without a tree radical.

[Item 4 – The Twelve Aspects]

This noble truth of **stress**, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom¹³¹. Moreover, **one ought to know this**. The noble truth of stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **I have known [this]**. The noble truth of stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. This is called the noble truth of stress.

This noble truth of the **arising of stress**, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **one ought to cut this off**. The noble truth of the arising of stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **I have cut this off**. The noble truth of the arising of stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. This is called the noble truth of the arising of stress.

This noble truth of **the ceasing of stress**¹³², a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **one ought to realise this**. The noble truth of the ceasing of stress¹³³, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **I have realised this**. The noble truth of the ceasing of stress¹³⁴, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. [This is called the noble truth of the ceasing of stress.]

¹³¹ The text has de2 zheng4, which I omit as it is omitted in all the following occurrences of the list in the text and since it takes the number of items to seven, unlike the other versions of this discourse. The first section of this discourse, dealing with the middle path, has one list of benefits, but this section, dealing with the Four Noble Truths has another, suggesting that they may have been separate discourses. This is how the two lists compare:

Yan3 ming2	Zhi4 ming2	Yong3 ji4 xiu1 xi2	Shen2 tong1	Deng3 jue2	Sha1 men2 nie4 pan2
Zhi4	Yan3	Jue2	Ming2	Tong1	Hui4

This noble truth of **the exit from stress**, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **one ought to practise [this]**. The noble truth of the exit from stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, **I have practised this**. The noble truth of the exit from stress, a process not heard of before, gives rise to: knowledge, vision, realisation, understanding, super knowledge and wisdom. [This is called the noble truth of the exit from stress.]

These are called the four noble truths.

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

If I had not practised these four noble truths in three phases and twelve modes¹³⁵ as they really are, then I would not know [and] I [would not] now have realised the unsurpassed completely right path¹³⁶. But now I know these four noble truths in three phases and twelve modes as they really, [so] I now have realised the unsurpassed completely right path. Therefore [I have] no hesitation¹³⁷.

The One-Thus-Come said these four noble truths. Among sentient beings there were no awake ones¹³⁸, so the One-Thus-Come would not turn the Process-wheel for them by teaching the four noble truths. If the One-Thus-Come said the four noble truths and in the crowd there were awake ones, therefore the One-Thus-Come would then turn the Process-wheel for them. [The wheel] which recluses, priests, maaras, yaamas, gods and even those people in the world cannot turn [back]. Therefore diligent effort should be made to practise the four noble truths. The noble truth of stress, noble truth of the arising of stress, noble truth of the ceasing of stress and noble truth of the exit from stress ought to be practised like this.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

Then when the World Honoured One spoke about this process, [of the] five mendicants, all the dust and dirt of Venerable Knowing¹³⁹ Ko.n.dannyya was

¹³⁵ The three phases and twelve modes are sequenced as in the Paali, but are partly duplicated in the definitions earlier on. It would make more sense to me to have the definition of each truth in the position of the first phase rather than just the name of each truth.

¹³⁶ It seems strange to have “path-dao4-magga” here and just below, instead of “awakening-jue2-bodhi”, which is what we find below.

¹³⁷ Or “Then [I have] undoubtedly stopped.”

¹³⁸ This seems to be referring to the time when the Awakened One was considering not teaching because he thought there would be no one who would understand the subtlety of his teaching, but then he considered that there were people with “little dust in their eyes” in the world rather than the curious “no awake ones” as it is here. This part of the story is not in this discourse in the Paali, but just after his awakening at Bod-Gaya, before the trip to see the five monks he is now talking to.

¹³⁹ The text has a transcription for Annyya here and below.

eliminated. The Process-eye arose¹⁴⁰.

[Item 7 – The Renaming]

Then the World Honoured One understood what had been attained in the mind of Knowing Ko.n.dannyya. He therefore used these words to praise [him] saying, “Knowing Ko.n.dannyya has understood, Knowing Ko.n.dannyya has understood.” From this time forward he was called Knowing Ko.n.dannyya.

[Item 8 – The God’s Proclamation]

When the earth gods heard what the One-Thus-Come said, then they immediately passed it on. “Now the One-Thus-Come has reached complete and right awakening. In Baaraa.nasii, the Sages [Drop in Place], the Deer Park, he has turned the unsurpassed Process-wheel, which has not been turned before and cannot be turned [back] by recluses, priests, maaras, yaamas, gods, including people.” The earth gods proclaimed it and on hearing, the Four Great¹⁴¹ King gods, the 33 gods, the yaamas, the delightful gods, the gods delighting in others’ creations, the gods delighting in their own creations, proclaimed it one to the other passing it on, saying: “Now the One-Thus-Come has reached complete and right awakening. In Baaraa.nasii, the Sages [Drop in Place], the Deer Park, he has turned the unsurpassed Process-wheel, which has not been turned before and which cannot be turned [back] by recluses, priests, maaras, yaamas, gods, including people.” Then in the time of one thought, in an instant, in a second they passed on the proclamation that penetrated to the Brahmaa World.

[Item 10 – The Process-Eye]

Then Venerable Knowing Ko.n.dannyya saw the process, realised the process, realised all processes and realised the real fruit.

¹⁴⁰ There are two verbs in this sentence, de2=receive and sheng1=arose. I omit the first in line with the Paali.

¹⁴¹ Reading da4 for tian1.

Translation¹⁴² of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C5)

[So have I heard:

Once the Fortunate One dwelt at Baaraa.nasii at The Place the Sages Drop In, in the Deer Feeding Forest. At that time the World Honoured One told the five mendicants^{143:]}¹⁴⁴

[Item 1 – The Middle Path]

The Awakened One addressed them again saying: in the world there are two ends [that one] should not go near. The one is desirously grasping pleasant sensation in sensuality¹⁴⁵ [which is] fruitless¹⁴⁶. The second is the wicked view [that] the stressed body is not the way. Giving up these two ends, thereupon realising the Middle Way, there arose vision, knowledge, understanding and realisation in the direction of extinguishment¹⁴⁷.

What is the Middle Way? That which is called the eightfold [way]¹⁴⁸: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. That is the Middle Way.

[Item 3 and 4 – The 4NT Definitions and The Twelve Aspects]

Moreover, there are four noble truths. Stress is a noble truth, the arising of stress is a noble truth, the ceasing of stress is a noble truth and the path of the ceasing of stress is a noble truth.

What is called the noble truth of stress? That which is called birth, is stress, ageing, is stress, sickness, is stress, death, is stress, grief, lamentation and despair is stress, associating with the disliked is stress, being separate from

¹⁴² Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was [since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian] and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

¹⁴³ Bi3 qiu1/bhiksu or mendicant is considered to be a general term here, not a Buddhist specific term.

¹⁴⁴ This, the common opening for discourses is not present in the Discipline-Vinaya version/s. The latter is a chronological narrative. The setting and audience as indicated here are established earlier on in the story.

¹⁴⁵ I read “ai4 yuu4 yue4 (悅) yuu4” for the text’s “ai4 yuu4 shuo1 (說) yuu4” and the former would be the

¹⁴⁶ The text has “wu2 guo4 (過)”, but I read “wu2 guo3 (果)” as the translation of “anattasam.hito”.

¹⁴⁷ The text gives a transcription of Nibbaana (Ni2 huan2).

¹⁴⁸ The text says the eight rights (ba1 zheng4).

What is called the noble truth of the arising of stress? That which is called having the desire to reach all birth¹⁴⁹ and the trouble of clinging to pleasure there and there. That is called the noble truth of the arising of stress¹⁵⁰.

What is called the noble truth of the ending of stress? That which is called the desireless, remainderless, cessation, ending, extinguishment¹⁵¹. That is called the noble truth of the ending of stress.

What is the noble truth of the path of ceasing stress? That which is called eightfold right path. That is called the noble truth of the path of ceasing stress.

I had not heard this process before. Vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, realisation arose, super knowledge arose and wisdom arose.

This process ought to be known. I had not heard this process before. Vision arose, etc., wisdom arose.

This process has been known. I had not heard [this process] before. Vision arose, etc., wisdom arose.

[Item 4 – The Twelve Aspects]

This is the noble truth of stress. This noble truth of stress ought to be known
This noble truth of stress has been known. I had not heard [this process] before. Vision arose, etc., wisdom arose.

This is the noble truth of the cause of stress. This noble truth of the cause of stress ought to be cut off. This noble truth of the cause of stress has been cut off. I had not heard [this process] before. Vision arose, etc., wisdom arose.

¹⁴⁹ The text has "you3 ai4 ji2 ju4 sheng1". "You3 ai4" could be read as a translation of "bhava ta.nhaa". The other Chinese version has "yuan2 ai4 ben3 suo3 sheng1" (cause desire before which birth/arises/produce) that I translated as "desire associated with passionate relishing" for the Paali "yaayam. ta.nhaa ponobbhavikaa" (that desire related to again becoming). This seems to confuse: ben3 = before = pubbe in Paali, for puna/pono = again, and bhava = becoming for sheng1 = birth. So it has ben3 (suo3) sheng1 = before-birth (with suo3=which inserted) instead of fu4 you3 = re-becoming. I follow the Paali here.

¹⁵⁰ There is no mention of the other two kinds of desire (kaama ta.nhaa and vibhava ta.nhaa), as in the Paali.

¹⁵¹ The text gives a transcription of Nibbaana (Ni2 huan2).

wisdom arose.

This is the noble truth of the path of the ceasing of stress. This noble truth of the path of the ceasing of stress ought to be practised. This noble truth of the path of the ceasing of stress has been practised. I had not heard [this process] before. Vision arose, etc., wisdom arose.

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

When I knew, as they really are, thrice revolved, twelve fold Process-wheel, I realised unsurpassed complete enlightenment.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

When this process was taught: the earth shook in six directions and Ko.n.dannyya, regarding all processes of the middle [way], attained the pure eye of the process far from dust and separated from dirt¹⁵².

The Awakened One asked Ko.n.dannyya, “Are you liberated or not?” “Are you liberated or not?” and Ko.n.dannyya replied saying, “I am liberated, World Honoured One.”

[Item 8 – The God’s Proclamation]

Having heard, the earth spirits told the sky spirits, the sky spirits told the Four Great King gods¹⁵³, the Four Great King gods told the gods of the Thirty-three¹⁵⁴; in this way [it] unrolled and rolled on reaching the Brahma gods; saying “now in Baaraa.nasii the Awakened One turns the unsurpassed Process-wheel that has not been turned before whether by recluses, priests, maaras or Brahma. [That is,] all those in the world that never turned it”; all the gods were happy and sent down every kind of flower and all [over] there was a bright light like stars falling to the earth; in the sky played skilful¹⁵⁵ heavenly music.

With this Ko.n.dannyya, from sitting [paid] the utmost respect to the Awakened One’s feet. Explaining to the Awakened One he said, “World

¹⁵² “Far from dust and separated from dirt” is placed after Ko.n.dannyya as an adjective of him, but I read it as in the Paali.

¹⁵³ The text has “si4 tian1 (天) wang2 tian1” I read “si4 da4 (大) wang2 tian1. The editor of the Taisho also identifies these four characters as “caatumahaaraajikaa devaa”.

¹⁵⁴ The text has a transcription “dao1 li4” here and the Taisho editor identifies these gods as “Tusitaa devaa”. I disagree and identify the transcription as that of “Taavatim.saa devaa”. This is not only closer in pronunciation, but agrees with the list of gods found in the Paali.

¹⁵⁵ Skilful = ji4 is usually with a side hand radical (伎) rather than a side man radical (伎) as in the text.

Honoured One, ¹⁵⁶
full ordination¹⁵⁷

full ordination. In my well taught, Process and Discipline one can end all stress and purely practise the Holy Life.” Ko.n.dannyya’s beard and head hair were self dropped¹⁵⁸. The (Buddhist mendicant’s) robes wrapped around his body and the (Buddhist mendicant’s) earthenware bowl was in his hand. This was Ko.n.dannyya’s receiving the going forth and full ordination.

[Item 7b – The Renaming]

After this [his] name was Knowing¹⁵⁹ Ko.n.dannyya.

¹⁵⁶ Literally “going out of home/family” (chu1 jia1).

¹⁵⁷ Literally “enough siila” (ju4 zu2 jie4).

¹⁵⁸ This could mean “fell off by themselves” or “he cut them off himself”.

¹⁵⁹ The text has a transcription of Annyya.

Translation¹⁶⁰ of Dhammacakka-sutta from the Chinese (C6)

[The Preamble]

So have I heard:

Once the Fortunate One dwelt in Baaraa.nasii at The Place the Sages Drop In, in the Deer Feeding Forest. At that time the World Honoured One told the mendicants¹⁶¹:

[Item 1 – The Middle Path]

There are two activities [that] a disciple should not be intimate with. What are the two activities? That is to say: clinging to desire to reach pleasurable processes; this is a base, common and low process; on the other hand are these stresses, many despairs and many extremes. These are called two activities a disciple should not be intimate with. In this way, having given up these two activities, I myself have attained the essential path and realised Right Enlightenment. Vision and knowledge arose, I realised understanding and rest, attained all super knowledge and the fruit of recluse-ship leading to extinguishment¹⁶².

What is called attaining the essential path and realising Right Enlightenment? Vision and knowledge arising, realising understanding and rest, attaining all super knowledge and the fruit of recluse-ship leading to extinguishment? That which is called the worthy noble eightfold path. That is to say: Right View, Right Thought¹⁶³, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Memory and Right Concentration. That is the essential path [which] caused me to attain and realise Right Enlightenment. Vision and knowledge arising, realising understanding and rest, attaining all super knowledge and the fruit of recluse-ship leading to extinguishment. Thus mendicants you ought to study and reject the above two activities and practise the essential path. Thus mendicants ought to do this study.

[Closure]

¹⁶⁰ Rather than an absolute literal translation, the principle of considering what the original Indian word was [since it is said these Chinese discourses were translated from the Indian] and translating with its meaning in mind is being followed here. The original Chinese text did not have punctuation so the use of it in translation is a matter of opinion. Later versions of the texts, including the one used here, have added punctuation.

¹⁶¹ Bi3 qiu1/bhiksu or mendicant is considered to be a general term here, not a Buddhist specific term. The text does not say there were five mendicants.

¹⁶² The text gives a transcription of Nibbaana (Ni2 pan4) here and below.

¹⁶³ The text has "zhi4" meaning to direct, to control, to study.

At that time the mendicants heard what the Awakened One said and they happily went to practise.

Translated And Edited Version Of The Paali “Dhammacakka-Pavattana-Sutta” (P1)

(Based on S v 420-425 and applying the findings in the above study.)

[The Preamble]

I have heard this:

Once the Fortunate One lived in the Deer Park at the Place the Sages Drop In at Baaraa.nasii. There the Fortunate One addresses the five mendicants:

[Item 1 – The Middle Path]

Mendicants, these two extremes should not be followed by one gone forth: engaging in clinging to pleasant sensation in sensuality, [which] is low, village-like, common, ignoble and not associated with profit; and engaging in self-tiring, [which] is stressful, ignoble and not associated with profit.

Mendicants, not having gone to these two extremes, the middle path has been realised by the One-Thus-Come¹⁶⁴ [which] causes vision, calm, knowledge¹⁶⁵, leads to penetration, complete knowledge and extinguishment. And what is that middle path [which] causes vision, calm, knowledge, wisdom, insight and realisation? Truly it is this Noble Eightfold Path, it is: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration¹⁶⁶. Mendicants, truly this is that middle path [wh¹⁶⁷ insight and realisation¹⁶⁷.

[Item 3 and 4 – The 4NT Definitions and The Twelve Aspects]

1.1¹⁶⁸ Mendicants, “This is the noble truth of¹⁶⁹ stress: birth is stress, ageing

¹⁶⁴ Reading “Thus-Come” according to the Chinese.

¹⁶⁵ The order of calm and knowledge is reversed here and below in accordance with some Chinese versions.

¹⁶⁶ For an in depth look at the traditional presentation of the Four Noble Truths (the Noble Eightfold Path being the fourth) please see my book soon to be published called “Investigating the Buddha’s teaching from the early texts.”

¹⁶⁷ The definitions of the Four Noble Truths come next in the text separate from the first phase, but I have placed them in the first phase, which would seem to be the more logical position.

¹⁶⁸ I follow the order of the Chinese, Sanskrit and Tibetan, as is also found in other places in the Paali e.g. M iii 289-290 = MN 149.

¹⁶⁹ The text has “the noble truth of” for each of the Twelve Aspects, but I put it in only the first phase, the definition of the truths, because it makes more sense. To have it in the second phase causes problems as K R Norman points out in his article “The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Paali Syntax” in LA Hercus, FBK Kuiper, T Rajapatirana, ER Skrzypczak, *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Faculty of Asian Studies Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

is stress, sickness is stress, death is stress, to be joined with the unloved is stress, to be separated from the loved is stress, not getting what one wants is stress, in summary, the five aggregates of clinging are stress.” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

2.1 Mendicants, “This is the noble truth of the source of stress: the addiction which is related to rebecoming, associated with passionate relishing and taking delight there and there¹⁷⁰. That is, addiction to sensuality, addiction to becoming, addiction to non-becoming.” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

3.1 Mendicants, “This is the noble truth of ending of stress: the remainderless, desireless, cessation of, abandonment of, relinquishment of, freedom from and non-attachment to that very addiction.” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

4.1 Mendicants, “This is the noble truth of the path to the ending of stress: truly it is this Noble Eightfold Path, that is, Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

1.2 Indeed again, mendicants, “This stress **ought to be understood.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

2.2 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the source of stress **ought to be eradicated.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

3.2 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the ending of stress **ought to be realised.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

4.2 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the path to the ending of stress **ought to be practised.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

Canberra, Australia 1982.

¹⁷⁰ I have stuck to the text here and translated literally rather than put “here and there” which sounds better, but I think misses the point of the “grass is always greener on the other side” syndrome that I think is alluded to here.

1.3 Indeed again, mendicants, “This stress **has been understood.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

2.3 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the source of stress **has been eradicated.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

3.3 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the ending of stress **has been realised.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

4.3 Indeed again, mendicants, “This the path to the ending of stress **has been practised.**” Through [this] previously unheard process there arose vision, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and light for me.

[Item 5 – The Declaration]

Mendicants, so long as my insight and vision in the three phases and twelve aspects of these Four Noble Truths as they really are, was not completely clear, then indeed for so long I did not admit there was an incomparable-fully-rightly-awakened person in the world with its gods, demons, rulers, recluses, priests, with its rulers and peoples. But mendicants, when my insight and vision in the three phases and twelve aspects of these Four Noble Truths as they really are, was completely clear, then indeed did I proclaim there was an incomparable-fully-rightly-awakened person in the world with its gods, demons, rulers, recluses, priests, with its rulers and people. And then the knowledgable insight arose to me: “Unshakable is the liberation of my mind, this is the last birth, there is none of this rebecoming.

The Fortunate One said this. The five mendicants understood what the Fortunate one said and were overjoyed.

[Item 6 – The Process-Eye]

Even while this was being explained the stainless and pure Vision Of The Process arose to Elder Ko.n.dannyya: “Whatever is of a nature to arise, all that is of a nature to cease.”¹⁷¹

[Item 7 – The Renaming]

And the Fortunate One exclaimed “Indeed, the Good Ko.n.dannyya has understood. Indeed, the Good Ko.n.dannyya has understood.” That is how

¹⁷¹ The story of the gods is omitted.
Study of the Dhammacakka-sutta Copyright by Norman Joseph Smith, 2001

the Elder Ko.n.dannyya was named “Knowing Ko.n.dannyya”.