

**Selections from the
Buddha's Discourses**
*A Concise Compilation of Excerpts
from the Pāli Canon*



**Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu
Edited by Stephen D'Arcy**



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**Selections from the Buddha's Discourses:
A Concise Compilation of Excerpts
from the Pāli Canon**

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Translations from Pali

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Introduction

This compilation of excerpts from the Pali Canon has been produced for the use of philosophy students in the first or second year of their undergraduate studies. In principle, reading *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses* should require no particular background knowledge, expertise, or experience with Buddhism of any kind. However, the texts are in some ways difficult to read and there are important pieces of background information that may be useful to readers. So this Introduction has been prepared as a supplement, which may help you achieve more quickly and more completely a good understanding of the selections themselves.

Feel free to skip this Introduction and go straight to the selections from the Buddha's discourses, if you so wish.

(a) What is the Pāli Canon?

The Buddha's discourses were delivered orally, memorized by Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis (monks and nuns), transmitted for centuries by oral tradition, and then finally transcribed in the Pali language around 100BCE, approximately 400 years after the Buddha's death. Together, these discourses, along with some other "canonical" commentaries and other early Buddhists texts compiled with the discourses, comprise the Pali Canon, the scriptural basis for Buddhism. (For details about the Pali Canon, visit the web site: <www.accesstoinsight.org>.)

The Buddha's discourses survive in a form that shows two notable characteristics. On the one hand, we find the routine use of mnemonic devices or memorization aids, such as repetition, numbered lists, and standardized formulas – all of which suggest that the practicalities involved in the process of oral transmission affected the content of the discourses to *some* extent, so that what survives must not quite

be a verbatim transcription. On the other hand, we also find a remarkable degree of conceptual, thematic and narrative unity, strongly suggesting that the ideas, and a great deal of the wording, originates from a single source, a single "author," as one would now say: the Buddha himself.

So, it seems appropriate to view the surviving Pali discourses as an authentic record, albeit not a strictly verbatim one, of the teachings of Siddhattha Gotama, the historical Buddha

As such their importance would be hard to overestimate. The impact of Siddhattha Gotama (560-480BCE), the Buddha, on human culture has been, and continues to be, enormous. Born in what is now known as Nepal, his ideas dramatically transformed the philosophical and religious thinking of much of Asia.

For us, today, it is perhaps just as important to see that what the Buddha tries to say still speaks to the predicament of modern humanity in a uniquely challenging way. The "possessive individualism" that serves as the fundamental framework in terms of which we are encouraged to think about our hopes and aspirations and our place in the world is anticipated and subjected to ruthless critical analysis by the Buddha. In essence, he argues that something we tend to regard as obvious – that if we get more of what we want, and less of what we don't want, our lives will get better – is not only an inadequate basis for leading a satisfying life; it is, on the contrary, the most basic cause of human suffering and disappointment. In place of this doomed strategy, based on craving, the Buddha proposes a kind of radical reversal, a *revolution* (that is, to borrow an expression from the Pali discourses, a "turning of the wheel"): we can find happiness not by singling out something that we don't have, and then seeking to get one's hands on it, but instead by cultivating a stance of radical acceptance of what is. Acceptance, here, does not mean embracing or endorsing what is. He does not by any means advocate just going along with the way things

are and not challenging or trying to change anything. Instead, acceptance means a clear-eyed willingness to witness the reality of what is going on: to see the suffering and say, *there is suffering*. Acceptance, as the Buddha understands it, is not a form of resignation, nor is it an affirmation of the status quo; it is a lucid, fearlessly honest witnessing of reality, wedded to a selflessly compassionate willingness to act “skillfully” to liberate all beings from suffering.

The Pali discourses, as the literary repository of this remarkable intellectual and practical undertaking, are a true treasure of human culture.

And yet, to the modern student, the Pali Canon is relatively inaccessible. It is not that good translations into modern languages are not available. They are (see Suggestions for Further Reading, at the end of this document, for references to English translations). But these translations present us with thousands of pages of dense material, much of it extremely repetitive, often obscure, and exhibiting a theoretical sophistication and complexity that really demands careful study over the course of many years. In short, it is too demanding for most students.

What is needed is a way to bring the Pali Canon closer to students, presenting the *main* ideas, *concisely* stated, and *clearly* arranged. *Selections from the Buddha’s Discourses*, as a systematically organized compilation of brief excerpts from the Pali Canon, attempts to fulfill that purpose.

(b) The translations

The translations from which the excerpts in *Selections from the Buddha’s Discourses* are drawn were the work of Thanissaro Bhikkhu, the Abbot of the Metta Forest Monastery. Ajahn Thanissaro is author of *Mind Like a Fire Unbound* and *Noble Strategy*, and editor of a four-volume collection of the Buddha’s discourses, under the title, *A Handful of Leaves*. His translations are distributed free of charge, notably on the excellent web site to which I referred

above: <www.accesstoinsight.org>.

It is worth pointing out a few of the expressions that are translated in distinctive ways by Ven. Thanissaro.

First, “*dukkha*,” usually translated as “suffering,” is here rendered as *stress*.

Second, “*Nibbana*,” which many English translators render as the untranslated Sanskrit equivalent, “*Nirvana*,” is rendered by Thanissaro as *Unbinding*, a translation that receives elaborate justification in *Mind Like a Fire Unbound*.

Third, “*kamma*” remains untranslated. Its Sanskrit equivalent, *karma*, is more familiar, and a literal English equivalent would be *action*. Thanissaro leaves it as *kamma*, and that is probably for the best. Rendering it as *karma* would encourage the equation of the Buddha’s notion with the Hindu notion of karma, which is arguably more familiar to most people than the Buddha’s conception of *kamma*. But rendering *kamma* as “action” would make it difficult to grasp some of the term’s connotations: *kamma* is *intentional* action, which “ripens” or “comes to fruition” in a series of *results*.

(c) The selections

The choice of which excerpts to include was governed by the need to find easily understood, relatively straightforward expositions of key Buddhist concepts, such as mindfulness, absorption [*jhana*], not-self, *kamma*, and so on.

Another consideration has been brevity. The Pali Canon goes on for several thousands of pages, and much of it is repetitive and wordy. So, passages that “got to the point” quickly were chosen, as much as possible.

The choices in many cases overlap with other, similar anthologies, especially *Word of the Buddha*, edited by Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka, and available from the Buddhist Publication Society in Sri Lanka. But this selection was designed to give special emphasis to ethical issues. “Cosmological” aspects of the Buddha’s thought are omitted almost entirely, in favor of “existential” aspects. For example,

I omit many aspects of the “kamma” doctrine; passages encouraging a literal interpretation of “rebirth”; all reference to multiple “worlds”; and most references to “devas” (heavenly beings), “heavenly” or “hell” realms, etc.

(d) An overview of the Buddha’s ethics

In spite of the effort made here to present the Buddha’s ideas, in his own words, in an accessible format, a rough outline of the overall vision of the Buddha may help students more easily grasp the meaning of these ideas.

I therefore wish to summarize the main points of the Buddha’s ethics, which are encapsulated in the “four noble truths.”

The Buddha was born a prince, firstborn son to a local monarch in present-day Nepal. In fact, he was born with most of the things that most people believe will lead to happiness. He was powerful; he was wealthy; he was regarded as physically attractive; he was healthy; he had a spouse and children; and he lived a life of uncommon leisure, luxury and indulgence.

The Buddha was born into a life where all these things were available to him in abundance. And yet he renounced them all: his money, his power, his luxury, his expensive clothes, his family, even his name. He became instead, quite literally, a *homeless* person, a wandering beggar, pursuing spiritual insight through ascetic discipline and mental cultivation (or what we would call meditation).

Now, it is usually held that the things he renounced are precisely the things that lead to happiness. If one has power, wealth, beauty, health, a romantic relationship, a family, leisure, and luxury, one is supposed to be happy. This is the first claim he denies in the four noble truths, his most fundamental framework for articulating his insights into the good life.

The *first noble truth* is, simply, “suffering.” The truth of suffering. One cannot escape suffering by gaining

wealth, by gaining power, by gaining health, and so on. The rich may be well-entertained, or widely flattered, or elaborately pampered by servants and subordinates. But, according to the Buddha, they are not at peace. They, too, suffer. (If this is basically false, then the Buddha is clearly barking up the wrong tree.) And the same holds for the powerful, the beautiful, the healthy, the loved, and so on. They, too, suffer.

This brings us to the *second noble truth*: the cause or origin of suffering.

Ironically perhaps, the cause of suffering is *craving*. In fact, it is craving for just the sorts of things that the Buddha renounced. One suffers not because one lacks power, but because one craves power: an affliction that affects those who have power at least as much as those who lack it. Similarly, one suffers not because one lacks money, or a romantic relationship, or beauty, or luxury, but because one craves these things, regardless of whether one has them. Having these things is no protection against craving them. So, according to the second noble truth, *getting* what one wants is not ultimately satisfying.

Now, I mentioned that the Buddha renounced his life of luxury and privilege. His first alternative to that life was a kind of complete reversal: rejecting the life of self-indulgence, he embraced instead a life of self-mortification, radical self-denial. According to the discourses he ate only a small amount of soup each day (see below, pp. 14-15), and nearly starved himself to death.

But what he discovered – and here it is only too easy to accept his point, since at this point he confirms our prejudices – was that self-denial was no more a path to the end of suffering than self-indulgence.

Nevertheless, there *is*, he claims, a path leading to the end of suffering: a path *between* self-indulgence and self-denial.

That there is such a possibility constitutes the *third*

noble truth: the truth of the cessation of suffering. His claim is that this is possible: that a complete cessation of suffering is possible. Obviously, one would always experience pain, as when one falls and breaks one's leg, and so on (see pp. 23). But, according to the Buddha, pain is only a cause of suffering if one craves a pain-free existence: it is not pain that makes us suffer, but attachment to the idea that one should not be in pain. Insight into the cause of suffering thus suggests that it might be possible to cease to do the things that generate that suffering: the cessation of suffering, *Nibbana*.

But if neither self-indulgence nor self-denial lead to the cessation of suffering, how *does* one get there?

The *fourth noble truth* spells out the Buddha's answer, which is given in the form of what he calls an "eightfold path," that is, a strategy for self-improvement with eight elements, incorporating (1) the *cultivation of insight and wisdom*, (2) *moral virtue*, and (3) *mental discipline* (meditation). (In the translations below, these are called "discernment," "virtue," and "concentration.")

Before I list the elements of the eightfold path, I want to make explicit some of the structural features of the Buddha's doctrine.

First, note that the central notion in the Buddha's philosophical perspective is that of *cause and effect*. Again and again, he analyses things in terms of cause and effect. For instance, the famous concept of *kamma* (in Sanskrit, *karma*) is all about cause and effect: a good cause produces a good effect, a bad cause produces a bad effect.

This is exactly how the four noble truths work: a good cause (the eightfold path) produces a good result (the cessation of suffering, or *Nibbana*); a bad cause (craving) produces a bad effect (suffering). It could not be more simple. And yet, he was convinced that the doctrine was so radical, that it represented such a challenge to our most basic assumptions about what we should do if we want to be happy, that few people would be willing to accept this idea.

Second, I want to emphasize that the notion of craving is really an abbreviation for a more complex notion: the three "kilesas," or "defilements," that is, mental impurities. There are three of these: greed, hatred and ignorance. They are also known as attachment, aversion (although it would be better to say "avoidance"), and delusion.

The *cognitive defilement* of delusion is more basic than the *emotive defilements* of attachment and avoidance, in the sense that the latter two are rooted in, and made possible by an inability or unwillingness to see things as they really are. (On this see Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Eightfold Path* [BPS].)

To be attached to something is not just to want it; it is to *rely* on it for one's welfare. In the jargon of the Buddhist religion, something that one relies on is called a refuge. Attachment is seeking refuge *in* something; avoidance is seeking refuge *from* something. Both are based on the delusion that the things we are attached to or avoidant towards are *reliable*, either in the affirmative sense that one can rely on them being there for you when you want them, or in the negative sense that you can rely on them *not* being there when you don't want them.

If you are avoidant towards sickness, you are seeking refuge from sickness, which is to say that you are counting on or relying on not getting sick. But you *cannot* rely on that, since health is unreliable. Pinning your hopes on that is seeking refuge from something that we cannot count on avoiding.

What is the nature of the delusion here? It is failing or refusing to see the inconstancy of "conditioned" realities. (In this context, "conditioned" means they come or go depending on circumstances; the "unconditioned" peace of *Nibbana* does not depend in this way on conditions.)

Inconstancy means both impermanence and unreliability, and suggests that what it describes is bound to disappoint. To the Buddha *all* conditioned things are inconstant, unreliable and unsatisfactory. Attachment and

avoidance are founded upon a blindness to this reality.

So, craving (attachment, avoidance, and delusion) will not lead to the cessation of suffering, but to its multiplication. The path must lead in another direction.

Let's look, then, at the Buddha's path to "Nibbana" [or, in Sanskrit, *Nirvana*]: *the eightfold path*.

As I mentioned above, the eight "factors" or elements fall into three groups. First, there are the factors of the path relating to *discernment*:

1. Right View: understanding the four noble truths.
2. Right Resolve: the commitment to cultivate renunciation, good will and harmlessness.

Second, there are the factors relating to *virtue*:

3. Right Speech: speech that is not false, malicious, harsh, or frivolous.
4. Right Action: not killing, stealing, or engaging in sexual misconduct.
5. Right Livelihood: a non-harming way of earning a living.

Third, there are the factors relating to *concentration*:

6. Right Effort: persistent attempt to encourage skillful traits, and discard unskillful traits.
7. Right Mindfulness: continual awareness of one's body, one's feelings, one's mind, and one's mental formations, "in and of themselves."
8. Right Concentration: the jhanas (absorptions), which are states of deep, "one-pointed" concentration.

Of course, these call for considerable commentary and elucidation, some of which is found in the discourses excerpted below. But I will not pursue that here.

It will suffice to say that, whether one ultimately agrees with him or not, it is difficult to deny that the Buddha's discourses offer us a lucidly articulated, profoundly sophisticated challenge to "commonsense" views about the good life. As such, they deserve to play a prominent role in

any student's attempts to come to terms with the philosophical questions posed by the human condition, especially the question that Socrates regarded as the most fundamental: how should we live?

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Typographical Note:

Words attributed to the Buddha are indicated by double quotation marks ("..."); words attributed to others are indicated by single quotation marks ('...'). Passages not in quotation marks are narrational in character (such as the following: *A certain monk went to his preceptor...*).

Note on books of the Pali Canon excerpted here:

All selections in this compilation are taken from the Nikayas of the Pali Canon, that is, the discourse collections. (The Pali Canon has three parts: the *Nikayas*, the *Vinaya*, which compiles the disciplinary rules for monks and nuns, and the *Abhidhamma*, or "Higher Dhamma," which consists of psychological and philosophical commentaries composed after the Buddha's death.) The sources for the selections are indicated in square brackets at the end of each passage, including a name of the collection and a number identifying the discourse, as follows: [Digha Nikaya, 15]. Of the five Nikayas, four are identified by the collection's name: the Digha Nikaya (*Long Discourses*), the Majjhima Nikaya (*Middle-Length Discourses*), the Samyutta Nikaya (*Connected Discourses*), and the Anguttara Nikaya (*Further-Factored Discourses*). The fifth collection, the Khuddaka Nikaya (*Little Texts*), is omitted in favour of the name of the more specific "little text": for instance, Udana, Dhammapada, Itivuttaka, Sutta Nipata, Theragatha, Therigatha, and so on.

Chapter One: The Buddha's Life

(a) Luxury and disenchantment

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

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

“Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: ‘When an untaught, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to aging, not beyond aging, sees another who is aged, he is horrified, humiliated, and disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to aging, not beyond aging. [Likewise when such a person sees someone who is ill, or someone who is dead.] If I – who am subject to aging [and illness and death], not beyond aging [or illness or death] – were to be horrified, humiliated, and disgusted on seeing another person who is aged [or ill or dead], that would not be fitting for me.’ As I noticed this, the [typical] young person's intoxication with youth entirely

dropped away. [So too did the healthy person's intoxication with health, and the living person's intoxication with life.]”

[Anguttara Nikaya, III, 39]

(b) Renunciation and going forth

“Before my Awakening, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta, the thought occurred to me: ‘The household life is crowded, a dusty road. Life gone forth is the open air. It isn't easy, living in a home, to lead the holy life that is totally perfect, totally pure, a polished shell. What if I, having shaved off my hair and beard and putting on the ochre robe, were to go forth from the home life into homelessness?’

“So at a later time, when I was still young, black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life, having shaved off my hair and beard – though my parents wished otherwise and were grieving with tears on their faces – I put on the ochre robe and went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 36]

On going forth, he avoided evil deeds in body. Abandoning verbal misconduct, he purified his livelihood. Then he, the Buddha, went to Rajagaha, the mountain fortress of the Magadhans, and wandered for alms, endowed with all the foremost marks.

[Sutta Nipata, III, 1]

“Having gone forth in search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I went to Alara Kalama and, on arrival, said to him: ‘Friend Kalama, I want to practice in this doctrine and discipline.’

“When this was said, he replied to me, ‘You may stay here, my friend. This doctrine is such that a wise person can soon enter and dwell in his own teacher's knowledge, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge.’

“It was not long before I learned the doctrine....

“I went to him and said, ‘Friend Kalama, is this the extent to which you have entered and dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge?’

[Alara Kalama replied] ‘Yes, my friend...As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come friend, let us now lead this community together.’

“In this way did Alara Kalama, my teacher, place me, his pupil, on the same level with himself and pay me great honor. But the thought occurred to me, ‘This Dhamma leads not to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to Awakening, nor to Unbinding (*nibbana*), but only to reappearance in the dimension of nothingness.’ So, dissatisfied with that Dhamma, I left.”

[The Buddha then recounts a similar story about his relationship with his second teacher, Uddaka Ramaputta].

[Majjhima Nikaya, 36]

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

“I thought: ‘Suppose I were to take only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup.’ So I took only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time.... My body became extremely emaciated. Simply from my eating so little, my limbs became

like the jointed segments of vine stems or bamboo stems.... My backside became like a camel’s hoof.... My spine stood out like a string of beads.... My ribs jutted out like the jutting rafters of an old, run-down barn.... The gleam of my eyes appeared to be sunk deep in my eye sockets like the gleam of water deep in a well..., simply from eating so little.

“I thought: ‘Whatever priests or contemplatives in the past have felt painful, racking, piercing feeling due to their striving, this is the utmost. None have been greater than this.... But with this racking practice of austerities I haven’t attained any superior human state, any distinction in knowledge or vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to Awakening?’”

[....]

“I thought: ‘I recall once, when my father the Sakyan was working, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, then – quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful mental qualities – I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Could that be the path to Awakening?’ Then, following on that memory, came the realization: ‘That is the path to Awakening.’ I thought: ‘I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities, but it is not easy to achieve that pleasure with a body so extremely emaciated. Suppose I were to take some solid food: some rice & porridge.’ So I took some solid food....Now five monks had been attending on me, thinking, ‘If Gotama, our contemplative, achieves some higher state, he will tell us.’ But when they saw me taking some solid food – some rice & porridge – they were disgusted and left me, thinking, ‘Gotama the contemplative is living luxuriously. He has abandoned his exertion and is backsliding into abundance.’

“So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then – quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn

from unskillful mental qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal....”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 36]

(c) Awakening

“When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability..., I discerned, as it was actually present, that ‘This is stress....This is the origination of stress....This is the cessation of stress....This is the way leading to the cessation of stress....’ With release, there was the knowledge, ‘Released.’ I discerned that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 36]

“Through the round of many births I roamed without reward, without rest, seeking the house-builder. Painful is birth again & again. House-builder, you’re seen! You will not build a house again. All your rafters broken, the ridge pole destroyed, gone to the Unformed, the mind has come to the end of craving.”

[Dhammapada, 153-4]

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly Self-awakened, he was staying at Uruvela.... Then, while he was alone and in seclusion, this line of thinking arose in his awareness: “One suffers if dwelling without reverence or deference. Now on what priest or contemplative can I dwell in dependence, honoring and respecting him?”

Then the thought occurred to him: “It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of virtue that I would dwell in dependence on another priest or contemplative, honoring and respecting him. However..., in this generation with its priests and contemplatives, its royalty

and common-folk, I do not see another priest or contemplative more consummate in virtue than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring and respecting him....

“What if I were to dwell in dependence on this very Dhamma to which I have fully awakened, honoring and respecting it?”

[Sutta Nipata, VI, 2]

(d) Teaching career

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly Self-awakened, he was staying at Uruvela.... Then, while he was alone and in seclusion, this line of thinking arose in his awareness: “This Dhamma that I have attained is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, peaceful, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in attachment, is excited by attachment, enjoys attachment. For a generation delighting in attachment, excited by attachment, enjoying attachment, this/that conditionality and dependent co-arising are hard to see. This state, too, is hard to see: the resolution of all fabrications, the relinquishment of all acquisitions, the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; Unbinding. And if I were to teach the Dhamma and if others would not understand me, that would be tiresome for me, troublesome for me.”

Just then these verses...occurred to the Blessed One: “Enough now with teaching what only with difficulty I reached. This Dhamma is not easily realized by those overcome with aversion & passion. What is abstruse, subtle, deep, hard to see, going against the flow – those delighting in passion, cloaked in the mass of darkness, won’t see.”

[...]

Then the Blessed One...out of compassion for beings, surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and those with much..., those easy to teach and those hard....

Then Brahma Sahampati, thinking, ‘The Blessed One

has given his consent to teach of Dhamma,' bowed down to the Blessed One and, circling him on the right, disappeared right there.

[Samyutta Nikaya, VI, 1]

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was living among the Magadhans at Dakkhinagiri in the brahman village of Ekanala. Now at that time approximately 500 of the brahman Kasi Bharadvaja's plows were yoked at the sowing time. Then, in the early morning, putting on his lower robe and taking his bowl & robes, the Blessed One went to where Kasi Bharadvaja was working.

Now at that time Kasi Bharadvaja's food-distribution was underway. so the Blessed One went to Kasi Bharadvaja's food-distribution and, on arrival, stood to one side. Kasi Bharadvaja saw the Blessed One standing for alms, and on seeing him, said to him, 'I, contemplative, plow & sow. Having plowed & sown, I eat. You, too, contemplative, should plow & sow. Having plowed & sown, you (will) eat.'

"I, too, brahman, plow & sow. Having plowed & sown, I eat."

'But, contemplative, I don't see the Master Gotama's yoke or plow, plowshare, goad, or oxen, and yet the Master Gotama says this: "I, too, brahman, plow & sow. Having plowed & sown, I eat."'

Then the Kasi Bharadvaja addressed the Blessed One with a verse:

'You claim to be a plowman,
but I don't see your plowing.
Being asked, tell us about your plowing
so that we may know your plowing.'

[The Buddha replied:]

"Conviction is my seed, austerity my rain,
discernment my yoke & plow, conscience my pole, mind my
yoke-tie, mindfulness my plowshare & goad. Guarded in body,
guarded in speech, restrained in terms of belly & food, I make

truth a weeding-hook, and composure my unyoking.

Persistence, my beast of burden, bearing me toward rest from the yoke, takes me, without turning back, to where, having gone, one doesn't grieve. That's how my plowing is plowed. It has as its fruit the deathless. Having plowed this plowing one is unyoked from all suffering & stress."

Then Kasi Bharadvaja, having heaped up milk-rice in a large bronze serving bowl, offered it to the Blessed One, [saying,] 'May Master Gotama eat [this] milk-rice. The master is a plowman, for the Master Gotama plows the plowing that has as its fruit the deathless.'

[Sutta Nipata, I, 4]

[A monk said:] 'In a lowly family I was born, poor, with next to no food. My work was degrading: I gathered the spoiled, the withered flowers from shrines and threw them away. People found me disgusting, despised me, disparaged me....

'Then I saw the One Self-awakened, arrayed with a squadron of monks..., entering the city....

'Throwing down my carrying pole, I approached him to do reverence. He – the supreme man – stood still out of sympathy just for me. After paying homage to the feet of the teacher, I stood to one side & requested the Going Forth from him.... The compassionate Teacher, sympathetic to all the world, said: "Come, monk." That was my formal Acceptance.

'Alone, I stayed in the wilds, untiring, I followed the Teacher's words, just as he, the Conquerer, had taught me....

'Then [after practicing for some time]..., Indra & the Brahma came to pay homage to me, hands palm-to-palm at their hearts: 'Homage to you, O man supreme.... You, dear sir, are worthy of offerings'.'

[Theragatha, XII.2]

**(e) Reluctant founding of the Order of Nuns
(Bhikkhuni Sangha)**

Now at that time, the Awakened One, the Blessed One, was staying near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Grove. Then Mahapajapati Gotami went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, stood to one side. As she was standing there, she said to him: ‘It would be good, lord, if a woman might obtain the Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

“Enough, Gotami. Don’t advocate a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.”

A second time ... A third time she said to him: ‘It would be good, lord, if a woman might obtain the Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

“Enough, Gotami. Don’t advocate a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.”

So Mahapajapati Gotami, (thinking,) ‘The Blessed One does not allow a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline’ – sad and unhappy, crying, her face in tears – bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, keeping him to her right, and then went away.

The Blessed One, having stayed as long as he liked in Kapilavatthu, set out for Vesali. After wandering in stages, he arrived at Vesali. There he stayed near Vesali at the Gabled Hall in the Great Wood.

Then Mahapajapati Gotami, having had her hair cut off, having donned ochre robes, set out for Vesali together with a large number of Sakyan women. After wandering in stages, she arrived at Vesali and went to the Gabled Hall in the Great Wood. Then she stood there outside the porch, her feet swollen, her limbs covered with dust, sad and unhappy, crying, her face in tears. Ven. Ananda saw her standing there

... and so asked her, ‘Why, Gotami, why are you standing here ... your face in tears?’

‘Because, sir, the Blessed One does not allow a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

‘In that case, Gotami, stay right here for a moment while I ask the Blessed One to allow a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

Then Ven. Ananda went to where the Blessed One was staying and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: ‘Mahapajapati Gotami, lord, is standing outside the porch ... her face in tears, because the Blessed One does not allow a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline. It would be good if a woman might obtain the Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

“Enough, Ananda. Don’t advocate a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.”

A second time... A third time, Ven. Ananda said, ‘It would be good, lord, if a woman might obtain the Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

“Enough, Ananda. Don’t advocate a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.”

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Ananda, ‘The Blessed One does not allow a woman’s Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline. What if I were to find some other way to ask the Blessed One to allow a woman’s Going-forth ...’ So he said to the Blessed One, ‘Lord, if a woman were to go forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline, would she be able to realize the fruit of stream-

entry, once-returning, non-returning, or arahantship?’

“Yes, Ananda, she would...”

‘In that case, lord, Mahapajapati Gotami has been of great service to the Blessed One. She was the Blessed One’s aunt, foster mother, nurse, giver of milk. When the Blessed One’s mother passed away, she gave him milk. It would be good if a woman might obtain the Going-forth from the home life into homelessness in the Tathagata’s doctrine and discipline.’

“Ananda, if Mahapajapati Gotami accepts eight vows of respect, that will be her full ordination (upasampada).”

[The Buddha then lists eight rules to be followed by nuns, but not monks – a list that could be fairly described as symbolically establishing for them a secondary status in the Sangha. – S.D.]

[Cullavagga X.1]¹

(f) Death and Parinibbana

“Now I am frail, Ananda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ananda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathagata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ananda, only when the Tathagata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the signless concentration of mind, that his body is more comfortable.

“Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the

Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge.”

[Digha Nikaya, 16]

And soon after the Blessed One had eaten the meal provided by Cunda the metalworker, a dire sickness fell upon him, even dysentery, and he suffered sharp and deadly pains. But the Blessed One endured them mindfully, clearly comprehending and unperturbed.

[Digha Nikaya, 16]

Then the blessed One addressed the monks, “Now, then, monks, I exhort you: All fabrications are subject to decay. Bring about completion by being heedful.” Those were the Tathagata’s last words.

[...]

Emerging from the first jhana he entered the second..., the third..., the fourth jhana. Emerging from the fourth jhana, he immediately was totally Unbound.

[Digha Nikaya, 16]

¹This text is the only one in the present compilation that is not from any of the Nikayas (discourse collections). It is from Cullavagga, one of the Vinaya collections of disciplinary rules and norms applying to monks and nuns.

Chapter Two:

The Problem of Suffering, Its Origin and Cessation

(a) Stress [*Dukkha*]

Sariputta: ‘Now what, friends, is the noble truth of stress? Birth is stress, aging is stress, death is stress; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stress; not getting what is wanted is stress. In short, the five aggregates for sustenance are stress.

‘Now what is *birth*? Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of [sense] media of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.

‘And what is *aging*? Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging.

‘And what is *death*? Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death.

‘And what is *sorrow*? Whatever sorrow, sorrowing, sadness, inward sorrow, inward sadness of anyone suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called sorrow.

‘And what is *lamentation*? Whatever crying, grieving, lamenting, weeping, wailing, lamentation of anyone

suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called lamentation.

‘And what is *pain*? Whatever is experienced as bodily pain, bodily discomfort, pain or discomfort born of bodily contact, that is called pain.

‘And what is *distress*? Whatever is experienced as mental pain, mental discomfort, pain or discomfort born of mental contact, that is called distress.

‘And what is *despair*? Whatever despair, despondency, desperation of anyone suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called despair.

‘And what is the stress of not getting what one wants? In beings subject to birth, the wish arises, ‘O, may we not be subject to birth, and may birth not come to us.’ But this is not to be achieved by wishing. This is the stress of not getting what one wants. In beings subject to aging..., illness..., sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, the wish arises, ‘O, may we not be subject to aging..., illness..., sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, and may aging..., illness..., sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair not come to us.’ But this is not to be achieved by wishing. This is the stress of not getting what one wants.

‘And what are the five aggregates for sustenance that, in short, are stress? Form as an aggregate for sustenance, feeling as an aggregate for sustenance, perception..., fabrication, consciousness as an aggregate for sustenance: These are called the five aggregates for sustenance that, in short, are stress.

‘This is called the noble truth of stress.’

[Majjhima Nikaya, 141]

Once the Blessed One was staying at Kosambi in the Simsapa tree grove. Then, picking up a few Simsapa leaves

with his hand, he asked the monks, “How do you construe this, monks: Which are more numerous, the few Simsapa leaves in my hand or those overhead in the Simsapa grove?”

[The monks replied:] ‘The leaves in the hand of the Blessed One are few in number, lord. Those overhead in the grove are far more numerous.’

[The Buddha:] “In the same way, monks, those things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught]. And why haven’t I taught them? Because they are not connected with the goal, do not relate to the rudiments of the holy life, and do not lead to disenchantment], to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding. That is why I have not taught them.

“And what have I taught? ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.’ This is what I have taught. And why have I taught these things? Because they are connected with the goal, relate to the rudiments of the holy life, and lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding. This is why I have taught them.”

[Samyutta Nikaya LVI, 31]

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly Awakened..., he sat in the shade of the Bodhi tree for seven days in one session, sensitive to the bliss of release. At the end of seven days, after emerging from that concentration, he surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw living beings burning with the many fevers and aflame with the many fires born of passion, aversion, & delusion. Then, on realizing the significance of that, he on that occasion exclaimed:

“This world is burning. Afflicted by contact, it calls disease a ‘self.’ By whatever it construes [things], that is always otherwise. Becoming otherwise, the world is held by becoming, afflicted by becoming, and yet delights in that very becoming. Where there’s delight, there is fear. What one fears is stressful. This holy life is lived for the abandoning of becoming.

“Whatever priests or contemplatives say that liberation from becoming is by means of becoming, all of them are not released from becoming, I say.

“And whatever priests or contemplatives say that escape from becoming is by means of non-becoming, all of them have not escaped from becoming, I say.

“This stress comes into play in dependence on acquisitions. With the ending of all clinging/sustenance, there is no stress coming into play.

“Look at this world: Beings, afflicted with thick ignorance, are unreleased from delight in what has come to be. All levels of becoming, anywhere, in any way, are inconstant, stressful, subject to change. Seeing this – as it actually is present – with right discernment, one abandons craving for becoming, without delighting in non-becoming. From the total ending of craving comes fading & cessation without remainder: Unbinding.

“For the monk unbound, from lack of clinging/sustenance, there is no further becoming. He has vanquished Mara, won the battle. Having gone beyond all levels of being, he’s Such.

[Udana, III, 10]

(b) Craving

“Now what is the noble truth of the origination of

stress? The craving that makes for further becoming – accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there – i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

“And where does this craving, when arising, arise? And where, when dwelling, does it dwell? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“And what is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“The ear... The nose.... The tongue.... The body.... The intellect.... Forms.... Sounds.... Smells.... Tastes.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas.... [Each of these is] endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

[...]

“This is called the noble truth of the origination of stress.”

[Digha Nikaya, 22]

“If its root remains undamaged & strong, a tree, even if cut, will grow back. So too if latent craving is not rooted out, this suffering returns again & again.”

[Dhammapada, 338]

“Overcome by two viewpoints, some human & divine beings adhere, other human & divine beings slip right past, while those with vision see.

“And how do some adhere? Human & divine beings delight in becoming, enjoy becoming, are satisfied with becoming. When the Dhamma is being taught for the sake of the cessation of becoming their minds do not take to it, are not calmed by it, do not settle on it, or become resolved on it. This is how some adhere.

“And how do some slip right past? Some, feeling horrified, humiliated, & disgusted with that very becoming, delight in non-becoming: ‘When this self, at the break-up of the body, after death, perishes & is destroyed, and does not exist after death, that is peaceful, that is exquisite, that is sufficiency! This is how some slip right past.

“And how do those with vision see? There is the case where a monk sees being as being. Seeing being as being, he practices for disenchantment with being, dispassion toward being, cessation of being. This is how those with vision see....

“One who, having seen what has come to be as what has come to be, has gone beyond being, and is released in line with things as they are, through the exhaustion of craving for becoming. The monks who have comprehended being – free from the craving to go from becoming to becoming; with the non-becoming of what has come to be – come to no further becoming.”

[Itivuttaka 49]

(c) Attachment, Avoidance and Delusion

“The All is aflame. Which All is aflame? The eye is aflame. Forms are aflame. Eye-consciousness is aflame. Eye-contact is aflame. And anything that arises in dependence on eye-contact, experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain, that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion,

the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging, & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

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

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

“The tongue is aflame. Flavors are aflame....

“The intellect is aflame. Ideas are aflame.... Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging, & death, with sorrows, lamentations, distresses, & despairs.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XXV, 28]

“What do you think, Kalamas? When greed arises in a person, does it arise for welfare or for harm?”

‘For harm, lord.’

“And this greedy person, overcome by greed, his mind possessed by greed: Doesn’t he kill living beings, take what is not given, go after another person’s wife, tell lies, and induce others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term harm & suffering?”

‘Yes, lord.’

(Similarly for aversion and delusion)

“So what do you think, Kalamas: Are these qualities [of greed, aversion and delusion] skillful or unskillful?”

‘Unskillful, lord.’

“Blameworthy or blameless?”

‘Blameworthy, lord.’

“Criticized by the wise or praised by the wise?”

‘Criticized by the wise, lord.’

“When undertaken & carried out, do they lead to harm & to suffering, or not?”

‘When undertaken & carried out, they lead to harm & to suffering....’

[Anguttara Nikaya, III, 65]

This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant, so I have heard: "Abandon one quality, monks, and I guarantee you non-return. Which one quality? Abandon greed as the one quality, and I guarantee you non-return." This is the meaning of what the Blessed One said. So with regard to this it was said:

The greed with which beings go to a bad destination, coveting: from rightly discerning that greed, those who see clearly let go. Letting go, they never come to this world again. This, too, was the meaning of what was said by the Blessed One, so I have heard.

This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant, so I have heard: "Abandon one quality, monks, and I guarantee you non-return. Which one quality? Abandon aversion as the one quality, and I guarantee you non-return."

The aversion with which beings go to a bad destination, upset: from rightly discerning that aversion, those who see clearly let go. Letting go, they never come to this world again.

This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant, so I have heard: "Abandon one quality, monks, and I guarantee you non-return. Which one quality? Abandon delusion as the one quality, and I guarantee you non-return."

The delusion with which beings go to a bad destination, confused: from rightly discerning that delusion, those who see clearly let go. Letting go, they never come to

this world again.

[Itivuttaka, I, 1-3]

(d) Dependent Co-arising

I have heard that on one occasion ... the Blessed One ... gave close attention to dependent co-arising in forward and reverse order, thus:

“When this is, that is.

“From the arising of this comes the arising of that.

“When this isn’t, that isn’t.

“From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.”

In other words:

“From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

“From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.

“From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-and-form.

“From name-and-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.

“From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.

“From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.

“From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

“From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.

“From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition

comes becoming.

“From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.

“From birth as a requisite condition, then old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair come into play.

“Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress and suffering.

“Now from the remainderless fading and cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications.

“From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness.

“From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-and-form.

“From the cessation of name-and-form comes the cessation of the six sense media.

“From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact.

“From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling.

“From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving.

“From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance.

“From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming.

“From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth.

“From the cessation of birth, then old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair all cease.

“Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress and suffering.”

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

“As phenomena grow clear to the brahman – ardent, absorbed – he stands, routing the troops of Mara, like the sun that illumines the sky.”

[Udana, I, 3]

(e) Not-self

“For a monk perceiving inconstancy, the perception of not-self is made firm. One perceiving not-self attains the uprooting of the conceit, ‘I am’ – Unbinding [*nibbana*] in the here & now.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, IX, 1]

“People are intent on the idea of ‘made by me’ and attached to the idea of ‘made by another.’ Some do not realize this, nor do they see it as a thorn. But to one who sees, having extracted this thorn, [the thought] ‘I am doing,’ doesn’t occur; ‘Another is doing,’ doesn’t occur.

“This human race is possessed by conceit, bound by conceit, tied down by conceit. Speaking hurtfully because of their views, they do not go beyond transmigration.”

[Udana, VI, 6]

Having taken a seat to one side, Vacchagotta the wanderer said to the Master, ‘Now then, Venerable Gotama, is there a self?’ When this was said, the Master was silent.

‘Then is there no self?’ For a second time the Master was silent.

Then Vacchagotta the wanderer got up from his seat and left.

Then, not long after Vacchagotta the wanderer had left, the Venerable Ananda said to the Master, ‘Why, sir, did the Master not answer when asked a question by Vacchagotta the wanderer?’

“Ananda, if I, being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self, were to answer that there is a self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of eternalism [i.e., the view that there is an eternal soul]. And if I ... were to answer that there is no self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of annihilationism (i.e., the view that death is the annihilation of experience). If I ... were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?”

‘No, Lord.’

“And if I ... were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered Vacchagotta would become even more bewildered: ‘Does the self which I used to have, now not exist?’”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLIV, 10]

[Mogharaja:] ‘In what way does one view the world so that the King of Death does not see one?’

[The Buddha:] “Having removed any view in terms of self, always mindful, Mogharaja, view the world as void. This way one is above & beyond death. This is the way one views the world so that the King of Death does not see one.”

[Sutta Nipata, V, 16]

“Monks, suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it, and – holding on to both banks – kasa grasses, kusa grasses, reeds, birana grasses, & trees were growing. Then a man swept away by the current would grab hold of the kasa grasses, but they would tear away, and so from that cause he would come to disaster. He would grab hold of the kusa grasses... the reeds... the birana grasses... the trees, but they would tear away, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“In the same way, there is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person – who has no regard for noble ones is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma – assumes form (the body) to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form. That form tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes feeling to be the self, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling. That feeling tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception. That perception tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes (mental) fabrications to be the self, or the self as possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications. Those fabrications tear away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. That consciousness tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“What do you think, monks – Is form constant or inconstant?”

‘Inconstant, lord.’

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

‘Stressful, lord.’

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

‘No, lord.’

[....]

“Thus, monks, any body whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every body is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

[Likewise for feelings, perceptions, fabrications, and consciousness.]

“Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the body, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is fully released. With full release, there is the knowledge, ‘Fully released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

[Samyutta Nikaya XXII.93]

“There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person ... does not discern what ideas are fit for attention, or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does

not attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas unfit for attention. And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? [...] This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past...? Shall I be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future...?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’

“As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self*...or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self*...or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self*...or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine – the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions – is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity*. This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from stress.

“The well-taught noble disciple ... discerns what ideas are fit for attention....He attends appropriately, *This is stress, This is the origination of stress...This is the cessation of stress...This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.*”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 2]

(f) The Arahant and the Nibbana Ideal

“This is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing factor between the well-instructed disciple of

the noble ones and the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person.

“Gain/loss, status/disgrace, censure/praise, pleasure/pain: These conditions among human beings are inconstant, impermanent, subject to change. Knowing this, the wise person, mindful, ponders these changing conditions.

“Desirable things don't charm the mind, undesirable ones bring no resistance. His welcoming & rebelling are scattered, gone to their end, do not exist.

“Knowing the dustless, sorrowless state, he discerns rightly, has gone, beyond becoming, to the Further Shore.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, VIII, 6]

“Having renounced All, he is said to be at peace; having clearly known, he is an attainer-of-wisdom; knowing the Dhamma, he's independent. Moving rightly through the world, he doesn't envy anyone here.

“Whoever here has gone over & beyond sensual passions – an attachment hard to transcend in the world, doesn't sorrow, doesn't fret. He, his stream cut, is free from bonds.

“Burn up what's before, and have nothing for after. If you don't grasp at what's in between, you will go about, calm.

“For whom, in name & form, in every way, there's no sense of mine, and who doesn't grieve over what is not: he, in the world, isn't defeated, suffers no loss.

“To whom there doesn't occur ‘This is mine,’ for whom nothing is others’, feeling no sense of mine-ness, doesn't grieve at the thought ‘I have nothing.’

“Not harsh, not greedy, not perturbed, everywhere in tune: this is the reward – I say when asked – for those who are free from preconceptions.

“For one unperturbed – who knows – there's no accumulating. Abstaining, unaroused, he everywhere sees security. The sage doesn't speak of himself as among those who are higher, equal, or lower. At peace, free of selfishness, he doesn't embrace, doesn't reject,” the Blessed One said.

[Sutta Nipata, IV, 15]

A certain monk went to his preceptor and on arrival said to him, ‘My body, sir, now feels like it's drugged. I've lost my bearings. Things are unclear to me. Sloth & drowsiness surround my mind at all times. I am unhappy in leading the holy life. I have doubts about mental qualities (or: things – *dhammas*).’

Then the preceptor, taking his student, went to see the Buddha (and told him what his student had said. The Buddha replied:)

“That's the way it is for a person who does not guard the doors to his sense faculties, who does not know moderation in eating, who is not devoted to wakefulness, who does not clearly understand skillful qualities, and who is not devoted day after day to the development of the wings to awakening Thus you should train yourself, monk: ‘I will guard my senses, will know moderation in eating, will devote myself to wakefulness, will clearly understand skillful qualities, and will devote myself day after day to the development of the wings of awakening.’ That's how you should train yourself.’

Then the monk, having received this instruction from the Blessed One, got up from his seat, bowed down, circled the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, and then went away. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached [Unbinding] & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the

sake of this world.’ And thus he became another one of the Arahants.’

[Anguttara Nikaya, V, 56]

Ven. Ananda: ‘Whenever a monk or nun declares the attainment of Arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of four paths. Which four?’

‘There is the case where a monk has developed insight preceded by tranquility. As he develops insight preceded by tranquility, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it – his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies abolished.

‘Furthermore, there is the case where a monk has developed tranquility preceded by insight. As he develops tranquility preceded by insight, the path is born. He follows that path His fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies abolished.

‘Furthermore, there is the case where monk has developed tranquility & insight in concert. As he develops tranquility & insight in concert, the path is born. He follows that path His fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies abolished.

‘Furthermore, there is the case where a monk has developed tranquility & insight in concert. As he develops tranquility & insight in concert, the path is born. He follows that path His fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies abolished.

‘Furthermore, there is the case where a monk's mind has its restlessness concerning the Dhamma well under control. There comes a time when his mind grows steady inwardly, settles down, and becomes unified & concentrated. In him, the path is born. He follows that path His fetters

are abandoned, his latent tendencies abolished.

‘Whenever a monk or nun declares the attainment of Arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of these four paths.’

[Anguttara Nikaya, IV, 170]

“Suppose that a man, in the course of traveling along a path, were to come to a great expanse of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the further shore secure & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the other. The thought would occur to him, ‘Here is this great expanse of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the further shore secure & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the other. What if I were to gather grass, twigs, branches, & leaves and, having bound them together to make a raft, were to cross over to safety on the other shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with my hands & feet?’ Then the man, having gathered grass, twigs, branches, & leaves, having bound them together to make a raft, would cross over to safety on the other shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with his hands & feet. Having crossed over to the further shore, he might think, ‘How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the further shore. Why don't I, having hoisted it on my head or carrying on my back, go wherever I like?’ What do you think, monks: would the man, in doing that, be doing what should be done with the raft?”

‘No, lord.’

“And what should the man do in order to be doing what should be done with the raft? There is the case where the man, having crossed over, would think, ‘How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that,

making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the further shore. Why don't I, having dragged it on dry land or sinking it in the water, go wherever I like?’ In doing this, he would be doing what should be done with the raft. Even so monks, I have taught you the Dhamma like a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Knowing the Dhamma to be like a raft, you should let go even of [skillful] qualities, to say nothing of those that are not.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 22]

“The great expanse of water stands for the fourfold flood: the flood of sensuality, the flood of becoming, the flood of views, & the flood of ignorance. The near shore, dubious & risky, stands for self-identity. The further shore, secure and free from risk, stands for Unbinding. The raft stands for just this noble eightfold path: right view... right concentration. Making an effort with hands & feet stands for the arousing of persistence.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XXXV.197]

Chapter Three:

The Eightfold Path

(a) The Middle Way: The Fourth Noble Truth

“It is just as if a man, traveling along a wilderness track, were to see an ancient path, an ancient road, traveled by people of former times. He would follow it. Following it, he would see an ancient city, an ancient capital inhabited by people of former times, complete with parks, groves, & ponds, walled, delightful. He would go to address the king or the king’s minister, saying, ‘Sire, you should know that while traveling along a wilderness track I saw an ancient path I followed it I saw an ancient city, an ancient capital ... complete with parks, groves, & ponds, walled, delightful. Sire, rebuild that city!’ The king or king’s minister would rebuild the city, so that at a later date the city would become powerful, rich, & well-populated, fully grown & prosperous.

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

knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of consciousness. I followed that path.

“Following it, I came to direct knowledge of fabrications, direct knowledge of the origination of fabrications, direct knowledge of the cessation of fabrications, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of fabrications. Knowing that directly, I have revealed it to monks, nuns, male lay followers, & female lay followers, so that this holy life has become powerful, rich, detailed, well-populated, widespread, proclaimed among the celestial & human beings.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XII, 65]

“Monks, just as a pot without a stand is easy to tip over, and a pot with a stand is hard to tip over, so too the mind without a stand is easy to tip over, and a mind with a stand is hard to tip over. And what is the mind’s stand? Just this noble eightfold path.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 27]

Visakha: ‘Is the noble eightfold path compounded or un-compounded?’

Sister Dhammadinna: ‘The noble eightfold path is compounded The noble eightfold path is included under the three aggregates [namely, virtue, concentration, & discernment]. Right speech, right action, & right livelihood come under the aggregate of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration come under the aggregate of concentration. Right view & right resolve come under the aggregate of discernment.’

[Majjhima Nikaya, 44]

(b) The Eight Factors of the Path

i. Right View

“And what is right view? Knowledge with regard to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called right view.”

[Digha Nikaya, 22]

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Varanasi in the Game Refuge at Isipatana. There he addressed the group of five monks:

“There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathagata [lit. ‘the one thus gone,’ i.e., the Buddha – producing vision, producing knowledge – leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.

“And what is the middle way realized by the Tathagata that – producing vision, producing knowledge – leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding? Precisely this Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the middle way realized by the Tathagata that – producing vision, producing knowledge – leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.

“Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress:[1] Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow,

lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of stress: the craving that makes for further becoming – accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there – i.e., craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of stress: the remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path – right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This is the noble truth of stress’... ‘This noble truth of stress is to be comprehended’... ‘This noble truth of stress has been comprehended.’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This is the noble truth of the origination of stress’... ‘This noble truth of the origination of stress is to be abandoned’ [2] ... ‘This noble truth of the origination of stress has been abandoned.’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of stress’... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress is to be directly experienced’... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress has been directly experienced.’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress’... ‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress is to be developed’... ‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress has been developed.’

“And, monks, as long as this knowledge & vision of mine [...] was not pure, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos [...] But as soon as this knowledge & vision of mine – with its three rounds & twelve permutations concerning these four noble truths as they actually are present – was truly pure, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos....

“Knowledge & vision arose in me: ‘Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.’”

[...]

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the group of five monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, there arose to Ven. Kondañña the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.

[...]

Then the Blessed One exclaimed: “So you really know, Kondañña? So you really know?” And that is how Ven. Kondañña acquired the name Añña-Kondañña – Kondañña who knows.

[Samyutta Nikaya, LVI, 11]

“There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person... does not discern what ideas are fit for

attention, or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends instead to ideas unfit for attention... This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’

“As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view I have a self arises in him as true & established, or the view I have no self ... or the view It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self ... or the view It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self ... or the view It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: This very self of mine – the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions – is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity. This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

“The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones... discerns what ideas are fit for attention, and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas fit for attention... He attends appropriately, This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress. As he attends

appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at precepts & practices.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 2]

[Kaccayana:] ‘Lord, ‘Right view, right view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right view?’

[The Buddha:] “By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, ‘existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one.

“By & large, Kaccayana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings (sustenances), & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on ‘my self.’ He has no uncertainty or doubt that, when there is arising, only stress is arising; and that when there is passing away, only stress is passing away. In this, one's knowledge is independent of others. It is to this extent, Kaccayana, that there is right view.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XII.15]

“Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are unskillful; these qualities are blameworthy; these qualities are criticized by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering’ – then you should abandon them...”

“When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness’ – then you should enter & remain in them.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, III, 65]

ii. Right Resolve

“And what is right resolve? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill-will, on harmlessness: This is called right resolve.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“Of two people who practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, having a sense of Dhamma, having a sense of meaning – one who practices for both his own benefit and that of others, and one who practices for his own benefit but not that of others – the one who practices for his own benefit but not that of others is to be criticized for that reason, the one who practices for both his own benefit and that of others is, for that reason, to be praised.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, VII, 64]

“Whenever you want to perform a bodily act, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily act I want to perform – would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily act, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily act with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily act of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would

not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then any bodily act of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a bodily act, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily act I am doing – is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily act, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to affliction of others, or both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a bodily act, you should reflect on it... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily act with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed and joyful, training day and night in skillful mental qualities.”

...[Similarly for verbal and mental acts]...

“Therefore, Rahula, you should train yourself: ‘I will purify my bodily acts through repeated reflection. I will purify my verbal acts through repeated reflection. I will purify my mental acts through repeated reflection.’ That is how you should train yourself.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 61]

iii. Right Speech

“And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, & from idle

chatter: This is called right speech.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“Monks, a statement endowed with five factors is well-spoken, not ill-spoken. It is blameless & unfaulted by knowledgeable people. Which five?

“It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of good-will.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, V, 198]

iv. Right Action

“And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from unchastity. This is called right action.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“Having thus gone forth, following the training & way of life of the monks, abandoning the taking of life, he abstains from the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, kind, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. Abandoning uncelibacy, he lives a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager's way.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, X, 99]

v. Right Livelihood

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

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“A lay follower should not engage in five types of business. Which five? Business in weapons, business in living beings, business in meat, business in intoxicants, and business in poison.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, V, 177]

vi. Right Effort

“And what, monks, is right effort?”

[i] “There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen.

[ii] “He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the abandonment of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen.

[iii] “He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen.

[iv] “He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This, monks, is called right effort.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“Abandon what is unskillful, monks. It is possible to abandon what is unskillful. If it were not possible to abandon what is unskillful, I would not say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' But because it is possible to abandon what is unskillful, I say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' If this abandoning of what is unskillful were conducive to harm and pain, I would not say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' But because this abandoning of what is unskillful is conducive to benefit and pleasure, I say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.'

“Develop what is skillful, monks. It is possible to develop what is skillful. If it were not possible to develop what is skillful, I would not say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' But because it is possible to develop what is skillful, I say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' If this development of what is skillful were conducive to harm and pain, I would not say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' But because this development of what is skillful is conducive to benefit and pleasure, I say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.’”

[Anguttara Nikaya, II, 19]

vii. Right Mindfulness

“And what is right mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself – ardent, alert, & mindful – putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves – ardent, alert, & mindful – putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called right mindfulness...”

“This is the direct path for the purification of beings,

for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of Unbinding – in other words, the four frames of reference.”

[Digha Nikaya, 22]

1. Mindfulness in General

“Stay mindful, monks, and alert. This is our instruction to you all. And how is a monk mindful? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself – ardent, alert, & mindful – putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings ... mind ... mental qualities in & of themselves – ardent, alert, & mindful – putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is how a monk is mindful.

“And how is a monk alert? There is the case where feelings are known to the monk as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Discernment is known to him as it arises, known as it persists, known as it subsides. This is how a monk is alert. So stay mindful, monks, and alert. This is our instruction to you all.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLVII, 35]

“Furthermore, when walking, the monk discerns that he is walking. When standing, he discerns that he is standing. When sitting, he discerns that he is sitting. When lying down, he discerns that he is lying down. Or however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it.

“In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or focused externally ... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

“Furthermore, when going forward & returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward & looking away ... when bending & extending his limbs ... when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe & his bowl ... when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring ... when urinating & defecating ... when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert.... Or his mindfulness that ‘There is a body’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world.

[...]

“And how does a monk remain focused on feelings in & of themselves? There is the case where a monk, when feeling a painful feeling, discerns that he is feeling a painful feeling. When feeling a pleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a pleasant feeling. When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he discerns that he is feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling....Or his mindfulness that ‘There are feelings’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world.

[...]

“And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in & of itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns that the mind has passion. When the mind is without passion, he discerns that the mind is without passion. When the mind has aversion, he discerns that the mind has aversion. When the mind is without aversion, he discerns that the mind is without aversion. When the mind has delusion, he discerns that the mind has delusion. When the mind is without delusion, he discerns that the mind is without delusion....Or his mindfulness that ‘There is mind’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world.

[...]

“And how does a monk remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves?

“There is the case where a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the five hindrances ... the five aggregates for sustenance/clinging ... the sixfold internal and external sense media ... the seven factors of awakening ... the four noble truths ...* In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or externally ... or both internally and externally Or his mindfulness that ‘There are mental qualities’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 10]

“Imagine a tree devoid of branches & leaves: Its buds don’t grow to maturity, its bark doesn’t grow to maturity, its sapwood doesn’t grow to maturity, its heartwood doesn’t grow to maturity. In the same way, when – there being no mindfulness or alertness – a person is devoid of mindfulness or alertness, the prerequisite for a sense of conscience & concern [for the results of wrong-doing] becomes spoiled. There being no sense of conscience & concern ... the prerequisite for restraint of the senses becomes spoiled. There being no restraint of the senses ... the prerequisite for virtue becomes spoiled. There being no virtue ... the prerequisite for right concentration becomes spoiled. There being no right concentration ... the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of things as they actually are present becomes spoiled. There being no knowledge & vision of things as they actually are present becomes spoiled. There being no knowledge & vision of things as they actually are present, the prerequisite for disenchantment & dispassion becomes spoiled. There being

no disenchantment & dispassion, the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of release becomes spoiled.

“Now imagine a tree abundant in its branches & leaves: Its buds grow to maturity, its bark grows to maturity, its sapwood grows to maturity, its heartwood grows to maturity. In the same way, when – there being *mindfulness and alertness* – a person is abundant in mindfulness & alertness, the prerequisite for a sense of conscience & concern becomes abundant. There being a sense of conscience ... the prerequisite for restraint of the senses becomes abundant. There being restraint of the senses ... the prerequisite for virtue becomes abundant. There being virtue ... the prerequisite for right concentration becomes abundant. There being right concentration ... the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of things as they actually are present becomes abundant. There being knowledge & vision of things as they are actually present, the prerequisite for disenchantment & dispassion becomes abundant. There being disenchantment & dispassion, the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of release becomes abundant.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, VIII, 81]

2. Mindfulness of Breathing Instructions

Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so that it bears great fruit & great benefits?

There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

[1] Breathing in long, he discerns that he is breathing

in long; or breathing out long, he discerns that he is breathing out long. [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns that he is breathing in short; or breathing out short, he discerns that he is breathing out short. [3] He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to the entire body, and to breathe out sensitive to the entire body. [4] He trains himself to breathe in calming bodily fabrication, and to breathe out calming bodily fabrication.

[5] He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to rapture, and to breathe out sensitive to rapture. [6] He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to pleasure, and to breathe out sensitive to pleasure. [7] He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication, and to breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication. [8] He trains himself to breathe in calming mental fabrication, and to breathe out calming mental fabrication.

[9] He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to the mind, and to breathe out sensitive to the mind. [10] He trains himself to breathe in satisfying the mind, and to breathe out satisfying to the mind. [11] He trains himself to breathe in steadying the mind, and to breathe out steadying the mind. [12] He trains himself to breathe in releasing the mind, and to breathe out releasing the mind.

[13] He trains himself to breathe in focusing on inconstancy, and to breathe out focusing on inconstancy. [14] He trains himself to breathe in focusing on dispassion [literally, fading], and to breathe out focusing on dispassion. [15] He trains himself to breathe in focusing on cessation, and to breathe out focusing on cessation. [16] He trains himself to breathe in focusing on relinquishment, and to breathe out focusing on relinquishment.

This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & is pursued so that it bears great fruit & great benefits.

[Samyutta Nikaya, LIV, 1]

viii. Right Concentration

“And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk – quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities – enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thought & evaluation, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation – internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains in equanimity, mindful, & fully alert, and physically sensitive of pleasure. He enters & remains in the third jhana, and of him the Noble Ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasurable abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain – as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress – he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLV, 8]

“Develop concentration, monks. A concentrated monk discerns things as they actually are present. And what does he discern as it actually is present?

“‘This is stress,’ he discerns as it actually is present. ‘This is the origination of stress ... This is the cessation of stress This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress,’ he discerns as it actually is present

“Therefore your duty is the contemplation, ‘This is stress This is the origination of stress This is the cessation of stress This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.’”

[Samyutta Nikaya, LVI, 1.]

Chapter Four:

Further Ethical Teachings

(a) The Sublime States: Good Will (Metta), Compassion (Karuna), Appreciation (Mudita), and Equanimity (Upekkha)

“That disciple of the noble ones, headman – thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful – keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with good will, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with good will – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. Just as a strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way, when the awareness-release through good will is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there.

“That disciple of the noble ones – thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful – keeps pervading the first direction with an awareness imbued with compassion... appreciation... equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with equanimity – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. Just as a strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way, when the awareness-

release through equanimity is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLII, 8]

“These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely. Which five?

“When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop good will for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

“When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop compassion for that individual... equanimity toward that individual... one should pay him no mind & pay him no attention... When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should direct one's thoughts to the fact of his being the product of his kamma: 'This venerable one is the doer of his kamma, heir of his kamma, born of his kamma, related by his kamma, and is dependent on his kamma. Whatever kamma he does, for good or for evil, to that will he fall heir.' Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

“These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, V, 161]

“Monks, for one whose awareness-release through good will is cultivated, developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken, eleven benefits can be expected. Which eleven?

“One sleeps easily, wakes easily, dreams no evil dreams. One is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings. The devas protect one. Neither fire, poison, nor weapons can touch one. One's mind gains concentration quickly. One's complexion is bright. One dies unconfused and – if penetrating no higher – is headed for the Brahma worlds.

“These are the eleven benefits that can be expected for one whose awareness-release through good will is cultivated, developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, XI, 16]

“And how is one a noble one with developed faculties? There is the case where, when seeing a form with the eye, there arises in a monk what is agreeable, what is disagreeable, what is agreeable & disagreeable. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not. If he wants – in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not – cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful.

“When hearing a sound with the ear... When smelling an aroma with the nose... When tasting a flavor with the tongue... When touching a tactile sensation with the body... When cognizing an idea with the intellect, there arises in him what is agreeable, what is disagreeable, what is agreeable & disagreeable. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the

presence of what is loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not. If he wants – in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not – cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful.

“This is how one is a noble one with developed faculties.

“So, Ananda, I have taught you the unexcelled development of the faculties in the discipline of a noble one; I have taught you how one is a person in training, someone following the way; I have taught you how one is a noble one with developed faculties. Whatever a teacher should do – seeking the welfare of his disciples, out of sympathy for them – that have I done for you. Over there are the roots of trees; over there, empty dwellings. Practice jhana, Ananda. Don't be heedless. Don't later fall into regret. This is our message to you all.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Ananda delighted in the Blessed One's words.

[Majjhima Nikaya, 152]

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of good-will or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will

remain sympathetic to that person's welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will equal to a catskin bag – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves.

"Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handed saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: 'Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves.

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

'No, lord.'

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

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

[Majjhima Nikaya, 21]

"This is to be done by one skilled in aims who wants to break through to the state of peace: Be capable, upright, & straightforward, easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited,

content & easy to support, with few duties, living lightly, with peaceful faculties, masterful, modest, & no greed for supporters.

"Do not do the slightest thing that the wise would later censure.

"Think: Happy, at rest, may all beings be happy at heart. Whatever beings there may be, weak or strong, without exception, long, large, middling, short, subtle, blatant, seen & unseen, near & far, born & seeking birth: May all beings be happy at heart.

"Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere, or through anger or irritation wish for another to suffer.

"As a mother would risk her life to protect her child, her only child, even so should one cultivate a limitless heart with regard to all beings. With good will for the entire cosmos, cultivate a limitless heart: Above, below, & all around, unobstructed, without enmity or hate. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as long as one is alert, one should be resolved on this mindfulness. This is called a sublime abiding here & now.

"Not taken with views, but virtuous & consummate in vision, having subdued desire for sensual pleasures, one never again will lie in the womb."

[Sutta Nipata, I, 8]

"There is the case where a monk might say, 'Although good will has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still ill will keeps overpowering my mind.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent

the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that – when good will has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release – ill will would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from ill will: good will as an awareness-release.'

“Furthermore, there is the case where a monk might say, ‘Although compassion has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still viciousness keeps overpowering my mind.’ He should be told, ‘Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that – when compassion has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release – viciousness would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from viciousness: compassion as an awareness-release.’

“Furthermore, there is the case where a monk might say, ‘Although appreciation has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still resentment keeps overpowering my mind.’ He should be told, ‘Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that – when appreciation has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release – resentment would still keep overpowering the mind. That

possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from resentment: appreciation as an awareness-release.’

“Furthermore, there is the case where a monk might say, ‘Although equanimity has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still passion keeps overpowering my mind.’ He should be told, ‘Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that – when equanimity has been developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release – passion would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from passion: equanimity as an awareness-release.’”

[Anguttara Nikaya, VI, 13]

“Rahula, develop meditation in tune with the earth. For when you are developing meditation in tune with earth, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind. Just as when people throw what is clean or unclean on the earth – faeces, saliva, pus, or blood – the earth is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted by it; in the same way, when you are developing meditation in tune with earth, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 62]

(b)Kamma (Karma)

“Phenomena are preceded by the heart, ruled by the heart, made of the heart.

“If you speak or act with a corrupted heart, then suffering follows you – as the wheel of the cart, the track of the ox that pulls it.

“Phenomena are preceded by the heart, ruled by the heart, made of the heart.

“If you speak or act with a calm, bright heart, then happiness follows you, like a shadow that never leaves.”

[Dhammapada, 1-2]

“Beings are the owners of their kamma, heir to their kamma, born of their kamma, related through their kamma, and have their kamma as their refuge. Kamma is what creates distinctions among beings in terms of coarseness & refinement....”

[....]

“Furthermore, there is the case where a certain woman or man has a tendency to injure living beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife On the break-up of the body, after death, this person re-appears in the plane of deprivation in hell. Or, if he/she ... instead returns to the human state, then wherever he/she is reborn, he/she is sickly. This is the way leading to being sickly, namely being one who has a tendency to injure living beings.

“But there is the case where a certain woman or man does not have a tendency to injure living beings This is the way leading to being healthy....”

[Majjhima Nikaya, 135]

Moliyasivaka: There are some priests & contemplatives who are of this doctrine, this view: Whatever an individual feels – pleasure, pain, neither-pleasure-nor-pain – is entirely caused by what was done before. Now what does the Ven. Gotama say to that?

The Buddha: “There are cases where some feelings arise based on bile [i.e., diseases and pains that come from a malfunctioning gall bladder]. You yourself should know how some feelings arise based on bile. Even the world is agreed on how some feelings arise based on bile. So any priests & contemplatives who are of the doctrine & view that whatever an individual feels – pleasure, pain, neither-pleasure-nor-pain – is entirely caused by what was done before – slip past what they themselves know, slip past what is agreed on by the world. Therefore I say that those priests & contemplatives are wrong.

“There are cases where some feelings arise based on phlegm ... based on internal winds ... based on a combination of bodily humors ... from the change of the seasons ... from uneven (‘out of tune’) care of the body ... from attacks ... from the result of kamma....”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XXXVI, 21]

“There is the case where a trifling evil act done by a certain individual takes him to hell. There is the case where the very same sort of trifling act done by another individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment

[....]

“Now, a trifling evil act done by what sort of individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment? There is the case where a certain individual is developed in [contemplating] the body,

developed in virtue, developed in mind, developed in discernment: unrestricted, large-hearted, dwelling with the unlimited. A trifling evil act done by this sort of individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.

“Suppose that a man were to drop a salt crystal into a small amount of water in a cup. What do you think? Would the water in the cup become salty because of the salt crystal, and unfit to drink?”

‘Yes, lord....’

“Now suppose that a man were to drop a salt crystal into the River Ganges Would the water in the river Ganges become salty because of the salt crystal, and unfit to drink?”

‘No, lord....’

“In the same way, there is the case where a trifling evil act done by one individual [the first] takes him to hell; and ... the very same sort of trifling act done by the other individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, III, 99]

“These four imponderables are not to be speculated about. Whoever speculates about them would go mad & experience vexation. Which four? The Buddha-range of the Buddhas [i.e., the range of powers a Buddha develops as a result of becoming a Buddha] The jhana-range of one absorbed in jhana [i.e., the range of powers that one may obtain while absorbed in jhana] The result of kamma Speculation about [the first moment, purpose, etc., of] the cosmos is an imponderable that is not to be speculated about. Whoever speculates about these things would go mad & experience vexation.”

[Anguttara Nikaya, IV, 77]

(c) Miscellaneous Moral Views

“When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.

“And how does one, when watching after oneself, watch after others? Through pursuing [the practice], through developing it, through devoting oneself to it. This is how one, when watching after oneself, watches after others.

“And how does one, when watching after others, watch after oneself? Through endurance, through harmlessness, and through a mind of kindness & sympathy. This is how one, when watching after others, watches after oneself.”

[Samyutta Nikaya, XLVII, 19]

“If beings knew, as I know, the results of giving & sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would the stain of miserliness overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there were someone to receive their gift. But because beings do not know, as I know, the results of giving & sharing, they eat without having given. The stain of miserliness overcomes their minds.”

[Itivuttakka, 26]

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. Now at that time King Pasenadi Kosala was together with Queen Mallika in the upper palace. Then he said to her, ‘Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?’

‘No, your majesty,’ she answered. ‘There is no one more dear to me than myself. And what about you, your

majesty? Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?’

‘No, Mallika. There is no one more dear to me than myself.’

Then the king, descending from the palace, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: ‘Just now I was together with Queen Mallika in the upper palace. I said to her, ‘Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?’

‘No, your majesty,’ she answered. ‘There is no one more dear to me than myself. And what about you, your majesty? Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?’

‘No, Mallika. There is no one more dear to me than myself.’

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

“Searching all directions with one’s awareness, one finds no one dearer than oneself. In the same way, others are fiercely dear to themselves. So one should not hurt others if one loves oneself.”

[Udana, V, 1]

“‘He insulted me, hit me, beat me, robbed me’ – for those who brood on this, hostility isn’t stilled.

“‘He insulted me, hit me, beat me, robbed me’ – for those who don’t brood on this, hostility is stilled.

“Hostilities aren’t stilled through hostility, regardless. Hostilities are stilled through non-hostility: this, an unending truth.”

[Dhammapada, 3-5]

“One who neither kills nor gets others to kill, neither conquers nor gets others to conquer, with good will for all beings, has no hostility with anyone at all.”

[Itivuttaka, I, 27]

“When embraced, the rod of violence breeds danger & fear: Look at people quarrelling. I will tell of how I experienced dismay. Seeing people floundering like fish in small puddles, competing with one another – as I saw this, fear came into me. The world was entirely without substance. All the directions were knocked out of line. Wanting a haven for myself, I saw nothing that wasn’t laid claim to. Seeing nothing in the end but competition, I felt discontent. And then I saw an arrow here, so very hard to see, embedded in the heart. Overcome by this arrow you run in all directions. But simply on pulling it out you don’t run, you don’t sink.”

[Sutta Nipata, IV, 15]

Suggestions for Further Reading

(a) Introductions to Buddhism

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. Revised Edition (Grove Press). An authoritative summation of the Buddha's original teachings, as distinct from the larger tradition of Buddhist thought and practice generally as it has evolved over several centuries, in several cultures. This book covers exclusively the Buddha's own contributions.

Keown, Damien. *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press). A very concise, and yet quite comprehensive and reliable survey of Buddhist thought and, to some extent, practice, briefly covering the Buddha's contribution as well as later developments.

Brazier, David. *The New Buddhism* (Palgrave Publishing). A somewhat controversial, but often compelling reinterpretation of the political implications of Buddhism, by a founder of the Amida Order, based in England.

Bachelor, Stephen. *Buddhism Without Beliefs* (Parallax). A "modernist" interpretation of Buddhism, one that owes a lot to phenomenology and existentialism, and that purges the "religious" aspects of Buddhism in favour of the idea that "dharma practice" implies no beliefs about anything, but only commitment to a set of practices aiming at liberation from attachment, etc.

Titmuss, Christopher. *Light on Enlightenment* (Wisdom Pubs.). A systematic exposition of (Theravada) Buddhism, in a contemporary, conversational style.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge U. Press). A

comprehensive survey of Buddhism, ancient and contemporary, around the world.

Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Noble Eightfold Path* (Buddhist Publication Society). A systematic scholarly exposition of Theravada Buddhism, organized in terms of the factors of the eightfold path. Available online as a free e-book: [.http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/eightfoldpath.pdf](http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/eightfoldpath.pdf)

(b) Translations of the Buddha's Discourses (Pali Canon)

Three major, recent translations into English of the Buddha's discourse collections are: (1) Bodhi, Bhikkhu, ed., *The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the Majjhima Nikaya; (2) Walshe, Maurice, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the Digha Nikaya; and (3) Bodhi, Bhikkhu, ed., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, a translation of the Samyutta Nikaya. All three are published by Wisdom Publications.

Over 800 translated Suttas (Pali Canon discourses) are available online, along with other resources, at the following web site:

www.AccessstoInsight.org

This web site is an invaluable resource for any student of the Buddha's thought.

(c) Translations of the Mahayana Sutras and Other Traditional Buddhist Texts

The Pali Canon is the "scriptural" basis of Theravada Buddhism (still predominant in countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma/Myanmar). Mahayana Buddhism is the name for a series of schools or sects, now with far more adherents than Theravada Buddhism, predominant in Northern Asia (notably Tibet) and East Asia. The Mahayana schools

(Zen, Pure Land, Vajrayana, etc.) accept a series of additional Sanskrit discourses (sutras) not included in the Pali Canon, like the “Lotus Sutra,” the “Diamond Sutra,” etc., which were probably composed some time later than the Pali discourses anthologized here, but which are nonetheless attributed to the Buddha by many Buddhists.

There are readily available anthologies of Buddhist texts, often including both some discourses [*sutta*] from the Pali Canon and some specifically Mahayana Sutras (none of which appear in the present compilation), as well as other classical Buddhist texts, commentaries, verses, etc. (1) Burt, E.A., ed., *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha* (New American Library); (2) de Barry, William Theodore, *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan* (Vintage); (3) Conze, Edward, ed., *Buddhist Scriptures* (Penguin); and (4) Thurman, Robert, ed., *Essential Tibetan Buddhism* (Harper).

For other Mahayana sutras, traditional texts, and commentaries, see the following web site:

http://www.buddhanet.net/ebooks_ms.htm

(d) Meditation

Gunaratana, Henepola. *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Wisdom Publications). A crystal-clear introduction to meditation as the Buddha taught it.

Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu. *Mindfulness with Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners* (Wisdom Publications). A much more difficult work, which encourages serious engagement with some of the Buddha’s Pali vocabulary, by a renowned “meditation master” from Thailand.

Sole-Leris, Amadeo. *Tranquility and Insight* (Vipassana Publications). A systematic overview of mediation as practiced and taught in the Theravada tradition, making substantial use of the commentarial literature, notably

Buddhaghosa (as opposed to focusing only on the Buddha’s discourses themselves). But also much information about contemporary approaches to meditation in Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, etc.

Chögyam Trungpa. *The Myth of Freedom* (Shambhala Classics). A very sophisticated and subtle set of reflections on meditation and its role in Buddhism, by an iconoclastic and influential, but controversial Tibetan teacher.

(e) Some Recent Contributions to Buddhist Thought

Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu. *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree: The Buddha’s Teaching on Voidness* (Wisdom Publications). A fascinating study of the concept of *suññata* (voidness or emptiness) by a famous and influential Thai monk.

Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *Facing the Future* (Buddhist Publication Society). A provocatively radical critique of capitalism and its impact on human life, from an orthodox Theravada perspective. Available online as a free e-book: http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/facingfuture.pdf

Sivaraksa, Sulak. *Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* (Parallax). Another attempt to think through the implications of Buddhism for social criticism and social change.

Allen Hunt-Badiner. *Dharma Gaia: Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology* (Wisdom Publications). A collection on Buddhism’s relation to environmentalism.