

*The Discourses of the Buddha*

*From the Pali Canon*

Jason Espada, editor

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## The Discourses of the Buddha - from the Pali Canon

### Preface

For the last few years, I've had it in mind to pair a recording of *Paritta - Protective Readings from the Pali Canon*, with a number of my favorite *Discourses of the Buddha*. After completing the selection of Paritta readings, I looked again at the Suttas I've been gathering, and felt that I needed to add to these. I now have some sixty of the Buddha's teachings I would like to share.

There are more than 10,000 suttas in the Pali Canon, which leaves every generation with the vital task of choosing which are the most important. How can this be done? Where to even begin? Although every teacher and tradition focusses on different teachings, there *are* some Discourses which are generally agreed on as important, and which are the most frequently taught. In this collection then, I've selected a combination of the suttas that are most frequently referred to, and those that are my personal favorites, the ones I've found most useful.

I remember one of my teachers, Thich Nhat Hanh, saying that while writing his biography of the Buddha, *Old Path, White Clouds*, he wanted to show how all of the Buddhist teachings we are familiar with now across traditions can be found in the original, Pali sources.

Without saying so explicitly, he was addressing the split that developed centuries ago between the lineages that draw on these sources and their commentaries, from those that feature the Bodhisattva Vow, and the Path as set forth by later accomplished Buddhist teachers. *All of these teachings, we should know, have their basis in the teachings of the Historical Buddha.*

These are teachings that uplift and inspire, that affirm the possibility of liberation, and greatly empower the Mahayana View. They very clearly show us the best way we can care for ourselves and for one another.

The Dalai Lama has taught that this possibility of the cessation of suffering, the Third Noble Truth- is an *immense* help for compassion. Because compassion is a desire to remove suffering, once we *see* this possibility, then our concern becomes something realistic. We know it can be done. Now, how wonderful is that?

About these selections

As far as the versions of the texts presented here go, in some cases I've departed from the translations to the point that I now consider the sources just to be the basis for what I've included.

I've made these changes for two reasons: for ease of speaking, and listening to on the recordings, and to make the meaning stand out more clearly. These are my interpretations. All errors then, of course, are my own, and I would humbly ask for patience and forgiveness for each of these.

*May all beings benefit.*

*May the knowledge of the Buddha's Teachings increase, more and more*

*May we each practice well, freeing ourselves completely*

*and may we then share the benefits of our practice with all our family,  
and all the world!*

Jason Espada

San Francisco,

October 11th, 2021

## Part I

### The Life of the Buddha

The one who was to become the Buddha was born the son of a king, in Lumbini, in what is now Nepal. He was to be named Siddhartha, which means 'Fulfiller of Wishes'. Before his birth, a wise man visited the king and told him that his son would either be a great ruler, or a supreme sage. This upset the king, since he wanted his son to continue his legacy. After Siddhartha was born, the king made sure that everything was perfect around him - he was to see no signs of decay or sorrow. Grounds were kept neat and trimmed, always delightful to see, and youth, abundance, and happiness were to surround the young prince at all times.

Eventually though the young Siddhartha began to learn the truth, as is told in the story that has come down to us that is known as *The Four Messengers*.

Setting out with his charioteer on four different occasions, the prince first saw an old person, then one who was sick, then one who was dead, and finally a spiritual seeker, 'with a serene countenance'.

Disillusioned, and moved by what he saw, and by the possibility of finding freedom from all sorrow, at the age of 29, Siddhartha left his home in search of liberating truth.



## The Night of the Buddha's Enlightenment

From The Longer Discourse to Saccaka, MN 36

{After Siddhartha left his home, he sought out the most highly respected teachers of his day. After studying with them and mastering their practices, he was still not satisfied that he had reached liberation. He then set out with five fellow seekers, and they practiced together, supporting and encouraging one another.

After undergoing austerities, and not finding liberation through those practices, the story of the Buddha's enlightenment is as follows.}

"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: 'So why am I afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities?' I thought: 'I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities, ....'

{The Buddha then accepted solid food, and regained his strength. His fellow seekers left him at that point, and he continued practicing.

On the night of the Buddha's enlightenment, he would later recall}

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives.... This was the first knowledge I attained, in the first watch of the night.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings.... "This was the second knowledge I attained, in the second watch of the night.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the ending of the afflictions. I discerned, as it was actually present, that 'This is suffering...This is the origination of suffering...This is the cessation of suffering...This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering...These are afflictions...This is the origination of afflictions...This is the cessation of afflictions...This is the way leading to the cessation of the afflictions.'

My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the afflictions related to sensuality, released from the afflictions related to becoming, and released from the afflictions related to ignorance.

With release, there was the knowledge, 'Released.' I discerned that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose -- as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.

## The Ayacana Sutta: The Request, SN 6.1

Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu; edited

... When the Blessed One was newly Self-awakened, he was staying at Uruvela on the bank of the Nerañjara River, at the foot of the Goatherd's Banyan Tree. 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; it is 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, it would be troublesome for me."

Just then these verses, unspoken in the past, unheard before, 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.*

As the Blessed One reflected thus, his mind inclined to dwelling at ease,  
and to not teaching the Dhamma.

Then Brahma Sahampati, having known with his own awareness the line of  
thinking in the Blessed One's awareness, thought:

*Ah! The world is lost!  
The world is destroyed!  
The mind of the Tathagata, the Arahant,  
the Rightly Self-awakened One inclines to dwelling at ease,  
and to not teaching the Dhamma!*

Then, just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended  
arm, Brahma Sahampati disappeared from the Brahma-world and  
reappeared in front of the Blessed One. Arranging his upper robe over one  
shoulder, he knelt down with his right knee on the ground, saluted the  
Blessed One with his hands before his heart, and said to him:

*Lord, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!  
Let the One-Well-Gone teach the Dhamma!  
There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are falling away because they do  
not hear the Dhamma!  
There will be those who will understand the Dhamma!*

That is what Brahma Sahampati said. Having said that, he further said this:

*In the past  
there appeared among the Magadhans  
an impure Dhamma  
devised by the stained.*

*Throw open the door to the Deathless!  
Let them hear the Dhamma  
realized by the Stainless One!*

*Just as one standing on a rocky crag  
might see people all around below,*

*So, O wise one, with all-around vision,  
ascend the palace fashioned of the Dhamma.*

*Free from sorrow, behold the people  
submerged in sorrow,  
oppressed by birth & aging!*

*Rise up, O hero,  
Victor in battle!  
O Teacher, wander without debt in the world!  
Teach the Dhamma, O Blessed One!  
There will be those who will understand!*

Then the Blessed One, having understood Brahma's plea, 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 with keen faculties and those with dull, those with good attributes and those with bad, those easy to teach and those hard, some of them seeing disgrace and danger in the other world.

Having seen this, he answered Brahma Sahampati in verse:

*Open are the doors to the Deathless  
to those with ears.  
Let them show their conviction!*

Then Brahma Sahampati, thinking,

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

## The Meeting at R̥ṣipatana

Having decided to proclaim his doctrine, Gautama thought first of telling his two former teachers, but a deity informed him that Arada Kalama had died a week before, and Udraka Ramaputra the previous night. The Buddha confirmed this with his super-knowledge. He then thought of the five fellow seekers who had been with him during the period of his austerities. With his divine eye he saw that they were staying near Benares, and so he set out to teach them the way to Awakening...

- From *The Buddhist Religion - A Historical Introduction*, by Richard Robinson

From *The Earliest Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Anandajoti Bhikkhu:

The Realised One, after walking through the various States approached the great city of Vārāṇasī, and after approaching, dressing at the right time, picking up his bowl and robe, he entered the great city of Vārāṇasī for alms. After walking for alms there, when he was returning from the alms-round after the meal, he approached the Deer Park in R̥ṣipatana, and the auspicious group-of-five.

The auspicious group-of-five saw the Realised One coming from afar, and after seeing him, they stopped what they were doing, and said:

“Oh! That ascetic Gautama who is coming, friends, is loose; he is given to luxury; he has forsaken the striving. Even when formerly living an austere life he was not able to experience for himself a state beyond ordinary human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight, so how now, when he lives with devotion and clinging to bringing in food for the gross material body?

It is unsuitable, he is loose and given to luxury. No one should go out to meet him, or rise up for him, or take his bowl and robes, or give him a seat, or give him a drink, or set up a footstool, but after putting out extra seats he should be told: 'Know that these are extra seats friend Gautama, if you wish you can sit down.'

"Venerable Ājñāna Kauṇḍinya though could not endure what he felt, but neither could he oppose his friends. And, as the Realised One was approaching, the auspicious group-of-five took no delight on being on their seats, and they all had a desire to rise.

Just as a bird inside a cage when the bottom of the cage is consumed by fire wishes to rise up quickly and wishes to escape the heat of the fire, just so, as the Realised One was approaching near, they took no delight on being on their seats, and had a desire to rise. Why is that? There is no being in the various classes of beings who, having seen the Realised One, does not rise from their seat.

In this way, as the Realised One was approaching, they were unable to bear the glory and majesty of the Realised One. Trembling, they rose from their seats, having broken their agreement, and rising, someone went out to meet him, someone rose up for him and took his bowl and robes, someone offered him a seat, someone set up a footstool, someone set up water for washing his feet, and they said:

"Welcome to you friend Gautama, welcome to you friend Gautama, please sit down on the prepared seat." Then the Realised One, sat down on the prepared seat.

The auspicious group-of-five exchanged with the Realised One some polite and pleasing talk while seated, and while sitting on one side, they said this to the Realised One:



“Your faculties, friend Gautama, are very clear; purified is your skin and bright; the complexion of your face is pure. Have you, friend Gautama, experienced for yourself a state beyond ordinary human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge, and insight?”

After that was said, the Realised One said this:

“Do not, monks, address the Realised One by the word ‘friend’- that will not be for your welfare, benefit and happiness for a long time;

The Deathless has been experienced by me,  
and the Path to the Deathless;  
I am an Awakened One,  
all-knowing, and all-seeing;

One who has cooled off, without pollutants;  
I have power over all things,  
and I teach the Doctrine.

You should come, listen, undertake and give an ear,  
I am advising and instructing.

Having been properly instructed by me, properly trained, you will be free from the pollutants, freed in mind, freed through wisdom, and in this very life, having seen directly, having attained, you will be able to say:

‘Destroyed is (re)birth for us,  
accomplished is the spiritual life,  
done is what ought to be done,  
there is no more of this mundane state - this we know’.

Then the Realised One, in the first watch of the night kept silent; in the middle watch of the night he took delight in what was to be said, in the last watch of the night he addressed the auspicious group-of-five...

## Part II - His Teachings

### Turning the Wheel the of Dharma

From Old Path, White Clouds, by Thich Nhat Hanh

The Buddha said, "Please listen, my friends. I have found the Great Way, and I will show it to you.

You will be the first to hear my Teaching. This Dharma is not the result of thinking. It is the fruit of direct experience. Listen serenely with all your awareness."

The Buddha's voice was filled with such spiritual authority that his five friends joined their palms and looked up at him. Kondanna spoke for them all, "Please, show us compassion and teach us the Way."

The Buddha began serenely, "My brothers, there are two extremes that a person on the path should avoid. One is to plunge oneself into sensual pleasures, and the other is to practice austerities which deprive the body of its needs. Both of these extremes lead to failure.

The path I have discovered is the Middle Way, which avoids both extremes and has the capacity to lead one to understanding, liberation, and peace. It is the Noble Eightfold Path of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. I have followed this Noble Eightfold Path and have realized understanding, liberation, and peace.

"Brothers, why do I call this path the Right Path? I call it the Right Path because it does not avoid or deny suffering, but allows for a direct confrontation with suffering as the means to overcome it. The Noble Eightfold Path is the path of living in awareness.

Mindfulness is the foundation. By practicing mindfulness, you can develop concentration which enables you to attain Understanding. Thanks to right concentration, you realize right awareness, thoughts, speech, action, livelihood, and effort. The Understanding which develops can liberate you from every shackle of suffering and give birth to true peace and joy.

"Brothers, there are four truths: the existence of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path which leads to the cessation of suffering. I call these the Four Noble Truths.

The first is the existence of suffering. Birth, old age, sickness, and death are suffering. Sadness, anger, jealousy, worry, anxiety, fear, and despair are suffering. Separation from loved ones is suffering. Association with those you hate is suffering. Desire, attachment, and clinging to the five aggregates are suffering.

"Brothers, the second truth is the cause of suffering. Because of ignorance, people cannot see the truth about life, and they become caught in the flames of desire, anger, jealousy, grief, worry, fear, and despair.

"Brothers, the third truth is the cessation of suffering. Understanding the truth of life brings about the cessation of every grief and sorrow and gives rise to peace and joy.

"Brothers, the fourth truth is the path which leads to the cessation of suffering. It is the Noble Eightfold Path, which I have just explained. The Noble Eightfold Path is nourished by living mindfully. Mindfulness leads to concentration and understanding which liberates you from every pain and sorrow and leads to peace and joy.

I will guide you along this path of realization."

While Siddhartha was explaining the Four Noble Truths, Kondanna suddenly felt a great light shining within his own heart. He could taste the liberation he had sought for so long. His face beamed with joy. The Buddha pointed at him and cried, "Kondanna! You've got it! You've got it!"

Kondanna joined his palms and bowed before the Buddha. With deepest respect, he spoke, "Venerable Gautama, please accept me as your disciple. I know that under your guidance, I will attain the Great Awakening"

The other four monks also bowed at the Buddha's feet, joined their palms, and asked to be received as disciples. The Buddha motioned his friends to rise...

The Buddha smiled at them. "Please, brothers, practice with an open and intelligent spirit, and in three months you will have attained the fruit of liberation..."

## And the Devas Rejoiced

And when the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion, the earth devas cried out, in jubilation:

Aah! At Varanasi, at the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma, that cannot be stopped by any contemplative, or deva, or Mara, or God, or by anyone in the cosmos!

On hearing the earth devas' rejoicing, the devas of the Four Kings' Heaven understood what they said, and also took up the cry, celebrating... and this was followed by the devas of the Thirty-three... and the Yama devas... and the Tusita devas... all the way up even to the devas of Brahma's retinue...

Rejoicing, they all proclaimed with one mighty voice,

Aah! At Varanasi, at the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma, that cannot be stopped by any contemplative, or deva, or Mara, or God, or by anyone in the cosmos!

Thus, this joyful song of praise travelled up even to the realm of the highest divinities, and this system of ten thousand worlds trembled, and quaked, and shook, and a boundless, sublime radiance, surpassing the glory of all the devas appeared in the world...

## The Story of Shariputra and Mogallana

As found in the Vinaya Pitaka, Mv 1.23.1-10

{From The Great Disciples of the Buddha, by Nyanaponika Thera:

The power of the Dhamma to ignite realization of ultimate truth is proportional to the receptivity and earnestness of the disciple. For those who have long trained themselves in the disciplines of contemplation and renunciation, who have reflected deeply upon the impermanent and the Deathless, and who are ready to relinquish everything for the sake of final deliverance, even a concise four-line stanza can reveal more truth than volumes of systematic exposition.}

Among the first sixty-one arahants whom the Master had sent forth to proclaim the message of deliverance to the world was an elder named Assaji.

Assaji had belonged to the group of five ascetics who had attended upon the Bodhisattva while he was engaged in his ascetic practices, and he was also one of the first five disciples.

One morning when Assaji was walking on alms round in Rājagaha, Upatissa (later named Shariputra) saw him calmly wending his way from door to door with his bowl in hand.<sup>3</sup>

Struck by Assaji's dignified and serene appearance, Upatissa thought:

"Never before have I seen such a monk. He must be one of those who are arahants, or who are on the way to arahantship. Should I not approach him and question him?"

But then he considered: "It is not the proper time now for putting questions to this monk, as he is going for alms through the streets. I had better follow behind him after the manner of supplicants." And he did so.

Then, when the elder had finished his alms round and was seeking a quiet place to eat his meal, Upatissa spread out his own sitting cloth and offered the seat to the elder. The Elder Assaji sat down and took his meal, after which Upatissa served him with water from his own water-container, and in this way performed toward Assaji the duties of a pupil to a teacher.

After they had exchanged the usual courteous greetings, Upatissa said:

"Serene are your features, friend. Pure and bright is your complexion. Under whom have you gone forth as an ascetic? Who is your teacher and whose doctrine do you profess?"

Assaji replied: "There is, friend, a great recluse, a scion of the Sākyas, who has gone forth from the Sākyā clan. I have gone forth under him, the Blessed One. That Blessed One is my teacher and it is his Dhamma that I profess."

"What does the venerable one's master teach, what does he proclaim?"

Questioned thus, the Elder Assaji thought to himself:

"These wandering ascetics are opposed to the Buddha's teaching. I shall show him how profound this teaching is."

So he said: "I am but new to the training, friend. It is not long since I went forth from home, and I came but recently to this doctrine and discipline. I cannot explain the Dhamma in detail to you."

The wanderer replied: "I am called Upatissa, friend. Please tell me according to your ability, be it much or little. It will be my task to penetrate its meaning by way of a hundred or a thousand methods."

And he added: Be it little or much that you can tell, The meaning only, please proclaim to me! To know the meaning is my sole desire; Of no use to me are many words.

In response, the Elder Assaji uttered this stanza:

Of those things that arise from a cause,  
The Tathāgata has told the cause,  
And also what their cessation is:  
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.

Upon hearing the first two lines, there arose in the wanderer Upatissa the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma—the first glimpse of the Deathless, the path of stream-entry—and to the ending of the last two lines he already listened as a stream enterer.

At once he knew: "Here the means of deliverance is to be found!"

And he said to the elder:

"Do not enlarge upon this exposition of the Dhamma, venerable sir. This much will suffice. But where does our Master live?"

"In the Bamboo Grove, wanderer."

"Then please go ahead, venerable sir. I have a friend with whom I have made an agreement to share the Dhamma. I shall inform him, and together we shall follow you and come into the Master's presence."



Upatissa then prostrated himself at the elder's feet and went back to the park of the wanderers. Kolita (later named Mogallana) saw him approaching and immediately knew: "Today my friend's appearance is quite changed. Surely, he must have found the Deathless."

And when he inquired, Upatissa replied: "Yes, friend, the Deathless has been found!" He told him all about his meeting with the Elder Assaji, and when he recited the stanza he had heard, Kolita too was established in the fruit of stream-entry.

...

Sutta references:

This is found in the Pali Vinaya Pitaka / Khandaka / Mahavagga

Mv 1.23.1-10

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From The First Discourse on Gratification - Samyuktagama 13

Translated by Bhikkhu Analayo

At one time the Buddha was staying at Savatthi, in the Jeta's Grove, at Anathapindika's Park. At that time the Blessed One said to the monks:

If living beings did not find gratification in bodily form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness, they would not get defiled by them.

But because living beings find gratification in these, they become attached, and are defiled by them.

Monks, if living beings did not perceive the danger in bodily form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness, those living beings would not become disenchanted with them.

But because living beings perceive the danger in these, they become disenchanted with them.

Monks, if for living beings there were no escape from bodily form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness, those living beings would not escape from them.

But because for living beings *there is* an escape from bodily form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness,

*{through the Three Trainings}*

those living beings escape from them.

Monks, as long as I had not understood as it really is the gratification in relation to the five aggregates of clinging as gratification, the danger as

danger, and the escape as escape, among gods, Mara, Brahma, recluses, brahmins and the assemblies of gods and humans, I was not liberated, had not gone beyond, was not released, was forever dwelling in mental distortion, and was unable to declare of myself that I had attained supreme and right awakening.

But Monks, because I had understood as it really is the gratification the danger and the escape as escape, I was able to declare to have attained liberation, and that I had attained supreme and right awakening.

Then the monks, hearing what the Buddha had said, were delighted and received it respectfully.

## Daily Advice to Bhikkhus

Abstaining from all evil,  
Doing what is good,  
Cleansing one's mind,  
This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

Patience is the highest practice,  
Nibbana is supreme, say the Buddhas,  
A contemplative does not harm others,  
A recluse oppresses no one.

Not insulting, not harming,  
Restrained according to the moral code.  
Moderate when it comes to food,  
Dwelling in solitude,  
Engaging in higher mental development,  
This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

## The Three Trainings - Numbered Discourses, 3

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato, revised

Monks, these are the three trainings. What three? The training in ethics, the the training in meditation, and the training in wisdom.

And what is the training ethics? It is when a person is ethical, restrained in the code of conduct, with good behavior and supporters. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they've undertaken. This is called the training in ethics.

And what is the training in meditation? It is when a person, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters into and remains in the first jhana, the second, third, and fourth jhana. This is called the training in meditation.

And what is the training in wisdom? It is when a person realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. They live having realized through their own insight the ending of defilements. This is called the training in wisdom.

These are the three trainings.

## The Fruits of an Immoral and a Moral Life

From The Parinibbana Sutta - The Last Days of the Buddha

### Book One

Thereupon the Blessed One addressed the devotees of Pāṭaligāma thus:

“The immoral man, householders, by falling away from virtue, encounters five perils: great loss of wealth through heedlessness; an evil reputation; a timid and troubled demeanour in every society, be it that of nobles, brahmins, householders, or ascetics; death in bewilderment; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a realm of misery, in an unhappy state, in the nether world, in hell.

“Five blessings, householders, accrue to the righteous man through his practice of virtue: great increase of wealth through his diligence; a favourable reputation; a confident deportment, without timidity, in every society, be it that of nobles, brahmins, householders, or ascetics; a serene death; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a happy state, in a heavenly world.”

## The Sutra on the White - Clad Disciple

The Upasaka Sutra, no. 128 of the Madhyama Agama

Translated by Thich Nhat Hanh

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was staying at the monastery in the Jeta Grove near Sravasti that had been donated by the layman Anathapindika. On that day, Anathapindika came with five hundred other lay students of the Buddha to the hut where Sariputra resided. They all bowed their heads in reverence to Sariputra and sat down respectfully to one side. Venerable Sariputra offered them skillful teachings, bringing them joy and confidence in the Three Jewels and the practice of the true Dharma. Then, Sariputra and the five hundred laymen and women went together to the hut of the Buddha, where Sariputra, Anathapindika, and the other five hundred laymen and women prostrated at the Buddha's feet and sat down to one side.

When he saw that everyone was seated, the Buddha addressed Sariputra, saying,

“Sariputra, if lay students of the Buddha, those who wear white robes, study and practice the Five Precepts and the Four Contemplations, they will realize without hardship the capacity to abide happily in the present moment. They know they will not fall into the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and other suffering paths.

“Such men and women will have attained the fruit of stream-enterer, and they will have no fear of descending into dark paths. They are on the way of right awakening. They will only need to return to the worlds of gods or men seven more times before attaining perfect liberation and the end of suffering.

“Sariputra, how do lay students of the Buddha, those who wear white robes, study and practice the Five Precepts and the Four Contemplations?

“Lay students of the Buddha move away from killing, put an end to killing, rid themselves of all weapons, learn humility before others, learn humility in themselves, practice love and compassion, and protect all living beings, even the smallest insects. They uproot from within themselves any tendency to kill. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the first of the Five Precepts.

“Lay students of the Buddha move away from taking what has not been given, put an end to taking what has not been given. They find joy in being generous without expecting anything in return. Their minds are not obscured by greed or craving. They constantly guard their own honesty and uproot from within themselves any tendency to take what has not been given. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the second of the Five Precepts.

“Lay students of the Buddha move away from sexual misconduct, put an end to sexual misconduct, and protect everyone - those under the care of their father, mother, or both father and mother; their elder sister or elder brother; their parents-in-law or other in-laws; those of the same gender or other gender; the wife, daughter, husband or son of another; and those who have been raped, assaulted, or sexually abused, or who have been or who are prostitutes. Lay students of the Buddha uproot from within themselves any tendency to commit sexual misconduct. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the third of the Five Precepts.

“Lay students of the Buddha move away from saying what is not true, put an end to saying what is not true. They say only what is true, and they find great joy in saying what is true. They always abide in truth and are completely reliable, never deceiving others. They have uprooted from within themselves any tendency to say what is not true. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the fourth of the Five Precepts.



“Lay students of the Buddha move away from taking intoxicants, put an end to taking intoxicants. They uproot from within themselves the habit of taking intoxicants. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the fifth of the Five Precepts.

“Sariputra, how do lay students of the Buddha attain the Four Contemplations and abide happily in the present moment with ease and without hardship?

They practice being aware of the Buddha,

as one who is truly and fully awakened, and who is without any attachments;

as one whose understanding and practice are perfect;

as the Well - Gone One;

as one who knows and fully understands the world;

as one who has attained the very highest;

as one who has tamed what needs to be tamed;

as a teacher of humans and devas;

as an Awakened One;

and as a World-Honored One.

When they meditate in this way, all unwholesome desires come to an end, and impure, sorrowful, or anxious elements no longer arise in their hearts.

As a result of contemplating the Buddha, their thoughts are clear, they feel joy, and they arrive at the first of the Four Contemplations, abiding happily in the present moment, with ease and without any hardships.

“Sariputra, the lay students of the Buddha practice being aware of the Dharma, meditating as follows:

the Dharma is taught by the Lord Buddha with great skill;

it can lead to complete liberation;

it can lead to a state of no afflictions;

there is not the pain of heat in it - instead it is cool and refreshing;

its value is timeless.

When lay students of the Buddha meditate on and observe the Dharma in this way, all unwholesome desires come to an end, and impure, sorrowful, or anxious elements no longer arise in their hearts.

As a result of contemplating the Dharma, their thoughts are clear, they feel joy, and they arrive at the second of the Four Contemplations, abiding happily in the present moment, with ease and without any hardship.

“Sariputra, the lay students of the Buddha practice being aware of the Sangha, meditating as follows:

the noble community of the Tathagata is advancing in a good direction;

it is on an upright path - a path of righteousness;

it is oriented toward the Dharma, and lives the teachings in the way they are meant to be lived.

In that community, there are the Four Pairs and the Eight Grades - realized Arhats and those who are realizing the fruit of Arhatship, non-returners and those who are realizing the fruit of non-returning, once-returners and those who are realizing the fruit of once-returning, and stream-enterers and those who are realizing the fruit of stream-entry.

The noble community of the Tathagata has successfully realized the practice of the Precepts (sila), the practice of concentration (samadhi), and the practice of insight (prajña).

It has liberation and liberated vision.

It is worthy of respect, honor, service, and offerings.

It is a beautiful field of merit for everyone.

As a result of contemplating the Sangha, their thoughts are clear, they feel joy, and they arrive at the third of the Four Contemplations, abiding happily in the present moment, with ease and without any hardship.

“Sariputra, the lay students of the Buddha practice being mindful of the Precepts, meditating as follows:

the Precepts have no drawbacks, flaws, impurities, or unsound points;

and they help us abide in the Pure Land of the Tathagata.

The Precepts are not of the nature to deceive.

They are always praised, accepted, practiced, and guarded by the holy ones.

As a result of contemplating these Precepts, the students' thoughts are clear, they feel joy, and they arrive at the fourth of the Four Contemplations, abiding happily in the present moment, with ease and without any hardship.

“Sariputra, remember that white - clad disciples of the Buddha who practice in this way will not descend into hell realms, hungry ghost realms, animal realms, or any other realms of suffering. They have experienced the fruit of stream-entry, which means not falling into paths of hardship or wrongdoing. Having entered the stream, they cannot help but go more and more in the direction of right awakening. They will only need to return to the world of gods or humans seven more times before they arrive at complete liberation and the end of sorrow.”

At that time, the Lord, the World-Honored One, pronounced these verses:

*An intelligent man or woman who lives a family life  
and realizes how fearful the hell realms are,  
is encouraged to receive and practice the right  
teachings and put an end to paths of suffering.*

*She studies and learns to deepen the practice -  
not killing living beings,  
speaking of things as they really are,  
and not taking what is not given.*

*He is faithful to his spouse,  
moving away from the habit of sexual misconduct,  
determined not to ingest  
intoxicants,  
keeping his mind frenzy-free,  
and free of further obscurations.*

*She is always aware of the Buddha,  
the Dharma, and the Sangha.  
Contemplating the Mindfulness Trainings,  
her mind arrives at peace, joy, and freedom.*

*If he wants to practice generosity  
in order to cultivate the garden of happiness,  
then his guideline is learning the path  
of liberation and awakening.*

*Sariputra, listen carefully  
with regard to this point:  
Look carefully at the herd  
of oxen over there.*

*Some oxen are both white and yellow.  
Some are black and red.  
Some are brown with yellow spots,  
while others are gray like pigeons.*

*Whatever their color  
or place of origin,  
their value lies to us  
in their ability to transport.*

*Healthy and strong ones  
who pull carts vigorously  
can make many journeys  
and are most useful.*

*In our human world,  
there are Brahmans, warriors,  
scholars, tradesmen,  
and artisans.*

*But the truly virtuous men and women  
are those who practice the Wonderful Precepts  
and are able to realize liberation.  
Like the Well - Gone One, they live in true freedom.*

*There is no need to discriminate  
according to family or caste  
{race, gender, or nationality}  
To realize the greatest happiness  
is to make offerings to those who are truly virtuous.*

*A person who lacks virtue  
or who is poor in insight  
cannot light the way for others.  
To make offerings to such a one  
bears little fruit.*

*Sons and daughters of Buddha  
who practice the way of insight  
and have their minds directed to Buddha  
have strong, stable roots  
and are reborn only to be happy.*

*Returning to the worlds of gods and humans  
no more than seven times,  
they eventually realize nirvana,  
transforming all their suffering  
into joy and purity.*

Thus spoke the Buddha. The Venerable Shariputra, the other monks and nuns, the layman Anathapindika, and the other five hundred laymen and laywomen heard these words and were delighted and put them into practice.

From The Serenity Sutta

An. 54 (4)

Bhikkhu Bodhi translation

"Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not skilled in the ways of others minds [should train]: I will be skilled in the ways of my own mind. It is in this way that you should train yourselves.

"And how is a bhikkhu skilled in the ways of his own mind? It is just as if a woman or a man- young, youthful, and fond of ornaments- would look at her or his own facial reflection in a clean bright mirror or in a bowl of clear Water. If they see any dust or blemish there, they will make an effort to remove it. But if they do not see any dust or blemish there, they will be glad about it, and their wish fulfilled, they will think, 'How fortunate for me that I'm clean!'

"So too, bhikkhus, self-examination is very helpful for a bhikkhu [to grow] in wholesome qualities:

"Do I gain internal serenity of mind or not? Do I gain the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena or not?"

(1) "If, by such self-examination, a bhikkhu knows: I gain internal serenity of mind but not the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena, he should base himself on internal serenity of mind and make an effort (to gain the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena.) Then, some time later, he gains both internal serenity of mind and the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena.

(2) "But if, by such self-examination, he knows: 'I gain the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena but not internal serenity of mind, he should base him self on the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena and make an effort to gain internal serenity of mind. Then, some time later, he gains both the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena and internal serenity of mind.

(3) "But if, by such self-examination, he knows: 'I gain neither internal serenity of mind nor the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena, he should put forth extraordinary desire, effort, zeal, enthusiasm , indefatigability, mindfulness, and clear comprehension to obtain both those wholesome qualities.

Just as one whose clothes or head had caught fire would put forth extraordinary desire, effort, zeal, enthusiasm , indefatigability, mindfulness, and clear comprehension to extinguish [the fire on] his clothes or head, so that bhikkhu should put forth extraordinary desire, effort, zeal, enthusiasm, indefatigability, mindfulness, and clear comprehension to obtain both of those wholesome qualities. Then, some time later, he gains both internal serenity of mind and the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena.

(4) "But if, by such self-examination, he knows: I gain both internal serenity of mind and the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena, he should base himself on those same wholesome qualities and make a further effort to reach the destruction of the taints...



From the Rahulavada Sutta - The Mirror

The Buddha asks Rahula if he knows what a mirror is for and Rahula replies "for reflection, sir."

The Buddha responds "In the same way your thoughts, words and deeds must be done with constant reflection.

Reflect in this manner, Rahula: '

Is this thought, word or deed skillful?

Will it lead to harm for myself or others, or will it lead to release?

Will this thought, word or deed bring more suffering for myself or others, or will it have a peaceful result?

If upon reflection your thoughts words and deeds will have peaceful results then this is fit for you and fit for a person developing understanding."

"Rahula, all those who purify their minds through continual reflection (mindfulness) will do so in just this way.

Rahula you should train yourself in just this way through continual mindfulness of your thoughts, words, and deeds."

The Metta Sutta - The Discourse On Love, translated by Thich Nhat Hanh

He or she who wants to attain peace should practice being upright, humble, and capable of using loving speech. He or she will know how to live simply and happily, with senses calmed, without being covetous and carried away by the emotions of the majority. Let him or her not do anything that will be disapproved of by the wise ones.

(And this is what he or she contemplates:)

May all beings be happy and safe, and may their hearts be filled with joy. May all living beings live in security and in Peace - beings who are frail or strong, tall or short, big or small, visible or not visible, near or far away, already born or yet to be born. May all of them dwell in perfect tranquility. Let no one do harm to anyone. Let no one put the life of anyone in danger. Let no one, out of anger or ill will, wish anyone any harm.

Just as a mother loves and protects her only child at the risk of her own life, we should cultivate Boundless Love to offer to all living beings in the entire cosmos. We should let our boundless love pervade the whole universe, above, below and across. Our love will know no obstacles, our heart will be absolutely free from hatred and enmity. Whether standing or walking, sitting or lying down, as long as we are awake, we should maintain this mindfulness of love in our own heart. This is the noblest way of living.

Free from wrong views, greed and sensual desires, living in beauty and realizing perfect understanding, those who practice Boundless Love will certainly transcend Birth and Death.

## The Cultivation of Loving Kindness

Having seen that like oneself  
all beings seek for happiness,  
one patiently then cultivates love for all beings

May all the precious children of this world  
be entirely well and at their ease...

May I be happy, healthy, and peaceful  
May I be free from suffering

May my family, friends,  
neutral ones, and all honored guests  
have every happiness  
May they be free from all suffering  
May they be free from all danger, and all difficulty

Within the boundaries of this town,  
may all beings have happiness  
Likewise those in other places,  
in other cities, and countries,  
in all places,  
may they all have happiness, health and peace

All creatures and all breathing things,  
all persons and all entities...  
men, women and children,  
the Noble Ones, the unawake,  
Devas, and unhappy ones  
who in the ten directions dwell -

*May all beings be happy and at peace,  
and may their hearts be filled with joy!*

The Kalama Sutta An., 3.65

With the Kālāmas of Kesamutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a town of the Kālāmas named Kesamutta. The Kālāmas of Kesamutta heard:

“It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Kesamutta. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ...’ It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

Then the Kālāmas went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. Seated to one side the Kālāmas said to the Buddha:

“There are, sir, some ascetics and brahmins who come to Kesamutta. They explain and promote only their own doctrine, while they attack, badmouth, disparage, and smear the doctrines of others. Then some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesamutta. They too explain and promote only their own doctrine, while they attack, badmouth, disparage, and smear the doctrines of others. So, sir, we’re doubting and uncertain: ‘I wonder who of these respected ascetics and brahmins speaks the truth, and who speaks falsehood?’”

“It is enough, Kālāmas, for you to be doubting and uncertain. Doubt has come up in you about an uncertain matter.

Please, Kālāmas, don’t go by oral transmission, don’t go by lineage, don’t go by testament, don’t go by canonical authority, don’t rely on logic, don’t rely on inference, don’t go by reasoned contemplation, don’t go by the

acceptance of a view after consideration, don't go by the appearance of competence, and don't think 'The ascetic is our respected teacher.' But when you know for yourselves: 'These things are unskillful, blameworthy, criticized by sensible people, and when you undertake them, they lead to harm and suffering', then you should give them up.

What do you think, Kālāmas? Does greed come up in a person for their welfare or harm?"

"Harm, sir."

"A greedy individual, overcome by greed, kills living creatures, steals, commits adultery, lies, and encourages others to do the same. Is that for their lasting harm and suffering?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think, Kālāmas? Does hate come up in a person for their welfare or harm?"

"Harm, sir."

"A hateful individual, overcome by hate, kills living creatures, steals, commits adultery, lies, and encourages others to do the same. Is that for their lasting harm and suffering?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think, Kālāmas? Does delusion come up in a person for their welfare or harm?"

"Harm, sir."

“A deluded individual, overcome by delusion, kills living creatures, steals, commits adultery, lies, and encourages others to do the same. Is that for their lasting harm and suffering?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas, are these things skillful or unskillful?”

“Unskillful, sir.”

“Blameworthy or blameless?”

“Blameworthy, sir.”

“Criticized or praised by sensible people?”

“Criticized by sensible people, sir.”

“When you undertake them, do they lead to harm and suffering, or not? Or how do you see this?”

“When you undertake them, they lead to harm and suffering. That’s how we see it.”

“So, Kālāmas, when I said: ‘Please, don’t go by oral transmission, don’t go by lineage, don’t go by testament, don’t go by canonical authority, don’t rely on logic, don’t rely on inference, don’t go by reasoned contemplation, don’t go by the acceptance of a view after consideration, don’t go by the appearance of competence, and don’t think “The ascetic is our respected teacher.” But when you know for yourselves: “These things are unskillful, blameworthy, criticized by sensible people, and when you undertake them, they lead to harm and suffering”, then you should give them up.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

Please, Kālāmas, don't go by oral transmission, don't go by lineage, don't go by testament, don't go by canonical authority, don't rely on logic, don't rely on inference, don't go by reasoned contemplation, don't go by the acceptance of a view after consideration, don't go by the appearance of competence, and don't think 'The ascetic is our respected teacher.' But when you know for yourselves: 'These things are skillful, blameless, praised by sensible people, and when you undertake them, they lead to welfare and happiness', then you should acquire them and keep them.

What do you think, Kālāmas? Does contentment come up in a person for their welfare or harm?"

"Welfare, sir."

"An individual who is content, not overcome by greed, doesn't kill living creatures, steal, commit adultery, lie, or encourage others to do the same. Is that for their lasting welfare and happiness?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think, Kālāmas? Does love come up in a person for their welfare or harm? ... Does understanding come up in a person for their welfare or harm? ... Is that for their lasting welfare and happiness?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think, Kālāmas, are these things skillful or unskillful?"

"Skillful, sir."

"Blameworthy or blameless?"

"Blameless, sir."

“Criticized or praised by sensible people?”

“Praised by sensible people, sir.”

“When you undertake them, do they lead to welfare and happiness, or not? Or how do you see this?”

“When you undertake them, they lead to welfare and happiness. That’s how we see it.”

“So, Kālāmas, when I said: ‘Please, don’t go by oral transmission, don’t go by lineage, don’t go by testament, don’t go by canonical authority, don’t rely on logic, don’t rely on inference, don’t go by reasoned contemplation, don’t go by the acceptance of a view after consideration, don’t go by the appearance of competence, and don’t think “The ascetic is our respected teacher.” But when you know for yourselves:

“These things are skillful, blameless, praised by sensible people, and when you undertake them, they lead to welfare and happiness”, then you should acquire them and keep them.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

Then that noble disciple is rid of desire, rid of ill will, unconfused, aware, and mindful. They meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of compassion to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.



They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of rejoicing to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

When that noble disciple has a mind that's free of enmity and ill will, uncorrupted and purified, they've won four consolations in the present life. 'If it turns out there is another world, and good and bad deeds have a result, then—when the body breaks up, after death—I'll be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' This is the first consolation they've won.

'If it turns out there is no other world, and good and bad deeds don't have a result, then in the present life I'll keep myself free of enmity and ill will, untroubled and happy.' This is the second consolation they've won.

'If it turns out that bad things happen to people who do bad things, then since I have no bad intentions, and since I'm not doing anything bad, how can suffering touch me?' This is the third consolation they've won.

'If it turns out that bad things don't happen to people who do bad things, then I still see myself pure on both sides.' This is the fourth consolation they've won.

When that noble disciple has a mind that's free of enmity and ill will, undefiled and purified, they've won these four consolations in the present life."

“That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! When that noble disciple has a mind that’s free of enmity and ill will, undefiled and purified, they’ve won these four consolations in the present life. ...

Excellent, sir! Excellent! ... We go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life.”

- Bhikkhu Sujato translation

Preface, and The Discourse on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness

From *Old Path, White Clouds*, by Thich Nhat Hanh

From Chapter Fifty-Three, *On The Satipatthana Sutta*

Dwelling in the Present Moment

In the spring of the following year, the Buddha delivered the Satipatthana Sutta, the Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, to a gathering of more than three hundred bhikkhus in Kammassadhamma, which was the capital of Kuru.

This was a sutra fundamental for the practice of meditation. The Buddha referred to it as the path which could help every person attain peace of body and mind, overcome all sorrows and lamentations, destroy suffering and grief, and attain highest understanding and total emancipation.

Later, Venerable Sariputta told the community that this was one of the most important sutras the Buddha had ever given. He encouraged every bhikkhu and bhikkhuni to study, memorize, and practice it.

Venerable Ananda repeated every word of the sutra later that night.

\* \* \*

(Afterwards) During a Dharma discussion, Venerable Assaji reminded the community that this was not the first time the Buddha had taught the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. He had, in fact, spoken about them on several occasions, but this was the first time he had compiled all of his previous teaching on the subject in so complete and thorough a way. Assaji agreed with Sariputta that this sutra should be memorized, recited, and practiced by every bhikkhu and bhikkhuni.

## The Discourse on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness

i.

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was living at Kammassadhamma, a market town of the Kuru people. The Buddha addressed the bhikkhus, “O bhikkhus.”

And the bhikkhus replied, “Venerable Lord.”

The Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, there is a most wonderful way to help living beings realize purification, overcome directly grief and sorrow, end pain and anxiety, travel the right path, and realize nirvana. This way is the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

“What are the Four Establishments?

1. “Bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
2. “He remains established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
3. “He remains established in the observation of the mind in the mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
4. “He remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.”

ii.

“And how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the body in the body?”

“She goes to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down cross-legged in the lotus position, holds her body straight, and establishes mindfulness in front of her. She breathes in, aware that she is breathing in. She breathes out, aware that she is breathing out. When she breathes in a long breath, she knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath.’ When she breathes out a long breath, she knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath.’ When she breathes in a short breath, she knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath.’ When she breathes out a short breath, she knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“She uses the following practice: ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I calm my body.’

“Just as a skilled potter knows when he makes a long turn on the wheel, ‘I am making a long turn,’ and knows when he makes a short turn, ‘I am making a short turn,’ so a practitioner, when she breathes in a long breath, knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath,’ and when she breathes in a short breath, knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath,’ when she breathes out a long breath, knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath,’ and when she breathes out a short breath, knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“She uses the following practice: ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I calm my body.’

“Moreover, when a practitioner walks, he is aware, ‘I am walking.’ When he is standing, he is aware, ‘I am standing.’ When he is sitting, he is aware, ‘I am sitting.’ When he is lying down, he is aware, ‘I am lying down.’ In

whatever position his body happens to be, he is aware of the position of his body.

“Moreover, when the practitioner is going forward or backward, he applies full awareness to his going forward or backward. When he looks in front or looks behind, bends down or stands up, he also applies full awareness to what he is doing. He applies full awareness to wearing the sanghati robe or carrying the alms bowl. When he eats or drinks, chews, or savors the food, he applies full awareness to all this. When passing excrement or urinating, he applies full awareness to this. When he walks, stands, lies down, sits, sleeps or wakes up, speaks or is silent, he shines his awareness on all this.

“Further, the practitioner meditates on her very own body from the soles of the feet upwards and then from the hair on top of the head downwards, a body contained inside the skin and full of all the impurities which belong to the body: ‘Here is the hair of the head, the hairs on the body, the nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.’

“Bhikkhus, imagine a sack which can be opened at both ends, containing a variety of grains — brown rice, wild rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame, white rice. When someone with good eyesight opens the bags, he will review it like this: ‘This is brown rice, this is wild rice, these are mung beans, these are kidney beans, these are sesame seeds, this is white rice.’ Just so the practitioner passes in review the whole of his body from the soles of the feet to the hair on the top of the head, a body enclosed in a layer of skin and full of all the impurities which belong to the body: ‘Here is the hair of the head, the hairs on the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.’

“Further, in whichever position her body happens to be, the practitioner passes in review the elements which constitute the body: ‘In this body is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

“As a skilled butcher or an apprentice butcher, having killed a cow, might sit at the crossroads to divide the cow into many parts, the practitioner passes in review the elements which comprise her very own body: ‘Here in this body are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he visualizes thrown onto a charnel ground and lying there for one, two, or three days- bloated, blue in color, and festering, and he observes-

*This body of mine is of the same nature. It will end up in the same way. There is no way it can avoid that state.*

Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he visualizes thrown onto a charnel ground

...pecked at by crows, eaten by hawks, vultures, and jackals, and infested with maggots and worms...

(then,) ...it is just a skeleton with a little flesh and blood sticking to it, and the bones are held together by the ligaments...

(then,) ... it is just a skeleton, no longer adhered to by any flesh, but still smeared by a little blood...

(then,) ... it is just a skeleton, no longer adhered to by any flesh nor smeared by any blood...

(then,) ... all that is left is a collection of bones scattered here and there; in one place a hand bone, in another a shin bone, a thigh bone, a pelvis, a spinal column, a skull...

(then,) ...all that is left is a collection of bleached bones, the color of shells...

(then,) ... it has been lying there for more than one year, and all that is left is a collection of dried bones...

(then,) all that is left is the dust which comes from the rotted bones...

and he observes-

*This body of mine is of the same nature. It will end up in the same way. There is no way it can avoid that state.*

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, observation of the body from within or from without, or both from within or from without. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.”



iii.

“Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings?”

“Whenever the practitioner has a pleasant feeling, she is aware, ‘I am experiencing a pleasant feeling.’ The practitioner practices like this for all the feelings, whether they are pleasant, painful, or neutral, observing when they belong to the body and when they belong to the mind.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, observation of the feelings from within or from without, or observation of the feelings both from within and from without. She remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the feelings or the process of dissolution in the feelings or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or she is mindful of the fact, ‘There is feeling here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. She remains established in the observation, free, not caught in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the feelings in the feelings, O bhikkhus.”

iv.

“Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the mind in the mind?”

“When his mind is desiring, the practitioner is aware, ‘My mind is desiring.’ When his mind is not desiring, he is aware, ‘My mind is not desiring.’ He is aware in the same way concerning a hating mind, a confused mind, a collected mind, a dispersed mind, an expansive mind, a narrow mind, the highest mind, and a concentrated and liberated mind.

This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the mind in the mind, observation of the mind from within or from without, or

observation of the mind both from within and from without. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the mind or the process of dissolution in the mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, 'There is mind here,' until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught in any worldly consideration. This is how to practice observation of the mind in the mind, O bhikkhus."

v.

"Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind?

"First of all, she observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Hindrances. How does she observe this?

"When sensual desire is present in her, she is aware, 'Sensual desire is present in me.' Or when sensual desire is not present in her, she is aware, 'Sensual desire is not present in me.' When sensual desire begins to arise, she is aware of it. When sensual desire that has already arisen is abandoned, she is aware of it. When sensual desire that has already been abandoned will not arise again in the future, she is aware of it.

"She practices in the same way concerning anger, dullness and drowsiness, agitation and remorse, and doubt.

"Further, the practitioner observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Aggregates of Clinging. How does she observe this?

"She observes like this: 'Such is form. Such is the arising of form. Such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling. Such is the arising of feeling. Such is the disappearance of feeling. Such is perception. Such is the arising

of perception. Such is the disappearance of perception. Such are mental formations. Such is the arising of mental formations. Such is the disappearance of mental formations. Such is consciousness. Such is the arising of consciousness. Such is the disappearance of consciousness.

“Further, bhikkhus, the practitioner observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the six sense organs and the six sense objects. How does she observe this?

“She is aware of the eyes and aware of the form, and she is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. She is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and she is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“She is aware in the same way of the ears and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and touch, the mind and objects of mind.

“Further, bhikkhus, the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Seven Factors of Awakening.

“How does he remain established in the practice of observation of the Seven Factors of Awakening?

“When the factor of awakening, mindfulness, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Mindfulness is present in me.’ When mindfulness is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Mindfulness is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born mindfulness is being born and when already-born mindfulness is perfectly developed.

“In the same way, he is aware of the factors of investigation, diligence, joy, ease, concentration, and equanimity.

“Further, bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Four Noble Truths.

“How, bhikkhus, does the practitioner remain established in the observation of the Four Noble Truths?

“A practitioner is aware ‘This is suffering,’ as it arises. She is aware, ‘This is the cause of the suffering,’ as it arises. She is aware, ‘This is the end of suffering,’ as it arises. She is aware, ‘This is the path which leads to the end of suffering,’ as it arises.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind either from within or from without, or both from within and from without. She remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in any of the objects of mind or the process of dissolution in the objects of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or she is mindful of the fact, ‘There is an object of mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. She remains established in the observation, free, not caught in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind, O bhikkhus.”

vi.

“Bhikkhus, he who practices the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for seven years can expect one of two fruits — the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone seven years, bhikkhus, whoever practices the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for six, five, four, three, two years or one year, for seven, six, five, four, three, or two months, one month or half a month, can also expect one of two fruits — either the highest

understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“That is why we said that this path, the path of the four grounds for the establishment of mindfulness, is the most wonderful path, which helps beings realize purification, transcend grief and sorrow, destroy pain and anxiety, travel the right path, and realize nirvana.”

The bhikkhus were delighted to hear the teaching of the Buddha. They took it to heart and began to put it into practice.

## The Discourse on the Full Awareness of Breathing

Preface - from *Old Path, White Clouds*, by Thich Nhat Hanh

Sometimes the Buddha or one of his senior disciples gave a Dharma talk at the bhikkhunis' monastery. Once a month, the bhikkhunis also attended Dharma discourses at Jetavana or Eastern Park. One year, thanks to a suggestion made by Venerable Sariputta, the Buddha extended the retreat season an extra month. Sariputta knew that by extending the retreat one month, many bhikkhus and bhikkhunis from distant centers would be able to travel to Savatthi for direct teaching from the Buddha after they had concluded the retreats at their own centers. And indeed, many came.

Lay patrons Sudatta, Visakha, and Mallika used all the means at their disposal to provide food and dwelling for nearly three thousand monks and nuns. The Pavarana ceremony, held at the end of each rainy-season retreat, fell on the full moon day of the month of Kattika that year, rather than Assayuja.

When the full moon day of Kattika arrived, *kumudi* flowers were blossoming everywhere. Because the kumudi, a white lotus, always blossomed at the same time each year, the full moon day of Kattika was called Kumudi Day.

That evening the Buddha and his three thousand disciples sat beneath the radiant full moon.

The delicate fragrance of lotus flowers drifted up from the lake. The bhikkhus and bhikkhunis sat silently as the Buddha looked out over the community, and praised them for their diligence.

The Buddha used this special occasion to deliver the Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing. That evening under the full moon, the Buddha delivered the Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing to 3,000 disciples.

Of course, every bhikkhu and bhikkhuni present had been taught the method of the awareness of breathing, but this was the first time that most of them had an opportunity to hear this teaching directly from the Buddha.

This was also the first time the Buddha compiled and summarized all his previous teachings on the awareness of breathing

Venerable Ananda listened intently, knowing that this sutra would be an important one to transmit to all the sangha.

The Discourse on the Full Awareness of Breathing, translated by Thich Nhat Hahn

I.

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was staying in Savatthi in the Eastern Park, with many well-known and accomplished disciples, including Sariputta, Mahamoggallana, Mahakassapa, Mahakacchayana, Mahakotthita, Mahakappina, Mahachunda, Anuradha, Revata, and Ananda. The senior bhikkhus in the community were diligently instructing bhikkhus who were new to the practice — some instructing ten bhikkhus, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty; and in this way the bhikkhus who were new to the practice gradually made great progress.

That night the moon was full, and the Pavarana Ceremony was held to mark the end of the rainy-season retreat. Lord Buddha, the Awakened One, was sitting in the open air, and his disciples were gathered around him. After looking over the assembly, he began to speak:

“O bhikkhus, I am pleased to observe the fruit you have attained in your practice. Yet I know you can make even more progress. What you have not yet attained, you can attain. What you have not yet realized, you can realize perfectly. [To engage your efforts,] I will remain here until the next full-moon day.”

When they heard that the Lord Buddha was going to remain in Savatthi for another month, bhikkhus throughout the country began traveling there to study with him. The senior bhikkhus continued teaching the bhikkhus new to the practice even more ardently. Some were instructing ten bhikkhus, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty. With this help, the newer bhikkhus were able, little by little, to continue their progress in understanding.



When the next full-moon day arrived, the Buddha, seated under the open sky, looked over the assembly of bhikkhus and began to speak:

‘O bhikkhus, our community is pure and good. At its heart, it is without useless and boastful talk, and therefore it deserves to receive offerings and be considered a field of merit. Such a community is rare, and any pilgrim who seeks it, no matter how far he must travel, will find it worthy.

‘O bhikkhus, there are bhikkhus in this assembly who have realized the fruit of Arhatship, destroyed every root of affliction, laid aside every burden, and attained right understanding and emancipation.

There are also bhikkhus who have cut off the first five internal knots and realized the fruit of never returning to the cycle of birth and death.

‘There are those who have thrown off the first three internal knots and realized the fruit of returning once more. They have cut off the roots of greed, hatred, and ignorance, and will only need to return to the cycle of birth and death one more time.

There are those who have thrown off the three internal knots and attained the fruit of stream-enterer, coursing steadily to the Awakened State.

There are those who practice the Four Establishments of Mindfulness-

Awareness of the body in the body, awareness of the feelings in the feelings, awareness of the mind in the mind, and awareness of the objects of the mind in the objects of the mind.

There are those who practice the Four Right Efforts-

Not to allow any occasion for wrongdoing to arise,  
Once it has arisen, to find a means to put an end to it,  
To cause right action to arise when it has not already arisen, and,

To find ways to develop right action and make it lasting once it has arisen.

and those who practice the Four Bases of Success-

of diligence, energy, full awareness, and penetration.

There are those who practice the Five Faculties,

of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.

and those who practice these as the Five Powers.

There are those who practice the Seven Factors of Awakening-

of full attention, the investigation of dharmas, energy, joy, ease, concentration, and letting go, or equanimity

and those who practice the Noble Eightfold Path.

There are those who practice loving kindness, those who practice compassion, those who practice joy, and those who practice equanimity.

There are those who practice the Nine Cemetery Contemplations-

The practice of contemplation on the nine stages of disintegration of a corpse, from the time it swells up to the time it becomes dust,

and those who practice the Observation of Impermanence.

There are also bhikkhus who are already practicing Full Awareness of Breathing.”

## II.

“O bhikkhus, the full awareness of breathing, if developed and practiced continuously, will be rewarding and bring great advantages. It will lead to success in practicing the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. If the method of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness is developed and practiced continuously, it will lead to success in the practice of the Seven Factors of Awakening. The Seven Factors of Awakening, if developed and practiced continuously, will give rise to understanding and liberation of the mind.

“What is the way to develop and practice continuously the method of Full Awareness of Breathing so that the practice will be rewarding and offer great benefit?

“It is like this, bhikkhus: the practitioner goes into the forest or to the foot of a tree, or to any deserted place, sits stably in the lotus position, holding his or her body quite straight, and practices like this: ‘Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.’

1. ‘Breathing in a long breath, I know I am breathing in a long breath. Breathing out a long breath, I know I am breathing out a long breath.

2. ‘Breathing in a short breath, I know I am breathing in a short breath. Breathing out a short breath, I know I am breathing out a short breath.

3. ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body.’ He or she practices like this.

4. ‘Breathing in, I calm my whole body. Breathing out, I calm my whole body.’ He or she practices like this.

5. ‘Breathing in, I feel joyful. Breathing out, I feel joyful.’ He or she practices like this.

6. 'Breathing in, I feel happy. Breathing out, I feel happy.' He or she practices like this.
7. 'Breathing in, I am aware of my mental formations. Breathing out, I am aware of my mental formations.' He or she practices like this.
8. 'Breathing in, I calm my mental formations. Breathing out, I calm my mental formations.' He or she practices like this.
9. 'Breathing in, I am aware of my mind. Breathing out, I am aware of my mind.' He or she practices like this.
10. 'Breathing in, I make my mind happy. Breathing out, I make my mind happy.' He or she practices like this.
11. 'Breathing in, I concentrate my mind. Breathing out, I concentrate my mind.' He or she practices like this.
12. 'Breathing in, I liberate my mind. Breathing out, I liberate my mind.' He or she practices like this.
13. 'Breathing in, I observe the impermanent nature of all dharmas. Breathing out, I observe the impermanent nature of all dharmas.' He or she practices like this.
14. 'Breathing in, I observe the disappearance of desire. Breathing out, I observe the disappearance of desire.' He or she practices like this.
15. 'Breathing in, I observe the no-birth, no-death nature of all phenomena. Breathing out, I observe the no-birth, no-death nature of all phenomena.' He or she practices like this.
16. 'Breathing in, I observe letting go. Breathing out, I observe letting go.' He or she practices like this.

“The Full Awareness of Breathing, if developed and practiced continuously according to these instructions, will be rewarding and of great benefit.”

III.

“In what way does one develop and continuously practice the Full Awareness of Breathing, in order to succeed in the practice of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness?”

“When the practitioner breathes in or out a long or a short breath, aware of his breath or his whole body, or aware that he is making his whole body calm and at peace, he abides peacefully in the observation of the body in the body, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. These exercises of breathing with Full Awareness belong to the First Establishment of Mindfulness, the body.

“When the practitioner breathes in or out aware of joy or happiness, of the mental formations, or to make the mental formations peaceful, he abides peacefully in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. These exercises of breathing with Full Awareness belong to the Second Establishment of Mindfulness, the feelings.

“When the practitioner breathes in or out with the awareness of the mind, or to make the mind happy, to collect the mind in concentration, or to free and liberate the mind, he abides peacefully in the observation of the mind in the mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. These exercises of breathing with Full Awareness belong to the Third Establishment of Mindfulness, the mind. Without Full Awareness of Breathing, there can be no development of meditative stability and understanding.

“When the practitioner breathes in or breathes out and contemplates the essential impermanence or the essential disappearance of desire or the no-birth, no-death nature of all phenomena or letting go, he abides peacefully in the observations of the objects of mind in the objects of mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. These exercises of breathing with Full Awareness belong to the Fourth Establishment of Mindfulness, the objects of mind.

“The practice of Full Awareness of Breathing, if developed and practiced continuously, will lead to perfect accomplishment of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.”

IV.

“Moreover, if they are developed and continuously practiced, the Four Establishments of Mindfulness will lead to perfect abiding in the Seven Factors of Awakening. How is this so?

“When the practitioner can maintain, without distraction, the practice of observing the body in the body, the feelings in the feelings, the mind in the mind, and the objects of mind in the objects of mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding her state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life, with unwavering, steadfast, imperturbable meditative stability, she will attain the First Factor of Awakening, namely mindfulness. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can abide in meditative stability without being distracted and can investigate every dharma, every object of mind that arises, then the Second Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in her, the factor of investigating dharmas. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can observe and investigate every dharma in a sustained, persevering, and steadfast way, without being distracted, the Third Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in her, the factor of energy. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner has reached a stable, imperturbable abiding in the stream of practice, the Fourth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in her, the factor of joy. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can abide undistractedly in the state of joy, she will feel her body and mind light and at peace. At this point the Fifth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed, the factor of ease. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When both body and mind are at ease, the practitioner can easily enter into concentration. At this point the Sixth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in her, the factor of concentration. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner is abiding in concentration with deep calm, she will cease discriminating and comparing. At this point the Seventh Factor of Awakening is released, born, and developed in her, the factor of letting go. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“This is how the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, if developed and practiced continuously, will lead to perfect abiding in the Seven Factors of Awakening.”

V.

“How will the Seven Factors of Awakening, if developed and practiced continuously, lead to the perfect accomplishment of true understanding and complete liberation?”

“If the practitioner follows the path of the Seven Factors of Awakening, living in quiet seclusion, observing and contemplating the disappearance of desire, he will develop the capacity of letting go. This will be a result of following the path of the Seven Factors of Awakening and will lead to the perfect accomplishment of true understanding and complete liberation.”

VI.

This is what the Lord, the Awakened One, said; and everyone in the assembly felt gratitude and delight at having heard his teachings.



Venerable Svasti had already heard the Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. He now felt that, thanks to this Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing, he could more deeply penetrate the Four Establishments. He saw how these two sutras complemented one another and how fundamental they both were to the practice of meditation.

Three thousand bhikkhus and bhikkhunis joyously received the Buddha's teaching that night beneath the light of the full moon. Svasti's heart filled with gratitude to Venerable Sariputta for having made this night possible.

The Luminous Mind, the Pabhassara Sutta, AN 1.49-52,

Bhikkhus, this mind is luminous, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. The uninstructed worldling does not understand this as it really is, therefore I say that for the uninstructed worldling there is no development of the mind.

Bhikkhus, this mind is luminous, and it can be freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed noble disciple understands this as it really is, therefore I say that for the instructed noble disciple there is development of the mind.

From The Simile of the Cloth, Majjhima Nikaya 7

Translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera, revised

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, at Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed the monks thus:

Monks -

Venerable sir, they replied.

The Blessed One said this:

Monks, suppose a cloth were stained and dirty, and a dyer dipped it in some dye or other, whether blue or yellow or red or pink, it would take the dye badly and be impure in color. And why is that? Because the cloth was not clean.

So too, monks, when the mind is defiled, an unhappy destination [in a future existence] may be expected.

Monks, suppose a cloth were clean and bright, and a dyer dipped it in some dye or other, whether blue or yellow or red or pink, it would take the dye well and be pure in color. And why is that? Because the cloth was clean.

So too, monks, when the mind is undefiled, a happy destination [in a future existence] may be expected.

And what, monks, are the defilements of the mind?

Covetousness and greed,

ill will and anger,

hostility, denigration, being domineering,

envy, jealousy, hypocrisy,

fraud, obstinacy, presumption,

conceit, arrogance, vanity, and negligence

are the defilements of the mind.

Knowing, these to be defilements of the mind, the monk abandons them.

Having abandoned them, he thereupon gains unwavering confidence in the Buddha thinking:

Thus indeed is the Blessed One: he is accomplished, fully enlightened, endowed with [clear] vision and [virtuous] conduct, sublime, knower of the worlds, the incomparable guide of those who are able to learn, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed.'

He gains unwavering confidence in the Dhamma thinking:

Well proclaimed by the Blessed One is the Dhamma, realizable here and now, possessed of immediate result, bidding you come and see, accessible and knowable individually by the wise.

And he gains unwavering confidence in the Sangha thinking:

The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples has entered on the good way, has entered on the straight way, has entered on the true way, has entered on the proper way; that is to say, the four pairs of men, the eight types of persons;

this Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the incomparable field of merit for the world.'

When he has given up, renounced, let go, abandoned and relinquished [the defilements] in part, he knows:

I am endowed with unwavering confidence in the Buddha, in the Dhamma, and in the Sangha; and he gains enthusiasm for the goal, gains enthusiasm for the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma.

When he is gladdened, joy is born in him; being joyous in mind, his body becomes tranquil; his body being tranquil, he feels happiness; and the mind of him who is happy becomes concentrated.

Just as cloth that is stained and dirty becomes clean and bright with the help of pure water, or just as gold becomes clean and bright with the help of a furnace, so too, it may be said of a monk of such virtue, such concentration and such wisdom- his mind becomes clean and bright.

Then he abides, having suffused with a mind of loving-kindness towards one direction of the world, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth, and so above, below, around and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides suffusing the entire universe with loving-kindness, with a mind grown great, lofty, boundless and free from enmity and ill will.

He abides, having suffused with a mind of compassion... of sympathetic joy... of equanimity towards one direction of the world, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth, and so above, below, around and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides suffusing the entire universe with equanimity, with a mind grown great, lofty, boundless and free from enmity and ill will.

He understands what exists, what is low, what is excellent, and what escape there is from this [whole] of samsara.

"When he knows and sees in this way, his mind becomes liberated from the afflictions related to sense desire, liberated from the afflictions related to becoming, and liberated from the afflictions related to ignorance.

When liberated, there is knowledge: 'It is liberated'; and he knows: 'Birth is exhausted, the life of purity has been lived, the task is done, there is no more of this to come.'

Such a monk is called 'one bathed with the inner bathing'-

{thoroughly purified, and resplendent}.

The Sangarava Sutta - On the Hindrances, translated by Maurice Walshe

SN 46.55

[At Saavatthii, the Brahman Sangaarava asked the Buddha:] "Why is it, good Gotama, how does it come about that sometimes sacred words[1] I have long studied are not clear to me, not to mention those I have not studied? And how is it too that sometimes other sacred words that I have not so studied are clear to me, not to mention those I have studied?"

"Well, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by sense-desires, and does not know, as it really is, the way of escape from those sense-desires that have arisen, then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, nor can he know and see what is to the profit of others, or of both himself and others, and even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has not studied.

"Imagine, Brahman, a bowl of water mixed with red, yellow, blue, or crimson dye. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was.

In the same way, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by sense-desires... then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both; and even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has not studied.

"Again, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed with anger.. then he cannot know or see...

"Imagine a bowl of water, heated on a fire, boiling up and bubbling over. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

"Again, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by dullness and drowsiness... then he cannot know or see...

"Imagine a bowl of water covered over with slimy moss and water-plants. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

"Again, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by restlessness and worry... then he cannot know or see...

"Imagine a bowl of water ruffled by the wind, so that the water trembled, eddied and rippled. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

"Again, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by doubt-and-wavering... he cannot know or see...

"Imagine a bowl of water, agitated, stirred up muddied, put in a dark place. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was.

In the same way, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by doubt-and-wavering... then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both; and even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has not studied.

But, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart *not* possessed, *not* overwhelmed by sense-desires... anger... dullness and drowsiness... restlessness and worry, or doubt-and-wavering... not as previously described, but is like water that is clear, limpid, and set out in the open... then he knows and sees, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both himself and others, and even sacred



words he has not long studied are clear to him, not to mention those he has studied."

## The Refinement of the Mind

"There are, O monks, gross impurities in gold, such as earth and sand, gravel and grit. Now the goldsmith or his apprentice first pours the gold into a trough and washes, rinses, and cleans it thoroughly. When he has done this, there still remain moderate impurities in the gold, such as fine grit and coarse sand. Then the goldsmith or his apprentice washes, rinses, and cleans it again. When he has done this, there still remain minute impurities in the gold, such as fine sand and black dust. Now the goldsmith or his apprentice repeats the washing, and thereafter only the gold dust remains.

"He now pours the gold into a melting pot, smelts it, and melts it together. But he does not yet take it out from the vessel, as the dross has not yet been entirely removed and the gold is not yet quite pliant, workable, and bright; it is still brittle and does not yet lend itself easily to molding.

But a time comes when the goldsmith or his apprentice repeats the melting thoroughly, so that the flaws are entirely removed. The gold is now quite pliant, workable, and bright, and it lends itself easily to molding. Whatever ornament the goldsmith now wishes to make of it, be it a diadem, earrings, a necklace, or a golden chain, the gold can now be used for that purpose.

"It is similar, monks, with a monk devoted to the training in the higher mind: there are in him gross impurities, namely, bad conduct of body, speech, and mind. Such conduct an earnest, capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, and abolishes.

"When he has abandoned these, there are still impurities of a moderate degree that cling to him, namely, sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of harming. Such thoughts an earnest, capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, and abolishes.

"When he has abandoned these, there are still some subtle impurities that cling to him, namely, thoughts about his relatives, his home country, and his reputation. Such thoughts an earnest, capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, and abolishes.

"When he has abandoned these, there still remain thoughts about the teaching 16 That concentration is not yet peaceful and sublime; it has not attained to full tranquillity, nor has it achieved mental unification; it is maintained by strenuous suppression of the defilements.

"But there comes a time when his mind becomes inwardly steadied, composed, unified, and concentrated. That concentration is then calm and refined; it has attained to full tranquillity, and achieved mental unification; it is not maintained by strenuous suppression of the defilements.

"Then, to whatever mental state realizable by direct knowledge he directs his mind, he achieves the capacity of realizing that state by direct knowledge, whenever the necessary conditions obtain...

The Removal of Distracting Thoughts, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is pursuing the higher mind, from time to time he should give attention to five signs. What are the five?

3. (i) "Here, bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign there arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should give attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome. When he gives attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him, and subside. With the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

Just as a skilled carpenter or his apprentice might knock out, remove, and extract a coarse peg by means of a fine one, so too ... when a bhikkhu gives attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome ... his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

4. (ii) "If, while he is giving attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should examine the danger in those thoughts thus: 'These thoughts are unwholesome, they are reprehensible, they result in suffering.' When he examines the danger in those thoughts, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are

abandoned in him, and subside. With the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

Just as a man or a woman, young, youthful, and fond of ornaments, would be horrified, humiliated, and disgusted if the carcass of a snake, or a dog, or a human being were hung around his or her neck, so too ... when a bhikkhu examines the danger in those thoughts ... his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

5. (iii) "If, while he is examining the danger in those thoughts, there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should try to forget those thoughts, and should not give attention to them. When he tries to forget those thoughts, and does not give attention to them, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him, and subside. With the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

Just as a man with good eyes who did not want to see forms that had come within range of sight would either shut his eyes, or look away, so too ... when a bhikkhu tries to forget those thoughts, and does not give attention to them ... his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

6. (iv) "If, while he is trying to forget those thoughts, and is not giving attention to them, there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should give attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts. When he gives attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him, and subside. With the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

Just as a man walking fast might consider: ‘Why am I walking fast? What if I walk slowly?’ and he would walk slowly; then he might consider: ‘Why am I walking slowly? What if I stand?’ and he would stand; then he might consider: ‘Why am I standing? What if I sit?’ and he would sit; then he might consider: ‘Why am I sitting? What if I lie down?’ and he would lie down.

By doing so he would substitute for each grosser posture one that was subtler. So too ... when a bhikkhu gives attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts ... his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

7. (v) “If, while he is giving attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts, there still arise in him, evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then, with his teeth clenched, and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he should beat down, constrain, and crush mind with mind. When, with his teeth clenched, and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him, and subside. With the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

Just as a strong man might seize a weaker man by the head or shoulders and beat him down, constrain him, and crush him, so too ... when, with his teeth clenched, and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, a bhikkhu beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind ... his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

8. “Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign there arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then when he gives attention to some

other sign connected with what is wholesome, any such evil, unwholesome thoughts are abandoned in him and subside, and with the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

When he examines the danger in those thoughts...

When he tries to forget those thoughts and does not give attention to them...

When he gives attention to stilling the thought-formation of those thoughts...

and when, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind, any such evil, unwholesome thoughts are abandoned in him ... and his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated.

This bhikkhu is then called a master of the courses of thought. He will think whatever thought he wishes to think, and he will not think any thought that he does not wish to think. He has severed craving, flung off the fetters, and with the complete penetration of conceit he has made an end of suffering."

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied, and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

## The Discourse on the Five Ways of Putting an End to Anger

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was staying in the Anathapindika Monastery in the Jeta Grove near the town of Shravasti.

One day the Venerable Shariputra said to the monks, “Friends, today I want to share with you five ways of putting an end to anger. Please listen carefully, and put into practice what I teach.”

The bhikshus agreed, and listened carefully.

The Venerable Shariputra then said, “What are these five ways of putting an end to anger?”

“This is the first way: My friends, if there is someone whose bodily actions are not kind, but whose words are kind, if you feel anger toward that person, but you are wise, you will know how to meditate in order to put an end to your anger.

“My friends, say there is a bhikshu practicing asceticism who wears a patchwork robe. One day he is going past a garbage pile filled with excrement, urine, mucus, and many other filthy things, and he sees in the pile one piece of cloth still intact. Using his left hand, he picks up the piece of cloth, and he takes the other end and stretches it out with his right hand.

He observes that this piece of cloth is not torn and has not been stained by excrement, urine, sputum, or other kinds of filth. So he folds it and puts it away to take home, wash, and sew into his patchwork robe.

My friends, if we are wise, when someone’s bodily actions are not kind, but his words are kind, we should not pay attention to his unkind bodily actions, but only be attentive to his kind words. This will help us put an end to our anger.



“My friends, this is the second method: If you become angry with someone whose words are not kind, but whose bodily actions are kind, if you are wise, you will know how to meditate in order to put an end to your anger.

“My friends, say that not far from the village there is a deep lake, and the surface of that lake is covered with algae and grass. There is someone who comes near that lake who is very thirsty, suffering greatly from the heat. He takes off his clothes, jumps into the water, and using his hands to clear away the algae and grass, enjoys bathing and drinking the cool water of the lake.

It is the same, my friends, with someone whose words are not kind, but whose bodily actions are kind. Do not pay attention to that person’s words. Only be attentive to his bodily actions in order to be able to put an end to your anger. Someone who is wise should practice in this way.

“Here is the third method, my friends: If there is someone whose bodily actions and words are not kind, but who still has a little kindness in his heart, if you feel anger toward that person and are wise, you will know how to meditate to put an end to your anger.

“My friends, say there is someone going to a crossroads. She is weak, thirsty, poor, hot, deprived, and filled with sorrow. When she arrives at the crossroads, she sees a buffalo’s footprint with a little stagnant rainwater in it. She thinks to herself, ‘There is very little water in this buffalo’s footprint. If I use my hand or a leaf to scoop it up, I will stir it up, and it will become muddy and undrinkable. Therefore, I will have to kneel down with my arms and knees on the earth, put my lips right to the water, and drink it directly.’ Straightaway, she does just that.

My friends, when you see someone whose bodily actions and words are not kind, but where there is still a little kindness in her heart, do not pay attention to her actions and words, but to the little kindness that is in her

heart, so that you may put an end to your anger. Someone who is wise should practice in that way.

“This is the fourth method, my friends: If there is someone whose words and bodily actions are not kind, and in whose heart there is nothing that can be called kindness, if you are angry with that person and you are wise, you will know how to meditate in order to put an end to your anger.

“My friends, suppose there is someone on a long journey who falls sick. He is alone, completely exhausted, and not near any village. He falls into despair, knowing that he will die before completing his journey. If at that point, someone comes along and sees this man’s situation, she immediately takes the man’s hand and leads him to the next village, where she takes care of him, treats his illness, and makes sure he has everything he needs by way of clothes, medicine, and food. Because of this compassion and loving kindness, the man’s life is saved.

Just so, my friends, when you see someone whose words and bodily actions are not kind, and in whose heart there is nothing that can be called kindness, give rise to this thought:

‘Someone whose words and bodily actions are not kind and in whose heart is nothing that can be called kindness, is someone who is undergoing great suffering. Unless he meets a good spiritual friend, there will be no chance for him to transform, and go to realms of happiness.’

Thinking like this, you will be able to open your heart with love and compassion toward that person. You will be able to put an end to your anger and help that person. Someone who is wise should practice like this.

“My friends, this is the fifth method: If there is someone whose bodily actions are kind, whose words are kind, and whose mind is also kind, if you are angry with that person and you are wise, you will know how to meditate in order to put an end to your anger.

“My friends, suppose that not far from the village there is a very beautiful lake. The water in the lake is clear and sweet, the bed of the lake is even, the banks of the lake are lush with green grass, and all around the lake, beautiful fresh trees give shade.

Someone who is thirsty, suffering from heat, whose body is covered in sweat, comes to the lake, takes off his clothes, leaves them on the shore, jumps down into the water, and finds great comfort and enjoyment in drinking and bathing in the pure water. His heat, thirst, and suffering disappear immediately.

In the same way, my friends, when you see someone whose bodily actions are kind, whose words are kind, and whose mind is also kind, give your attention to all his kindness of body, speech, and mind, and do not allow anger or jealousy to overwhelm you. If you do not know how to live happily with someone who is as fresh as that, you cannot be called someone who has wisdom.

“My dear friends, I have shared with you the five ways of putting an end to anger.”

When the bhikshus heard the Venerable Shariputra’s words, they were happy to receive them and put them into practice.

The Higher Stages of Training, from In the Buddha's Words, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Having abandoned these five hindrances, defilements of the mind that weaken wisdom, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters and dwells in the first jhana, which is accompanied by thought and examination, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.

He makes the rapture and happiness born of seclusion drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the rapture and happiness born of seclusion.

Just as a skilled bath man, or a bath man's apprentice heaps bath powder in a metal basin, and, sprinkling it gradually with water, kneads it until the moisture wets his ball of bath powder, soaks it, and pervades it inside and out, yet the ball itself does not ooze; so too, a monk makes the rapture and happiness born of seclusion drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the rapture and happiness born of seclusion.

Again, monks, with the subsiding of thought and examination, he enters and dwells in the second jhana, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without thought and examination, and has rapture and happiness born of concentration.

He makes the rapture and happiness born of concentration drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the rapture and happiness born of concentration.

Just as though there were a lake whose waters welled up from below, and it had no inflow from east, west, north, or south, and would not be replenished from time to time by showers of rain, then the cool fount of water welling up in the lake would make the cool water drench, steep, fill,

and pervade the lake, so that there would be no part of the whole lake that is not pervaded by cool water; so too, a monk makes the rapture and happiness born of concentration drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the rapture and happiness born of concentration.

Again, monks, with the fading away as well of rapture, he dwells equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences happiness with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhana of which the noble ones declare: 'He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.'

He makes the happiness divested of rapture drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the happiness divested of rapture.

Just as, in a pond of blue, or red, or white lotuses, some lotuses that are born and grow in the water thrive immersed in the water without rising out of it, and cool water drenches, steeps, fills, and pervades them to their tips and their roots, so that there is no part of all those lotuses that is not pervaded by cool water; so too, a monk makes the happiness divested of rapture drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the happiness divested of rapture.

Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and dejection, a monk enters upon and dwells in the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

He sits pervading this body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the pure bright mind.

Just as though a man were sitting covered from the head down with a white cloth, so that there would be no part of his whole body that is not

pervaded by the white cloth; so too, a monk sits pervading this body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his whole body that is not pervaded by the pure bright mind.

When his mind is thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilements, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the recollection of past lives.

He recollects his manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births... Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives.

Just as a man might go from his own village to another village and then back again to his own village, he might think: 'I went from my own village to that village, and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, spoke in such a way, kept silent in such a way; and from that village I went to that other village, and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, spoke in such a way, kept silent in such a way; and from that village I came back again to my own village.'

So too, a monk recollects his manifold past lives.... Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives.

When his mind is thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilements, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings...

Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions.

Just as though there were two houses with doors and a man with good sight standing there between them saw people entering the houses and coming out, and passing to and fro, so too, with the divine eye, which is

purified and surpasses the human, a monk sees beings passing away and being reborn ... and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions.

When his mind is thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilements, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the destruction of the defilements.

"Just as if there were a lake in a mountain recess, clear, limpid, and undisturbed, so that a man with good sight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting, he might think:

'There is this lake, clear, limpid, and undisturbed, and there are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.'

So too, a monk understands as it actually is: 'This is suffering'... 'This is the cause of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering'... and 'This is the Path leading to the cessation of suffering'...

He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.'

(from MN 39: the Maha Assapura Sutta; I 274-80)

## Happiness and Joy - Anguttara Nikaya 6.78

{This version is based on a teaching by Ajahn Pasanno}

Possessing six qualities, one will experience happiness and joy in this present life, and also lay the foundation for happiness in the future, due to ending the defilements.

What are the six?

Here, one delights in the Dhamma,

delights in meditation,

delights in letting go,

delights in solitude,

delights in kindness,

and delights in non-proliferation.

Possessing these six qualities, one will experience happiness and joy in this present life, and also lay the foundation for happiness in the future, due to ending the defilements.



The Appamada Sutta, Anguttara 7.31, Bhikkhu Bodhi translation

### On Heedfulness

Then, when the night had advanced, a certain deity of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, stood to one side, and said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, there are these seven qualities that lead to the non-decline of a bhikkhu. What seven?”

Reverence for the Teacher,

reverence for the Dhamma,

reverence for the Saṅgha,

reverence for the training,

reverence for concentration,

reverence for heedfulness,

and reverence for hospitality.

These seven qualities lead to the nondecline of a bhikkhu.”

This is what that deity said. The Teacher agreed. Then that deity, [thinking]: “The Teacher agrees with me,” paid homage to the Blessed One, circumambulated him keeping the right side toward him, and disappeared right there.

Then, when the night had passed, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus:

“Last night, bhikkhus, when the night had advanced, a certain deity of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta’s Grove, approached me, paid homage to me, stood to one side, and said to me:

‘Bhante, there are these seven qualities that lead to the nondecline of a bhikkhu. What seven? Reverence for the Teacher, reverence for the Dhamma, reverence for the Saṅgha, reverence for the training, reverence for concentration, reverence for heedfulness, and reverence for hospitality.. These seven qualities lead to the non-decline of a bhikkhu.’

This is what that deity said. Then that deity paid homage to me, circumambulated me keeping the right side toward me, and disappeared right there.”

*Respectful toward the Teacher,  
respectful toward the Dhamma,  
deeply revering the Sangha,*

*respectful toward concentration, ardent,  
deeply respectful toward the training,*

*respectful toward heedfulness,  
holding hospitality in reverence:  
this bhikkhu cannot fall away,  
but is close to nibbana.*

## The Heartwood of the Spiritual Life

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rājagaha on Mount Vulture Peak; it was soon after Devadatta had left. There, referring to Devadatta, the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

2. “Monks, here some clansman goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, considering: ‘I am a victim of birth, aging, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair; I am a victim of suffering, a prey to suffering. Surely an ending of this whole mass of suffering can be known.’ When he has gone forth thus, he acquires *gain, honor, and renown*. He is pleased with that gain, honor, and renown, and his intention is fulfilled.

On account of it, he lauds himself and disparages others thus: ‘I obtain gain and renown, but these other monks are unknown, of no account.’ He becomes intoxicated with that gain, honor, and renown, grows negligent, falls into negligence, and, being negligent, he lives in suffering.

“Suppose a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood. Passing over its heartwood, its sapwood, its inner bark, and its outer bark, he would cut off its twigs and leaves and take them away, thinking they were heartwood.

Then a man with good sight, seeing him, might say: ‘This good man did not know the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, the outer bark, or the twigs and leaves. Thus, while needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, he came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood, and, passing over its heartwood, its sapwood, its inner bark, and its outer bark, he cut off its twigs and leaves and took them away thinking they were heartwood. Whatever it was this good man had to make with heartwood, his purpose will not be served.’

So too is it with this monk who becomes intoxicated with that gain, honor, and renown. This monk is called one who has taken the twigs and leaves of the spiritual life, and stopped short with that.

3. "Here, monks, some clansman goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness... When he has gone forth thus, he acquires gain, honor, and renown. He is not pleased with that gain, honor, and renown, and his intention is not fulfilled. He does not, on account of it, laud himself and disparage others. He does not become intoxicated with that gain, honor, and renown; he does not grow negligent and fall into negligence. Being diligent, he achieves the attainment of *moral discipline*. He is pleased with that attainment of moral discipline and his intention is fulfilled.

On account of it, he lauds himself and disparages others thus: 'I have moral discipline; I am of good character; but these other monks are immoral, of bad character.' He becomes intoxicated with that attainment of moral discipline, grows negligent, falls into negligence, and, being negligent, he lives in suffering.

"Suppose a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood. Passing over its heartwood, its sapwood, and its inner bark, he would cut off its outer bark and take it away, thinking it was heartwood.

Then a man with good sight, seeing him, might say: 'This good man did not know the heartwood... Thus, while needing heartwood, he cut off its outer bark and took it away thinking it was heartwood. Whatever it was this good man had to make with heartwood, his purpose will not be served.'

So too is it with this monk who becomes intoxicated with that attainment of moral discipline. This monk is called one who has taken the outer bark of the spiritual life, and stopped short with that.

4. "Here, monks, some clansman goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness... When he has gone forth thus, he acquires gain, honor, and renown. He is not pleased with that gain, honor, and renown, and his intention is not fulfilled.... Being diligent, he achieves the attainment of moral discipline. He is pleased with that attainment of moral discipline, but his intention is not fulfilled.

He does not, on account of it, laud himself and disparage others. He does not become intoxicated with that attainment of moral discipline; he does not grow negligent and fall into negligence. Being diligent, he achieves the attainment of *concentration*. He is pleased with that attainment of concentration and his intention is fulfilled.

On account of it, he lauds himself and disparages others thus: 'I am concentrated; my mind is unified; but these other monks are scatter-minded, with their minds astray.' He becomes intoxicated with that attainment of concentration, grows negligent, falls into negligence, and, being negligent, he lives in suffering.

"Suppose a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood. Passing over its heartwood and its sapwood, he would cut off its inner bark and take it away thinking it was heartwood.

Then a man with good sight, seeing him, might say: 'This good man did not know the heartwood... Thus, while needing heartwood, he cut off its inner bark and took it away, thinking it was heartwood. Whatever it was this good man had to make with heartwood, his purpose will not be served.'

So too is it with this monk who becomes intoxicated with that attainment of concentration. This monk is called one who has taken the inner bark of the spiritual life, and stopped short with that.

5. "Here, monks, some clansman goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness... When he has gone forth thus, he acquires gain, honor, and renown. He is not pleased with that gain, honor, and renown, and his intention is not fulfilled.... Being diligent, he achieves the attainment of moral discipline. He is pleased with that attainment of moral discipline, but his intention is not fulfilled....

Being diligent, he achieves the attainment of concentration. He is pleased with that attainment of concentration, but his intention is not fulfilled. He does not, on account of it, laud himself and disparage others. He does not become intoxicated with that attainment of concentration; he does not grow negligent and fall into negligence. Being diligent, he achieves *knowledge and vision*. He is pleased with that knowledge and vision, and his intention is fulfilled.

On account of it, he lauds himself and disparages others thus: 'I live knowing and seeing, but these other monks live unknowing and unseeing.' He becomes intoxicated with that knowledge and vision, grows negligent, falls into negligence, and being negligent, he lives in suffering.

"Suppose a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood. Passing over its heartwood, he would cut off its sapwood and take it away thinking it was heartwood.

Then a man with good sight, seeing him, might say: 'This good man did not know the heartwood... Thus, while needing heartwood, he cut off its sapwood and took it away, thinking it was heartwood. Whatever it was this good man had to make with heartwood, his purpose will not be served.'

So too is it with this monk who becomes intoxicated with that knowledge and vision. This monk is called one who has taken the sapwood of the spiritual life, and stopped short with that.

6. "Here, monks, some clansman goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness... When he has gone forth thus, he acquires gain, honor, and renown. He is not pleased with that gain, honor, and renown, and his intention is not fulfilled.... When he is diligent, he achieves the attainment of moral discipline. He is pleased with that attainment of moral discipline, but his intention is not fulfilled....

When he is diligent, he achieves the attainment of concentration. He is pleased with that attainment of concentration, but his intention is not fulfilled. ... When he is diligent, he achieves knowledge and vision. He is pleased with that knowledge and vision, but his intention is not fulfilled.

He does not, on account of it, laud himself and disparage others. He does not become intoxicated with that knowledge and vision; he does not grow negligent and fall into negligence. Being diligent, he attains *perpetual emancipation*, and it is impossible for that monk to fall away from that perpetual liberation.

"Suppose a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood, and cutting off only its heartwood, he would take it away knowing it was heartwood.

Then a man with good sight, seeing him, might say: 'This good man knew the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, the outer bark, and the twigs and leaves. Thus, while needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, he came to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood, and cutting off only its heartwood, he took it away knowing it was heartwood. Whatever it was this good man had to make with heartwood, his purpose will be served.'

So too is it with this monk who attains perpetual liberation.

“So this spiritual life, monks, does not have *gain, honor, and renown* for its benefit, or the attainment of *moral discipline* for its benefit, or the attainment of *concentration* for its benefit, or *knowledge and vision* for its benefit, but it is this *unshakable liberation of mind* that is the goal of this spiritual life, its heartwood, and its end.”

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

(MN 29: Mahāsāropama Sutta; I 192-97)



## The Anuruddha Sutta

Anguttara Nikaya 8.30, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi; edited

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Bhaggas in Suṃsumāragira in the deer park at Bhesakalā Grove.

Now on that occasion the Venerable Anuruddha dwelled among the Cetis, in the eastern bamboo park. While the Venerable Anuruddha was alone in seclusion, a course of thought arose in his mind thus:

- (1) "This Dhamma is for one with few desires, not for one with strong desires.
- (2) This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.
- (3) This Dhamma is for one who resorts to solitude, not for one who delights in company.
- (4) This Dhamma is for one who is energetic, not for one who is lazy.
- (5) This Dhamma is for one with mindfulness established, not for one who is forgetful, and muddle-minded.
- (6) This Dhamma is for one who is concentrated, not for one who is unconcentrated.

And,

- (7) This Dhamma is for one who is wise, not for one who is unwise."

The Blessed One knew with his own mind the course of thought in the Venerable Anuruddha's mind. Then, just as a strong man might extend his drawn-in arm, or draw in his extended arm, the Blessed One disappeared

from among the Bhaggas at Suṃsumāragira, in the deer park at Bhesakalā Grove, and reappeared before the Venerable Anuruddha, among the Cetis, in the eastern bamboo park.

The Blessed One sat down on the seat prepared for him. The Venerable Anuruddha then paid homage to him and sat down to one side, and the Blessed One said to him:

“Well done, Anuruddha! Well done! It is good that you have reflected on these seven thoughts of a great person...

Now, Anuruddha, you should also reflect on this eighth thought of a great person:

(8) ‘This Dhamma is for one who delights in non-proliferation, not for one who delights in proliferation.’

“When, Anuruddha, you reflect on these eight thoughts of a great person, then, as much as you wish, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, you will enter and dwell in the first jhāna, which consists of the joy and ease born of seclusion, accompanied by the initial application of the mind, and the effort made to continue awareness.

“When you reflect on these eight thoughts of a great person, then, as much as you wish, with the subsiding of the initial application of mind, and the effort made to continue being aware, you will enter and dwell in the second jhāna, which has peace and the unification of mind, along with the joy and ease born of concentration.

“When you reflect on these eight thoughts of a great person, then, as much as you wish, with the fading away as well of the more exuberant joy, you will dwell equanimous, mindful and clearly comprehending. You will experience pleasure with the body, and you will enter and dwell in the

third jhāna of which the noble ones declare: ‘He is equanimous, mindful, and one who dwells happily.’

When you reflect upon these eight thoughts of a great person, then, as much as you wish, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and sadness, you will enter and dwell in the fourth jhana, neither painful nor pleasant, which has purification of mindfulness by equanimity...

“Therefore, Anuruddha, you should also spend the next rains residence right here among the Cetis, in the eastern bamboo park.”

“Yes, Bhante,” the Venerable Anuruddha replied...

Thereupon the Venerable Anuruddha spent the next rains residence right there among the Cetis, in the eastern bamboo park. Dwelling alone, withdrawn, heedful, ardent, and resolute, in no long time the Venerable Anuruddha realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the spiritual life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness, and having entered upon it, he dwelled in it.

He directly knew: “Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done. There is no more coming back to any state of being,” and the Venerable Anuruddha became one of the arahants.

On that occasion, when he had attained arahantship, the Venerable Anuruddha spoke these verses:

*“Having understood my thoughts,  
the unsurpassed teacher in the world  
came to me by psychic potency,  
in a mind-made body.*

*“He taught me more  
than my thoughts contained:  
the Buddha, delighting in non-proliferation,  
instructed me in non-proliferation.*

*“Having learned his Dhamma,  
I delighted in his teaching.*

*I have gained the three true knowledges-  
the knowledge of past lives,  
the knowledge of the arising and passing away of beings,  
and the knowledge of the end of the defilements.*

*The Buddha’s teaching has been accomplished.”*

## The Parable of the Simsapa Leaves - Saṃyutta Nikāya 56.31

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Kosambi in a simsapa grove. Then the Blessed One took up a few simsapa leaves in his hand and addressed the bhikkhus thus: “What do you think, bhikkhus, which are more numerous: these few simsapa leaves that I have taken up in my hand or those in this whole simsapa grove?”

“Venerable sir, the simsapa leaves that the Blessed One has taken up in his hand are few, but those in this whole simsapa grove are numerous.”

“So too, bhikkhus, the things I have directly known but have not taught you are numerous, while the things I have taught you are few. And why, bhikkhus, have I not taught those many things? Because they are unbeneficial to know, or irrelevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to letting go, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. Therefore I have not taught them.

“And what, bhikkhus, have I taught? I have taught just this: ‘This is suffering’; ‘This is the origin of suffering’; ‘This is the cessation of suffering’; and ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’

And why, bhikkhus, have I taught this? Because this is beneficial to know, relevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and leads to letting go, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand, and to practice just what is essential...

The Simile of the Arrow - from Old Path White Clouds, by Thich Nhat Hanh

The Buddha had given the example of the simsapa leaves because at that time there were many bhikkhus who tended to lose themselves in philosophical speculation.

Bhikkhu Malunkyaputta had been especially advised by the Buddha not to entangle himself in esoteric questions that were not essential for the practice. This was because Malunkyaputta had a habit of asking about things such as the existence of the buddha after death, and whether the universe was finite or infinite, temporal or eternal. The Buddha always refused to answer such questions.

One day Malunkyaputta felt he could no longer endure the Buddha's silence. He resolved that he would ask the Buddha his questions one last time and if the Buddha still refused to answer him, he would ask to be relieved of his vows as a bhikkhu.

He found the Buddha, and said, "Teacher, if you will agree to answer my questions, I will continue to follow you. If you refuse, I will abandon the sangha.

Tell me - does the Buddha exist after death?and, tell me- is the universe is finite or infinite?It is temporal, or eternal? If you don't know the answer to these, then just say so."

The Buddha looked at Malunkyaputta and said,

"When you asked to be ordained, did I promise to answer such questions?

Did I say, 'Come, Malunkyaputta, become a bhikkhu, and I will solve all your metaphysical problems?'"

“No, Lord, you did not.”

“Then why do you demand me to do so now?”

Malunkyaputta, it is like this: Suppose there is a person who has been shot with a poisoned arrow, and whose family summons the doctor to have the arrow removed and the man given an antidote- but now suppose the man refuses to let the doctor do anything before certain questions can be answered-

the wounded man demands to know who shot the arrow, what his caste and job is, and why he shot him. He wants to know what kind of bow the man used, and what kind of feather, and on and on- Malunkyaputta, such a man would die before getting the answers to his questions.

It is no different for one who follows the Way. I teach only those things that are necessary to realize the Way. Things which are not helpful or necessary, I do not teach.

“Malunkyaputta, whether Buddha exists after death, or whether the universe is finite or infinite, or whether it is temporal or eternal, there are these truths, of the presence of suffering, and that suffering has causes which can be illuminated, in order to be removed.

The things that I teach will help you attain letting go, peace, and liberation. I refuse to speak about all those things which are not helpful in realizing the Way.”

Feeling embarrassed, Malunkyaputta asked the Buddha to forgive him for making such a foolish demand, and returned to his hermitage.

The Buddha then encouraged all the bhikkhus to focus on their practice and to avoid useless philosophical speculation and debate.

## From The Tamonata Sutta - Four Types of People

AN 4.85

"There are these four types of people to be found existing in the world. Which four? One in darkness who is headed for darkness, one in darkness who is headed for light, one in light who is headed for darkness, and one in light who is headed for light.

"And how is one the type of person in darkness who is headed for darkness? There is the case where a person is born into a lowly family- the family of a scavenger, a hunter, a basket-weaver, a wheelwright, or a sweeper- a family that is poor, with little food or drink, living in hardship, where food & clothing are hard to come by;

he is ugly, misshapen, stunted, & sickly: half-blind or deformed or lame or crippled. He doesn't receive any [gifts of] food, drink, clothing, or vehicles; garlands, perfumes, or ointments; bedding, shelter, or lamps.

He engages in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct. Having engaged in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct, he- on the break-up of the body, after death- reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, in a lower realm, in hell. This is the type of person in darkness who is headed for darkness.

"And how is one the type of person in darkness who is headed for light? There is the case where a person is born into a lower class family...

He engages in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct. Having engaged in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct, he- on the break-up of the body, after death- reappears in a good destination, in a heavenly world. This is the type of person in darkness who is headed for light.



"And how is one the type of person in light who is headed for darkness?

There is the case where a person is born into an upper class family- a noble warrior family, a priestly family, a prosperous householder family- a family that is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions, with a great deal of money, a great many accoutrements of wealth, a great many commodities.

he is well-built, handsome, extremely inspiring, endowed with a lotus-like complexion. He receives [gifts of] food, drink, clothing, & vehicles; garlands, perfumes, & ointments; bedding, shelter, & lamps.

He engages in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct. Having engaged in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct, he- on the break-up of the body, after death- reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, in a lower realm, in hell. This is the type of person in light who is headed for darkness.

"And how is one the type of person in light who is headed for light? There is the case where a person is born into an upper class family... and

He engages in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct. Having engaged in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct, he- on the break-up of the body, after death- reappears in a good destination, in a heavenly world. This is the type of person in light who is headed for light.

"These are the four types of people to be found existing in the world."

## The Origin of the Sharing of Merit in Buddhism, As found in the Tirokudda Sutta

### Introduction

The Buddhist ritual of sharing of merits was first established with the story of King Bimbisara.

After the Buddha taught The Discourse on Turning the Wheel of the Dhamma to the five ascetics, they became his first disciples. Then the Buddha went to Gaya and converted the three ascetic brothers, and their one thousand followers.

Then, while proceeding to Rajagaha, King Bimbisara went to visit him with thousands of brahmins. King Bimbisara was established in the fruit of Stream-entry on that very day, and he invited the Buddha to a meal in the palace the following day.

During the alms-giving, pretas who were the departed next-of kin of King Bimbisara stood outside the walls of the palace thinking, "The king will dedicate the merits of the alms-giving to us."

However, after the alms-giving, King Bimbisara did not dedicate the merits to the pretas who were his next of kin, but instead, his mind was thinking about where to build the vihara for the Buddha. Not receiving the merits, these pretas made dreadful cries and wailings outside the palace walls in the dead of night.

The king heard these unearthly noises and became very frightened. At daybreak, the king told the Buddha about his dreadful experience and asked him about what had happened.

The Buddha explained to the king:

'Former relatives of yours who have been reborn as pretas have been going around for an immeasurably long time, expecting to be released from their suffering.

They had expected you to dedicate the alms-giving done yesterday to them, but you did not. They were extremely distressed by this, and lamented their lost hope.'

The king said, 'O Blessed One, would they receive the merits, if I give alms today and dedicated the merits to them?'

The Buddha said, Yes, they would.

'Then let the the Blessed One accept my invitation of alms-giving today.'

The Blessed One consented.

During the alms-giving to the Buddha and his Order of Ariya Sangha, further strange things happened. *The Buddha, using his supernormal powers, caused the pretas from outside the walls of the palace to be clearly seen by the king.*

As the king gave the gift of water saying, 'Let this be for my relatives!', at that moment, lotus ponds appeared around the pretas. The pretas bathed in them, and their weariness and thirst was allayed; and their bodies became the color of gold.

The king then gave rice gruel, and both hard and soft food, and dedicated the action. All at once, the pretas had food to eat, and their faculties were refreshed.

The king gave robes and lodging and dedicated these actions, and instantly, the pretas were richly adorned, and they had well-furnished palaces to live in.

When he saw this, he king was extremely delighted;

And when the Blessed One had finished his meal, he expounded this  
Tirokudda Sutta:

*Outside the walls they stand,  
and at crossroads.*

*At door posts they stand,  
returning to their old homes.*

*But when a meal with plentiful food and drink is served,  
no one remembers them:*

*Such is the kamma of living beings.*

*Thus, those who feel sympathy for their passed-over relatives  
give timely donations of proper food and drink-  
exquisite, and clean,  
thinking:*

*“May this be for our relatives.*

*May our relatives be happy!”*

*Then those who have gathered there,  
the assembled shades of the relatives,  
with appreciation, give their blessing  
for the plentiful food and drink:*

*‘May our relatives live long!*

*We have been honored,*

*and May the donors have a good reward!’-*

*For in their realm, there is no farming,  
no herding of cattle,*

*no commerce, no trading with money.*

*They live on what is given here,*

*hungry shades whose time here is done.*

*As water raining on a hill  
flows down to the valley,  
even so does what is given here  
benefit those who have departed from this world.*

*As rivers full of water  
fill the ocean full,  
even so does what is given here  
benefit those who have passed on.*

*In this way,  
'He gave to me, she acted on my behalf,  
these were my relatives, and companions, and friends'-  
Offerings should be given for those who have passed over,  
when one remembers our relations in the past.*

*For no weeping, no sorrowing  
and no other lamentation  
benefits those who have passed on*

*But when this offering is given,  
well-placed in the Sangha,  
they profit immediately,  
and it works for their long-term benefit.*

*The proper duty to relatives has been shown;  
Great honor has been done for the departed loved ones;  
Monks have been given strength-  
and the merit you have acquired is great.*

## The Story of Kisa Gotami - Seeing Things As They Really Are

By A. McLellan

In the time of the Buddha many people came to seek his advice for mundane matters as well as spiritual. One story of a lay person who sought out the Buddha has survived over the centuries and that is the tale of Kisa Gotami.

Thus I have heard. One day a woman carrying a child came to the place where the Buddha was staying with his sangha of monks, lay seekers and attendants. She was granted an audience with the Buddha and, clearly in considerable distress, told him how she needed medicine for her baby son who had fallen into a deep sleep and would not wake up.

The Buddha asked the woman, named Kisa Gotami, to pass the child to him so that he could see what he could do. The Buddha was no physician but was willing to do anything he could to relieve suffering in anyone, be they his friend, enemy or a complete stranger. Upon receiving the child into his arms, though, it was obvious to him that the child was dead and had been so for some days. It was also obvious that to break this news to Kisa Gotami would have a devastating effect on her mind.

The Buddha told Kisa that he could help her but that he would need for her to leave her son with him while she got a special ingredient which he needed to prepare medicine. Close followers of the Buddha were surprised at this, as they could see that the child was long beyond the help of even the most skilled medical men. However, the Buddha went on to explain to Kisa that she would need to get some mustard seed from one of the nearby houses and bring it to him. Kisa was expecting to be asked to find something very rare to use as medicine so was surprised and delighted that the Buddha had only requested that she obtain something as commonly used as mustard seeds which were part of everyone's store cupboard.

This was, however, not all. The Buddha said that the mustard seeds must come from a very particular house, one that had never experienced death. Still, Kisa thought that this would not be such a hard task. Although many houses would have suffered the loss of a family member, surely many had been untouched by this. So, with a lighter heart, she set off to begin her quest for mustard seeds.

Kisa approached the first house in the town and knocked at the door – a woman answered. Kisa explained that she needed some mustard seed to help her sick son and, since mustard seeds were commonly used in home remedies in India at that time, the woman simply nodded and went into the kitchen to fetch some. Coming back with a small jar containing the seeds, Kisa suddenly remembered the second part of the Buddha's request and asked the woman if anyone had died in her house. If this was a strange thing to ask, the woman of the house did not let on but told Kisa that her elderly father had died upstairs over the last winter. Kisa was sad but took the seed anyway. Surely she would have better luck at the next house.

O, but this was not to be the case. She went to every single house in the town, but at each door was told the same story. No house had escaped the touch of death. Sometimes it was a child who had died, more often an elderly parent or aunt, occasionally a husband or wife taken unexpectedly in the night. Kisa grew more and more despondent as she continued her search and finally made her way back to the Buddha long after the sun had set. The moon, however, was full, and reflected light allowed her to see the way to where the Buddha's sangha were staying.

The Buddha was seated in meditation, still holding Kisa's child and Kisa waited for him to finish, not wanting to interrupt his contemplation. He soon opened his eyes and looked at her.

"My son is dead, isn't he?", Kisa asked. "Yes", the Buddha replied.

"Will you help me to bury him?".

The Buddha assented, and the two of them found a peaceful spot under a tree in which to inter Kisa's child. She was upset by the knowledge that her son was dead and not merely sleeping, but now at least could face the reality of her grief on her own terms.

The next morning she asked the Buddha if she could become one of his followers, and he agreed.



## The Simile of the Mountain

SN 3:25, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

At Sāvathī. Then, in the middle of the day, King Pasenadi of Kosala approached the Blessed One....

The Blessed One said to him as he was sitting to one side: “Now where are you coming from, great king, in the middle of the day?”

“Just now, venerable sir, I have been engaged in those affairs of kingship typical for head-anointed khattiya kings, who are intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, who are obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth.”

“What do you think, great king? Here, a man would come to you from the east, one who is trustworthy and reliable; having approached, he would tell you: ‘For sure, great king, you should know this: I am coming from the east, and there I saw a great mountain, high as the clouds, coming this way, crushing all living beings. Do whatever you think should be done, great king.’

Then a second man would come to you from the west ... Then a third man would come to you from the north ... Then a fourth man would come to you from the south, one who is trustworthy and reliable; having approached, he would tell you: ‘For sure, great king, you should know this: I am coming from the south, and there I saw a great mountain, high as the clouds, coming this way, crushing all living beings. Do whatever you think should be done, great king.’

If, great king, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life, the human state being so difficult to obtain, what should be done?”

“If, venerable sir, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life, the human state being so difficult to obtain, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“I inform you, great king, I announce to you, great king: aging and death are rolling in on you. When aging and death are rolling in on you, great king, what should be done?”

“As aging and death are rolling in on me, venerable sir, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“There are, venerable sir, elephant battles [fought by] head-anointed khattiya kings, who are intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, who are obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth; but there is no place for those elephant battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in.

There are, venerable sir, cavalry battles [fought by] head-anointed khattiya kings... There are chariot battles ... infantry battles ...but there is no place for those infantry battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in.

In this royal court, venerable sir, there are counsellors who, when the enemies arrive, are capable of dividing them by subterfuge; but there is no place for those battles of subterfuge, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in.

In this royal court, venerable sir, there exists abundant bullion and gold stored in vaults and depositories, and with such wealth we are capable of mollifying the enemies when they come; but there is no place for those battles of wealth, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in.

As aging and death are rolling in on me, venerable sir, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“So it is, great king! So it is, great king! As aging and death are rolling in on you, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:

*Just as mountains of solid rock,  
Massive, reaching to the sky,  
Might draw together from all sides,  
Crushing all in the four quarters-  
So aging and death come  
Rolling over living beings-*

*Khattiyas, brahmins, vessas, suddas,  
Caṇḍālas and scavengers:  
They spare none along the way  
But come crushing everything.*

*There's no ground there for elephant troops,  
For chariot troops and infantry.  
One can't defeat them by subterfuge,  
Or buy them off by means of wealth.*

*Therefore a person of wisdom here,  
Out of regard for his own good,  
Steadfast, should settle faith  
In the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.*

*When one conducts oneself by Dhamma  
With body, speech, and mind,  
They praise one here in the present life,  
And after death one rejoices in heaven.*

## Aging and Death

SN 3:3, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

At Sāvathī. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, for one who has taken birth, is there anything other [to expect] than aging and death?”

“For one who has taken birth, great king, there is nothing other [to expect] than aging and death. Even in the case of those affluent khattiyas- rich, with great wealth and property, with abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and commodities, abundant wealth and grain- because they have taken birth, there is nothing other [to expect] than aging and death.

Even in the case of those affluent brahmins... affluent householders- rich... with abundant wealth and grain- because they have taken birth, there is nothing other [to expect] than aging and death.

Even in the case of those bhikkhus who are arahants, whose defilements are destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, and are completely liberated through final knowledge: even for them this body is subject to breaking up, subject to being laid down.

*The beautiful chariots of kings wear out,  
This body too undergoes decay.  
But the Dhamma of the good does not decay:  
So the good proclaim along with the good.*

## Five Subjects for Frequent Recollection

*I am of the nature to age, I have not gone beyond aging.*

*I am of the nature to sicken, I have not gone beyond sickness.*

*I am of the nature to die, I have not gone beyond dying.*

*All that is mine, beloved and pleasing, will become otherwise, will become separated from me.*

*I am the owner of my kamma, heir to my kamma, born of my kamma, related to my kamma, abide supported by my kamma. Whatever kamma I shall do, for good or for ill, of that I will be the heir.*

Thus we should frequently recollect.

## On Stream-Entry, from *The Island*, by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasanno

Although Nibbana is the highest and most worthy goal for one practising the Buddha's teachings, the thought of ever attaining the sublime nature of that goal can appear daunting. So, to show the point of access to that goal, it is often a useful exercise to contemplate the first level of realization: stream-entry. This helps to provide a clearer sense of what needs to be done in the first stage of the practice, and to provide a reminder of the practice's positive and attainable fruits.

Exploring the various facets and aspects of stream-entry should be a fruitful endeavour as there tends to be little talk about or discussion of this 'lowly' attainment, which often lives in the shadow of complete realization: Nibbana – arahantship.

Particularly in a modern Western culture, inundated by advertising and the overstimulation of the consumption ethic, the mind can be constantly searching for anything with a superlative prefacing it – the ultimate, the perfect, the refined, the exquisite. If this is the case in our spiritual aspirations, we will tend to overlook the foundations when trying to reach the ultimate too quickly. This impatience can easily lead to frustration and a feeling that the goal is impossible to attain.

So reflecting on stream-entry can play a very important role, especially in that it allows us to see what can be incorporated into our daily lives and practice.

A sotapanna is one who has reached the first stage of liberation (stream-entry– sotapatti). The early commentators emphasized that the stream-enterer had a first taste of Nibbana and the motivation arising from that initial realization would, without a doubt, provide the impetus that would carry the aspirant on to the final goal.

After one has realized stream-entry, one's full awakening is assured in not more than seven lifetimes. This is nothing to be looked down upon. Stream-enterers will not be reborn in any of the lower realms; they will at least be born in the human realm or higher. This is a great blessing...

Although some people may be quicker than others in reaching the goal, the structure of the unfolding insight is common to all. The most familiar description of the stages of realization contains four levels: the stream-enterer (sotapanna), once-returner (sakadagami), non-returner (anagami) and one fully enlightened (arahant).

These levels are differentiated according to the 'fetters' (samyojana) that a liberated person relinquishes at each stage:

A Sutta reads:

Bhikkhus, there are these five lower fetters. What five?

Identity view, doubt, the mistaken grasp of rites and rituals, sensual desire, and ill will.

These are the five lower fetters.

And,

Bhikkhus, there are these five higher fetters. What five?

Desire for form, desire for the formless, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

These are the five higher fetters.

~ S 45.180



{A Stream-enterer is someone who is free from self view, from doubt about the teachings, and from mistaken attachment to rites and rituals;

A Once-returner in addition to these, has greatly lessened sensual desire and aggression;

A Non-returner has relinquished these five lower fetters;

and an Arahant is free from all ten of the fetters.

May all beings completely realize the Path that leads to freedom from suffering.}

In the Pali Canon, the qualities of a Stream-enterer are described in the following way:

*...those who have abandoned the first three fetters,  
are all stream-winners;  
they are steadfast,  
never again destined for states of woe;  
they are headed for awakening...*

A few inferences can be drawn from the brief introduction to this next sutta. One is that the attainments are not so formidable and daunting that laypeople living within society were not able to become non-returners, once returners, and stream-enterers.

'Then the Venerable Sariputta approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to him:

“Sariputta, this is said: ‘A factor for stream-entry, a factor for stream-entry-what now, Sariputta, are the factors for stream-entry?’

Association with superior persons,

Hearing the true Dhamma,

Careful attention,

and practice in accordance with the Dhamma-

these are the factors for stream entry.”

These four factors for stream-entry are an extremely useful framework for our investigation. One who desires to experience the stream of truth would need to develop these factors. They form the foundation for what is wholesome and are conjoined with understanding...

The Buddha also described various ways in which the precepts bring benefit, such as being a source of merit for those who give support, relinquishing unwholesome mental qualities, entering the jhanas, and many other higher attainments including this:

If a bhikkhu should wish: “May I, with the destruction of the first three fetters, become a stream-enterer, no longer subject to perdition, bound [for deliverance], headed for enlightenment,” let him fulfill the precepts, be devoted to internal serenity of mind, not neglect meditation, be possessed of insight, and dwell in empty huts.

~ M 6.2-3 & .11 (Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi trans.

The stages of stream enterer, once returner, non returner and arhat are attainments of increasing refinement, according to the fetters relinquished, and each are meaningful. It is said that:

Thus, monks, one who is partly accomplished achieves partial success; one who is fully accomplished achieves full success, but these training rules are not barren, I declare.

~ A 3.85, Nyanaponika Thera & Bhikkhu Bodhi trans.

A partial accomplishment in concentration and wisdom is still enough to take one to a clear vision of the Dhamma. Even a partial attainment, that is, stream-entry, is sufficient to lay the foundation for understanding the true nature of things and to begin to realize the transcendent fruits of practice.

All the different aspects of the sotapanna (these, and more referenced in *The Island*) are worthy of much reflection. As human beings we have the opportunity to experience a breakthrough from the stream of the world to the stream of Truth. The discussion of this possibility is not just an idle philosophical pastime, but a practical guide as to how the heart can be set free.

By being attentive to this initial stage of Awakening, we can recognize more clearly what needs to be relinquished and what needs to be cultivated in the immediate present so that we can taste this freedom ourselves. Most significantly, all these teachings show us that, by entering the noble path and embodying the various qualities of the stream-enterer, we could attain 'welfare and happiness for a long time' – both for ourselves and for those around us.

The Mirror of the Dhamma, from Digha Nikaya 16, translated by Sister Vajira & Francis Story

8. Truly, Ananda, it is nothing strange that human beings should die, but if each time it happens you should come to the Tathagata and ask about their destination, indeed it would be troublesome to him. Therefore, Ananda, I will give you the teaching called 'the Mirror of the Dhamma', possessing which the noble disciple, should he so desire, can declare of himself: 'There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into states of misery, assured am I, and bound for Enlightenment.'

9. "And what, Ananda, is that teaching called the Mirror of Dhamma, possessing which the noble disciple may thus declare of himself?

"In this case, Ananda, the noble disciple possesses unwavering faith in the Buddha thus: 'The Blessed One is an Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One, perfect in knowledge and conduct; the Happy One, the knower of the world, the paramount trainer of beings, the teacher of gods and men, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.'

"He possesses unwavering faith in the Dhamma thus: 'Well propounded by the Blessed One is the Dhamma, evident, timeless, [18] inviting investigation, leading to emancipation, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself.'

"He possesses unwavering faith in the Blessed One's Order of Disciples thus: 'Well faring is the Blessed One's Order of Disciples, righteously, wisely, and dutifully: that is to say, the four pairs of men, the eight classes of persons. The Blessed One's Order of Disciples is worthy of honor, of hospitality, of offerings, of veneration- they are the supreme field for meritorious deeds in the world.'

"And he possesses virtues that are dear to the Noble Ones, complete and perfect, spotless and pure, which are liberating, praised by the wise, uninfluenced by worldly concerns, and favorable to the concentration of mind.

10. "This, Ananda, is the teaching called the Mirror of the Dhamma, whereby the noble disciple may thus know of himself: "There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into states of misery, assured am I, and bound for Enlightenment."

## The Six Recollections

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan-tree Monastery. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said:

“Venerable sir, in what way does a noble disciple often dwell when he has arrived at the fruit and understood the teaching?”

“When, Mahānāma, a noble disciple has arrived at the fruit and understood the teaching, he often dwells in such a way as this. Here, a noble disciple recollects the Tathāgata thus:

“The Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, a teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’

When a noble disciple recollects the Tathāgata thus, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with the Tathāgata as its object.

A noble disciple whose mind is straight gains the inspiration of the meaning, the inspiration of the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma.

When he is gladdened joy arises; for one uplifted by joy the body becomes calm; one calm in body feels happy; for one who is happy the mind becomes concentrated.

This is called a noble disciple who dwells evenly amid an uneven population, who dwells without affliction amid an afflicted population, who has entered upon the stream of the Dhamma...

“Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects the Dhamma thus:

“The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One; it is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see; it is worthy of application, to be personally experienced by the wise.

When a noble disciple recollects the Dhamma thus, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with the Dhamma as its object....

“Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects the Sangha thus:

'The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples is practicing the good way, practicing the straight way, practicing the true way, practicing the proper way; that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals- this Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality; it is worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation; they are the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.'

When a noble disciple recollects the Sangha thus, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with the Sangha as its object....

“Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects his own moral discipline thus:

'I possess the moral virtues dear to the noble ones, unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unmottled; freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration.'

When a noble disciple recollects his own moral discipline thus, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with virtue as its object....

“Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects his own generosity thus:

‘It is a gain for me, that in a population obsessed by the stain of stinginess, I dwell at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment; as one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.

‘When a noble disciple recollects his own generosity thus, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with generosity as its object....

“Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple develops the recollection of the devas thus:

“There are devas in the various heavenly realms, and there is found in me such faith, moral discipline, learning, generosity, and wisdom as those devas possessed, because of which, when they passed away from this world, they were reborn there.

When a noble disciple recollects his own faith, moral discipline, learning, generosity, and wisdom, as well as those of the devas, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; his mind is straight, with the devas as its object....

This is called a noble disciple who dwells evenly amid an uneven population, who dwells without affliction amid an afflicted population, who has entered upon the stream of the Dhamma...

“A noble disciple, Mahānāma, who has arrived at the fruit and understood the teaching often dwells in just this way.”

(AN 6:10; III 284-88)



## The Sabbāsavasutta – All the Defilements

The Middle Length Discourses - 2, based on the translation by the Hermitage Meditation Center

I have heard that one time the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed the monks:  
"Monks!"

"Yes, Bhante," the monks replied to him.

The Blessed One said, "Monks, I will teach you about the different ways of removing all the defilements of the mind. Listen and pay close attention, and I will speak."

"Yes, Bhante!"

There are defilements that are to be removed by seeing with wise attention,  
those that are to be removed by guarding,  
those to be removed by correctly using,  
those to be removed by enduring,  
those to be removed by wisely avoiding,  
those to be removed by cutting off,  
and those to be removed by developing.

(1) What are the defilements that are to be removed by *seeing with wise attention*?

Monks, it is in *one who knows and sees with wise attention* that all the defilements of the mind are ended; not for one who is unseeing and unknowing.

When a monk pays attention unwisely, defilements arise and grow, but when a monk pays attention wisely, defilements do not arise and grow further, and those that are already there are weakened and given up for good.

Here, in one case, you have an untrained person, an uncultivated, untaught person. He or she has no respect for wise people, does not know their teaching, and is not disciplined in their teaching. They do not know the right way to think and the wrong way to think.

Their attention is directed to the wrong things, and they do not pay attention to what they should.

What are the wrong things they pay attention to?-

Whatever ideas, thoughts, qualities or intentions lead to harmful states and wrongdoing arising and increasing, those that lead to continued rebirth, and that lead to ignorance arising and increasing.

What are the things they *should* pay attention to, but do not?-

Whatever ideas, thoughts, qualities or intentions lead to harmful states and wrongdoing *not* arising, or decreasing if they are already there; those that lead toward the end of birth, that lead toward the end of ignorance.

In some fashion for them, then, the view of self arises... and this is called wrong view, the labyrinth of views, the desert of views, the trickery of views, the cheating of views, the chain of views...

Here, a person who is chained by views is not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are not freed from suffering, I say.

By comparison, the well-taught student of the noble ones— one who has respect for noble ones, who knows well their teaching and is well-disciplined in their teaching, knows the right way to think, and the wrong way to think.

He or she gives attention where they should, and they do not give attention to what they should not.

And what are the wrong things to which they do not give attention?-

Whatever ideas, thoughts, qualities or intentions lead to harmful states and wrongdoing arising and increasing, those that lead to birth arising and continuing, and that lead to ignorance arising and increasing.

And what are the things worthy of attention, and to which they *do* pay attention?-

Whatever ideas, thoughts, qualities or intentions lead to harmful states and wrongdoing *not* arising, or decreasing if they are already there; those that lead toward the end of birth, that lead toward the end of ignorance.

Because of not giving attention unwisely to what they should not, and because of wisely giving attention to what they should, defilements weaken and decrease in him; wisdom increases, and more and more, freedom from suffering is then experienced.

This is how he thinks, rightly and wisely: *This is suffering – this is the cause of suffering... this is the truth that it is possible to end suffering, and this is the way to end suffering.*

As he thinks rightly and wisely in this way, three barriers are broken in him: the view of personal identity, doubt (in the Buddha, his teachings and those who have seen and who practice the teaching); and the misunderstanding and mistaken application of rules and rituals. These are called the defilements that are uprooted by seeing.

(2) What are the defilements that are removed *by guarding*?

In this, monks, a monk with wise judgement lives constantly with an observer and guard at the door of the eye... the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... and the mind...

Then the harmful and troubling defilements that could be born of contact when there is no guard, are not born...

This is how defilements are to be let go of, removed, and prevented through guarding.

(3) What are the defilements to be removed *by wisely using the requisites*?

In this, a monk with good judgement makes wise use of a robe: using it only for the sake of protection from heat and cold; for protection from flies, mosquitos, wind, sun, and reptiles, and for the sake of modesty. (not for the sake of looking good, not for the sake of showing off, not as a source of respect from laypeople, nor for self definition; not as a symbol of one's purity, and not as a thing one owns to which one is attached.)

Again, a monk with good judgement makes wise use of alms food, using it in this way:

(this is) not for the sake of enjoyment, not for indulgence, not for appearance, but only to maintain the body, to avoid sickness, and to support practice.

He sees it in this way:

“With this food I will put an end to feelings of discomfort from hunger, and will not cause new discomfort from overeating, and so I will live blamelessly and comfortably.”

Further, a monk with good judgement makes wise use of lodgings, and of medicines...

And then, the troubling and harmful defilements that could arise in someone who does not use these things properly, naturally, do not arise...

(4) And what are the defilements to be removed *by tolerating*?

In this, a person tolerates heat, cold, hunger, and thirst with good judgement and wisdom, when necessary, and when unavoidable...They have contentment, patience, and foresight, and are not merely suppressing their unhappiness.

And then the defilements that could be born in someone who does not know how to endure such discomforts, of course, do not arise...

(5) And what are the defilements that are to be removed *by wisely avoiding*?

In this, a monk through good judgement wisely avoids whatever situations, places or associations would be blamed or criticized by wise practitioners and friends.

Then the defilements that could arise through those conditions, of course, do not arise...

(6) And what are the defilements that are to be removed *by cutting off and removing*?

In this a monk with wise judgement, does not accept a sensual thought that arises: he immediately cuts it off, refuses it, eliminates it, destroys it, wipes it out of existence.

In the same way, he does not tolerate at all any thought of aversion...,

and he does not tolerate any evil that arises in him; right away he cuts it off, he refuses it, eliminates it, destroys it, wipes it out of existence-

Then the defilements that could arise, by accepting these, and by not removing them at once, of course, do not arise...

(7) And what are the defilements that are to be removed *by developing*?

In this, a monk with wise judgement develops mindfulness, discernment and inquiry, joy, peace, energy, collectedness, and equanimity, as factors of awakening.

These depend on living in solitude, detachment, and renunciation, and, when brought to maturity, they result in letting go.

Then any defilements that could arise when these are not developed, naturally, cannot arise.

Now whatever person, who, by seeing with wisdom, by guarding, by correctly using, by tolerating, by avoiding, by cutting off, and by developing, has removed the defilements to be removed by these methods-

this person is called one who lives having removed all defilements of the mind- one who has removed craving, one who has undone the chains, and

one who has, by full and complete understanding, made an end of suffering.

This is what the Blessed One said, and the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.

The Graduated Path, from In the Buddha's Words, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Here a Tathāgata appears in the world, an arahant, perfectly enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct; fortunate, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, a teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.

Having realized with his own direct knowledge this world with its devas, Mara, and Brahma, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, with its devas and humans, he makes it known to others-

He teaches a Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and expression; he reveals a holy life that is perfectly complete and purified.

12. Then a householder or householder's son or one born in some other clan hears that Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma he acquires faith in the Tathagata. Possessing that faith, he considers thus:

'Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the spiritual life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the ochre robe, and go forth from the household life into homelessness...'

13. "Having thus gone forth and possessing the monk's training and way of life, abandoning the destruction of life, he abstains from the destruction of life; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, he dwells compassionate to all living beings.

Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, expecting only what is given, by not stealing he dwells in purity.



Abandoning sexual relations, he observes celibacy, living apart, refraining from the coarse practice of sexual intercourse.

"Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech; he speaks truth, adheres to truth, is trustworthy and reliable, one who is no deceiver of the world.

Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided; he is a promoter of friendships, one who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord.

Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many and agreeable to many.

Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial.

He eats only one meal a day, abstaining from eating outside the proper time; He abstains from singing, dancing, and unsuitable shows; He abstains from wearing garlands, and from high and luxurious beds...

14. "He becomes content with robes to protect his body, and with almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him.

Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too the monk becomes content with robes to protect his body and with

almsfood to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him.

Possessing this aggregate of noble moral discipline, he experiences within himself the bliss of blamelessness.

15. "On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of longing and dejection might invade him, he practices the way of its restraint.

On hearing a sound with the ear ... on smelling an odor with the nose ... on tasting a flavor with the tongue... on feeling a tactile object with the body ... and on cognizing a mental phenomenon with the mind, he does not grasp at its signs and features.

Since, if he left these faculties unguarded, evil unwholesome states of longing and dejection might invade him, he practices the way of their restraint. Possessing the noble restraint of the sense faculties, he experiences within himself an unsullied bliss.

16. "He becomes one who acts with clear comprehension when going forward and returning; when looking ahead and looking away; when flexing and extending his limbs;

when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when defecating and urinating;

when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

17. "Possessing this aggregate of noble moral discipline, and this noble restraint of the faculties, and possessing this noble mindfulness and clear comprehension, he resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of

a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.

18. "On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him.

- Abandoning longing for the world, he dwells with a mind free from longing; he purifies longing from his mind.

- Abandoning ill will and hatred, he dwells with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies ill will and hatred from his mind.

- Abandoning dullness and drowsiness, he dwells free from dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and clearly comprehending; he purifies dullness and drowsiness from his mind.

- Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he dwells free from agitation with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies restlessness and remorse from his mind.

- and abandoning doubt, he dwells having gone beyond doubt, clear about wholesome states; he purifies doubt from his mind.

19. "Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, the defilements of the mind that obstruct awareness and weaken wisdom, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters and dwells in the first jhana, which is accompanied by the necessary initial application of the mind and the effort made to continue awareness, with the joy and ease born of seclusion.

This, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata, something marked by the Tathagata, but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion:

"The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened, the Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, and the Sangha is practicing the good way, the right way, the noble way.'

20. "Again, with the subsiding of the initial application of the mind and effort needed to continue awareness, he enters and dwells in the second jhana, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, and has joy and ease born of concentration. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata ... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion, that: 'The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened....'

21. "Again, with the fading away as well of exuberant joy, he dwells equanimous, and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences happiness with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhana of which the noble ones declare: 'He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.' This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata ... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion, that: 'The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened....'

22. "Again, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and dejection, he enters and dwells in the fourth jhana, which is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata ... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion: 'The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened....?'

23. "When his mind is thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives... and with their aspects and particulars, he recollects his manifold past lives. This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata ... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion, that: "The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened....'

24. "With his mind thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings.

With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and being reborn here and there- inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. He understands how beings pass on according to their actions... This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata ... but a noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion, that: "The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened....'

25. "With his mind thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He understands as it really is: "This is suffering. This is the origin of suffering. This is the cessation of suffering. This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'

He understands as it really is: "These are the defilements. This is the origin of the defilements. This is the cessation of the defilements. And this is the way leading to the cessation of the defilements.'

"This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathāgata, something marked by the Tathāgata, but a noble disciple still has not yet come to the conclusion, that: 'The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened, the Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, and the Sangha is practicing the good way, the right way the noble way;' rather, he is in the process of coming to this conclusion.

26. "When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the suffering associated with sensual desire, from the suffering associated with existence, and from the suffering associated with ignorance. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: 'It is liberated. 'He understands:

'Birth is destroyed, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.'

"This too, brahmin, is called a footprint of the Tathagata, something marked by the Tathagata. It is at this point that a noble disciple has come to the conclusion, that: "The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened, the Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, and the Sangha is practicing the good way, the right way, the noble way.'

From The Shorter Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint,  
Majjhima Nikāya 27

The Discourse on Youth and Happiness, based on the translation by Thich Nhat Hanh

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying at the Bamboo Forest Monastery near the town of Rajagriha. At that time there was a bhikshu who, in the very early morning, came to the banks of the river, took off his upper robe and left it on the bank, and went down to the river to bathe. After bathing, he came out of the river, waited until his body was dry, and then put on his upper robe.

At that time a goddess appeared, whose body, surrounded by light, lit up the entire bank of the river. The goddess said to the bhikshu,

“Venerable, you’ve recently become a monk. Your hair is still black; you are very young. At this time in your life, shouldn’t you be perfumed with oils, adorned with gems and fragrant flowers, enjoying the five kinds of sensual desire?”

Why have you abandoned your loved ones and turned your back on the worldly life, living alone? You’ve shaved your hair and beard, donned the monk’s robe, and placed your faith in monastic practice. Why have you abandoned the pleasures of this moment to seek pleasures in some distant future?”

The bhikshu replied,

“I have not abandoned the present moment to seek pleasures in a some distant future.

I have abandoned the mistaken grasping at such pleasures that are superficial, fraught with danger and difficulty, deceptive, illusory and ephemeral, for those that are deeper, safe and sure, for those that are true, and lasting.

With this better understanding, I have now abandoned mistaken grasping at pleasures for the deeper happiness that is available in this present moment, that is reliable, and that will last.”

The goddess asked, “What do you mean?”

And the bhikshu replied, “The World-Honored One has taught: in the joy associated with sensual desire there is so little sweetness and the potential for so much bitterness; there are such tiny benefits, and great potential to lead to disaster.

Now, as I dwell in the Dharma that is available here and now, I’ve given up the burning fire of afflictions, and all that is jeopardous and false.

The Dharma is available here and now. It is outside of time, and it always invites us to come and see- it is to be realized and experienced by each of us for ourselves.

That is what is meant by abandoning pleasures that are merely superficial, and that can be dangerous; that can be deceptive, and that are momentary-only, in order to arrive at a happiness that is deeper, one that is safe and sure, a refuge; and true, being not of a nature to deceive; happiness and peace that is lasting, and to be found in the present moment.”

The goddess asked the bhikshu again, “Why does the World-Honored One say that in the mistaken, deluded enjoyment of pleasure of sensual desire there is so little sweetness and the potential for so much bitterness? Why does he say that its benefit is so tiny but its potential to lead to disaster is so great?

Why does he say that if we dwell in the Dharma that is available here and now we are able to give up the flames of the afflictions that burn us, that can be false, misleading, and degrading?



Why does he say that this Dharma belongs to the present moment, is outside of time, always invites us to come and see it, is available here and now, and is realized and experienced by each of us for ourselves?"

The bhikshu replied, "I have only been ordained for two years. I do not have the skill to explain to you the true teachings and the wonderful precepts that the World-Honored One has proclaimed.

The World-Honored One is presently nearby, in the Bamboo Forest. Why don't you go to him and ask your questions directly? The Tathagata will offer you the Right Dharma, and you will be able to receive and practice his guidance as you see fit."

The goddess replied, "Venerable bhikshu, at this moment the Tathagata is surrounded by powerful and influential gods and goddesses. It would be difficult for me to have the chance to approach him and ask about the Dharma. If you would be willing to ask the Tathagata these questions on my behalf, I will accompany you."

The bhikshu replied, "I will help you."

The goddess said, "Venerable, then I will follow you."

The bhikshu went to the place where the Buddha was staying, bowed his head and prostrated before the Buddha, then withdrew a little and sat down to one side. He repeated the conversation he had just had with the goddess, and then said,

"World-Honored One, if this goddess had not spoken sincerely, she would not have come here with me."

At that moment, there was a sound from afar, "Venerable monk, I am here. I am here."

The World-Honored One immediately offered this gatha:

*It is this way-  
Beings produce wrong perceptions  
concerning the objects of their desire.  
That is why they are caught in desire-  
because they do not know the nature of their desire,  
they proceed on the path to Death.*

The Buddha then asked the goddess, “Do you understand this gatha? If not, please say so.”

The goddess addressed the Buddha, “I have not understood, World-Honored One. I have not understood, Well-Gone One.”

So the Buddha recited another gatha for the goddess:

*When you know the true nature of those desires  
that are superficial, that can be dangerous,  
that are illusory, and ephemeral, momentary-only,  
then the desiring mind will not be born.  
And when there is no desire, and no perception based on it,  
then at that time, no one is able to tempt you.*

Then Buddha asked the goddess, “Have you understood this gatha? If not, please say so.”

The goddess addressed the Buddha: “I have not understood, World-Honored One. I have not understood, Well-Gone One.”

So the Buddha recited another gatha for the goddess:

*If you think you are greater, less than, or equal,  
you cause dissension.*

*When those conceits have ended,  
then nothing can agitate your mind.*

Then Buddha asked the goddess, "Have you understood this gatha? If not, please say so."

The goddess addressed the Buddha, "I have not understood, World-Honored One. I have not understood, Well-Gone One."

So the Buddha recited another gatha for the goddess:

*Fully understanding the nature of desire-  
seeing its gratification, its danger, and its escape,  
and having overcome the conceits,  
our mind is stilled, we have nothing to long for.  
We lay aside all affliction and sorrow,  
in this life and in lives to come.*

Then Buddha asked the goddess, "Have you understood this gatha? If not, please say so."

The goddess addressed the Buddha, "I have understood, World-Honored One. I have understood, Well-Gone One."

The Buddha had finished the teaching. The goddess was delighted at what she had heard. Practicing in accord with these teachings, she disappeared, and not a trace of her was to be seen anywhere.

The Discourse on the Teachings to Be Given to the Sick, translated by Thich Nhat Hanh

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying in the monastery in the Jeta Grove in Anathapindika's park, near Shravasti. At that time the householder Anathapindika was seriously ill. When the Venerable Shariputra was told this, he immediately went to Ananda and said, "Brother Ananda, let us go and visit the layman Anathapindika." The Venerable Ananda replied, "Yes, let us go now."

The Venerable Ananda put on his robe, took his bowl, and went into the town of Shravasti with the Venerable Shariputra to make the almsround. Ananda walked behind Shariputra, stopping at every house until they came to the house of the layman Anathapindika, and they went in to visit him.

After he had sat down, the Venerable Shariputra asked the layman Anathapindika, "How is your illness? Is it getting better or worse? Is the physical pain easing at all or is it getting greater?"

The householder Anathapindika replied, "Venerable monks, it does not seem to be getting better. The pain is not easing. It is getting greater all the time."

Shariputra said, "Friend Anathapindika, now is the time to practice the meditation on the Three Jewels, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

"The Buddha has gone to Suchness, is fully and truly awakened, has perfected understanding and action, has arrived at true happiness, understands the nature of the world, is unequalled in understanding, has conquered the afflictions of human beings, is a teacher of gods and humans, and is the Awakened One, the one who liberates the world.

“The Dharma is the teaching of love and understanding that the Tathagata has expounded. It is deep and lovely, worthy of the highest respect, and is very precious. It is a teaching that cannot be compared to ordinary teachings. It is a path of practice for the Noble Ones.

“The Sangha is the community of practice, guided by the teachings of the Awakened One. The community is in harmony, and within it all aspects of the practice can be realized. The community is respected and is so precious. It practices the precepts and realizes concentration, insight, and liberation. Offerings made to the Sangha are very beneficial.

“Friend Anathapindika, if you meditate in this way on the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, the beneficial effects are beyond measure.

Meditating in this way, you can destroy the obstacles of wrong deeds and the afflictions. You can harvest a fruit that is as fresh and sweet as the balm of compassion.

A woman or a man practicing an upright way of life who knows how to meditate on the Three Jewels will have no chance of falling into the three lower realms but will be reborn as a human or a god.

“Friend Anathapindika, now is the time to practice the meditation on the Six Sense Bases:

“These eyes are not me. I am not caught in these eyes.

“These ears are not me. I am not caught in these ears.

“This nose is not me. I am not caught in this nose.

“This tongue is not me. I am not caught in this tongue.

“This body is not me. I am not caught in this body.

and “This mind is not me. I am not caught in this mind.

“Now continue your meditation with the Six Sense Objects:

“These forms are not me. I am not caught in these forms.

“These sounds... smells... tastes... contacts with the body, and thoughts are not me. I am not caught in these...

“Now continue your meditation on the Six Sense Consciousnesses:

“Sight is not me. I am not caught in sight.

“Hearing is not me. I am not caught in hearing.

“Consciousness based on the nose... tongue... body or mind are not me. I am not caught in these...

“Now continue your meditation on the Six Elements:

“The earth element is not me. I am not caught in the earth element.

“The water element, the fire element, the air element, the space element, and the consciousness element are not me. I am not caught in these...

“Now continue your meditation on the Five Aggregates:

“Form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness are not me. I am not limited by these...

“Now continue your meditation on the Three Times:

“The past, present, and future are not me. I am not limited by these...

“Friend Anathapindika, everything that arises is due to causes and conditions.

Everything that is has the nature not to be born and not to die, not to arrive and not to depart.

When eyes arise, they arise, but they do not come from anywhere. When eyes cease to be, they cease to be, but they do not go anywhere.

Eyes are neither nonexistent before they arise, nor are they existent after they arise.

Everything that is comes to be because of a combination of causes and conditions.

When the causes and conditions are sufficient, eyes are present. When the causes and conditions are not sufficient, eyes are absent.

The same is true of ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought; sight, hearing, and the consciousnesses based on the nose, tongue, body, and mind; the Six Elements, the Five Aggregates, and the Three Times.

“In the Five Aggregates, there is nothing that we can call ‘I,’ a ‘person,’ or a ‘soul.’

Ignorance is the inability to see this truth.

Because there is ignorance, there are mistaken intentions. Because there are mistaken intentions, and there is mistaken consciousness.

Because there is mistaken consciousness, there is the dualistic distinction between the perceiver and the perceived.

Because there is this mistaken distinction between the perceiver and the perceived, there is the mistaken distinction between the six organs and the six objects of sense.

Because there is this mistaken distinction between the six organs and the six objects of sense, there is misperceived contact, feeling, thirst, grasping, being, and becoming; there are birth, death, and the subsequent pain and grief.

“Friend Anathapindika, you have meditated that everything that arises is due to causes and conditions and does not have a separate self.

That is called ‘the meditation on emptiness.’ It is the highest and the most profound meditation.”

When he had practiced to this point, the layman Anathapindika began to cry.

Venerable Ananda asked him, “Friend, why are you crying? Has your meditation not been successful? Do you have some regret?”

The layman Anathapindika replied, “Venerable Ananda, I do not regret anything. The meditation has been most successful. I am crying because I am so deeply moved.

I have been fortunate to have been able to serve the Buddha and his community for many years, yet I have never heard a teaching so wonderful and precious as the teaching transmitted by the Venerable Shariputra today.”



Then the Venerable Ananda said to the layman Anathapindika, "Do you not know, friend, that the Buddha often gives this teaching to bhikshus and bhikshunis?"

The layman Anathapindika replied, "Venerable Ananda, please tell the Buddha that there are also laypeople with the capacity to listen, understand, and put into practice these deep and wonderful teachings."

After hearing Shariputra's instructions and meditating accordingly, Anathapindika felt free and at ease. The Venerables Shariputra and Ananda then bade him farewell and went back to the monastery, and Anathapindika passed away and was born in the thirty-third heaven.

## On Dependent Origination

### Introduction

In his book on dependent origination, Piyadassi Thera says the following:

Buddhism teaches that all compounded things come into being, presently exist, and cease (uppāda, ṭhiti, bhaṅga) dependent on conditions and causes. Compare the truth of this saying with that oft-quoted verse of the Arahat Thera Assaji, one of the Buddha's first five disciples, who crystallized the entire teaching of the Buddha when answering the question of Upatissa who later became known as the Arahat Thera Sāriputta.

Upatissa's question was:

*What is your teacher's doctrine?*

*What does he proclaim?*

And this was the answer:

Ye dharmā hetu-prabhavā  
 hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat,  
 teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha  
 evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇa -

*Whatever from a cause proceeds, thereof*

*The Tathāgatha has explained the cause,*

*Its cessation too he has explained.*

*This is the teaching of the Supreme Sage.*

Though brief, this expresses in unequivocal words dependent origination or conditionality.

Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu taught that:

*Idappaccayata* or 'conditionality' is the natural law, the natural truth that everything depends on causes and conditions. In all the things that are not self, in all naturally changing things, the change always changes according to causes and conditions.

Idappaccayata is the fact that with *this* as cause, *this* exists. With *this* as condition, *this* exists. The existence of anything, and the change of that existence, is always dependent on causes and conditions. Take away the conditions, and *this* will no longer exist.

We use the word idappaccayata to apply to everything – the entire universe, both physical and mental – but when we speak solely about living things, especially the consciousness of living things, we speak in a more specific way. We talk of *paticca-samuppada*, dependent co-origination: due to these and these and these and these and these conditions, dukkha arises.

We also speak of *paticca-nirodha*, dependent quenching. Through the quenching of *this* condition, which depends on the quenching of *this* condition dukkha is quenched, dukkha ends...

The understanding of *idappaccayata*, conditionality, and *paticca-samuppada*, dependent co-origination, is crucial in understanding the mind, how suffering is produced and how suffering is eliminated.

\* \* \*

“And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination?”

With birth as condition, aging-and-death comes to be: whether there

be an arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas, this nature of things still stands, the stableness of the Dhamma, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that (idappaccayata – specific conditionality).

A Tathagata awakens to this and breaks through to it. Fully enlightened, fully understanding, he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, elucidates it...

- From *The Island*, by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasanno

The Sutta on Dependent Origination - Sutta Nipata 12.1, Translated by  
Bhikkhu Bodhi

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable sir!” those bhikkhus replied.

The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, I will teach you dependent origination. Listen and attend closely, and I will speak.”

–“Yes, venerable sir,” those bhikkhus replied.

The Blessed One said this:

“And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination? With ignorance as a condition, volitional formations come to be;

with volitional formations, consciousness;

with consciousness, name and-form;

with name-and-form, the six sense bases;

with the six sense bases, contact;

with contact, feeling;

with feeling, craving;

with craving, clinging;

with clinging, existence;

with existence, birth;

and with birth as a condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

This, bhikkhus, is called dependent origination.

Now, with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations;

with the cessation of volitional formations, there is the cessation of consciousness;

with the cessation of consciousness, name-and-form cease;

with the cessation of name-and-form, the six sense bases;

with the cessation of the six sense bases, contact;

with the cessation of contact, feeling;

with the cessation of feeling, craving;

with the cessation of craving, clinging;

with the cessation of clinging, existence;

with the cessation of existence, birth;

and with the cessation of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair all cease.

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Elated, those bhikkhus delighted in the Blessed One’s statement.

On The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, from The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching, and Old Path, White Clouds, by Thich Nhat Hanh

When the Buddha said, "Ignorance conditions volitional actions," he meant that there is a relationship of cause and effect between ignorance and volitional actions. Ignorance nourishes volitional actions, but volitional actions also nourish ignorance. Ignorance activates consciousness by producing feelings of discomfort, craving, boredom, intention, and aspiration, so these feelings are called volitional actions. Once these feelings are active in consciousness, they make ignorance stronger.

\* \* \*

Ignorance is *avidya*, the lack of light. *Vidya* is understanding or wisdom. The presence of light means the absence of darkness. The presence of day means the absence of night. The presence of ignorance means the absence of understanding. The Buddha said, "When ignorance comes to an end, understanding arises."

Ignorance leads to volitional actions, the will to live. When you are angry, you want to do something, but does understanding lead to the will to die? No, it leads to the will to live, also.

*In understanding, there is loving kindness and compassion, and when you are compassionate, loving, and understanding, you want to do something to help alleviate suffering.*

Anger, hatred, and ignorance are forms of energy. Understanding and compassion are also forms of energy.

On one side, there are actions for grasping things or satisfying our desires. On the other side is the volition to be present in order to help alleviate



suffering.

*That is the intention of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and all people of goodwill. They have love, and understanding, and therefore the willingness to be present amidst suffering in order to bring relief, comfort, and joy.*

\* \* \*

As we can see, there is also a positive side to the Twelve Links, although Buddhist teachers since the time of the Buddha seem to have overlooked this. We need to find words to describe the Interdependent Co-Arising of positive states of mind and body, and not just of negative states.

The Buddha taught that when ignorance ends, there is clear understanding. He didn't say that when ignorance ends, there is nothing.

What does clear understanding condition? Clarity, the absence of ignorance, gives rise to the desire to act with love and compassion. This is called the Great Aspiration (*mahapranidhana*) or the mind of awakening (*bodhichitta*) in Mahayana Buddhism.

When you practice the Four Noble Truths, you see that you can liberate yourself and other beings, and you stop running away from and destroying yourself.

The positive side of volitional actions is the motivating energy called *the Great Aspiration* that propels us toward the beautiful and the wholesome, rather than toward the hell realms.

Just as volitional actions condition consciousness, the Great Aspiration conditions wisdom. When our ignorance has been transformed, what we have been calling consciousness becomes wisdom.

\* \* \*

We study the Twelve Links of Interdependent Co-Arising in order to diminish the element of ignorance in us and to increase the element of clarity. When our ignorance is diminished, craving, hatred, pride, doubt, and views are also diminished; and love compassion, joy, and equanimity are increased.

\* \* \*

“Bhikkhus, ignorance underlies all twelve links of the chain of existence. Thanks to the contemplation on the nature of dependent co-arising we can dispel ignorance in order to transcend all anxieties and sorrows.

An enlightened person walks over the waves of birth and death and does not drown in them. An enlightened person uses the twelve links of the chain of existence like the wheels of a carriage. An enlightened person lives in the very midst of the world but is never submerged by it. Bhikkhus, do not try to run away from birth and death. You need only rise above them. Transcending birth and death is the attainment of Great Beings.”

The Anatta-lakkhana Sutta: The Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic

SN 21.59 - Based on the translation by Bhikkhu Sujato

At one time the Buddha was staying near Benares, in the deer park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed the group of five mendicants:

“Monks!”

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha then said this:

“Monks, form is not-self. If form were self, it would not lead to affliction. You could compel form: ‘May my form be like this! May it not be like that!’, but it’s not this way...

See how it is: Feeling, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness also are not self.

If these were self, they wouldn’t lead to affliction. You could compel them, saying: ‘May my consciousness be like this! May it not be like that!’, but it’s not this way...

What do you think, monks? Are form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, sir.”

“If they are impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?”

“Suffering, sir.”

“If they are impermanent, suffering, and perishable, then are they fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”

“No, sir.”

“So you should truly see all of the skandas, individually and taken together- whether past, present, or future; whether internal or external; whether coarse or fine; inferior or superior: know *all* of these, with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

Seeing this, a discerning, noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away, and when desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done. There is no return to any state of existence.’”

That is what the Buddha said, and while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of the group of five monks were freed from the defilements by not grasping.

## The Discourse on the Middle Way

Based on the translation by Thich Nhat Hanh

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying at the guest house in a forest of the district of Nala. At that time, the Venerable Kaccayana came to visit him and asked,

“The Tathagata has spoken of Right View. How would the Tathagata describe Right View?”

The Buddha told the venerable monk,

“People in the world tend to believe in one of two views: the view of being or the view of nonbeing. That is because they are bound to wrong perception. It is wrong perception that leads to the concepts of being and nonbeing.

“Kaccayana, most people are bound to the internal formations of discrimination and preference, grasping and attachment. Those who are not bound to the internal knots of grasping and attachment no longer imagine and cling to the idea of a self.

They understand, for example, that suffering comes to be when conditions are favorable, and that it fades away when conditions are no longer favorable.

They no longer have any doubts. Their understanding has not come to them through others; it is their own insight. This insight is called Right View, and this is the way the Tathagata would describe Right View.

“How is this so? When a person who has correct insight observes the coming to be of the world, the idea of nonbeing does not arise in her, and

when she observes the fading away of the world, the idea of being does not arise in her mind.

Kaccayana, viewing the world as being is an extreme; viewing it as nonbeing is another extreme. The Tathagata avoids these two extremes and teaches the Dharma dwelling in the Middle Way.

“The Middle Way says that this is, because that is; this is not, because that is not...

This is true from ignorance, to birth and death, and from the fading away of ignorance, to the cessation of all suffering.

After listening to the Buddha, the Venerable Kaccayana was enlightened and liberated from sorrow. He was able to untie all of his internal knots and attain Arhatship.

Samyukta Agama 301

The Discourse on the Dharma in Brief, translated by Piya Tan, lightly edited

Now a certain monk approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the monk said this to the Blessed One:

“It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One teach me the Dhamma in brief. Having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I would dwell alone, aloof, diligent, making efforts, and resolute.”

(The Buddha said, Aah...) “It is just in this way that some hollow person beseech me, but when the Dhamma has been spoken, they think they should still follow me around.”

(The Monk persisted, and said) “May the Blessed One, bhante, teach me the Dhamma in brief. May the welcome one teach me Dhamma in brief. Perhaps I would know the meaning of the Blessed One’s word! Perhaps I would be an heir to the Blessed One’s word!”

“In that case, bhikshu, said the Buddha, you should train yourself thus:

*“My mind will indeed remain well settled internally. No bad, unwholesome states that have arisen will remain, overwhelming my mind Thus you should train yourself.”*

“When, bhikshu, your mind remains internally well settled, so that no bad, unwholesome states that have arisen will remain, overwhelming your mind, then, bhikshu, you should train yourself thus:

*Through the cultivation of lovingkindness, the liberation of mind should be cultivated, grown, made a vehicle, made a basis, practised, consolidated, and well engaged. Thus, bhikshu, you should train yourself.*

When, bhikshu, your mind is cultivated, well cultivated, then, bhikshu, you should train yourself thus:

*Through the cultivation of compassion...*

*the cultivation of joy...*

*and the cultivation of equanimity, the liberation of mind should be cultivated, grown, made a vehicle, made a basis, practised, consolidated, and well engaged. Thus, bhikshu, you should train yourself.*

When, bhikshu, this samadhi has been well cultivated by you, then you should train yourself thus:

*I will dwell ardent, clearly aware, and mindful, observing the body in the body, the feelings in the feelings, the mind in the mind, and the objects of mind in the objects of mind, removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. Thus, bhikshu, you should train yourself.*

When bhikshu, you have well cultivated this samadhi, then, wherever you walk, you will walk with ease; wherever you stand, you will stand with ease; wherever you sit, you will sit with ease; and, wherever you lie down, you will lie down with ease.

When the Blessed One had given him this advice, the monk rose from his seat, saluted the Blessed One, and, keeping rightwise, departed.

Then, dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, making efforts, and resolute, that monk, by realizing for himself through direct knowledge, in no long time at all, in this very life, entered and dwelled in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.



He directly knew: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done is what had to be done. There is no more for this state of being."

And that monk became one of the arhats.

## Verses on the Three Characteristics

*Impermanent is all that is conditioned.  
When one sees this with wisdom,  
One turns away from grasping and suffering.  
This is the path to purity.*

*Unsatisfactory is all that is conditioned.  
When one sees this with wisdom,  
One turns away from grasping and suffering.  
This is the path to purity.*

*Without self are all dhammas.  
When one sees this with wisdom,  
One turns away from grasping and suffering.  
This is the path to purity.*

*{Those Who Cross Over}*

*There are few among humans  
Who go to the further shore;  
The rest of them run about  
Here, on this shore. -*

*But those well established in Dhamma,  
Those who practice Dhamma,  
Are among those who will cross over  
Beyond the realm of death, so difficult to escape.*

*Abandoning the way of darkness,  
Cultivating the bright,  
The wise go from home to homelessness,  
Which for others is hard to enjoy.*

*Desiring that rare delight,  
Renouncing pleasure,  
Owning nothing of defilements of the mind,  
The wise person should cleanse himself.*

*Those whose minds are well established  
In the factors of enlightenment,  
Relinquish attachments  
And delight in not clinging.  
They, untainted and radiant,  
In this very world attain Nibbana.*

## The Buddha's Instruction to Share the Dhamma

From Buddhistdoor International, Bhante Bodhiratna

After his enlightenment, the Buddha began his teaching with the discourse known as The Turning of the Wheel of Truth, which he gave to the group of five ascetics at the Deer Park at Isipatana, at Benares of modern India.

Then he preached his second discourse, Anatta Lakkhana Sutta (The Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic), to them. After hearing these two suttas, these five ascetics attained Arhatship. Later on, Yasa, his distinguished friend, and 50 more friends converted to Buddhism and they all became Arhats as well.

In this way, in only two months since his enlightenment, the numbers of Arhats had gradually risen to sixty in the world.

The Buddha then said,

*Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men.*

*Let not go two by one way.*

*Preach, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma which is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end, both in spirit and letter. Proclaim the holy life, perfect and pure...*

After that day, the number of his followers grew larger and larger, and since his passing away into Nibbana at the age of 80, his Noble disciples (The Sangha) have been carrying the message of his Truth throughout the world...

## Selections from the Parinibbana Sutta

Preface - From *The Buddha and his Disciples*, by Venerable S. Dhammika

The Buddha said, 'I shall not die until the monks, the nuns, the laymen and the laywomen have become deeply learned, wise and well-trained, remembering the teachings, proficient in the lesser and greater doctrines and virtuous; until, having learned the teachings themselves, they are able to tell it to others, teach it, make it known, establish it, open it up, explain it and make it clear; until they are able to refute false doctrines taught by others and are able to spread the convincing and liberating truth abroad. I shall not die until the holy life has become successful, prosperous, undespised and popular; until it has become well proclaimed among both gods and men.'

The Buddha's motive in proclaiming the Dharma was compassion. He said: "Whatever has had to be done by a teacher out of compassion, for the welfare of his disciples, I have done for you."

## Be Islands Unto Yourselves

From The Parinibbana Sutta, Book Two

Now I am frail, Ānanda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ānanda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathāgata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ānanda, only when the Tathāgata, 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, Ānanda, 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.

## The Last Admonition

From The Parinibbana Sutta

Book Three

“So, then, Ānanda, let us go to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest.” And the Venerable Ānanda replied: “So be it, Lord.”

Then the Blessed One, with the Venerable Ānanda, went to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest. And there he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: “Go now, Ānanda, and assemble in the hall of audience all the bhikkhus who dwell in the neighbourhood of Vesālī.”

“So be it, Lord.” And the Venerable Ānanda gathered all the bhikkhus who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Vesālī, and assembled them in the hall of audience.

And then, respectfully saluting the Blessed One, and standing at one side, he said: “The community of bhikkhus is assembled, Lord. Now let the Blessed One do as he wishes.”

Thereupon the Blessed One entered the hall of audience, and taking the seat prepared for him, he exhorted the bhikkhus, saying:

“Now, O bhikkhus, I say to you that these teachings of which I have direct knowledge and which I have made known to you- these you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practise, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men.

“And what, bhikkhus, are these teachings? They are the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four constituents of psychic power,

the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path.

These, bhikkhus, are the teachings of which I have direct knowledge, which I have made known to you, and which you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practise, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men.

Then the Blessed One said to the bhikkhus:

“So, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness. The time of the Tathāgata’s Parinibbāna is near. Three months hence the Tathāgata will utterly pass away.”

And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

*My years are now full ripe, the life span left is short.  
Departing, I go hence from you, relying on myself alone.*

*Be earnest, then, O bhikkhus,  
be mindful and of virtue pure!*

*With firm resolve, guard your own mind!*

*Whoso untiringly pursues the Dhamma and the Discipline  
Shall go beyond the round of births,  
and make an end of suffering.*



## Virtue, Concentration, Wisdom, and Emancipation

From the Parinibbana Sutta

Book Four

And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying:

“Bhikkhus, it is through not realizing, through not penetrating four principles that this long course of birth and death has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you.

What are those four?

They are: noble virtue,  
noble concentration,  
noble wisdom,  
and noble emancipation.

But now, bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no fresh becoming.”

And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

“Virtue, concentration, wisdom, and emancipation  
unsurpassed-

These are the principles realized by Gotama the renowned;  
And, knowing them, he, the Buddha,  
to his monks has taught the Dhamma.

He, the destroyer of suffering, the Master, the Seer,  
is at peace.”

And also at Bhandagāma the Blessed One often gave counsel to the bhikkhus:

“Such is virtue; such is concentration; and such is wisdom.

Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct;

great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration;

utterly freed from the defilements of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.”

The Blessed One's Final Exhortation, From the Parinibbana Sutta, Book Six

Now the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: "It may be, Ānanda, that to some among you the thought will come: 'Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no longer.' But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known as the Dhamma and the Discipline, that shall be your Master when I am gone..."

And, Ānanda, whereas now the bhikkhus address one another as 'friend,' let it not be so when I am gone. The senior bhikkhus, Ānanda, may address the junior ones by their name, their family name, or as 'friend'; but the junior bhikkhus should address the senior ones as 'venerable sir' or 'your reverence.'

"If it is desired, Ānanda, the Sangha may, when I am gone, abolish the lesser and minor rules..."

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.' "

But when this was said, the bhikkhus were silent. And yet a second and a third time the Blessed One said to them: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.' "

And for a second and a third time the bhikkhus were silent.

Then the Blessed One said to them: “It may be, bhikkhus, out of respect for the Master that you ask no questions. Then, bhikkhus, let friend communicate it to friend.” Yet still the bhikkhus were silent.

And the Venerable Ānanda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: “Marvelous it is, O Lord, most wonderful it is! This faith I have in the community of bhikkhus, that not even one bhikkhu is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice.”

“Out of faith, Ānanda, you speak thus, but here, Ānanda, the Tathāgata knows for certain that among this community of bhikkhus there is not even one bhikkhu who is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, or the path or the practice. For, Ānanda, among these five hundred bhikkhus even the lowest is a stream-enterer, secure from downfall, assured, and bound for enlightenment.”

And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: “Behold now, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!”

This was the last word of the Tathāgata.

The World's Echo, from The Parinibbana Sutta, Book Six

And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneous with his Parinibbāna there came a tremendous earthquake, dreadful and astounding, and the thunders rolled across the heavens.

And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneous with his Parinibbāna, Brahmā Sahampati spoke this stanza:

*All must depart- all beings that have life  
Must shed their compound forms.  
Yea, even one,  
A Master such as he, a peerless being,  
Powerful in wisdom, the Enlightened One,  
has passed away.*

And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneous with his Parinibbāna, Sakka, king of the gods, spoke this stanza:

*Transient are all compounded things,  
Subject to arise and vanish;  
Having come into existence they pass away;  
Good is the peace when they forever cease.*

And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneous with his Parinibbāna, the Venerable Anuruddha spoke this stanza:

*No movement of the breath,  
but with steadfast heart,  
Free from desires and tranquil-  
so the sage comes to his end.  
By mortal pangs unshaken,  
His mind, like a flame extinguished,  
finds release.*

And when the Blessed One had passed away, simultaneous with his Parinibbāna, the Venerable Ānanda spoke this stanza:

*Then there was terror,  
and the hair stood up,  
when he,  
The All-accomplished One,  
the Buddha,  
passed away.*

Then, when the Blessed One had passed away, some bhikkhus, not yet freed from passion, lifted up their arms and wept; and some, flinging themselves on the ground, rolled from side to side and wept, lamenting:

“Too soon has the Blessed One come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!”

But the bhikkhus who were freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflected in this way:

“Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?”

And the Venerable Anuruddha addressed the bhikkhus, saying: “Enough, friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! For has not the Blessed One declared that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded and subject to decay, how can one say: ‘May it not come to dissolution!’?”

## The Conclusion of the Parinibbana Sutta

And when the body of the Blessed One had been burned, water rained down from heaven and extinguished the pyre of the Blessed One, and from the sāla trees water came forth, and the Mallas of Kusinārā brought water scented with many kinds of perfumes, and they too extinguished the pyre of the Blessed One.

And the Mallas of Kusinārā laid the relics of the Blessed One in their council hall, and surrounded them with a lattice-work of spears and encircled them with a fence of bows; and there for seven days they paid homage to the relics of the Blessed One with dance, song, music, flower garlands, and perfume, and showed respect, honour, and veneration to the relics of the Blessed One...

And thus it was in the days of old.

*Eight portions there were of the relics of him,  
The All-Seeing One, the greatest of men.  
Seven in Jambudīpa are honoured, and one*

*In Rāmagāma, by kings of the Nāga race.  
One tooth is honoured in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven,  
One in the realm of Kalinga, and one by the Nāga  
kings.*

*Through their brightness this bountiful earth  
With its most excellent gifts is endowed;  
For thus the relics of the All-Seeing One are best honoured  
By those who are worthy of honour- by gods and Nāgas  
And lords of men, yea, by the highest of mankind.*

*Pay homage with clasped hands! For hard indeed it is  
Through hundreds of ages to meet with an All-Enlightened One!*

And the Devas Rejoiced (reprise)

And when the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion, the earth devas cried out, in jubilation:

*Aah! At Varanasi, at the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma, that cannot be stopped by any contemplative, or deva, or Mara, or God, or by anyone in the cosmos!*

On hearing the earth devas' rejoicing, the devas of the Four Kings' Heaven understood what they said, and also took up the cry, celebrating... and this was followed by the devas of the Thirty-three... and the Yama devas... and the Tusita devas... all the way up even to the devas of Brahma's retinue...

Rejoicing, they all proclaimed with one mighty voice,

*Aah! At Varanasi, at the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma, that cannot be stopped by any contemplative, or deva, or Mara, or God, or by anyone in the cosmos!*

Thus, this joyful song of praise travelled up even to the realm of the highest divinities, and this system of ten thousand worlds trembled, and quaked, and shook, and a boundless, sublime radiance, surpassing the glory of all the devas appeared in the world...



Verses for the Sharing of Merits (Pali)

Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā  
Devā nāgā mahiddhikā  
Puññaṃ taṃ anumoditvā  
Ciraṃ rakkhantu sāsanaṃ.

Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā  
Devā nāgā mahiddhikā  
Puññaṃ taṃ anumoditvā  
Ciraṃ rakkhantu desanaṃ.

Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā  
Devā nāgā mahiddhikā  
Puññaṃ taṃ anumoditvā  
Ciraṃ rakkhantu maṃ paraṃ.

Ettāvatā ca amhehi  
Sambhataṃ puññasampadaṃ  
Sabbe devā anumodantu  
Sabbasampatti siddhiyā.

Ettāvatā ca amhehi  
Sambhataṃ puññasampadaṃ  
Sabbe bhūtā anumodantu  
Sabbasampatti siddhiyā.

Ettāvatā ca amhehi  
Sambhataṃ puññasampadaṃ  
Sabbe sattā anumodantu  
Sabbasampatti siddhiyā.

Bhavagg'upādāya avāciheṭṭhato  
etth'antare sattakāy' upapannā  
rūpī arūpī ca asaññā saññino  
dukkhā pamucantu  
phusantu nibbutiṃ.

### Verses for the Sharing of Merits

May the powerful devas & nāgas  
dwelling in the sky and on earth  
rejoice in this merit  
and long protect the Sāsana.

May the powerful devas & nāgas  
dwelling in the sky and on earth  
rejoice in this merit  
and long protect the teaching.

May the powerful devas & nāgas  
dwelling in the sky and on earth  
rejoice in this merit  
and long protect me & others.

To the extent that we have  
acquired any merit,  
may all devas rejoice in it  
for achieving all success.

To the extent that we have  
acquired any merit,  
may all spirits rejoice in it  
for achieving all success.

To the extent that we have  
acquired any merit,  
may all beings rejoice in it  
for achieving all success.

From the peak of existence,  
down as far as avīci hell,  
may all beings reborn in these realms,  
those with form,  
and those without form,  
those with, and those without perception-  
May they all be freed from suffering;  
May all attain the peace of nibbàna.

## The Sharing of Blessings

Through the goodness that arises from our practice,  
 May our spiritual teachers and guides of great virtue,  
 Our mothers, fathers, and relatives,  
 all the leaders of the world,  
 the highest gods and evil forces,

Celestial beings, guardian spirits of the Earth,  
 those who are friendly, indifferent, or hostile,  
 realized beings and ordinary worldly people -

May they all receive the blessings we have known in our lives.  
 May they soon attain the threefold bliss<sup>1</sup> and realize the Deathless<sup>2</sup>.

Through the goodness that arises from our practice,  
 And through this act of sharing,  
 May all desires and attachments,  
 and all harmful states of mind of myself and all others quickly cease.

May we all be completely healed.  
 May we all be completely liberated.

Until we realize Nibanna,  
 In every kind of birth, may we have upright minds,  
 With mindfulness and wisdom, austerity and vigor.  
 May the forces of delusion not take hold nor weaken our resolve.

The Buddha is our excellent refuge and Guide  
 Unsurpassed is the protection of practicing the Holy Dhamma,  
 and the Noble Sangha is our supreme support.

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<sup>1</sup> All the happiness of this life, celestial realms, and liberation

<sup>2</sup> Or 'May they all realize the true nature of no birth and no death'.

Through the supreme power of these three,  
for myself and for all others,  
May all darkness and delusion be dispelled.