

The Word *of* the Buddha

• SECOND EDITION



AJAHN BRAHM

Copyright©2025 Ajahn Brahmavamso
All rights reserved

Permission to copy, reprint and distribute this publication is hereby given
provided no changes are made to the content or layout.
Reproduction in any way for commercial gain is prohibited.

ISBN 978-0-646-71704-3

Designed in Hong Kong by Pressroom Printer and Designer Ltd
Printed in Perth by Daniels Printing Craftsmen Pty Ltd

Second Edition



BODHINYANA 覺智國際基金會
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Bodhinyana International Foundation
www.bodhinyana.com

The Word *of* the Buddha

An Outline of the Teachings of the Buddha
in the Words of the Pāli Canon

—

SECOND EDITION

Compilation based on Ñāṇatiloka Mahāthera's booklet
The Word of the Buddha

Updated with translations from Bhikkhu Bodhi
Edited by Ajahn Brahm



BODHINYANA 覺智國際基金會
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

FOREWORD

In 1907, the pioneering German monk, Venerable Nāṇatiloka, published the English version of *The Word of The Buddha*. It is described as “An outline of the teachings of the Buddha in the words of the Pāli Canon.” It consists of a selection of authentic teachings from the suttas that expound on the core Buddhist teaching of the four noble truths (including the noble eightfold path).

For almost 25 years, I have been using *The Word of The Buddha* as a textbook to introduce my monastic students to the Buddhist suttas. Indeed, every *anagārika* (postulant) and *sāmaṇera* (novice monk) must complete this course in basic Buddhist teaching before they are allowed to receive the higher ordination as a bhikkhu (fully-ordained monk). I have taken such steps to establish “quality control” in the monks under my training so, at the very least, they are made aware of what the Buddha really taught from the most reliable source, the suttas.

Unfortunately, there is a problem. Although the Dhamma is timeless, the usual presentation has become as if overgrown by impenetrable thickets of tradition. I have received countless well-intended criticisms that all the repetitions are discouraging, the similes are so archaic as to be obtuse, and some revered renderings of key Buddhist terms are rusted shut. The exegesis is well past its use-by-date.

Rather turn on the electric light, than complain about darkness.
Ancient Chinese saying, updated.

This little book, then, is not another translation. It is a new type of translation — not so much for detached scholars but for those who immerse their whole lives in these teachings. I have followed Professor A. K. Warder’s insightful advice: “*It is the sentences which are the natural units of discourse and which are the minimum units that have precise, fully articulated meaning. For purposes of study we have to assign approximate meanings to words and list these in vocabularies, but these generalised meanings of words are extremely vague, whereas sentences have exact meanings. In translation one may find close equivalents for sentences, whilst it is often impossible to give close equivalents for words.*” (INTRODUCTION TO PĀLI, P. 2)

Thus, in order to convey the meaning, I have chosen to translate sentence-for-sentence and not word-for-word. A word has no intrinsic essence outside of a sentence.

My authority to translate rests on my reputation as a well-known Buddhist meditation teacher, first trained to think in Cambridge University and then trained to be silent for 9 years under Ajahn Chah, as an author of many books on meditation and a teacher of Pāli to many monks, and with 50 years immersed in the life of a renunciant, open to scrutiny.

For example, for many years I have consistently protested against the traditional translation of “concentration” for the Pāli word *samādhi*, instead preferring “stillness”. This is not a trivial point for debate among philologists, for it cuts to the very heart of the Buddhist path to freedom. Nor is my protest to serve an ego—quite the opposite! The practice of concentration, and the willpower on which it depends, actually reinforces the ego. On the contrary, stillness, and the letting go/renunciation on which it depends, brings the ego to cessation.

This is not the final version. Translations will always be a work in progress. I only hope that this version will elucidate, inspire and challenge. Students have remarked on listening to classes based on earlier drafts of this book that it is “like listening to the teachings in the suttas for the first time—their power is frightening and, at the same time, compelling.” As for improvements, I welcome better sentence-by-sentence translations but only when they arise from someone immersed in these teachings, living as a renunciant for the cessation of all ego or any concept of a permanent essence within or beyond the five *khandhas*.

Sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāyā (MN 37)
There is nothing worth keeping.

Ajahn Brahm, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM THE PUBLISHER

We at Bodhinyana International Foundation (BIF), a registered non-profit organization in Hong Kong, wish to express our deepest gratitude to Ajahn Brahm, our Spiritual Advisor. Ajahn Brahm has kindly granted BIF the exclusive right to publish his version of *The Word of the Buddha*. This work, rendered in contemporary English with significantly improved accuracy, is based on the book of the same title, first published in German in 1906 by the eminent German monk Ñāṇatiloka Mahāthera (1878-1957). Like the original, Ajahn Brahm's version serves as a compact sourcebook of the teachings of the Buddha. It can also be used as a companion to Ajahn Brahm's 12-part lecture series of the same title. Both the videos and the podcasts can be accessed through this link: <https://bswa.org/teaching/word-buddha-ajahn-brahm/>

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the four anonymous donors, whose selfless contributions have made the publication of 2,000 copies of the first edition possible for free distribution. Their generosity has allowed us to share these teachings with a wider audience, and we are truly grateful for their support. We also wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Anne Cheung and Aosi Mak for their meticulous editing and formatting of this book; Corina Chan and Gerald Lee for their attentive proofreading of the final draft; Désirée Bucks and Gary Ling for their exceptional design and printing assistance; and Freddie Sze for providing the copyright of the photo featured on the cover. The cover design showcases a historic *Dhammacakka* statue, depicting the Buddha giving his first sermon, The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*). This statue moved Ajahn Brahm to tears whenever he beheld it at the Sarnath Museum outside Benares, India.

Finally, and most importantly, this publication is dedicated to the late **Mr. William Betts** and **Mrs. Hazel Betts**, whose “door of their house”, which inspired the title of Ajahn Brahm's first book, *Opening the Door of Your Heart*, was always open to their younger son Peter. A fine Englishman, Peter skilfully “let go” of himself from a Cambridge-educated theoretical physicist to a fully-ordained Theravāda Buddhist monk 50 years ago this year, 2024. The Betts' unconditional love and care have been the foundation of Ajahn Brahm's journey, enabling him to spread the Dhamma—the Teachings of the Buddha—far and wide for half a century through profound devotion and selfless service.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In this second edition of *The Word of the Buddha*, we have amended punctuation and spelling errors present in the first edition, and have extended the usage of terminology from the glossary to support Ajahn's preferred English rendering of certain Pāli vocabulary.

We have also changed the italicisation of Pāli words so that more commonly understood words are left without italics, and less common words rendered in italics. Capitalisation of key Buddhist doctrines has also been reduced to improve readability.

Some passages from the first edition have been lightly abridged. This is mainly to avoid unnecessary repetition of passages from the original text, in particular similes which can occur multiple times and are better left referenced at the beginning and end of a section.

Upon printing the second addition, we have amended a few further additional errors - these will be updated in the digital editions of the second edition -

- Page 73 - A correction of 'ssatipaṭṭhāna' (double leading 's') in 'Summary of Satipaṭṭhāna' section has been added.
- Page 79 - Consistent italicisation of 'āsava' has been corrected in the Nibbāna section.
- Page 88 - The macron has been added to 'samādhi' in the Editor's Note section.
- Page 101 - A closing bracket has been added to the description of Vism in Abbreviations.
- Page 104 - The leading 's' has been added to in 'saṅkappa' in 'sammā aṅkappa', in the Glossary definition of 'SAṅKAPPA'

We hope you enjoy this second edition of *The Word of the Buddha*.

Bhante Kimbila / Bhante Dayālu, 2025



TABLE
OF
CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

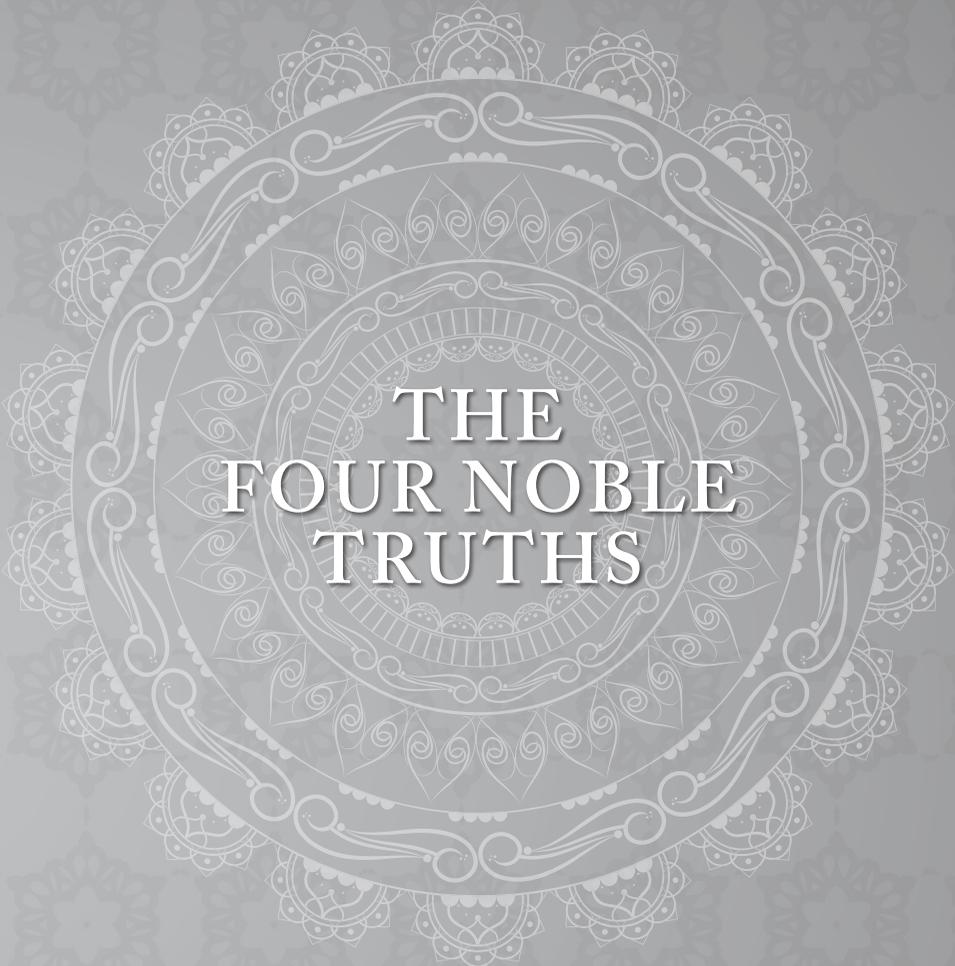
Foreword	2
Acknowledgements from the Publisher.	4
Preface to the Second Edition.	5
Table of Contents	7
The Four Noble Truths	13
I. The Noble Truth of Suffering	17
The Five Components of Existence (The <i>Khandhas</i>)	19
The Body Component of Existence.	20
The Experience (<i>Vedanā</i>) Component of Existence.	20
The Perception Component of Existence	21
The Will (and Other Mental Formations) Component of Existence	21
The Consciousnesses Component of Existence	21
Dependent Origination of Consciousnesses	21
<i>Sanḅhārā</i>	22
Dependency of Consciousnesses	22
The Three Characteristics of Existence	22
The <i>Anattā</i> Doctrine	23
The Three Warnings	25
<i>Samsāra</i>	26
II. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering	29
The Threefold Wanting.	30
The Origin of Wanting.	30
Dependent Origination of All Phenomena	31
Kamma	31
Present Kamma-Result (<i>Sandittḅhika</i>)	31
Future Kamma-Result (<i>Samparāyika</i>)	32
Kamma as Volition	32
Inheritance of Deeds.	32
III. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering	35
Dependent Cessation of all Phenomena	36
<i>Nibbāna</i> with Residue Remaining	36
The Arahant	37

IV. The Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering	39
1. Right View	41
Wrong View	41
Right View	41
The Four Noble Truths	42
The Good and the Bad	42
Right View Regarding the Five Components of Existence.	42
Unprofitable Questions	42
The Five Basic Fetters	43
Unwise Contemplations	43
The Six Views about the Permanent Essence	44
The Two Extremes and the Middle Doctrine	45
Views and Discussions about the Permanent Essence.	46
Wise Contemplations	48
The <i>Sotāpanna</i> or “Stream-Winner”	48
Causes for the Arising of the Right View of Stream-Winning.	49
What is the View of a Permanent Essence (<i>Sakkāya Diṭṭhi</i>)?	49
“Word of Another” Means the Word of an <i>Ariyan</i>	49
Stream-Winning and the Seven in the Water Simile	50
The <i>Jhānānāgāmi</i> or “Jhāna-Non-Returner”	51
Scent of “I am”	51
Free from All Speculative Views	53
The Three Characteristics	53
Dependent Origination.	56
2. Right Motivation	58
3. Right Speech	58
Abstaining from Lying	58
Abstaining from Malicious Gossip	58
Abstaining from Harsh Speech	59
Abstaining from Useless Chatter.	59
Right Way to Criticise Someone.	59
4. Right Action.	60
5. Right Livelihood.	61
6. Right Endeavour.	61
The Endeavour of Restraint.	61
The Endeavour to Abandon	62
The Endeavour to Develop	62
The Endeavour to Maintain	63

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7. Right Mindfulness	63
The Four Focuses of Mindfulness	63
Mindfulness of Body.	64
Mindfulness of Breathing	64
The Four Postures	65
Full Comprehension of the Purpose	65
The Bodily Parts	65
Elements	66
The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations	66
Benefits of Mindfulness of the Body.	67
Arising and Passing Away (Rise and Fall).	68
Mindfulness of Experience	68
Mindfulness of the <i>Citta</i> (Mind).	69
Mindfulness of Mind-Objects.	70
The Five Hindrances	70
The Seven Awakening Factors.	71
The Five Components of Existence.	72
The Six Sense Bases.	72
The Four Noble Truths	72
Summary of Mind-Objects	72
Summary of <i>Satipatṭhāna</i>	73
<i>Nibbāna</i> through <i>Ānāpānassati</i>	73
Mindfulness of Breathing Completes the Four Focuses of Mindfulness	73
Four Focuses of Mindfulness Complete the Seven Awakening Factors	75
Seven Awakening Factors Complete True Knowledge and Deliverance.	76
8. Right Stillness (Jhāna)	77
The Four Jhānas.	77
Summing Up of the Noble Eightfold Path	79
<i>Nibbāna</i>	79
The True Goal	79

The Gradual Training	81
Arising of Buddha and Dhamma	82
Confidence.....	82
Virtue.....	82
Contentment	84
Restraint of the Senses.....	84
Full Comprehension of the Purpose.....	84
Meditation.....	85
The Jhānas	85
From the Aṅguttara Nikāya	87
Editor's note.....	88
5.21 Irreverent.....	88
8.81 Mindfulness.....	89
10.61 Delusion	90
10.62 Craving	92
10.76 Incapable.....	93
10.103 The Wrong Course	97
11.3 Necessary Cause	98
10.2 Will.....	99
Abbreviations	101
Glossary	102



THE
FOUR NOBLE
TRUTHS

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

DN16 The Buddha addressed the community thus:

“It is through not fully understanding and penetrating the four noble truths that I, as well as you, have experienced the cycle of rebirth-and-death for a very long time. Because of not fully understanding the noble truth of suffering we have experienced the cycle of rebirth-and-death; by not fully understanding the noble truth of the origin of suffering; the noble truth of the cessation of suffering; the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering, that we have for a long time experienced the cycle of rebirth and death.”

SN 56.11 So long as my penetration and insight into these four noble truths as they really are was not thoroughly complete in their three phases and twelve aspects, then I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect awakening in this world.

But when my penetration and insight into these four noble truths as they really are was thoroughly complete in their three phases and twelve aspects, then did I claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect awakening in this world.

- 1a. This is the noble truth of suffering (*dukkha*).
- 1b. Suffering is to be fully understood.
- 1c. Suffering has been fully understood.

- 2a. This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: wanting (*taṇha*) causing rebirth.
- 2b. Wanting (the origin of suffering) is to be abandoned.
- 2c. Wanting (the origin of suffering) has been abandoned.

- 3a. This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: extinguishing (*nirodha*) that wanting.
- 3b. The end of wanting (the cessation of suffering) is to be realised.
- 3c. The end of wanting (the cessation of suffering) has been realised.

- 4a. This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: the noble eightfold path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*).
- 4b. The noble eightfold path (the way to the cessation of suffering) is to be developed.
- 4c. The noble eightfold path (the way to the cessation of suffering) has been developed.

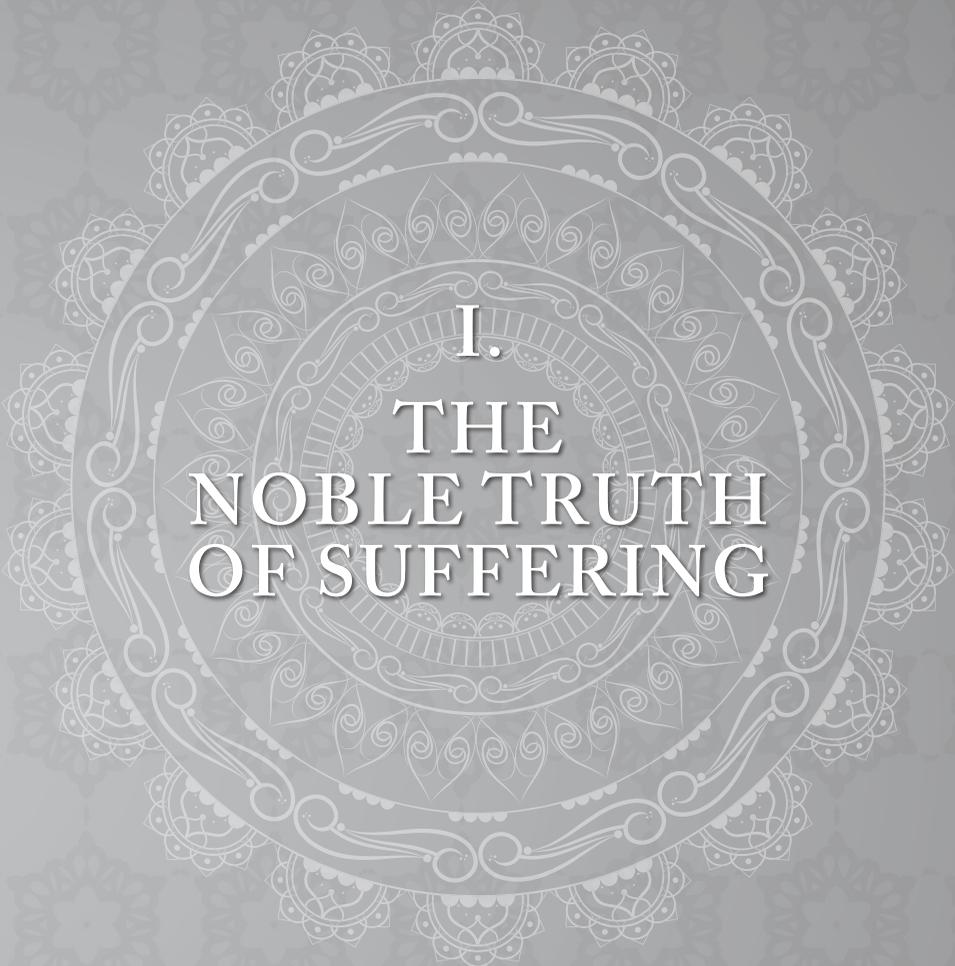
Thus, in regard to things unheard before in this generation, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

MN 26 I considered: “This Dhamma that has been awakened to is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in attachment to a self, takes delight in attachment to a self, and rejoices in attachment to a self. It is hard for such a generation to see this truth, namely, the empty process of cause and effect, dependent cessation and origination.

Furthermore, it is hard to embrace this truth, namely, the stilling and disappearance of the will, the relinquishing of everything that has been acquired, the destruction of wanting, everything fading away, cessation, *nibbāna*.”

...

[Brahma Sahampati entreats the Buddha to teach:] “There are beings with little dust in their eyes that are wasting through not hearing this Dhamma. There will be those who will understand this Dhamma”.



I.
THE
NOBLE TRUTH
OF SUFFERING

I. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

DN 22 And what is the noble truth of suffering? Rebirth (*jāti*) is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, unhappiness and distress are suffering; experiencing what is unpleasant is suffering; missing what is pleasing is suffering; not getting what one wants is suffering. In short, the five components of existence (the “five *khandha*” that fully describe your body and mind) are suffering.

And what is rebirth? In whatever type of beings, of whatever species of beings, there is rebirth, coming-to-be, coming forth, the appearance of the *khandhas*, the acquisition of the senses, that is called rebirth.

And what is old age? In whatever type of beings, of whatever species of beings, there is old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkled skin, shrinking with age, decay of the senses, that is called old age.

And what is death? In whatever type of beings, of whatever species of beings, there is a passing-away, demise, a disappearance, a death, a dying, decease, a destruction of the *khandhas*, a discarding of the body; that is called death.

And what is sorrow? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature, sorrow, mourning, anguish, grief, unhappiness; that is called sorrow.

And what is lamentation? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature and there is crying out, weeping, making much noise for grief, wailing; that is called lamentation.

And what is pain? Whatever painful feeling results from bodily contact; that is called pain.

And what is unhappiness? Whatever mental painful feeling arises from the mind; that is called unhappiness.

And what is distress? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anguish arises from something of a painful or unpleasant nature; that is called distress.

And what is experiencing what is unpleasant? Whoever has unwanted, disliked, unpleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches or mind-objects, or whoever meets those who wish you harm, cause you discomfort or insecurity; that is called experiencing what is unpleasant.

And what is missing what is pleasing? Whoever has pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches or mind-objects, or whoever encounters well-wishers, those who provide you with comfort or security, such as family or friends, and then is deprived of such interaction or connection; that is called missing what is pleasing.

And what is not getting what one wants? In beings subject to birth this desire arises: “Oh that we were not subject to birth, that we might never be reborn!” But this cannot be gained by desire. That is an example of not getting what one wants.

In beings subject to old age, to disease, to death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, negativity and distress they might want: “Oh that we were not subject to old age, to disease, to death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, negativity and distress; that we might not come to these things!” But this cannot be gained by wanting. That is another example of not getting what one wants.

The Five Components of Existence (The *Khandhas*)

DN 22 And what is meant by “in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering”? They are as follows: the body (*rūpa*), experience (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), the will and other mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousnesses (*viññāna*). These are the five components of existence that are suffering.

And that is called the noble truth of suffering.

MN 44 “Is that fuel (*upādāna*) the same as these five components of existence, or is the fuel something apart from the five components of existence?”

“That fuel is neither the same as the five components of existence, nor is the fuel separate from the five components of existence. It is the desire and wanting that is part of these five components of existence that is the fuel that sustains them.”

SN 22.59 Any kind of body whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, one’s own or others’, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—this is the body component of existence. All bodies should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not a permanent essence (*attā*).”

I. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

Any kind of experience whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—this is the experience component of existence. All experience should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not a permanent essence.”

Any kind of perception whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—this is the perception component of existence. All perception should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not a permanent essence.”

Any kind of will (and other mental formations) whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—this is the will and mental formations component of existence. All will should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not a permanent essence.”

Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—this is the consciousnesses components of existence. All consciousnesses should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not a permanent essence.”

The Body Component of Existence

MN 28 And what is the body component of existence? It is the four great elements and the physical qualities derived from the four great elements.

And what are the four great elements? They are the earth, water, fire and the air element.

The Experience (*Vedanā*) Component of Existence

SN 36.1 There are these three types of experience. What three? Pleasant experience through any of the six senses. Unpleasant experience through any of the six senses. Neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant (neutral) experience through any of the six senses. These are the three types of experience.

The Perception Component of Existence

SN 22.56 And what is perception? There are these six kinds of perception: perception of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and perception of mental objects.

The Will (and Other Mental Formations) Component of Existence

SN 22.56 And what is the will? There are these six kinds of volition: will regarding sights, will regarding sounds, will regarding smells, will regarding tastes, will regarding touches, will regarding mental objects.

The Consciousnesses Component of Existence

SN 22.56 And what are consciousnesses? There are these six kinds of consciousnesses: sight-consciousness, hearing-consciousness, smell-consciousness, taste-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness.

Dependent Origination of Consciousnesses

MN 28 If the sense of knowing is intact but no mind-objects (*dhammā*) come into its range, then there is no manifestation of mind consciousness.

If the sense of knowing is intact, mind-objects come into its range, but there's no conscious engagement; then there's no manifestation of mind-consciousness.

But when the sense of knowing is intact, mind-objects come into its range and there is conscious engagement; then mind-consciousness manifests.

And so with the other five senses and the origination each of their own type of consciousness.

Consciousnesses are reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which they arise. When consciousness arise dependent on sights and visual objects, they are reckoned as sight-consciousness. When consciousness arise dependent on hearing and sounds, they are reckoned as hearing-consciousness. When consciousness arise dependent on smells and odours, they are reckoned as smell-consciousness. When consciousness arise dependent on tastes and flavours, they are reckoned as taste-consciousness. When consciousness arise dependent on touches and tangibles, they are reckoned as touch-consciousness. When consciousness arise dependent on the mind and mind-objects, they are reckoned as mind-consciousness.

I. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

Whatever there is of “form” (*rūpa*), this belongs to the form component of existence. Whatever there is of “experience” (*vedanā*), this belongs to the experience component of existence. Whatever there is of “perception” (*saññā*), this belongs to the perception component of existence. Whatever there are of “will and other mental formations” (*saṅkhārā*), this belongs to the will component of existence. Whatever there is of “consciousnesses” (*viññāṇa*), this belongs to the consciousnesses component of existence.

Saṅkhārā

SN 22.56 + 57 What is the *saṅkhārā* component of existence? The definition of *saṅkhārā* is “the six types of will” (*cetanā-kāya*): will involved with the objects of the six senses.

Dependency of Consciousnesses

SN 22.53 Though someone might say: “Apart from the form, apart from experience (*vedanā*), apart from perception, apart from will, I will make known the coming and going of consciousnesses, their passing away and rebirth, their growth, increase, and expansion”—that is impossible.

SN 12.67 [Venerable Sāriputta:] Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with the objects of consciousnesses (*nāma-rūpa*) as a condition, consciousnesses come to be; with consciousnesses as condition, the objects of consciousnesses come to be...

If one were to remove one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall. So too, with the cessation of consciousnesses, the objects of consciousnesses cease to exist; with the cessation of the objects of consciousnesses, consciousnesses cease to exist.

The Three Characteristics of Existence

AN 3.136 All phenomena that arise from a cause do not persist (*anicca*)...
All phenomena that arise from a cause are suffering ...
All phenomena are without a permanent essence.

SN 22.59 “What do you think: does the body persist or disintegrate?”
 “It disintegrates, venerable sir.”
 “Is what disintegrates suffering or happiness?”
 “Suffering, sir.”
 “Is what disintegrates, is suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:
 ‘This is mine, this I am, this is a permanent essence?’”
 “No, sir.”
 “Does experience persist or disappear? ... Does perception persist or change? ...
 Does will stay the same or come, go and alter? ... Are consciousnesses constant
 or changing?”
 “Always changing, sir.”
 “Is what is always changing suffering or happiness?”
 “Suffering, sir.”
 “Is what is inconstant, suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:
 ‘This is mine, this I am, this is a permanent essence?’”
 “No, sir.”

The *Anattā* Doctrine

SN 22.95 Suppose that this river Ganges was carrying along a great lump of foam. A person with good sight would inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to them to be void, hollow, and empty. For what solidity could one find in a mere lump of foam?

So too, whatever kind of form (body) there is, whether past, future, or present, one’s own or others’, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: you inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to you to be void, empty, insubstantial. For what solidity could there be in form?

Suppose it were raining and big raindrops are falling, and a water bubble arises and bursts on the surface of the water. A person with good sight would inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to them to be void, hollow, and momentary. For what permanence could there be with in a water bubble?

So too, whatever kind of experience there is, whether past, future, or present, one’s own or others’, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: you inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to you to be void, empty, and momentary. For can anything constant be found in experience?

I. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

Suppose that in the last month of the hot season, around noon, a shimmering mirage appears. A person with good sight would inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to them to be void, hollow, and illusory. For what reality could there be in a mirage?

So too, whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: you inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to you to be void, empty and illusory. For what reality could there be in perception?

Suppose a person needing hardwood would take a chainsaw and enter a forest. There they would see the trunk of a large banana tree, straight, fresh, without a fruit-bud core. They would cut it down at the root, cut off the crown, and unroll the coil. As they unroll the coil, they would not find even softwood, let alone hardwood. A person with good sight would inspect and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to them to be void, hollow, and without a base. For what basis could there be in the trunk of a banana tree?

So too, whatever kind of will there is, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: you inspect it and carefully investigate it. As you investigate it, it appears to you to be void, empty, and hollow. For what underlying basis could there be in the will?

Suppose that a magician would perform a trick at a crossroads. A person with good eyesight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to them to be void, hollow, and deceptive. For what truth could there be in a magical illusion?

So too, whatever kind of consciousnesses there are, whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: you inspect and carefully investigate them, and they would appear to you to be void, empty, and deceptive. For what authenticity could there be in consciousnesses?

One who seeks pleasure in form seeks only irritation. One who seeks irritation, I say, is not freed from suffering.

One who seeks gratification in experiences seeks only disappointment. One who seeks disappointment, I say, is not freed from suffering.

SN 22.29 One who seeks reality in perceptions seeks only illusions. One who seeks for illusions, I say, is not freed from suffering.

One who seeks contentment in the will seeks only frustration. One who seeks frustration, I say, is not freed from suffering.

One who seeks eternity in consciousnesses seeks only for the affliction of more rebirth. One who seeks for rebirth, I say, is not freed from suffering.

Dhp 146-148 Why this laughter, why this joy, when it's ever burning?
Shrouded all about in gloom won't you look for the light?
Look at this attention-demanding body:
A mass of irritations, constantly needing support, prone to illness, with nothing stable or lasting.
This body gets worn out—so fragile, an incubator for disease.
When life ends in death, this disappointing body dissolves.

The Three Warnings

AN 3.36 But, my friend, didn't you ever see a man or a woman, eighty years of age or more, frail, sickly, struggling to walk even with a walking frame, with many a complaint, strength gone, with false teeth, with white hair or a wig, with wrinkled skin and blotched limbs, and forgetful?

My friend, didn't it occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: "I too am subject to old age; I am not exempt from old age. Let me now do good kamma while I still can by body, speech, and mind?"

But, my friend, didn't you ever see a man or a woman, sick, moaning, gravely ill, bed-ridden, incontinent?

My friend, didn't it occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: "I too am subject to illness; I am not exempt from illness. Let me now do good kamma while I still can by body, speech, and mind?"

But, my friend, didn't you ever see among human beings a dead man or a woman in a coffin, about to be cremated or buried?

I. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

My friend, didn't it occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: "I too am subject to death. I am not exempt from death. Let me now do good kamma while I still can by body, speech, and mind?"

Samsāra

SN 15.3 This *samsāra* is without a beginning. A first point is not found of beings roaming and wandering on, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting.

What do you think, which is more: the stream of tears that you have wept as you roamed and wandered on through your many lives, weeping and wailing because of enduring the disagreeable and not getting what you want—this, or the water in all the great oceans?

For a long time you have experienced grief through the death of a loved one or of a dear friend, or the loss of reputation or wealth; as you have experienced this, weeping and wailing because of enduring despair and not getting what you want, the stream of tears that you have wept is more than the water in all the great oceans.

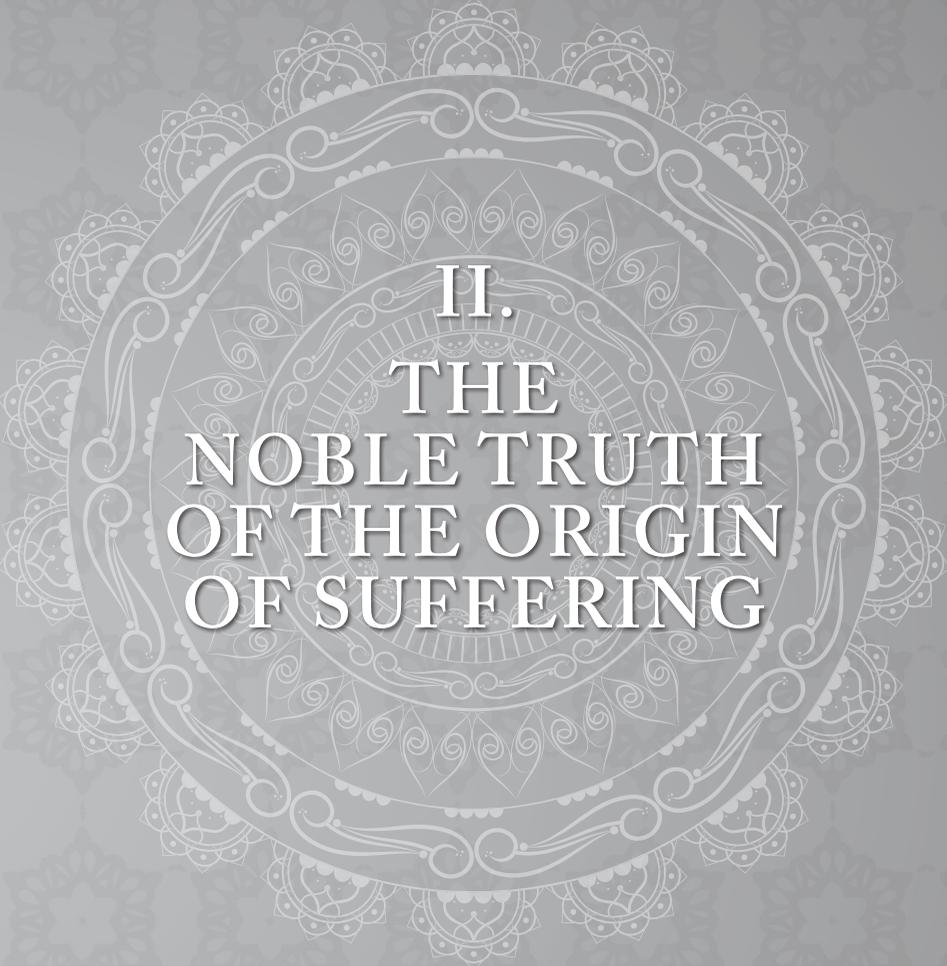
Which do you think is more: the streams of blood that you have shed when you were beheaded as you roamed and wandered on through this long course—this, or the water in all the great oceans?

For a long time you have been arrested as murderers, burglars, and adulterers, and when you were beheaded, the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the water in all the great oceans.

For what reason? Because this *samsāra* is without a beginning. A first point is not found of beings who, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting, are journeying through this round of rebirth and death.

SN 15.10 Even just one person, wandering on through their many lives, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting, would leave behind a stack of bones, a heap of bones, a mass of bones as large as the Himalayas—if there were someone to collect them all, what was collected would not perish. For what reason? Because this *samsāra* is without a beginning.

SN 15.1 For such a long time you have experienced suffering, agony, and disaster, and swelled the cemeteries with the bones from your many lives. It is enough to experience revulsion (*nibbidā*) towards all volitional formations (the will), enough to let go of the cause of more birth, enough to be liberated from *samsāra*.



II.
THE
NOBLE TRUTH
OF THE ORIGIN
OF SUFFERING

II. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING

The Threefold Wanting

SN 56.11 Now this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this wanting (*tañha*) which leads to rebirth, accompanied by enjoyment and desire, seeking delight now here, now there; that is, wanting related to the five senses, wanting to be, and wanting not to be (annihilation).

The Origin of Wanting

DN 22 And where does this wanting arise and become established? Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there this wanting arises and becomes established.

Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, mind-objects in the world are agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

The six consciousnesses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and mind) are agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

Experience of the six senses is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

The perception of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind-objects is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

Will in regard to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind-objects is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

The wanting of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind-objects is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

Thinking of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind-objects is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

Fantatising about sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind-objects is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting arises and becomes established.

And that is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.

Dependent Origination of All Phenomena

MN 38 On seeing a sight (the same with the other six senses), you want it if it is pleasing; you try to get rid of it if it is unpleasing. You abide with mindfulness (and wisdom) of the five senses (the body) unestablished, with a limited mind, and you do not understand as it actually is the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom wherein those deceiving and oppressive states cease without remainder.

Engaged as you are in favouring and opposing, whatever experience you have—whether pleasant or painful or neutral—you delight in that experience, welcome it, and remain holding to it. As you do so, delight arises in you. Now delight in experience is a fuel. With fuel (*upādāna*) as condition, states of existence develop; with states of existence as condition, rebirth; with rebirth as condition, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, negativity and distress come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Kamma

Present Kamma-Result (*Sandittḥika*)

MN 13 With the five senses as the cause, the source and the basis, the culprit being simply the five senses, Presidents quarrel with Prime Ministers, politicians with each other, priests with imams, businessmen with householders, monks with nuns; parents quarrel with each other and with their children, sibling with sibling, and friend with friend. And here in their quarrels, brawls, and disputes they attack each other with abuse, weapons or lawsuits, whereby they incur death, injury or loss. Now this too is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering in this very life ... the cause being simply the five senses.

Again, with the five senses as the cause ... people steal, commit fraud, sleep with other people's partners, commit domestic violence, sexually abuse their children; and when they are caught, they are imprisoned and ruined. Now this too is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering in this very life ... the cause being simply the five senses.

II. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING

Future Kamma-Result (*Samparāyika*)

Again, with the five senses as the cause, the source and the basis, the culprit being simply the five senses, people indulge in misconduct of body, speech, and mind. Having done so, after death they reappear in states of misery, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. Now this is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering in the life to come, having the five senses as its cause, its source and its basis, the cause being simply the five senses.

Dhp 127 You will not find a spot in the world
Not in the sky, not in the ocean,
Not inside a mountain cave
Where you will be free from the results of kamma.

Kamma as Volition

AN 6.63 “Volition is kamma,” I say. For having willed, you act by body, speech, or mind.

And what is the diversity of kamma? There is kamma to be experienced in hell, or in the animal realm, or in the ghost realm (afflicted spirits), or in the human world, and there is kamma to be experienced in the *deva* (heavenly) world.

And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma, I say, is threefold: [to be experienced] in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent life.

Inheritance of Deeds

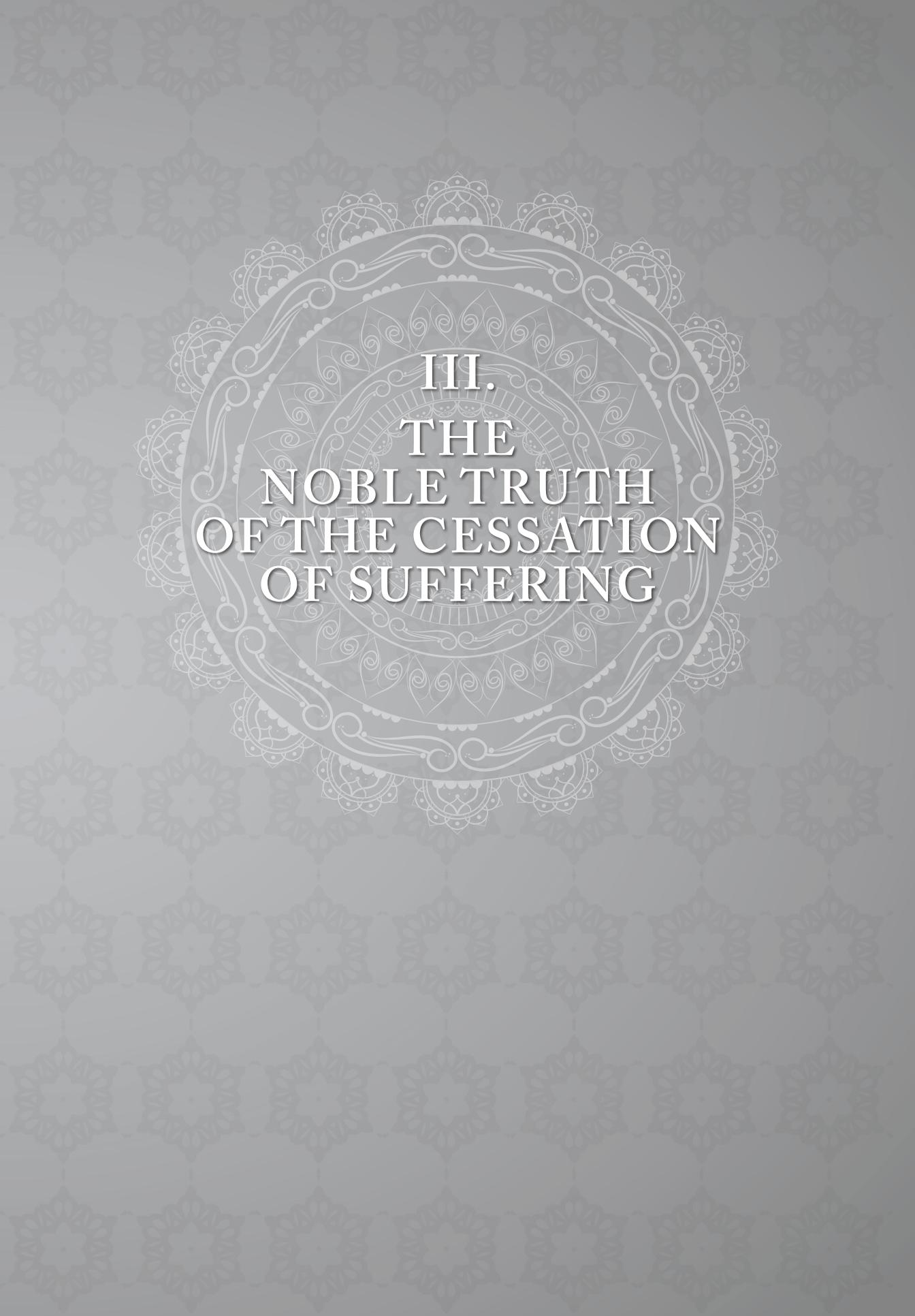
AN 10.216 Beings are the owners of their kamma, the heirs of their kamma; they have kamma as their origin, kamma as their property, kamma as their resort; whatever kamma they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.

AN 3.34 Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that you experience its result, either in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent life.

SN 22.99 There comes a time, when the great oceans dry up and evaporate and no longer exist, but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming through rebirth and death, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting.

There comes a time, when the Himalayas, the king of mountains, burns up and perishes and no longer exists, but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming through rebirth and death, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting.

There comes a time when the earth burns up, turns into cosmic dust which spreads throughout the universe, and no longer exists; but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming through rebirth and death, blinded by delusion and addicted to wanting.



III.
THE
NOBLE TRUTH
OF THE CESSATION
OF SUFFERING

III. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

- SN 56.11 This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same wanting (wanting related to the five senses, wanting for existence and wanting not to be); the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, never letting it settle enough to grow.
- DN 22 Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable; there the cessation of wanting comes about. And what is there in the world that is agreeable and pleasurable? Seeing the world is agreeable and pleasurable; hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and knowing is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this wanting comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.
- SN 12.66 Whatever spiritual seekers in the past regarded pleasant and agreeable things in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self, as an affliction, as fearful; they abandoned wanting.

Dependent Cessation of all Phenomena

- SN 12.43 But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same wanting (*tañhā*) comes cessation of fuel (*upādāna*); with the cessation of fuel, cessation of states of existence (*bhava*); with the cessation of states of existence, cessation of rebirth (*jāti*); with the cessation of rebirth, old-age-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, unhappiness, and distress cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. This is the passing away of suffering.
- SN 22.30 The cessation, subsiding, and passing away of form ... of experience ... of perception ... of will ... of consciousnesses ... is the cessation of suffering, the subsiding of affliction, the passing away of old-age-and-death.

Nibbāna with Residue Remaining

- AN 3.32 This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling (*samatha*) of all will (*sankhāra*), the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of wanting, fading away, cessation, *nibbāna*.
- AN 3.55 (1) When excited by wanting, overcome by wanting ...
(2) When full of aversion, overcome by aversion ...
(3) When deluded, overcome by delusion,

with mind obsessed by these—you intentionally create problems for yourself, for others, or for both, and you experience mental suffering and depression.

But when wanting, aversion and delusion are abandoned, you do not intentionally create any problems for yourself, for others, or for both, and you do not experience mental suffering and depression.

It is in this way that *nibbāna* can be experienced directly.

SN 38.1 [Venerable Sāriputta:] The destruction of wanting, the destruction of aversion, the destruction of delusion: this is called *nibbāna* (with residue remaining).

The Arahant

AN 6.55 If one is intent on the end of wanting and clarity of mind: when one sees the arising of any of the six senses, one’s mind is completely free from wanting. For one of peaceful mind, one completely liberated, there’s nothing further to be done, no [need to] increase what has been done.

As a stone mountain, one solid mass, is not stirred by the wind; so no sights, sounds, odours, tastes, touches or mind-objects, desirable or undesirable, stir the stability of the mind. This mind is steady and freed, and you witness the vanishing of the mind.

Sn 1048 And one who has considered all the contrasts on this earth,
And is no more disturbed by anything whatever in the world,
The peaceful one, freed from rage,
From frustration, and from wanting,
This stream of consciousnesses will not be reborn.

SN 5.10 [Māra asks:] “By whom has this being been created? Where is the maker of this being? Where has this being arisen? Where does this being cease?”

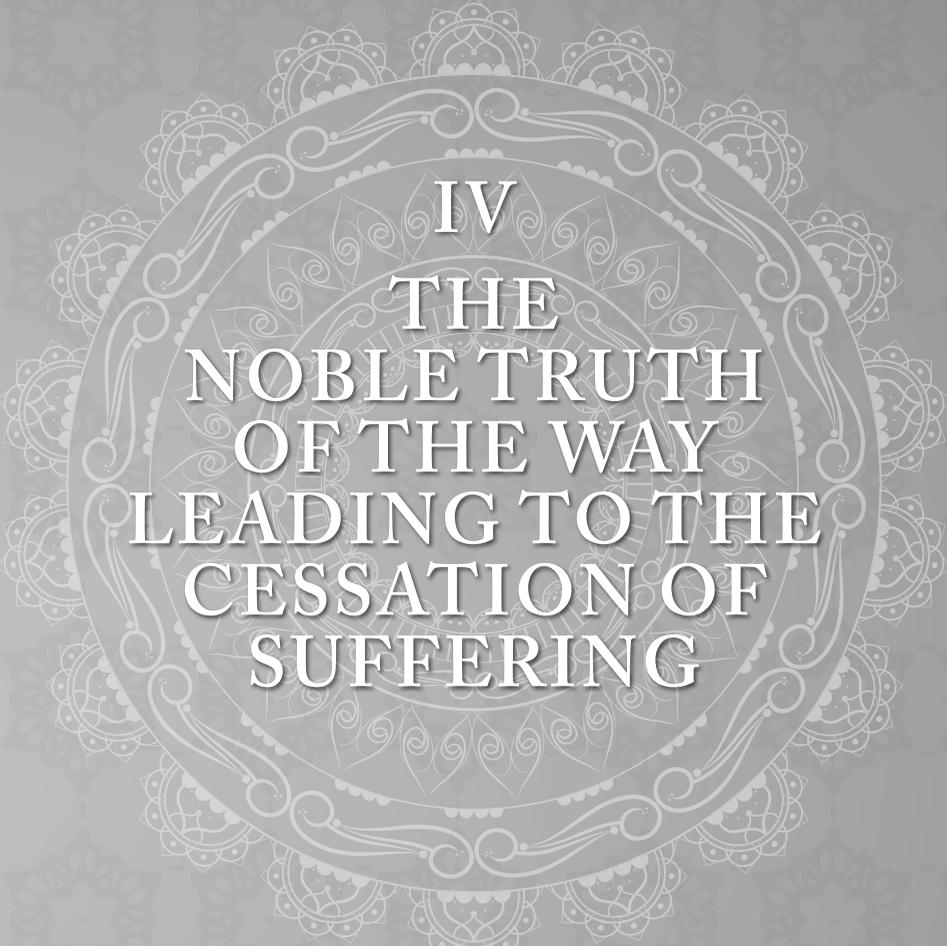
[The bhikkhunī arahant, Vajirā, replies:] “Why now do you assume ‘a being’? Māra, is that your wrong view? This is a heap of *saṅkhārā*. Here no being is found.”

“Just as with a coming together of parts, the word ‘vehicle’ is used, so, when the five components of existence exist, there is the conventional term ‘a being.’”

III. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

“It is only dukkha (suffering) that comes to be, dukkha that stands, and dukkha that falls away. Nothing but dukkha comes to be. Nothing but dukkha ceases.”

SN 48.53 An arahant understands that the six senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and the mind) will cease completely and totally without remainder and no other senses will arise anywhere in any way. This is another way one knows that there is nothing more to be done (one is an arahant).



IV
THE
NOBLE TRUTH
OF THE WAY
LEADING TO THE
CESSATION OF
SUFFERING

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

SN 56.11 There are these two extremes that should be avoided. The pursuit of happiness through the five senses, which is low (*hīna*), secular, coarse, ignoble, unbeneficial, and the pursuit of practices that fatigue the body and mind, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial.

Without going to either of these extremes, the Buddha has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to wisdom, which leads to peace, to direct understanding, to awakening, to *nibbāna*.

It is this noble eightfold path: right view, right motivation, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness, and right stillness.

This is that middle way awakened to by the Buddha, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to wisdom, which leads to peace, to direct understanding, to awakening, to *nibbāna*.

MN 139 The pursuit of pleasure that is linked to the five senses—low, secular, coarse, ignoble, and unbeneficial—is a state beset by suffering, frustration, despair, and fever, and it is the wrong way.

Disengagement from the pursuit of pleasure that is linked to the five senses—low, secular, coarse, ignoble, and unbeneficial—is a state without suffering, frustration, despair, and fever, and it is the right way.

Dhp 273-274 The noble eightfold path is the best of all practices...
This is the only path for purifying insight; there is no other.
Follow this path and you will discombobulate Māra.

MN 26 Listen, the end of dying has been reached. I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dhamma. Practising as you are instructed, by realising for yourselves in this very life through direct understanding you will soon enter upon and abide in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which people rightly go forth into monastic life.

1. Right View

How to know Right View from Wrong View

DN 16, 4.8-11 After my *parinibbāna*, some will think that the Dhamma has ended, and you no longer have a teacher. This is wrong. After the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, the Dhamma and discipline (*vinaya*) will be your teacher.

Suppose someone were to say: "Friends, this is the Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma and the discipline that I heard myself from the Buddha." Then you should check this person's words with the suttas and with the discipline. If they agree, then you should conclude that this is the teaching of the Buddha. If it disagrees with the suttas and the discipline, then you should conclude that this person has wrongly understood the teaching of the Buddha.

Or, suppose someone were to say: "Friends, I heard this from a community of senior monastics with distinguished teachers ... from many learned elders who uphold a tradition ... from one learned elder." Then you should check this person's words with the suttas and the discipline. If they agree, then you should conclude that it is the teaching of the Buddha. If it disagrees with the suttas and the discipline, then you should conclude that this one learned elder has wrongly understood the teaching of the Buddha.

Wrong View

What, now, is wrong view?

DN 1, 2.13 There are some who state: "Whatever is called sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch; that is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, and liable to change. But what is called 'mentality' (*mano*) or 'mind' (*citta*) or 'consciousness' (*viññāna*); that is the permanent essence, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same forever and ever."

Right View

DN 22 What now is right view?

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The Four Noble Truths

It is the understanding of the four noble truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called right view.

The Good and the Bad

What are the good and the bad and what is their cause?

MN 9 [Venerable Sāriputta:] Intentional killing; stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, malicious gossip, harsh speech, useless talk, desire relating to the five senses, ill will and wrong view—these are “the bad”.

Wanting, aversion and delusion, these are the causes of “the bad”.

Refraining from intentionally killing living beings, stealing, and sexual misconduct; from lying, malicious gossip, harsh speech and useless speech; having contentment, loving-kindness and right view is “the good”.

Renunciation, compassion and wisdom are the roots of “the good”.

Right View Regarding the Five Components of Existence

SN 22.51 You view your body as impermanent, suffering and non-self (not me, not mine, not a permanent essence).

You regard experience as impermanent, suffering and non-self.

You regard perception as impermanent, suffering and non-self.

You regard the will as impermanent, suffering and non-self.

You regard consciousnesses as impermanent, suffering and non-self.

That is right view.

Unprofitable Questions

MN 63 If anyone should say thus: “I will not become a practising Buddhist until I discover whether this universe is eternal or not, finite or infinite; or whether my permanent essence and my body are the same or my permanent essence is one thing, but my body is another; or whether the Buddha persists after death, does not persist after death, both persists and does not persist after death, or neither persists nor does not persist after death,” that person would die before they found out!

Suppose a person were shot with a gun and medics would come to help them. Then that person said “Hang on a minute! Who pulled the trigger? What type of gun did they use and why did they shoot me? Moreover, let me see your medical qualifications first. I will not let you treat me until you answer all these questions!” That person would be considered to have wrong view, and might die before their questions were answered.

Sn 592 Therefore, the one who seeks their own welfare should attend to this injury first—this trauma of unhappiness, pain, and suffering.

MN 63 For one with the view “life (the universe) is eternal,” the holy life is without meaning (there is no end of suffering whatever you do); and for one with the view “life is not eternal,” again the holy life is without meaning (your existence is going to end anyway). Whether one has the view “the universe is eternal” or the view “the universe is not eternal,” there is rebirth, there is old age, there is death, there is sorrow, crying, pain, unhappiness, and distress, the destruction of which I prescribe in this very life.

The Five Basic Fetters

MN 64 Here, one who has not seen the Dhamma (a *puthujjana*) abides with a mind addicted and attached to a view of a permanent essence, and they do not even seek an escape from the long-standing wrong view of a permanent essence. When that wrong view of a permanent essence has become habitual, it is regarded as a “basic fetter”.

One who abides with a mind addicted and attached to sceptical doubt ... to a belief in rites and rituals (as sufficient in themselves to reach awakening) ... to desire for the five senses ... to aversion ... and they do not even seek an escape from these states—then when these states have become habitual, they are regarded as the “five basic fetters”.

Unwise Contemplations

MN 2 One who has not seen the Dhamma (a *puthujjana*) does not understand what things are fit for contemplation and what things are not. Thus, they contemplate on those things unfit for attention and not on those things fit for attention.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

This is how you contemplate unwisely: “Did my permanent essence exist in the past? Did my permanent essence not exist in the past? What was my permanent essence in the past? How was my permanent essence in the past? Having been what, what did my permanent essence become in the past? Shall my permanent essence be in the future? Shall my permanent essence not be in the future? What shall my permanent essence be in the future? How shall my permanent essence be in the future? Having been what, what shall my permanent essence become in the future?”

Or else you are inwardly perplexed about the present thus: “Is this my permanent essence? Is this not my permanent essence? What is this permanent essence? How is this permanent essence? Where has this permanent essence come from? Where will it go?”

The Six Views about the Permanent Essence

MN 2 When you attend unwisely in this way, one of six views arises in you.

- (1) The view “I possess a permanent essence” arises in you as true and established;
- (2) or the view “I possess no permanent essence, only a material body whose conscious life is a mere by-product of a brain” arises in you as true and established;
- (3) or the view “I know the permanent essence with a permanent essence” (*I know therefore I am*) arises in you as true and established;
- (4) or the view “I perceive there is no permanent essence with a permanent essence” arises in you as true and established (the permanent essence is but cannot be known);
- (5) or the view “I perceive a permanent essence with what is without a permanent essence” arises in you as true and established (the five khandhas can know an “original mind” existing outside of the five khandhas);
- (6) or else you have some such view as this: “It is this permanent essence of mine that speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions; but this permanent essence of mine is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and it will endure as long as eternity.”

The Two Extremes and the Middle Doctrine

SN 12.15 “Venerable sir, it is said ‘right view, right view.’ In what way is there right view?”

“This world, Kaccāna, mostly depends on a duality, upon a theory of existence and a theory of non-existence. But for one who sees the origin of phenomena as it really is, there is no idea of non-existence of the world. And for one who sees the cessation of phenomena as it really is, there is no idea of existence of the world.

Most people are attached to one of these wrong views. But one with right view disengages from such dualistic theories about ‘my permanent essence.’ You have no perplexity or doubt that what arises is only suffering arising, what ceases is only suffering ceasing. Your knowledge about this is independent of mere belief and acceptance. In this way there is right view.

‘Phenomena exist’ is one extreme. ‘Phenomena do not exist’ is the second extreme. Without veering to either of these extremes, the Buddha teaches the Dhamma by the middle: with delusion as the cause, volition arises...”

MN 22 “If there was a permanent essence, would there be what belongs to a permanent essence (its attributes)?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“Or, if there were what belongs to a permanent essence, would there be a permanent essence?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Since a permanent essence and any attributes of a permanent essence are not apprehended as true and established, then this basic belief, namely, ‘This is the permanent essence, this is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’—would it not be an utterly and completely foolish belief?”

MN 2 Such speculative beliefs are called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the procrastination of views, the fetter of views. Shackled by the fetter of views, the unawakened person is not freed from birth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, unhappiness, and distress; they are not freed from suffering, I say.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

SN 12.61 The unawakened worldling might experience revulsion (*nibbidā*) from this body, let its importance fade away and be liberated from it. Why? Because growth and decay are seen in this body, moreover it is born and dies. But, that which is called “mind” or “mentality” or “consciousness”, the unawakened worldling is unable to experience revulsion towards it, let its importance fade away and be liberated from it. Why? Because for a long time you have held, appropriated and grasped the wrong view: “This “*citta*”, or “mind”, or “consciousness”, whatever you call it, is “mine”, this I am, this is the permanent essence.’

MN 72 Suppose a fire was burning in front of you, would you know that a fire was burning in front of you? If someone asked you what this fire burned in dependence on, how would you answer? You would answer that the fire was burning in dependence on the fuel of grass and sticks. If the fire was extinguished (*nibbuta*), would you know that the fire was extinguished? Yes.

If someone then asked you where that fire went when it was extinguished—did it go to the east, west, north or south? How would you answer?

That question makes no sense. That fire burnt in dependence on its fuel of grass and sticks. When that was used up, not getting any more fuel, it became extinguished. It didn’t go anywhere.

So too, where does an Awakened One go after death? That question makes no sense.

Views and Discussions about the Permanent Essence

DN 15 Now, one who says: “Experience is my permanent essence” should be told: “There are three kinds of experience: pleasant, painful, and neutral. Which of the three do you consider to be your permanent essence?”

When a pleasant experience is felt, no painful or neutral experience is felt. When a painful experience is felt, no pleasant or neutral experience is felt. And when a neutral experience is felt, no pleasant or painful experience is felt.

Pleasant experience is impermanent, conditioned, dependently-arisen, bound to decay, to vanish, to fade away, to cease—and so too are painful experience and neutral experience.

So anyone who, on experiencing a pleasant experience, thinks: “This is my permanent essence,” must, at the cessation of that pleasant experience, think: “my permanent essence has gone!” and the same with painful and neutral experience. Thus whoever thinks: “Experience is my permanent essence” is contemplating something in this present life that is impermanent, a mixture of happiness and unhappiness, subject to arising and passing away. Therefore it is not fitting to maintain: “Experience is my permanent essence.”

But anyone who says: “Experience is not my permanent essence; my permanent essence is, only it does not experience anything,” should be asked: “If your permanent essence had no experience at all, could its existence be known to itself?” [To which they would have to reply:] “No.” Therefore it is not reasonable to maintain: “Experience is not my permanent essence; my permanent essence is, but has no experience.”

And anyone who says: “Experience is not my permanent essence; my permanent essence is, and does not *not* experience anything; only my permanent essence performs the act of experience, that is its nature,” should be asked: “Well, if all experience absolutely and totally ceased, could its existence be known to itself?” [To which they would have to reply:] “No.” Therefore it is not tenable to maintain: “Experience is not my permanent essence; my permanent essence is, and does not *not* experience anything; my permanent essence performs the act of experiencing, for that is its nature.”

From the time when a meditator no longer regards experience as the permanent essence; or that the permanent essence is, only does not experience anything; or that the permanent essence is, and does not *not* experience anything, only the permanent essence performs the act of experience, that is its nature; from that point on, they cling to nothing in the world; not clinging, they are not agitated by anything; and not being agitated, they gain personal liberation; and they know: “Rebirth is finished, the holy life has been fulfilled, done was what had to be done, there is nothing more here.”

MN 148 If anyone says, “The mind is the permanent essence,” that is not reasonable. The appearance and disappearance of the mind are discerned, and since its appearance and disappearance are discerned, it would follow: “My permanent essence appears and then disappears.”

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

That is why it is not acceptable for anyone to say, “The mind is the permanent essence.”

If anyone says, “Mind-objects are the permanent essence” ... “Mind-consciousness is the permanent essence” ... “Experience is the permanent essence” ... “Wanting is the permanent essence” ... These things come and go, which is why it is not reasonable for anyone to say, “Mind-objects; mind-consciousness; experience or wanting is the permanent essence.”

Thus the mind is not the permanent essence; mind-objects, mind-consciousness, mind-objects, experience and wanting—all these are not a permanent essence.

SN 12.61 It would be better for the uninstructed worldling to take as the permanent essence this body rather than the mind (*citta*). Why? Because this body lasts for up to a hundred years, or even longer.

But that which is called “mind” (*citta*), or “mentality” (*mano*), or “consciousnesses” (*viññāna*), arises as one thing and ceases as another all the time.

Wise Contemplations

MN 2 An Awakened One, or one on the path to awakening (an *ariyapuggala*), understands what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. Thus they do not contemplate things unfit for attention, only those things fit for attention.

One contemplates: “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.”

The *Sotāpanna*, or “Stream-Winner”

MN 22 When you contemplate in this way, three fetters are abandoned in you: a view of a permanent essence, sceptical doubt, and belief in rites and rituals (as sufficient in themselves to reach awakening). Those who have abandoned three fetters are all stream-winners, no longer subject to rebirth in a lower realm and headed for full awakening.

Dhp 178 Absolute rule over the earth, going to heaven, supreme sovereignty over all worlds—the fruit of stream-winning surpasses them all.

Causes for the Arising of the Right View of Stream-Winning

MN 43 [Venerable Sāriputta:] There are two conditions for the arising of right view: the word of another (an *ariyan*), and “work of the mind that goes back to the source” (*yoniso manasikāra*). There are five factors that build on right view and take it to full awakening: virtue, learning, discussion, stillness and insight.

What is the View of a Permanent Essence (*Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*)?

MN 44.8 Friend Visākha, one who is an *ariyan* cannot regard the body, experience, perception, will or consciousnesses (being the five components of existence) as a permanent essence, nor a permanent essence as possessing any of these five components of existence, nor any of the five components of existence as within a permanent essence, nor a permanent essence as within any of the five components of existence. That is how *sakkāya diṭṭhi* comes not to be.

Explanation from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* 1.144-145:

One who is an *ariyan* does not regard the mind as a permanent essence—like the flame and hue of a lamp; does not regard the mind as possessing a permanent essence—like a tree has a shadow; does not regard the mind as within a permanent essence—like the scent in a flower; and does not regard a permanent essence as within the mind—like a jewel in a casket (The mind is part of the five components of existence, the sixth type of consciousness.)

“Word of Another” Means the Word of an *Ariyan*

AN 10.76 One who is shameless, reckless and heedless will be unable to abandon disrespect, being difficult to admonish and keeping bad company.

One who is disrespectful, incorrigible and keeps bad company will be unable to abandon lack of faith, stinginess and laziness.

One who is lacking in faith, uncharitable and lazy, will be unable to abandon restlessness, lack of restraint and immorality.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

One who is restless, unrestrained and immoral will be unable to abandon their fault-finding mind and their disinterest in seeing *ariyans* or hearing their teachings.

One who is not interested in meeting with *ariyans*, does not hear the teachings of an *ariyan*, but has a fault-finding mind, will be unable to establish mindfulness and understanding of the purpose—they will be distracted.

One who is without mindfulness and understanding, with a wandering mind, will be unable to abandon useless trains of thought, following a wrong path and mental sluggishness.

One who wastes time on useless thinking, on following a wrong path leading to a dull mind, will be unable to abandon the view of a permanent essence, sceptical doubt and belief in rites and rituals (the first three of the five basic fetters).

One who has not abandoned the first three of the five basic fetters will be unable to abandon desire for the world of the five senses, aversion and delusion.

One who has not abandoned desire, aversion and delusion, will not be able to abandon birth, old age and death.

Stream-Winning and the Seven in the Water Simile

AN 7.15 There are these seven kinds of persons similar to those in the water:

- (1) One who goes under and drowns—meaning one with bad qualities.
- (2) One who floats then drowns—meaning good at first but then bad qualities dominate.
- (3) One who floats and keeps their head above water—meaning the good qualities become ever stronger.
- (4) The one who looks around and sees safety—meaning the stream-winner.
- (5) The one who is swimming to safety—meaning the once-returner.
- (6) The one who feels solid earth underfoot—meaning the non-returner.
- (7) The one who is safe on dry land—meaning the arahant.

The *Jhānānāgāmi* or “Jhāna-Non-Returner”

AN 3.94 Just as when the sky is clear and cloudless, the sun, ascending in the sky, dispels all darkness as it shines and radiates; so too, when the dust-free, stainless Dhamma-eye arises in you, then, together with the arising of vision, you abandon three fetters: the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

Afterward, when you restrain two states—wanting and aversion—then, totally secluded from the five senses, secluded from the five hindrances, you enter and dwell for a while in the first jhāna, which consists of rapture and pleasure born of freedom from the five senses, accompanied by movements of the mind onto the bliss and holding the bliss. If you should pass away while in jhāna, there’s no fetter bound by which you might ever return to this world.

Scent of ‘I am’

SN 22.89 [Elder bhikkhus:] “Friend Khemaka, when you speak of this ‘I am’ ... what is it that you speak of as ‘I am’?”

[Venerable Khemaka:] “Friends, I do not speak of form as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from form. I do not speak of experience (*vedanā*) as ‘I am’ ... nor of perception as ‘I am’ ... nor of will as ‘I am’ ... nor of consciousnesses as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from consciousnesses.”

“Friends, although the thought ‘I am’ has not yet vanished in me in relation to these five components of existence, still I do not regard anything among them as ‘This I am’.”

“Suppose, friends, there is the scent of a lotus. Would you be speaking rightly if you were to say, ‘the scent belongs to the petals’, or ‘the scent belongs to the stalk’, or ‘the scent belongs to the pistils?’”

“No.”

“And how, friends, should you answer if you were to answer rightly?”

“You should answer: ‘The scent belongs to the flower.’”

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

“So too, friends, I do not speak of form as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from form. I do not speak of experience, of perception, of will, of consciousnesses as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from consciousnesses.”

“Friends, although the thought ‘I am’ has not yet vanished in me in relation to these five components of existence, still I do not regard anything among them as ‘This I am’.”

“Friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five basic fetters, still, in relation to the five components of existence there lingers in them a residual thought ‘I am’, a desire ‘I am’, an underlying tendency ‘I am’, that has not yet been uprooted.”

“Sometime later they dwell contemplating dependency on causes of the five components of existence: “Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away; such is experience ... such is perception ... such is will ... such are consciousnesses, such their origin, such their passing away.”

“As they dwell contemplating dependency on causes of the five components of existence, the residual thought ‘I am’, the desire ‘I am’, the underlying tendency ‘I am’, that had not yet been uprooted—this comes to be uprooted.”

“Suppose you washed a cloth in a washing machine, rinsed, and spun it, and then put it in a drier. Although that cloth would be clean, still it might retain the residual smell of the soap powder. Then you would hang it out in the sun to air and, after a while, the residual smell of the soap powder would vanish.”

“So too, friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five basic fetters, still, in relation to the five components of existence, there lingers in them a residual thought ‘I am’, a desire ‘I am’, an underlying tendency ‘I am’, that has not yet been uprooted ...”[Elder bhikkhus:] “Friend Khemaka, when you speak of this ‘I am’ ... what is it that you speak of as ‘I am’?”

[Venerable Khemaka:] “Friends, I do not speak of form as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from form. I do not speak of experience (*vedanā*) as ‘I am’ ... nor of perception as ‘I am’ ... nor of will as ‘I am’ ... nor of consciousnesses as ‘I am’, nor do I speak of ‘I am’ apart from consciousnesses.”

“Friends, although the thought ‘I am’ has not yet vanished in me in relation to these five components of existence, still I do not regard anything among them as ‘This I am.’”

“Suppose, friends, there is the scent of a lotus. Would you be speaking rightly if you were to say, ‘the scent belongs to the petals’, or ‘the scent belongs to the stalk’, or ‘the scent belongs to the pistils?’”

“No.”

“And how, friends, should you answer if you were to answer rightly?”

“You should answer: ‘The scent belongs to the flower.’”

As you dwell contemplating dependency on causes of the five components of existence, the residual thought ‘I am’, the desire ‘I am’, the underlying tendency ‘I am’, that had not yet been uprooted—this comes to be uprooted.”

Free from All Speculative Views

MN 72 [Vacchagotta:] “Then does the Buddha hold any speculative belief at all?”

“‘Speculative belief’ is something that the Buddha has put away. For the Buddha has seen this: ‘Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is experience ... such is perception ... such is will ... such are consciousnesses, such their origin, such their disappearance.’”

“Therefore, I say, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of all conceptual proliferations, all philosophising, all I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to assuming a permanent essence, the Buddha is liberated through exhausting the fuel that drives rebirth.”

The Three Characteristics

AN 3.136 Whether Buddhas arise or not, there persists that law, that stable Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: “All phenomena that arise from a cause (all *saṅkhārā*) are impermanent, suffering and not a permanent essence.”

A Buddha awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyses it, and elucidates it.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

SN 22.94 And what is it that the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, of which I too say that it does not exist?

Form that is permanent, stable, and eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.

Experience ... perception ... will ... consciousnesses that are permanent, stable, and eternal, not subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist.

AN 1.15 It is impossible and inconceivable that a person who is awakened or on the path to awakening (an *ariyapuggala*) could consider any phenomena that arise from a cause as permanent, as pleasurable and as a permanent essence—there is no such possibility.

But it is possible that an unawakened worldling might consider some phenomena that arise from a cause as permanent, as pleasurable and as a permanent essence—there is such a possibility.

SN 22.59 Therefore any kind of form whatsoever ... any kind of experience whatsoever ... any kind of perception whatsoever ... any kind of will whatsoever ... any kind of consciousnesses whatsoever—whether past, future, or present, one's own or others', gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—all form ... experience ... perception ... will ... consciousnesses should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom thus: "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not a permanent essence."

Vism XVI Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found.
The deed is, but no doer of the deed is there.
Nibbāna is, but not a person who enters it.
The path is, but no traveller on it is seen.

SN 44.4 It is those who do not understand form as it really is, who do not know and see its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, that think: "An Awakened One exists after death, or does not exist after death, or both exists and does not exist after death, or neither exists nor does not exist after death."

It is those who do not know and see experience as it really is ... who do not know and see perception as it really is ... who do not know and see the will as it really is ... who do not know and see consciousnesses as they really are, who do not know and see their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, that think: “An Awakened One exists after death, or does not exist after death, or both exists and does not exist after death, or neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

But one who knows and sees form ... experience ... perception ... will ... consciousnesses as they really are, who knows and sees their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, does not think: “An Awakened One exists after death, or does not exist after death, or both exists and does not exist after death, or neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

SN 22.85 [Sāriputta:] “What do you think, Yamaka, do you regard the body, experience, perception, will or consciousnesses as being an Awakened One?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“Do you regard an Awakened One as within the body, as within experience, as within perception, as within will or as within consciousnesses?”

“No, sir.”

“Do you regard the body, experience, perception, will and consciousnesses taken together as being an Awakened One?”

“No, sir.”

“Do you take an Awakened One as one who is without form, without experience, without perception, without will and without consciousnesses?”

“No, sir.”

“But, Yamaka, when an Awakened One is not apprehended by you as real and actual here in this very life, is it fitting for you to declare that an Awakened One is annihilated and perishes with the break-up of the body and does not exist after death?”

“If, Yamaka, they were to ask you what happens to an Awakened One with the break-up of their body, after death, how would you answer?”

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

“I would answer that the body is impermanent; what is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering has ceased and passed away. Experience is impermanent; what is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering has ceased and passed away. Perception is impermanent; what is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering has ceased and passed away. Will is impermanent; what is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering has ceased and passed away. Consciousnesses are impermanent; what is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering has ceased and passed away.”

“Good, Yamaka. Good!”

- SN 12.35 If there is the view, “The permanent essence and the body are the same,” there is no living of the holy life; and if there is the view, “The permanent essence is one thing, the body is another,” there is no living of the holy life. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Buddha teaches the Dhamma by the middle: dependent origination and dependent cessation.

Dependent Origination

- MN 28.38 One who sees dependent origination and cessation sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination and cessation.

SN 12.1 With delusion as cause, will [comes to be];

with will as cause, consciousnesses;

with consciousness as cause, name-and-form (the objects of consciousnesses);

with name-and-form as cause, the six sense bases;

with the six sense bases as cause, sensory contact;

with sensory contact as cause, experience;

with experience as cause, wanting;

with wanting as cause, fuel;

with fuel as cause, states of existence;

with states of existence as cause, rebirth;

with rebirth as cause, old-age-and-death, sorrow, crying, pain, unhappiness, and distress come to be.

Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Vism 19 No God, no Brahma can be called the maker of life;
Empty phenomena roll on, dependent on conditions all.

SN 12.51 But when a meditator has abandoned delusion and aroused true knowledge—
then, with the fading away of delusion and the arising of true knowledge, one
does not generate a meritorious volition, or a demeritorious volition, or a neutral
volition.

SN 12.1 But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of delusion comes
cessation of will;

with the cessation of will, cessation of consciousnesses;

with the cessation of consciousnesses, cessation of name-and-form;

with the cessation of name-and-form, cessation of the six sense bases;

with the cessation of the six sense bases, cessation of sensory contact;

with the cessation of sensory contact, cessation of experience;

with the cessation of experience, cessation of wanting;

with the cessation of wanting, cessation of fuel;

with the cessation of fuel, cessation of states of existence;

with the cessation of states of existence, cessation of rebirth;

with the cessation of rebirth, old-age-and-death, sorrow, crying, pain,
unhappiness, and distress cease.

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

Thag 184 House builder, you have now been seen. You shall build no houses again. Your
rafters have been broken and your gables all torn. Thrown off course, the mind
(*citta*) will be destroyed right here.

Thag 1144 Without any doubt, Mind, you shall be destroyed.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

2. Right Motivation

What, now, is right motivation?

DN 22 Actions of body, speech and mind, arising from a motive of renunciation, arising from a motive of kindness, or arising from a motive of gentleness—this is called right motivation.

MN 78 What are wrong motivations? They are motivations of desire concerning the world of the five senses, of aversion, and of cruelty. What is the source of these wrong motivations? They arise from perceptions of desire concerning the world of the five senses, of aversion and of cruelty. Where do these wrong motivations cease without remainder? They cease in the first jhāna.

What are the right motivations? They are motivations of renunciation, kindness and gentleness. What is the source of these right motivations? They arise from perceptions of renunciation, kindness and gentleness. Where do these right motivations cease without remainder? They cease in the second jhāna.

3. Right Speech

DN 22 What now is right speech? Right speech is refraining from lying, from malicious gossip, from harsh speech, and from useless chatter.

Abstaining from Lying

AN 10.176 You abandon lying and abstain from false speech. If you are asked to tell what you know, then you tell only what you know, as accurately as you can. So you do not intentionally speak a lie or deceive, for your own benefit or for the sake of another or for some other reason.

Vin, Parajika 4 To tell a deliberate lie, you must be mindful before speaking: “I am going to speak falsely,” while speaking be aware that “I am telling a lie,” and afterwards be aware that “I have misrepresented the truth.”

Abstaining from Malicious Gossip

AN 10.176 You abandon malicious gossip and abstain from talk that causes division. Having heard something, you do not repeat it in order to divide people from one another.

Instead, you are one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of unity, who enjoys, rejoices and delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord.

Abstaining from Harsh Speech

AN 10.176 Having abandoned harsh speech, you abstain from coarse speech. You only speak words that are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and lovable—words that go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many.

MN 21 Even if terrorists were to torture you, such as by savagely cutting off your head with a sharp serrated knife, if you allowed hatred to develop in your mind towards them, then you would not be carrying out my teaching.

Instead you should train yourself thus: “My mind will remain unaffected, and I shall speak no bad words; I shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. I shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and, starting with them, I shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness—abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill-will.”

That is how you should train.

Abstaining from Useless Chatter

AN 10.176 Having abandoned useless chatter, you abstain from unbeneficial talk.

You speak at a proper time, speak truth, speak what is beneficial, speak on the Dhamma and the discipline; at a proper time you speak words that are worth recording, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.

Right Way to Criticise Someone

AN 10.44 Before you criticise someone, you should be mindful with respect to five things and carefully establish five things:

- (1) “Is my bodily behaviour blameless? Do I possess bodily behaviour that is pure, flawless and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not?” If your bodily behaviour is not beyond blame, there will be those who say of you: “Please train your own bodily behaviour first.”

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

- (2) “Is my behaviour of speech blameless? Do I possess behaviour of speech that is pure, flawless and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not?” If your behaviour of speech is not beyond blame, there will be those who say of you: “Please train your own speech first.”
- (3) “Have I established a mind of loving-kindness without resentment to my associates? Does this quality exist in me or not?” If you have not established a mind of loving-kindness without resentment to your associates, there will be those who say of you: “Please establish a mind of loving-kindness without resentment to your associates first.”
- (4) “Am I learned, and do I remember and understand correctly what I have learned? Have I learned about those teachings on Dhamma that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life? Have I remembered them accurately, investigated them thoroughly, and understood them properly? Does this quality exist in me or not?” If not ... there will be those who say of you: “Please learn your own tradition first.”
- (5) “Have both (monks’ and nuns’) Monastic Codes been well learned and understood by me? Does this quality exist in me or not?” If not ... there will be others who say of you: “Please learn the monastic rules first.”
- (6) You resolve to speak at an appropriate time, not an improper time.
- (7) You resolve to speak truthfully, not falsely.
- (8) You resolve to speak gently, not harshly.
- (9) You resolve to speak in a beneficial way, not in a way that causes harm.
- (10) You resolve to speak with a mind of loving-kindness, not while harbouring ill will.

4. Right Action

DN 22 What, now, is right action?

Refraining from deliberately killing living beings, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct.

AN 10.176 Refraining from deliberately killing living beings, you abstain from the destruction of life. With the rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious and kindly, you dwell compassionate toward all living beings.

Refraining from theft, you abstain from taking what is not given; you do not steal the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest.

Refraining from sexual misconduct, you abstain from unlawful, abusive, sexual activity. You do not have sexual relations with those under the age of consent; with those who are unable to give consent (e.g., being mentally disabled); who are not free to refuse consent (such as a student to their teacher); where such conduct would be breaking a law; or with one already engaged.

5. Right Livelihood

What, now, is right livelihood?

- DN 22 Here the noble disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps themselves by right livelihood.
- AN 5.177 A lay follower should not engage in these five trades. What five? Trading in weapons, trading in living beings, trading in meat, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poisons. A lay follower should not engage in these five trades.

6. Right Endeavour

What, now, is right endeavour?

- AN 4.13-14 There are these four right endeavours: restraint, abandonment, development, preservation.

The Endeavour of Restraint

And what is the endeavour of restraint? When you see an object, you do not let yourself get sucked in by any characteristics or features that generate defilements. If you left the faculty of sight unrestrained, unskilful states of wanting and aversion would afflict you. Instead, you practise wisdom when seeing, you guard the faculty of sight, and you undertake the restraint of sight.

Having heard a sound ... Having noticed a smell ... Having sensed a taste ... Having felt a bodily feeling ... Having cognised something in the mind, you do not let yourself get sucked in by any characteristics or features that generate defilements. If you left the mind faculty unrestrained, unskilful states of wanting

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

and aversion would afflict you. Instead, you practise wisdom with the mind, you guard the mind, and you undertake the restraint of the mind.

This is called the endeavour to restrain.

The Endeavour to Abandon

And what is the endeavour to abandon? Here, you do not maintain an arisen motivation of wanting; you abandon it, let it go, renounce it, and bring it to cessation.

You do not indulge an arisen motivation of aversion ... an arisen motivation of harming ... whenever bad motivations arise, you abandon them, let them go, renounce them, and bring them to cessation.

This is called the endeavour to abandon.

MN 20 When you are mindful of some object, and there arise in you afflicting unwholesome motivations connected with desire, aversion and delusion, then:

- (1) You should give attention to some other object that generates wholesome mind states. Thus, unwholesome states are abandoned and subside. With their disappearance, your mind becomes internally steady, settled, unified and still.
- (2) You should examine the danger in those unwholesome motives...
- (3) You should try to ignore those unwholesome motives and not give attention to them ...
- (4) You should give attention to stilling the causes of those motives...
- (5) You should clench your teeth with your tongue pressed against the roof of your mouth, and beat down, constrain and crush any such afflicting unwholesome motives. With the disappearance of them, your mind becomes internally steady, settled, unified and still.

The Endeavour to Develop

AN 4.13-14 And what is the endeavour to develop?

Here, you develop:

- (1) the awakening factor of mindfulness ...
- (2) the awakening factor of exploring the Dhamma ...
- (3) the awakening factor of energy ...

- (4) the awakening factor of rapture ...
- (5) the awakening factor of tranquillity ...
- (6) the awakening factor of stillness ...
- (7) the awakening factor of equanimity ...

every one of which is based upon seclusion (physical and mental), fading away, and cessation, maturing in release.

This is called the endeavour to develop.

The Endeavour to Maintain

And what is the endeavour to maintain?

Here, you keep in mind an arisen meditation object that generates stillness (*samādhi nimitta*), such as the perception of a skeleton or corpse ... [or recollecting the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Saṅgha, loving-kindness, or the breath].

This is called the endeavour to maintain.

- AN 4.14 Restraining and abandoning, developing and maintaining,
 These four endeavours were taught by the Buddha.
 By these means a diligent meditator, in this very life,
 Can attain the destruction of suffering.

7. Right Mindfulness

What, now, is right mindfulness?

The Four Focuses of Mindfulness

- MN 10 The four focuses of mindfulness lead in one direction only, to the purification of beings, to going beyond sadness and crying, to the disappearance of physical and mental suffering, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of *nibbāna*. What are the four?

- (1) Having restrained the five hindrances, you abide aware of the body (*rūpa*), energised, knowing the purpose of what you are doing, and mindful.
- (2) Having restrained the five hindrances, you abide aware of experience (*vedanā*), energised, knowing the purpose of what you are doing, and mindful.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

- (3) Having restrained the five hindrances, you abide aware of the mind (*citta*), energised, knowing the purpose of what you are doing, and mindful.
- (4) Having restrained the five hindrances, you abide aware of mind-objects (*dhammā*), energised, knowing the purpose of what you are doing, and mindful.

Mindfulness of Body

And how are you aware of the body?

Mindfulness of Breathing

You go to a quiet secluded place, sit down comfortably, and give priority to establishing mindfulness. Then, mindful, you breathe in, mindful, you breathe out.

When the in-breath and out-breath are long, you are aware that they are long.

When the in-breath and out-breath are short, you are aware that they are short.

Then you learn to experience the whole of the breath as you breathe in and out.

Then you learn to calm the breath (*kāya-sāṅkhāra*) as you breathe in and out.

Just as a skilled painter is aware whether they are making a long brush stroke or a short brush stroke—so too, when the in-breath is long, you are aware that it is long ...

In this way you are aware of your own body, or you are aware that the bodies of others are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of the nature of both your own and others' bodies.

Or else you abide aware of what causes the arising of the body (the four nutriments), or you abide aware that the body will cease (when the four nutriments cease); or you abide contemplating the body's causal nature of both arising and ceasing.

Or else mindfulness that “it is just a body” (impermanent, suffering, and not me, not mine and not a permanent essence) is established in you to the extent necessary for mindfulness and wisdom essential for liberation. And you abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

That is one way that you are mindful of the body.

The Four Postures

When walking, you are aware in the present that: “I am walking,” when standing ... sitting ... or lying down, you are aware in the present that: “I am lying down.” Thus you maintain present-moment awareness of however your body is disposed.

In this way you are aware of your own body, or you are aware that the bodies of others are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of both your own and others’ bodies...

That is another way that you are mindful of the body.

Full Comprehension of the Purpose

You act in full comprehension of the purpose when going forward and returning; you act in full comprehension of the purpose when looking ahead and looking away, when flexing and extending your limbs, when wearing your clothes and carrying things; you act in full comprehension of the purpose regarding eating, drinking, defecating and urinating, walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, being awake, talking, and keeping silent.

In this way you are aware of your own body, or you are aware that the bodies of others are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of both your own and others’ bodies...

That is another way that you are mindful of the body.

The Bodily Parts

You review your body from head to toe, bounded by skin, as made up of many kinds of parts: blood and bones, tissues and organs ... Just as though there were a full shopping bag with many kinds of groceries, such as bread, potatoes, fruit and vegetables—so too, you review this same body ... as full of many parts thus: “In this body there are hairs, bones ... excrement and urine.”

... That is another way that you are mindful of the body.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

Elements

You review your body by way of the elements thus: “In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.”

... That is another way that you are mindful of the body.

The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations

- (1) You see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, up to three days old, bloated, livid, and oozing matter. Then you reflect that your own body is of the same nature, it may become like that, it is not exempt from that fate.
- (2) Or you see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by birds, animals or maggots. Then you reflect that your own body is of the same nature, it may become like that, it is not exempt from that fate.
- (3) Or you see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews ...
- (4) ... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews ...
- (5) ... a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews ...
- (6) ... disconnected bones scattered in all directions ...
- (7) ... bones bleached white, the colour of shells ...
- (8) ... bones heaped up ...
- (9) ... bones more than a year old, rotted and crumbled to dust.. Then you reflect that your own body is of the same nature, it may become like that, it is not exempt from that fate.

In this way you are aware of your own body, or you are aware that the bodies of others are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of both your own and others' bodies.

Or else you abide aware of what causes the arising of the body (the four nutriments), or you abide aware that the body is of the nature to cease (when the four nutriments cease), or you abide contemplating the body's causal nature of both arising and ceasing.

Or else mindfulness that “it is just a body” (impermanent, suffering and not me, not mine and not a permanent essence) is established in you to the extent necessary for mindfulness and wisdom essential for liberation. And you abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

That is another way that you are mindful of the body.

Benefits of Mindfulness of the Body

MN 119 When mindfulness of the body has been repeatedly practised, and developed, these ten benefits may be expected.

- (1) You overcome delight and discontent.
- (2) You overcome fear and dread.
- (3) You bear cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with flies, mosquitoes, ticks, wind, the sun, and creeping things; you endure unwelcome words and arisen bodily feelings that are painful and menacing to life.
- (4) You experience, whenever needed, without difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind (*adhicitta*) and provide a pleasant abiding in this very life.
- (5) You wield the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, you become many; having been many, you become one; you appear and vanish; you go unhindered through a wall or through a mountain as though through space; you dive in and out of the earth as though it were water; you walk on water without sinking as though it were earth; seated cross-legged, you travel in space like a bird; you wield bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.
- (6) With clairaudience (the “divine ear”), you hear sounds both heavenly and human, those that are far as well as near.
- (7) You can read the minds of other persons, having encompassed them with your own mind, especially whether their mind is affected by one of the five hindrances or whether it is experiencing a jhāna.
- (8) You recollect your past lives, even up to a hundred thousand births, and many aeons of expanding universes, many aeons of decaying universes: “There I was so named, of such a family with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared in this other place; and there too I was so named, of such a family ... such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared here.” Thus with their aspects and particulars you recollect many of your past lives.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

- (9) With clairvoyance (the “divine eye”), you see beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and one understands how beings are reborn according to their actions (kamma).
- (10) By realising for yourself with direct experience, in this very life, you enter upon and abide in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom; you are an awakened one.

Arising and Passing Away (Rise and Fall)

SN 47.42 I will teach you the origination (*samudaya*) and the passing away (*atthaṅgama*) of the four focuses of mindfulness.

- (1) Supported by the four nutriments, there is the origination and continuance of the body. With the cessation of the four nutriments, the body ceases. [The four nutriments are: food, six sense contacts (phassa), will and consciousnesses.]
- (2) Supported by the six sense contacts (phassa), there is the origination of experience. With the cessation of six sense contacts, experience ceases.
- (3) Supported by objects of consciousness (nāma-rūpa), there is the origination of the citta. With the cessation of nāma-rūpa, the mind (citta) ceases.
- (4) Supported by attention, there is the origination of mind-objects. With the cessation of attention, mind-objects cease.

Mindfulness of Experience

MN 10 How are you mindful of experience (*vedanā*)?

When feeling a pleasant experience, you are mindful that you feel a pleasant experience; when feeling an unpleasant experience, you are mindful that you feel an unpleasant experience; and when feeling a neutral experience, you are mindful that you feel a neutral experience.

When feeling a worldly pleasant experience, a worldly unpleasant experience, or a worldly neutral experience, you are mindful that you feel such a worldly pleasant, unpleasant or neutral experience.

When feeling an unworldly pleasant experience, an unworldly unpleasant experience, or an unworldly neutral experience, you are mindful that you feel such an unworldly pleasant, unpleasant or neutral experience.

In this way you are aware of your own experience, or you are aware that the experience of others is of the same nature as yours, or you abide mindful of both your own and others' experience.

Or else you abide aware of what causes the arising of experience (sensory contact), or you abide aware that experience is of the nature to cease (when sensory contact ceases), or you abide contemplating experience's causal nature of both arising and ceasing.

Or else mindfulness that "it is just experience" (impermanent, suffering and not me, not mine and not a permanent essence) is established in you to the extent necessary for mindfulness and wisdom essential to liberation. And you abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

That is how a meditator abides mindful of experience.

Mindfulness of the *Citta* (Mind)

How are you mindful of the mind?

You understand a mind that is affected by wanting as such and a mind that is unaffected by wanting as such. You understand a mind that is affected by aversion as such, and a mind that is unaffected by aversion as such. You understand a mind that is affected by delusion as such, and a mind that is unaffected by delusion as such. You understand a contracted mind as contracted because of dullness and drowsiness, and a distracted mind as distracted because of restlessness and remorse.

You understand an exalted mind, a surpassing mind, a still mind and a liberated mind (all referring to a mind in *jhāna*) as such, and a mind that is neither exalted, surpassing, still nor liberated, as such.

In this way you are aware of your own mind (*citta*), or you are aware that others' minds are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of both your own and others' minds.

Or else you abide aware of what causes the arising of the *citta* (*nāma-rūpa*), or you abide aware that the *citta* is of the nature to cease (when *nāma-rūpa* ceases); or you abide contemplating the *citta*'s causal nature of both arising and ceasing.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

Or else mindfulness that “it is just a mind” (impermanent, suffering, and not me, not mine, and not a permanent essence) is established in you to the extent necessary for mindfulness and wisdom essential to liberation. And you abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

This is how you are mindful of the mind.

Mindfulness of Mind-Objects

How are you mindful of mind-objects?

The Five Hindrances

You are mindful of mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances.

- (1) When there was wanting regarding the five senses, you are mindful that there was such wanting. When there is no wanting regarding the five senses, you are mindful that there is no such wanting. You also understand how such wanting arises, how to let go of such wanting, and how such wanting doesn't arise again.
- (2) When there was aversion in you ...
- (3) When there was dullness and drowsiness in you ...
- (4) When there was restlessness and remorse in you ...
- (5) When there was doubt in you, you are mindful that there was such doubt. When there is no such doubt, you are mindful that there is no doubt. You also understand how such doubt arises, how to let go of doubt, and how doubt doesn't arise again.

MN 39 Suppose you took out a loan and your business was successful. Then you repaid that loan and there was enough left over for your own enjoyment and for that of your family. As a result, you would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose you were very ill, you couldn't eat or sleep, and had no strength. Later, however, you recovered, could eat and sleep again, and you regained your strength. As a result, you would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose you were imprisoned and later were released, safe and secure, with no loss to your property. As a result, you would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose you were a slave, indentured to another, unable to go where you want. Then, later, you were released from slavery, independent of others, able to go where you want. As a result, you would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose you had to travel along a dangerous road across a wilderness, but later, you would pass through that wilderness safe and secure, with no loss to your property. As a result, you would be glad and full of joy.

So too, when these five hindrances were present, you look back on them as: a debt (wanting), a disease (aversion), a prison (dullness and drowsiness), slavery (restlessness and remorse), and a dangerous road across a wilderness (doubt). But when these five hindrances have been abandoned, you regard that as freedom from debt, as health, release from a prison, freedom from slavery, and reaching a land of safety.

The Seven Awakening Factors

Or, you are mindful of mind-objects in terms of the seven awakening factors.

- (1) When the awakening factor of mindfulness is present in you, you understand that it is present. But when the awakening factor of mindfulness was not present in you, you understand that it was absent. You also understand how there comes to be the arising of the absent awakening factor of mindfulness, and how it comes to fulfilment by development.
- (2) When the awakening factor of exploring the Dhamma is present in you ...
- (3) When the awakening factor of energy is present in you ...
- (4) When the awakening factor of joy is present in you ...
- (5) When the awakening factor of tranquillity is present in you ...
- (6) When the awakening factor of stillness is present in you ...
- (7) When the awakening factor of equanimity is present in you, you understand that it is present. But when the awakening factor of equanimity was not present in you, you understand that it was absent. You also understand how there comes to be the arising of the absent awakening factor of equanimity, and how it comes to fulfilment by development.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The Five Components of Existence

Or, you are mindful of mind-objects in terms of the five components of existence.
You are mindful—

“Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance;
such is experience, such its origin, such its disappearance;
such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance;
such is will, such its origin, such its disappearance;
such are consciousnesses, such their origin, such their disappearance.”

The Six Sense Bases

Or, you are mindful of mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external sense bases.

You understand sights, understand forms, understand the fetter (wanting) that arises dependent on both; you understand how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.

And so with the other five sense bases.

The Four Noble Truths

Or, you are mindful of mind-objects (*dharmā*) in terms of the four noble truths.

You understand as it actually 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.

Summary of Mind-Objects

In these ways you are aware of mind-objects, or you are aware that others' mind-objects are of the same nature as yours, or you abide aware of both your own and others' mind-objects.

Or else you abide aware of what causes the arising of mind-objects (attention), or you abide aware that mind-objects are of the nature to cease (when attention ceases), or you abide contemplating mind-objects' causal nature of both arising and ceasing.

Or else mindfulness that “these are just mind-objects” (impermanent, suffering, and not me, not mine, and not a permanent essence) is established in you to the extent necessary for mindfulness and wisdom essential for liberation. And you abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

This is how you are mindful of mind-objects.

Summary of *Satipaṭṭhāna*

- MN 10 So it was with reference to this that it was said: The four focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) lead in one direction only, to the purification of beings, to going beyond sadness and crying, to the disappearance of physical and mental suffering, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of *nibbāna*.

Nibbāna through Ānāpānassati

- MN 118 When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it completes the four focuses of mindfulness. When the four focuses of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they complete the seven awakening factors. When the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated, they complete true knowledge and deliverance (awakening).

Mindfulness of Breathing Completes the Four Focuses of Mindfulness

And how does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, complete the four focuses of mindfulness?

- (1) When the in-breath and out-breath are long and you are aware that they are long;
When the in-breath and out-breath are short and you are aware that they are short;
When you learn to experience the whole of the breath as you breathe in and out;

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

When you learn to calm the breath as you breathe in and out; —on those occasions you are mindful of the body, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful. In-and-out-breathing is regarded by the Buddha as a body in the category “bodies”. That is why on that occasion a meditator abides mindful of the body, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful.

- (2) When you learn to experience joy (*pīti*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to experience pleasure (*sukha*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to experience the mental formation (of *pīti-sukha*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to calm this mental formation (of *pīti-sukha*) as you breathe in and out;
—on those occasions you are mindful of experience, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful. For being mindful of the pleasure associated with this stage of breath meditation is being mindful of experience (*vedanā*). That is why on that occasion a meditator abides mindful of experience, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful.
- (3) When you learn to experience the *citta* (experiencing a *nimitta*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to brighten the *nimitta* (bring joy to the *citta*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to settle the *nimitta* (still the *citta*) as you breathe in and out;
When you learn to enter jhāna (liberate the *citta*) as you breathe in and out;
—on those occasions you are mindful of the *citta*, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful. I do not say that there is the development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is dull, who is not fully aware (reaching a jhāna without the hindrances gone). That is why on that occasion a meditator abides mindful of the mind (*citta*), having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful.
- (4) When you learn to explore impermanence in breath meditation;
When you learn to explore things fading away in breath meditation;

When you learn to explore things ceasing in breath meditation;
When you learn to explore relinquishing things in breath meditation;
—on those occasions you are mindful of mind-objects (*dharmā*), having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful. Having seen with wisdom the impermanence, fading away, cessation and relinquishment of the five hindrances, you are mindful with equanimity. That is why on that occasion you are mindful of mind-objects, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful. That is how mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, completes the four focuses of mindfulness.

Four Focuses of Mindfulness Complete the Seven Awakening Factors

How do the four focuses of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, complete the seven awakening factors?

- (1) When you are mindful of the body, having restrained the five hindrances, energised, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful—on that occasion steady mindfulness is established in you. On whatever occasion steady mindfulness is established in you—on that occasion the mindfulness awakening factor is aroused in you. You develop it and, by development, it comes to fulfilment in you.
- (2) When you are thus mindful, you explore Dhamma with wisdom. On whatever occasion, abiding thus mindful, you explore Dhamma with wisdom—on that occasion the exploration-of-Dhamma awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.
- (3) When you explore Dhamma with wisdom, and embark upon a full inquiry into it, unflagging energy is aroused. On whatever occasion unflagging energy is aroused as you explore Dhamma with wisdom—on that occasion the energy awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.
- (4) When you have aroused energy, unworldly joy (*pīti*) arises. On whatever occasion unworldly joy arises—on that occasion the joy awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

- (5) When you experience unworldly joy, your body and mind become tranquil. On whatever occasion the body and the mind become tranquil and you experience joy—on that occasion the tranquillity awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.
- (6) When your body is tranquil and you feel pleasure in the mind, the mind becomes still. On whatever occasion the mind becomes still and joyful—on that occasion the stillness awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.
- (7) You observe such a still mind with equanimity. On whatever occasion you observe with equanimity the still mind—on that occasion the equanimity awakening factor is aroused in you, and you develop it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in you.

That is how the four focuses of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, complete the seven awakening factors.

Seven Awakening Factors Complete True Knowledge and Deliverance

How do the seven awakening factors, developed and cultivated, complete true knowledge and deliverance (full awakening)?

Here, you develop the mindfulness awakening factor, which is supported by seclusion (physical and mental), fading away and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

You develop the exploration-of-Dhamma awakening factor ...

the energy awakening factor ...

the joy awakening factor ...

the tranquillity awakening factor ...

the stillness awakening factor ...

the equanimity awakening factor, which is supported by seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

That is how the seven awakening factors, developed and cultivated, complete true knowledge and deliverance (full awakening).

8. Right Stillness (Jhāna)

MN 36 I remembered a time when my father was occupied, while I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, having passed beyond the five senses and free from unwholesome states, I entered and abided in the first jhāna. I thought “Could that be the path to awakening (*bodhi*)?” Then the realisation arose: “That jhāna is indeed the path to awakening.”

The Four Jhānas

MN 27 Having abandoned the five hindrances, totally free from the five senses, free from unwholesome states (the hindrances), you enter upon and abide in the first jhāna, wherein the mind moves onto the object and holds onto it, the object being joy and pleasure caused by being totally free from the five senses.

MN 43 In the first jhāna, five things are absent and five factors are present.

When one has entered the first jhāna, the five hindrances are totally absent, and what is present is: (1) the mind moves onto the object, (2) it holds on to the object, the object being (3) joy and (4) pleasure, and there is (5) oneness of mind.

MN 27 When the mind no longer moves onto the object because it lets go of holding on to it, you enter upon and abide in the second jhāna, which has trust (in the object, the bliss, enough to let go of holding it) and unity of mind without any movement or holding, with joy and pleasure caused by absolute stillness.

With the fading away of joy, you abide mindful and fully aware, experiencing a bliss purified from joy; you enter upon and abide in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: “One has a pleasant abiding indeed who has such mindfulness and equanimity.”

Having abandoned pleasure and pain (all *vedanā* from the five senses), and with the disappearance of joy and unhappiness (all *vedanā* from the sixth sense except for equanimity), you enter upon and abide in the fourth jhāna, which has only neutral mental *vedanā* remaining—just pure mindfulness with equanimity.

MN 108 [Venerable Ānanda:] And what kind of meditation did the Buddha recommend? Totally free from the five senses ... you abide in the first jhāna. When the mind stops moving onto the joy and pleasure, and stops holding it ... you abide in the

IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

second jhāna. With the fading away of joy ... you abide in the third jhāna. With the abandoning of all mental pleasant and unpleasant *vedanā* ... you abide in the fourth jhāna. The Buddha praised these four kinds of meditation.

DN 29 There are, Cunda, these four kinds of life devoted to pleasure that are entirely conducive to revulsion (*nibbidā*), to fading away, cessation, peace, realisation, awakening, to *nibbāna*. What are they? The four jhānas. So, if devotees of other sects should say that the Buddhists are addicted to these four forms of pleasure-seeking, they should be told “Yes,” for they would be speaking correctly about you.

Then some people might further ask you what benefits can you expect from a life attached to these four forms of pleasure-seeking? You should reply that they can expect only four fruits, four benefits: (1) stream-winning, (2) once-returning, (3) non-returning, or (4) full awakening. These are the benefits that you can expect from being attached to these four forms of pleasure-seeking.

MN 64 There is one path, Ānanda, to the abandoning of the five basic fetters. It is impossible that anyone can understand or abandon these five basic fetters without relying on that path. No more than it is possible to cut out the hardwood from a tree without cutting through its bark and sapwood. What is that path? Any of the four jhānas and first three immaterial attainments.

MN 68 While you still do not experience jhāna, the five hindrances together with discontent (*arati*) and weariness (*tandī*) invade your mind and remain. But when you do experience a jhāna, the five hindrances, together with discontent and weariness do not invade your mind and remain.

AN 8.81 When you have no jhāna, for one deficient in jhāna, the cause for seeing things as they truly are is destroyed.

When you do not see things as they truly are, for one deficient in such wisdom, the cause for revulsion and fading away is destroyed.

When you are not revolted, nor do you incline to disappearing, for one deficient in these, the cause for knowledge and vision of liberation is destroyed.

SN 22.5 Develop jhāna. When you experience jhāna, you can understand things as they really are. And what do you understand as it really is? The origin and passing away of form; the origin and passing away of experience; the origin and passing

away of perception; the origin and passing away of will; the origin and passing away of consciousnesses.

- Dhp 372 There is no jhāna for one without wisdom,
There is no wisdom for one without jhāna.
For one who has both jhāna and wisdom,
They are in the presence of *nibbāna*!

Summing Up of the Noble Eightfold Path

- SN 56.11 This is that middle way awakened to by the Buddha, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to *nibbāna*.
- Dhp 275 Enter then upon this path; you'll make an end of suffering.

Nibbāna

- MN 39 When you know and see thus, the mind is no longer pulled out into the world of the five senses (it is liberated from the wanting āsava); it no longer flows out just to be (it is liberated from the being āsava), and it no longer leaks out because of delusion (it is liberated from the delusion āsava). When liberation occurs, the knowledge of liberation invariably follows.

You understand: “Rebirth is finished, the holy life has been fulfilled, done was what had to be done, there is nothing more here.”

- MN 26 Your deliverance is unshakeable;
This is your last life;
Now there will be no renewal of existence.
For this is the supreme noble wisdom, namely, the knowledge of the destruction of all suffering.

The True Goal

- MN 29 So this holy life does not have gain, honour and fame for its main purpose, nor the attainment of virtue for its main purpose, nor the attainment of jhāna as its main purpose, nor insight for its main purpose.

The main purpose of the holy life is this unshakeable deliverance of mind, full awakening. That is the goal of this holy life, its essence and its culmination.

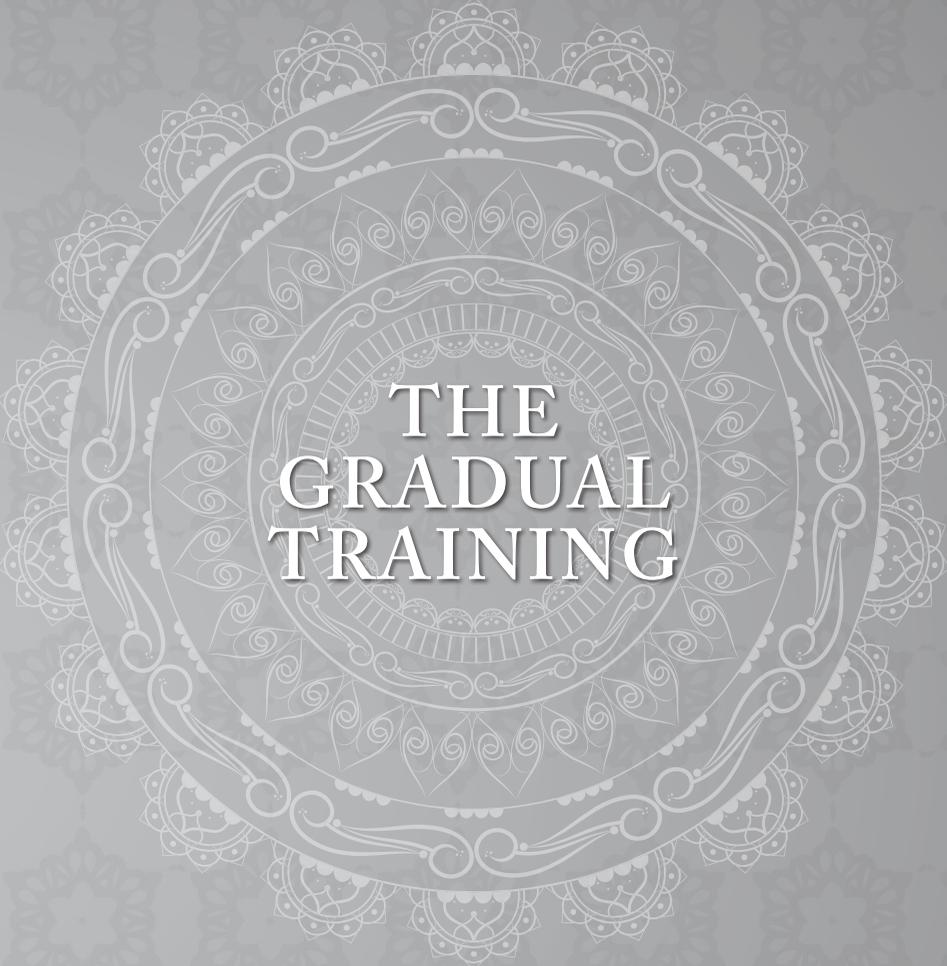
IV. THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE WAY LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

DN 16 It may be that you will think: “The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher!” It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher.

You should live as islands unto yourselves,
Being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge,
With the Dhamma as your island,
With the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge.

For this reason those matters that I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learnt by you, practised, developed and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of *devas* and humans.

SN 56.31 “Which do you think are greater, the few leaves that I hold in my hand or all the leaves in the forest?” asked the Buddha. “The leaves in the forest,” came the answer. “Likewise, the things that I know but have not taught to you are many, like the leaves in the forest, whereas the things that I have taught you are few, like the leaves in my hand. The reason that I have not taught you those many things is because they are irrelevant to the holy life and do not lead to awakening.”



THE
GRADUAL
TRAINING

Arising of Buddha and Dhamma

MN 27 A Buddha appears in the world, accomplished (arahant), fully awakened (*sammāsambuddho*), perfect in true knowledge and conduct (*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*), well liberated (*sugato*), knower of worlds (*loka-vidū*), incomparable teacher of those who can be taught (*anuttaro purisadamma-sārathī*), teacher of gods and humans (*sattḥā deva-manussānaṃ*), the awakened one (*buddho*), the master (*bhagavā*).

With his own direct knowledge, he has realised this universe with its gods, this world with all its beings; and he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dhamma good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and right phrasing, and he reveals a perfectly complete and pure spiritual life.

Confidence

MN 27 You hear that Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma you acquire confidence in the Buddha. Possessing that faith, you consider thus: “Household life is troublesome and busy; life as a monastic is free and relaxed. It is not easy, while living in a house, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure. Suppose I shave off my hair, put on the orange robe, and go forth from the worldly life into monastic life.”

On a later occasion, having given away all your wealth, abandoning your circle of relatives and friends, you shave off your hair, put on the orange robe, and go forth from the home life into monastic life.

Virtue

MN 27 When you have gone forth, you train in the monastic way of life:

You abstain from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, you live compassionate to all living beings.

You abstain from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, wanting only what is given, by not stealing you abide in purity.

You abstain from all sexual activity, living apart from others, you abstain from the lay practice of sexual intercourse.

You abstain from false speech; you speak only the truth, are trustworthy and reliable; you are no deceiver of the world.

You abstain from divisive speech; you do not tell tales in order to divide people, but you are one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys harmony, rejoices in harmony, delights in harmony, a speaker of words that promote harmony.

You abstain from harsh speech; you speak only words that are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, words that go to the heart, are courteous, desired by the many and agreeable to the many.

You abstain from useless speech; you speak at the proper time, speak what is truthful, speak on what is beneficial, speak on the Dhamma and the training; at the proper time you speak words that are worth treasuring, authoritative, succinct, and beneficial.

You abstain from injuring seeds and plants.

You practise eating only in the morning, abstaining from eating at night and outside the proper time.

You abstain from dancing, singing, music, and movies.

You abstain from wearing adornments, fragrances and cosmetics.

You abstain from using luxurious furnishings.

You abstain from accepting money. You abstain from accepting raw grain and raw meat. You abstain from accepting servants and slaves.

You abstain from accepting livestock. You abstain from accepting fields and land.

You abstain from going on errands and running messages.

You abstain from buying and selling.

You abstain from practising fraud.

You abstain from accepting bribes, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery.

You abstain from wounding, murdering, imprisoning, extortion, plunder, and violence.

Contentment

MN 27 You become content with patched robes to protect your body and with almsfood to maintain your stomach; and wherever you go, you travel taking only these with you. Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too you become content with patched robes to protect this body and with almsfood to maintain your stomach; and wherever you go, you travel taking only these with you.

When you follow this noble virtue and contentment, you experience within yourself a delightful bliss, the joy of being blameless.

Restraint of the Senses

MN 27 When you see an object, you do not let yourself get sucked in by any characteristics or features that generate defilements. Since, if you left the faculty of sight unrestrained, unskilful states of wanting and aversion would afflict you, instead, you practise wisdom when seeing, you guard the faculty of sight, and you undertake the restraint of sight.

Having heard a sound ... Having noticed a smell ... Having sensed a taste ... Having felt a bodily feeling ... Having cognised something in the mind, you do not let yourself get sucked in by any characteristics or features that generate defilements. Since, if you left the mind faculty unrestrained, unskilful states of wanting and aversion would afflict you, instead, you practise wisdom with the mind, you guard the mind, and you undertake the restraint of the mind.

When you follow this noble restraint of the senses, you experience within yourself an even more delightful bliss, the joy of being unagitated.

Full Comprehension of the Purpose

MN 27 You act in full comprehension of the purpose when going forward and returning; you act in full comprehension of the purpose when looking ahead and looking away, when flexing and extending your limbs, when wearing your clothes and carrying things; you act in full comprehension of the purpose regarding eating, drinking, defecating and urinating, walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, being awake, talking, and keeping silent.

Meditation

MN 27 When you have developed this noble virtue, this noble restraint of the sense faculties, and this noble full comprehension of the purpose, you go to a secluded dwelling place such as the forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, or a heap of straw.

You sit down, folding your legs crosswise, straightening the body, and establishing mindfulness as a priority.

Abandoning wanting for the world of the five senses, you abide with a mind free from wanting; you purify the mind from desire.

Abandoning aversion, you abide with a mind free from ill-will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; you thus purify the mind from aversion.

Abandoning dullness and drowsiness, you abide with a mind free from dullness and drowsiness, bright-minded, clearly comprehending; you purify the mind from dullness and drowsiness.

Abandoning restlessness and remorse, you abide unagitated, with a mind inwardly peaceful; you purify the mind from restlessness and remorse.

Abandoning doubt, you abide having gone beyond doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; you purify the mind from doubt.

The Jhānas

- (1) Having abandoned the five hindrances, totally free from the five senses, free from unwholesome states (the hindrances), you enter upon and abide in the first jhāna, wherein the mind moves onto the object and holds on to it, the object being joy and pleasure caused by being totally free from the five senses.
- (2) When the mind stops moving onto the object and stops holding on to it, you enter upon and abide in the second jhāna, which has trust (in the object, the bliss, enough to let go of holding it) and unity of mind without any movement or holding, with joy and pleasure caused by perfect stillness.

THE GRADUAL TRAINING

- (3) With the fading away of joy, you abide mindful and fully aware, experiencing a bliss purified from joy; you enter upon and abide in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: “One has a pleasant abiding indeed who has such mindfulness and equanimity.”
- (4) Having abandoned pleasure and pain (all *vedanā* from the five senses), and with the disappearance of joy and grief (all *vedanā* from the sixth sense except for equanimity), you enter upon and abide in the fourth jhāna, which has only neutral mental *vedanā* remaining—just pure mindfulness with equanimity.



FROM
THE ANGUTTARA NIKĀYA

Editor's note:

As mentioned in the Foreword, I have long campaigned for renderings of the suttas which accurately reflect the workings of the Buddhist path, which is not practised through willpower, but through letting go and renouncing, thereby enabling it to unfold as a natural process of cause and effect. “Stillness” rather than “concentration”, as a rendering of *samādhī*, is but one example of this. All too often, this crucial idea is missed or forgotten by practitioners to the detriment of their own happiness and progress on the path; therefore it warrants extra emphasis. It is for this reason that I append the following passages from the Aṅguttara Nikāya. These lay out the stages of the path explicitly, from several angles, all highlighting its impersonal, purely causal nature. Let no doubt remain!

Ajahn Brahm

5.21 Irreverent

Meditators, when a meditator is irreverent and undeferential, and their behaviour is uncongenial to their fellow meditators, it is impossible for them to fulfil the factor of proper conduct.

Without fulfilling the factor of proper conduct, it is impossible for them to fulfil the factor of a trainee.

Without fulfilling the factor of a trainee, it is impossible for them to fulfil virtuous behaviour.

Without fulfilling virtuous behaviour, it is impossible for them to fulfil right view. Without fulfilling right view, it is impossible for them to fulfil jhāna (*sammā samādhī*).

But, when a meditator is reverential and deferential, and their behaviour is congenial to their fellow meditators, it is possible for them to fulfil the duty of proper conduct.

Having fulfilled the duty of proper conduct, it is possible for them to fulfil the duty of a trainee.

Having fulfilled the duty of a trainee, it is possible for them to fulfil virtuous behaviour.

Having fulfilled virtuous behaviour, it is possible for them to fulfil right view. Having fulfilled right view, it is possible for them to fulfil jhāna (*sammā samādhi*).

8.81 Mindfulness

Meditators, when there is no mindfulness and wisdom, the sense of moral shame and moral dread (*hiriottappa*) lacks a necessary cause.

When there is no sense of moral shame and moral dread, restraint of the sense faculties lacks a necessary cause.

When there is no restraint of the sense faculties, virtuous behaviour lacks a necessary cause.

When there is no virtuous behaviour, jhāna (*sammā samādhi*) lacks a necessary cause.

When there is no jhāna, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are lacks a necessary cause.

When there is no knowledge and vision of things as they really are, revulsion (*nibbidā*) and fading away lack a necessary cause.

When there is no revulsion and fading away, liberation lacks a necessary cause.

When a tree is deficient in branches and foliage, its new shoots, bark, softwood, and heartwood do not grow to fullness. So too, when there is no mindfulness and wisdom ... liberation lacks a necessary cause.

Meditators, when there is mindfulness and wisdom, the sense of moral shame and moral dread possess their necessary cause.

When there is moral shame and moral dread, restraint of the sense faculties possesses its necessary cause.

When there is restraint of the sense faculties, virtuous behaviour possesses its necessary cause.

When there is virtuous behaviour, jhāna (*sammā samādhi*) possesses its necessary cause. When there is jhāna, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are possesses its necessary cause.

When there is knowledge and vision of things as they really are, revulsion and fading away possess their necessary cause.

When there is revulsion and fading away, liberation possesses its necessary cause.

When a tree is sufficient in branches and foliage, its new shoots, bark, softwood, and heartwood grow to fullness. So too, when there is mindfulness and wisdom ... liberation possesses its main cause.

10.61 Delusion

Meditators, some say that a first beginning of delusion cannot be seen such that, before then, there was only wisdom and after then delusion came to exist.

I say that delusion has a nutriment. The nutriment for delusion is the five hindrances.

The five hindrances have a nutriment: the three kinds of misconduct.

The three kinds of misconduct have a nutriment: lack of sense restraint.

Lack of sense restraint has a nutriment: lack of mindfulness and wisdom.

Lack of mindfulness and wisdom has a nutriment: careless attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*).

Careless attention has a nutriment: lack of faith.

Lack of faith has a nutriment: not hearing the true Dhamma.

Not hearing the true Dhamma has a nutriment: not associating with good persons.

Thus not associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up not hearing the good Dhamma.

Not hearing the good Dhamma, becoming full, fills up lack of faith.

Lack of faith, becoming full, fills up careless attention.

Careless attention, becoming full, fills up lack of mindfulness and wisdom.

Lack of mindfulness and wisdom, becoming full, fills up non-restraint of the sense faculties.

Non-restraint of the sense faculties, becoming full, fills up the three kinds of misconduct.

The three kinds of misconduct, becoming full, fill up the five hindrances.

The five hindrances, becoming full, fill up delusion.

Thus there is nutriment for delusion, and in this way it keeps full.

Just as when rain pours down in thick droplets on a mountaintop, the water flows down along the slope and fills the clefts, gullies, and creeks; these, becoming full, fill up the pools; these, becoming full, fill up the lakes; these, becoming full, fill up the streams; these, becoming full, fill up the rivers; and these, becoming full, fill up the great ocean. Thus there is nutriment for the great ocean, and in this way it keeps full.

So too, not associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up not hearing the good Dhamma ... The five hindrances, becoming full, fill up delusion. Thus there is nutriment for delusion, and in this way it keeps full.

Meditators, true knowledge and liberation have a nutriment: the seven factors of awakening.

The seven factors of awakening have a nutriment: the four focuses of mindfulness.

The four focuses of mindfulness have a nutriment: the three kinds of good conduct.

The three kinds of good conduct have a nutriment: restraint of the sense faculties.

Restraint of the sense faculties has a nutriment: mindfulness and wisdom.

Mindfulness and wisdom have a nutriment: careful attention (*yoniso manasikāra*).

Careful attention has a nutriment: faith.

Faith has a nutriment: hearing the true Dhamma.

Hearing the true Dhamma has a nutriment: associating with good persons.

Thus associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up hearing the true Dhamma.

Hearing the good Dhamma, becoming full, fills up faith.

Faith, becoming full, fills up careful attention.

Careful attention, becoming full, fills up mindfulness and wisdom.

Mindfulness and wisdom, becoming full, fill up restraint of the sense faculties.

Restraint of the sense faculties, becoming full, fills up the three kinds of good conduct.

The three kinds of good conduct, becoming full, fill up the four focuses of mindfulness.

The four focuses of mindfulness, becoming full, fill up the seven factors of awakening.

The seven factors of awakening, becoming full, fill up true knowledge and liberation.

Thus there is nutriment for true knowledge and liberation, and in this way they become full...

So too, associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up hearing the good Dhamma ... The seven factors of awakening, becoming full, fill up true knowledge and liberation. Thus there is nutriment for true knowledge and liberation, and in this way they become full.

10.62 Craving

Meditators, some say that a first beginning of craving cannot be seen such that, before then, there was only contentment, and after then, craving came to exist.

Craving for existence has a nutriment: delusion.

Delusion has a nutriment: the five hindrances ... [as in 10:61]

Not hearing the true Dhamma has a nutriment, not associating with good persons.

Thus not associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up not hearing the good Dhamma ... The five hindrances, becoming full, fill up delusion. Delusion, becoming full, fills up craving for existence. Thus there is nutriment for craving for existence, and in this way it keeps full...

So too, not associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up not hearing the good Dhamma ... and delusion, becoming full, fills up craving for existence. Thus there is nutriment for craving for existence, and in this way it keeps full.

True knowledge and liberation have a nutriment: the seven factors of awakening ...

Hearing the true Dhamma, too, I say, has a nutriment: associating with good persons.

Thus associating with good persons, becoming full, fills up hearing the true Dhamma ... the seven factors of awakening, becoming full, fill up true knowledge and liberation. Thus there is nutriment for true knowledge and liberation, and in this way they become full.

10.76 Incapable

Meditators, if these three things were not found in the world, the Buddha, the Arahant, the Perfectly Awakened One would not arise in the world, and the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Perfectly Awakened One would not shine in the world.

What three? Birth, old age and death.

But because these three things are found in the world, the Buddha, the Arahant, the Perfectly Awakened One arises in the world, and the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Perfectly Awakened One shines in the world.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning birth, old age, and death.

What three? Wanting, ill will, and delusion.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning wanting, ill will, and delusion.

FROM THE AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA

What three? The view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

What three? Careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

What three? Muddle-mindedness (weak mindfulness), lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning muddle-mindedness, lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

What three? Lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

What three? Restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

What three? Lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

What three? Disrespect, being difficult to correct, and bad friendship.

Without having abandoned these three things, one is incapable of abandoning disrespect, being difficult to correct, and bad friendship.

What three? Moral shamelessness, moral recklessness, and heedlessness.

Meditators, one who is morally shameless and morally reckless is heedless.

One who is heedless is incapable of abandoning disrespect, being difficult to correct, and bad friendship.

One who has bad friends is incapable of abandoning lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

One who is lazy is incapable of abandoning restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

One who is immoral is incapable of abandoning lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

One who has a mind bent on criticism is incapable of abandoning muddle-mindedness, lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

One who is mentally distracted is incapable of abandoning careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

One who is mentally sluggish is incapable of abandoning the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

One who has doubt is incapable of abandoning wanting, ill will, and delusion. Without having abandoned wanting, ill will, and delusion, one is incapable of abandoning birth, old age, and death.

Meditators, having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning birth, old age, and death.

What three? Wanting, ill will, and delusion.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning wanting, ill will, and delusion.

What three? The view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

What three? Careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

FROM THE AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

What three? Muddle-mindedness, lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning muddle-mindedness, lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

What three? Lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

What three? Restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

What three? Lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

What three? Disrespect, being difficult to correct, and bad friendship.

Having abandoned these three things, one is capable of abandoning disrespect, being difficult to correct, and bad friendship.

What three? Moral shamelessness, moral recklessness, and heedlessness.

Meditators, one who has a sense of moral shame and moral dread is heedful.

One who is heedful is capable of abandoning disrespect, being difficult to speak to, and bad friendship.

One who has good friends is capable of abandoning lack of faith, stinginess, and laziness.

One who is energetic is capable of abandoning restlessness, non-restraint, and immorality.

One who is virtuous is capable of abandoning lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to hear the noble Dhamma, and a mind bent on criticism.

One whose mind is not bent on criticism is capable of abandoning muddle-mindedness, lack of wisdom, and mental distraction.

One who has an undistracted mind is capable of abandoning careless attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

One who has an un-sluggish mind is capable of abandoning the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals.

One without the view of a permanent essence, doubt, and wrong grasp of rites and rituals is capable of abandoning wanting, ill will, and delusion.

Having abandoned wanting, ill will, and delusion, one is capable of abandoning birth, old age, and death.

10.103 The Wrong Course

Meditators, in dependence on the wrong course there is failure, not success.

For one of wrong view, wrong motivation originates.

For one of wrong motivation, wrong speech originates.

For one of wrong speech, wrong action originates.

For one of wrong action, wrong livelihood originates.

For one of wrong livelihood, wrong endeavour originates.

For one of wrong endeavour, wrong mindfulness originates.

For one of wrong mindfulness, wrong stillness originates.

For one of wrong stillness, wrong knowledge originates.

For one of wrong knowledge, wrong liberation originates.

In this way, in dependence on the wrong course, there is failure, not success.

In dependence on the right course, there is success, not failure.

For one of right view, right motivation originates.

For one of right motivation, right speech originates.

For one of right speech, right action originates.

For one of right action, right livelihood originates.

For one of right livelihood, right endeavour originates.

For one of right endeavour, right mindfulness originates.

For one of right mindfulness, jhāna (*sammā samādhi*) originates.

For one of jhāna (*sammā samādhi*), right knowledge originates.

For one of right knowledge, right liberation originates.

In this way, in dependence on the right course, there is success, not failure.

11.3 Necessary Cause

Meditators, for an immoral person, non-regret lacks its necessary cause.

When there is regret, happiness (*pāmuja*) lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no happiness, joy (*pīti*) lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no joy, tranquillity lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no tranquillity, pleasure (*sukha*) lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no pleasure, jhāna (*sammā samādhi*) lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no jhāna, seeing things as they really are lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no seeing things as they really are, *nibbidā* lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no *nibbidā*, fading away lacks its necessary cause.

When there is no fading away, liberation lacks its necessary cause.

When a tree is deficient in branches and foliage, its new shoots, bark, softwood, and heartwood do not grow to fullness. So too, for an immoral person non-regret lacks its necessary cause. When there is regret ... liberation lacks its necessary cause.

Meditators, for a virtuous person non-regret possesses its necessary cause.

When there is non-regret, happiness (*pāmuja*) possesses its necessary cause.

When there is happiness, joy (*pīti*) possesses its necessary cause.

When there is joy, tranquillity possesses its necessary cause.

When there is tranquillity, pleasure (*sukha*) possesses its necessary cause.

When there is pleasure, *jhāna* (*sammā samadhi*) possesses its necessary cause.

When there is *jhāna*, seeing things as they really are possesses its necessary cause.

When there is seeing things as they really are, *nibbidā* possesses its necessary cause.

When there is *nibbidā*, fading away possesses its necessary cause.

When there is fading away, liberation possesses its necessary cause.

When a tree is sufficient in branches and foliage, its new shoots, bark, softwood, and heartwood grow to fullness. So too, for a virtuous person, non-regret possesses its necessary cause. When there is no regret ... liberation possesses its necessary cause.

10.2 Will

Meditators, when one is virtuous, one does not need to will “Let me be free from regret.” It is natural that one who is virtuous becomes free from regret.

When one is free from regret, one does not need to will “Let me be happy (*pāmuja*).” It is natural that one who is free from regret becomes happy.

When one is happy, one does not need to will “Let me be joyful (*pīti*).” It is natural that one who is happy becomes joyful.

When one is joyful, one does not need to will “Let me be tranquil (*passaddhi*).” It is natural that one who is joyful becomes tranquil.

When one is tranquil, one does not need to will “Let me feel mental pleasure (*sukha*).” It is natural that one who is tranquil experiences mental pleasure.

When one experiences mental pleasure, one does not need to will “Let me enter *jhāna*.” It is natural that one who experiences mental pleasure enters *jhāna*.

When one has experienced *jhāna*, one does not need to will “Let me see things as they really are.” It is natural that one who has experienced *jhāna* will see things as they truly are.

FROM THE AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA

When one sees things as they really are, one does not need to will “Let me experience *nibbidā* and fading away.” It is natural that one who sees things as they really are experiences *nibbidā* and fading away.

When one experiences *nibbidā* and fading away, one does not need to will “Let me realise liberation.” It is natural that one who experiences *nibbidā* and fading away realises liberation.

ABBREVIATIONS

DN	Dīgha Nikāya, The Long Discourses (the number refers to the sutta)
MN	Majjhima Nikāya, The Middle Length Discourses (the number refers to the sutta)
SN	Samyutta Nikāya, The Connected Discourses, (the first number refers to the division into groups or samyuttas, the second number to the sutta).
AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya, The Numerical Discourses (the first number refers to the main division into parts or nipātas, the second number to the sutta)
Dhp	Dhammapada (by verse)
Ud	Udāna, The Inspired Utterances (by chapter and sutta)
Sn	Suttanipāta, Early Buddhist Poems, (by verse)
Vism	Visuddhimagga, The Path of Purification, (by chapter and section)

GLOSSARY

ĀLAYA: The core meaning of *ālaya* is the place where something settles or takes root, as in the Himālaya—the abode of *hima* (snow). In the context of the Buddha’s statement: “But this generation enjoys, attaches to and rejoices in ālaya (ālaya-rāma, ālaya-rata, ālaya-sammudita),” what are they really attaching to? What takes root? I understand that it is the delusion of a self, a permanent essence, which takes root. Hence, I have chosen to render this phrase as “But this generation is attached to the idea of a self, delights in what results from a self, and rejoices in their sense of self.”

ATTĀ: The main qualities of the term *attā* are that it is eternal and that it is the indestructible core of a being. Hence, I chose the rendering “permanent essence”.

HAT’ ŪPANISA: *Hata* means “killed” or “destroyed”. *Ūpanisā* refers to the “cause”. Together, they mean that the “cause for the arising of the next in the chain has been destroyed.” In these conditional sequences given in the Aṅguttara extracts, it is referring to *idappaccayatā*, the process of causality—the part that says “When this (A) is not, then that (B) is not.” In Western logic, this describes what is called a “necessary cause”. “A” is a necessary cause for “B” to occur. So, with the absence of “A,” the cause for the arising of “B” has been destroyed. For this reason, I described these links with the rendering “necessary cause”.

JĀTI: Buddhists accept the truth of rebirth. This is not our first birth. So, I have rendered *jāti* as “rebirth”.

JHĀNA: There is no adequate word in English to capture the meaning of *jhāna*. This is because there are few people who experience the real states of *jhāna* enough to understand it. Moreover, the word is becoming so well-known in Buddhist circles that there seems to be no point in rendering it.

KĀMA-TANHĀ and VIVICC’EVA-KĀMEHI: It seems that when the term *kāma* is used in the plural case, it refers to the world of the five senses (*kāma-loka*). It is misleading, as I understand it, to confuse this term with *kāma-sukha*, meaning five-sense pleasure. Therefore, I have rendered the two terms above as: “wanting related to the five senses” and “totally free from the five senses”.

KHANDHA: “Aggregates” might be an accurate term, but the five *khandhas* are not any old aggregates. They represent what ordinary folk take to be who they are. This is why I chose the rendering “components of existence”.

NIBBIDĀ: Some are surprised to read such a negative rendering of “revulsion” for *nibbidā*. However, AN 9.15, “The Boil,” compares the human body to a boil that is many years old with foul, disgusting ooze coming from each of nine orifices! It would be expected to regard this “boil” with *nibbidā*.

The common rendering for *nibbidā*, “disenchantment”, does not fit. Would you be merely “disenchanted” with an inflammation dripping foul-smelling pus, or feel revulsion? When you see things as they really are (*yathā-bhūta-dassanā*), it is as if you suddenly wake up to the fact that you are in a very unpleasant prison. You experience negativity to your situation, not mere disenchantment. You feel “revulsion”.

PARIMUKKHAM: An adverb usually translated as having established mindfulness “in front of you.” However, this begs the question: Where is the correct location of “you”? Moreover, it misses the point that *parimukkhāṃ* means “putting in front” in the sense of giving something priority. Thus, I have rendered this term as “give priority” (to establishing mindfulness).

SABBA-KĀYA-PATISAMVEDĪ: As the third instruction in the first tetrad of ānāpānassati, this is sometimes translated as “being mindful of the whole body” (meaning the physical body). Not only is this unnatural—as if one has to overwhelm the awareness of the breath with every other bodily sensation—but it is misleading. As the mindfulness becomes more refined, it is able to observe the whole in-breath from beginning to end without missing anything, and so with the out-breath as well as the pause between the in-to-out-breath, and the out-to-in-breath. One watches the complete sequence of sensations that make up the whole breath cycle. The term *kāya* sometimes means a physical body, but also means a collection of things. In this case, it means the collection of *kāya-saṅkhāra* that constitute the breath.

SABBA-SANĀKHĀRA-SAMATHA: The rendering “the end of all formations” fails to resonate. Moreover, the important term *samatha* refers to settling, calming or stilling. Also, *saṅkhāra* is more meaningfully rendered as “will”. Thus I chose the more powerful and accurate rendering “the stilling of all will”. Now, a generation that is attached to a self will find the idea of the stilling of all will hard to understand!

SAMĀDHI: The well-worn translation “concentration” does not match the experience of *samādhi* in Buddhist meditation. Moreover, the word “concentration” implies coercion. It is something one does. It is worth noting that Siddhattha Gotama had his first experience of *sammā samādhi* as a young seven-year-old boy while idling under the shade of a tree. Young children are not adept at concentration! “Stillness”, on the other hand, arises from letting go, a non-doing.

SAMBODHI: The usual translation is “enlightenment”. However, since *sambodhi* is not a theoretical knowledge, nor secular, but more of an experiential illumination that goes beyond cerebral theories, I have chosen the rendering “awakening”.

SANĶAPPA: The usage of *saṅkappa* in other places may mean forward-planning. However, its definition in the context of the noble eightfold path clearly points to where the plans were coming from—in other words, the “motivation”. In the Vinaya, as well as in modern legal systems, a distinction is made between motive (where the act was coming from) and the intention (where the act was going to, the goal). The definition of *sammā saṅkappa* clearly relates to the motive—coming from renunciation (letting go), kindness and gentleness.

This makes the noble eightfold path more meaningful. Right view is the cause for the motivations of letting go, kindness and gentleness. From such pure motivations, the actions of body and speech begin to fit with right speech, action and livelihood.

SAMSĀRA: This term is well enough known by those who would read a book such as this, that I leave it untranslated.

TANHĀ: The common translation of “craving” seems to limit the scope of *taṅhā* to the more intense forms of wanting. Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary definition of craving is “a powerful desire for something.” I understand that even weak forms of wanting may also lead to rebirth, as in the Simile of the Quail (MN 66), so I have chosen the more inclusive rendering “wanting”.

VĀYĀMA: *Sammā vāyāma* is defined by its results: defiled states such as the five hindrances go and stay away, and pure states arise and remain. When this is compared to the factors in the gradual training, which is a parallel description of the noble eightfold path, *sammā vāyāma* can only correspond with “sense restraint”, *indriya samvara*. Moreover, by rendering *vāyāma* as restraint of the five hindrances, I have highlighted the transition from *sammā vāyāma* to *sammā sati*, where each of the four *satipaṭṭhāna* are to be practised “having first restrained the five hindrances.” For these reasons, I have chosen to translate *vāyāma* as “restraint”.

VEDANĀ: I resisted the usual translation of *vedanā* as “feeling” because the word is restricted in common usage to emotional sensitivity and tactile impressions. One does not “feel” a sight! Indeed, when I examine its usage in the context of the khandhas, the common term “experience” appears the best rendering. There are three types of *vedanā*, just as there are three types of experience: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral.

VINEYYA LOKE ABHIJJHĀ DOMANASSAM: This prerequisite for the practice of any of the four focuses of mindfulness is usually translated as: “Having abandoned covetousness and grief for the world.” In fact, in the suttas, *loke abhijjhā* is a common synonym for *kāmacchanda*, being the first of the five hindrances. The term *domanassa* occurs once in the suttas (AN 3.33) as a synonym for the second of the five hindrances, aversion (*vyāpāda*). Moreover, the commentaries to both the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN 22) and the *Satiṭṭhāna Sutta* (MN 10) confirm that *loke abhijjhā domanassa* means “the five hindrances”.

VIÑÑĀNA: To translate *viññāna* as “consciousness” misses the important point that there are six different types of consciousnesses. Consequently, rendering *viññāna* as “consciousnesses” is true to its defined usage in the context of the khandhas and also draws out the essential point of Dhamma that there is nothing continuous throughout the process of six different consciousnesses arising and passing away. It is like a row of six different types of beads with no string passing through each bead.

VIRĀGA: Sometimes translated as “dispassion”, but my preferred rendering of this term is “fading away”, which draws attention to the five components of existence in the process of disappearing—because of no more fuel (*upādāna*)—on the unstoppable way to complete cessation.

GLOSSARY

VITAKKA-VICĀRA: In some contexts, *vitakka-vicāra* is best rendered as “thinking and pondering”. However, in the context of the first jhāna, thinking is way too coarse to describe the single-summit (*ekaggatā*) experience of inner silence. In the refined inner tranquillity of the first jhāna, *vitakka-vicāra* describes the sub-verbal residual movements of a stilled mind that would previously have generated a thought. Now, in the first jhāna, it can be compared to a “wobble” in the stillness. This is why I have chosen the rendering “movement of the mind onto the object (of *pīti-sukha*) and holding on to it.”



AJAHN BRAHM

Ajahn Brahm, born into a working-class family in London in 1951, graduated with first-class honors in theoretical physics from Cambridge University. He is the abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery in Serpentine, Western Australia, and serves as the spiritual advisor to Bodhinyana International Foundation in Hong Kong, among other leadership roles worldwide.

A fully ordained Theravāda Buddhist monk for over 50 years, Ajahn Brahm is a highly sought-after speaker. He has delivered keynote speeches and talks at the United Nations, Google, Meta, Oxford University, and other major multinational corporations and nonprofit organisations.

Ajahn Brahm is also the author of several international bestsellers translated into multiple languages, including *Opening the Door of Your Heart*; *Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond*; *The Art of Disappearing*; *Good? Bad? Who Knows?*; *Kindfulness*; *Bear Awareness*; and *Karuṇā-Virus*.

