

The Buddha's Rx

ATTACKING SUFFERING AT ITS CAUSE

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The Buddha compared himself to a doctor, treating the mental sufferings and stresses—the *dukkha*—of living beings. Buddhist traditions over the centuries have expanded on this simile, noting that the Buddha's teachings are like medicine. In particular, many have noted that his most central teaching—the four noble truths—is like a doctor's approach to curing an illness.

- The first noble truth, the truth of suffering, identifies the symptoms of the illness. The basic definition of the truth lists many things associated with suffering—such as birth, aging, and death—and then points out the common symptom in all forms of suffering that weigh on the mind: clinging to any of five activities called *khandhas*, or aggregates of physical form, feelings, perceptions, thought fabrications, and sensory consciousness.

- The second noble truth, the truth of the origination of suffering, pinpoints the cause of the illness: any of three types of craving that lead to becoming—craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for non-becoming.

- The third noble truth, the truth of the cessation of suffering, states that the illness can be brought to an end by doing away with the cause. To be specific, the three types of craving come to an end when you develop dispassion for them and abandon them. That's how the symptoms of suffering can cease.

- The fourth noble truth, the truth of the path of practice leading to the end of suffering, prescribes the course of treatment that cures the illness. This treatment is the noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The Buddha's explanation of the cessation of suffering in the third noble truth, noting that suffering has to be ended by attacking its cause, is where his approach most closely parallels that of a good doctor who treats an illness by treating the underlying cause rather than just the symptoms. In fact, this point is key to understanding the guidance offered by the four noble truths. It highlights where the work has to be done if it's going to be effective.

Yet there's no single place in the Pali Canon—the earliest extant record of his teachings—where the Buddha lays out a full depiction of exactly how the fourth truth—the noble eightfold path—targets the second, the three types of craving. Still, there are fragments of an explanation scattered throughout the discourses of the Canon. By pulling those fragments together, we can gain a coherent picture

of how the Buddha's course of treatment works, and why it's well suited to attack the disease of suffering right at its root.

TO FOCUS ON THE CAUSE

The first step in understanding how and why the path works is to look at the cause of suffering in detail. Beginning with the broadest terms, the Buddha states that suffering comes from within the mind itself, and in particular is caused by desire (SN 42:11). He admits that there are many phenomena existing outside that can cause pain through the six senses—the five physical senses, plus the intellect as the sixth—but he observes that these things cause mental suffering only if they affect things for which the mind feels desire.

Now, as the Buddha states elsewhere, all phenomena—events, objects, actions—known through the senses are rooted in desire (AN 10:58). This presents two challenges, the first of many that emerge as we unpack the cause of suffering. The first challenge is that if we try to abandon all desire in the quest to put an end to suffering, it stands to reason that we'll also end up putting an end to the experience of all sensory phenomena.

That may sound bad, but it's not. The Buddha notes that unbinding (*nibbāna/nirvāṇa*), the freeing of the mind from all suffering, is the end of all phenomena (AN 10:58), but it's not a blanking out. Instead, he describes it as a kind of consciousness, outside of space and time, known independently of the senses (DN 11; MN 49), and as the highest happiness (Dhp 203). Still, there were many people in his time, as there are now, who have trouble imagining such a happiness, and a large part of the Buddha's challenge as a teacher was to help his listeners expand their own imaginations to encompass such a happiness as a desirable possibility and, in fact, the only genuine form of health (MN 75).

The second challenge is more strategic. If there is a path of action leading to the end of suffering, it, too, is composed of phenomena, so it, too, has to be rooted in desire. To put an end to all suffering, we will have to employ certain desires to put an end to others, but then we'll have to abandon those "path-desires" when they've done their work (SN 51:15). Meanwhile, because the path is rooted in desire, there will also have to be some suffering or stress involved in following the path, in the same way that some beneficial medical treatments involve pain. To go totally beyond stress, the ultimate act of discernment will have to sense the subtle stress of the path factors and foster dispassion for them (AN 9:36). The cure is complete when there is no more stress, either from the original disease or from its treatment.

As a first step in this strategy, the Buddha divides desire into two sorts. On the one hand, there are the desires he identifies as part of the path: basically, the

desire to abandon unskillful mental qualities and to develop skillful ones in their place.

On the other hand, there are the desires he identifies as the cause—or in his terms, the “origination” (*samudaya*)—of suffering. These are the three types of craving mentioned above: craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for non-becoming.

Craving for sensuality, the Buddha says, is aimed less at sensual pleasures themselves, and more at the mind’s fascination with thinking about and planning them (AN 6:63). A large part of sensual pleasure lies in the fantasies we use to embroider it.

Craving for becoming: Becoming (*bhava*) is the act of taking on an identity in a particular world of experience. The “world,” here, can be either an interior thought-world or any of the outside worlds into which beings are born to pursue their desires. These becomings can exist on any one of three levels: the level of sensuality, the level of form, and the level of formlessness (AN 3:77). A becoming on the level of sensuality, for instance, would include the pleasures or pains of the five physical senses. A becoming on the level of form would include the experience of the form of the body as felt from within. A becoming on the formless level would include such formless dimensions as infinite space or infinite consciousness.

In the Buddha’s analysis, becomings involving outside worlds come from becomings within the mind. In every case, they begin with desire—for a certain pleasure, for example, or to take on a particular role in a world. A sense of the world then coalesces around the object of that desire. This world will include everything relevant to attaining the desire, plus anything that might get in its way. At the same time, a threefold sense of self develops around the desire as well: the self as the producer, who will or won’t be able to attain the desired object or role; the self as the consumer, who hopes to enjoy the fulfillment of the desire; and the self as commentator, who self-reflectively evaluates and comments on the actions of the other two (AN 3:40; AN 4:159).

For instance, if you want some ice cream, the relevant world would include the nearest place where ice cream can be found, plus anything that would allow you to get there and obtain the ice cream. Your sense of self as the producer in that particular becoming would include your body, as either capable or incapable of getting the ice cream. If you can make ice cream, that skill would be relevant to that particular sense of self, too. If you have to buy the ice cream, the amount of money in your pocket or your bank account would be more relevant. Your sense of self as the consumer, of course, is the “you” who hopes to enjoy the ice cream once it’s obtained, while your sense of self as commentator judges whether the other two do their job to your satisfaction.

The mind goes through many of these becomings in the course of a day, often with a different sense of the world and sense of self in each case. This is why your sense of self and of the world can change so quickly.

Craving for non-becoming is the desire to see a particular becoming come to an end. This type of craving can be motivated by any number of reasons. For example, in some cases, you might want to see a becoming end because the root desire that generated it has been thwarted (as when you fall in love with someone who calls off the relationship to marry someone else). In other cases, it's because your sense of the world or of your self in that becoming has involved some unanticipated suffering (as when you marry the person you love, but the marriage turns out to be a disaster). Or it may be because another becoming has arisen in the mind around a desire that conflicts with the first becoming (as when you're stuck in a bad marriage and fall in love with someone else). In all cases, the craving for non-becoming finds delight in its desire to escape from the becoming in which you find yourself.

When the Buddha introduces these three forms of craving, he points out that they have one feature in common: They all lead to becoming (SN 56:11). What he doesn't point out at first—but what he does indicate in other parts of the Canon—is that each presents strategic challenges if you want to abandon it.

The challenge posed by craving for sensuality lies in the fact that we ordinarily see sensual pleasure as our only alternative to pain (SN 36:6). This means that any effort to abandon sensuality will require a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, we have to learn how to see the drawbacks of sensuality; on the other, we need to provide the mind with an alternative, non-sensual pleasure with which to nourish itself. Otherwise, as the Buddha notes, even when you see the drawbacks of sensuality, if you don't have access to a higher form of pleasure, the mind will go back to its original craving for sensuality—or to one that's even worse (MN 14).

At the same time, because craving for sensuality leads to becoming, it actually entails craving for becoming. This means that you can't abandon it without attacking craving for becoming at the same time.

The challenge posed by craving for becoming lies in the fact that we use our various senses of self and of the world as tools for finding happiness, so we have difficulty imagining how we could achieve anything desirable without them. To pursue a path of practice that will end this type of becoming, you have to see that you'll benefit from taking it on. This point may seem paradoxical—after all, when there's no more becoming, there will be no sense of “you”—but strategically it's necessary. People accustomed to thinking in the terms that constitute becoming have to be given reasons that make sense within those terms

before they'll adopt any path of practice. As long as you're still attached to your sense of self, you want to know that you'll benefit from following the path.

However, the fact that craving for non-becoming also leads to becoming (MN 49) presents a further strategic challenge, one that's particularly tricky. Even though the Buddha encourages you to end craving for becoming, you can't simply replace it with craving for non-becoming. If you do, you'll cling to the desire to end becoming, and that act of clinging will lead to more becoming.

The way out of this dilemma is to look at the processes leading up to becoming as events in and of themselves, and to develop dispassion for them before any sense of "self" or "world" develops around them. The Buddha calls this approach "seeing what has come to be (*bhūta*) as what has come to be" (Iti 49). In SN 12:31, he corroborates Ven. Sāriputta's explanation of what this means: You see what has come to be as having come from a cause. If you develop dispassion for the cause, the cause will cease, and whatever has come into being based on that cause will cease as well.

In practice, this means that you can't focus directly on becoming, and you can't even think in terms of "self" or "world." Instead, you have to focus on the process of events that would lead up to those concepts, simply as events in a causal chain, with no thought of where they're happening or who they're happening to. They're just events as events. As these causes for new becomings disband through dispassion, no new becomings can form. At the same time, any becomings already existing will be allowed to cease. This is the only way in which becoming can be totally brought to an end.

So any path that will lead to the end of becoming has to focus on discerning chains of events in the mind before those events can coalesce into becomings, and, at the same time inducing dispassion for them.

The question is, how do the factors of the noble eightfold path address the challenges presented by these three forms of craving?

DEALING WITH SENSUALITY

They tackle craving for sensuality first, explaining the drawbacks of sensuality and providing an alternative pleasure to pry the mind away from its obsession with sensual pleasure.

Right view is the primary factor focusing on the drawbacks. It's important to note that right view operates on three progressive levels—mundane, transcendent, and beyond transcendent—and that *mundane right view* plays the leading role in bringing to light the drawbacks of sensuality.

It does this by focusing on the role of kamma—intentional action—in determining how beings fare in the various worlds existing in the universe. Actions based on unskillful intentions lead to suffering and unfortunate rebirths

in unpleasant worlds; actions based on skillful intentions, to happiness and fortunate rebirths in pleasant worlds. The Pali discourses explain how, in the context of kamma, craving for sensuality often leads to unskillful mental states, and so to unskillful behavior (MN 13; MN 54). These unskillful states include not only greed and lust, but also ill will and cruelty when your desires are thwarted. The behavior engendered by these states leads to suffering either in this lifetime, in lives to come, or in both. For example, craving for sensuality leads to quarrels and wars, which are painful both in and of themselves and in their long-term consequences.

Even when sensual desires lead to skillful behavior—as when you practice generosity or observe the precepts in order to enjoy the results of those actions in the sensual heavens—those heavenly sensual pleasures will end before you’ve had your fill of them. In the vast majority of cases, when they end, you will have exhausted your good kamma and will fall to the pains of the lower realms (SN 56:113).

This is why the Canon prescribes so many contemplations focused on the drawbacks of sensual objects—the human body in particular (MN 10; AN 10:60). These contemplations help you see that the pleasures offered by these objects are miniscule when compared to the harm that comes from allowing yourself to develop craving for them.

The path factor providing the second prong of the attack on craving for sensuality—a non-sensual, alternative pleasure to sensuality—is *right concentration*. This factor consists of four levels of absorption (*jhāna*) that can be accessed when the mind puts aside sensual thoughts and other unskillful mental qualities, and centers on an object it finds pleasurable (SN 45:8). The object for concentration most often mentioned in the discourses is the breath. When centered on the breath, the mind trains itself to be aware of the entire form of the body as felt from within, and directs the breath in a way that allows a sense of pleasure and rapture to suffuse the body to the point of saturation. That’s the first *jhāna*. The remaining *jhānas* grow more refined until, with the fourth, the breath becomes very still, the mind equanimous, mindful, and alert, and a bright awareness fills the body as a whole (MN 118; MN 119).

For the mind to enter these states of absorption in a solid and reliable way requires several preliminary steps. This is where the remaining factors of the path come in.

To begin with, right concentration requires a foundation of mental well-being and calm that comes from knowing that you haven’t behaved in unskillful ways that would be reason for regret or shame. So, based on the understanding provided by right view, *right resolve* focuses on making a firm resolution not to give rise to unskillful mental states such as sensuality, ill will, or harmfulness.

The path factors related to virtue—*right speech*, *right action*, and *right livelihood*—build on that resolution by exercising restraint over your actions so that:

- you don't intentionally speak in unskillful ways—lying, speaking divisively, speaking harshly, or engaging in idle chatter;
- you don't intentionally act in unskillful ways—killing, stealing, or engaging in illicit sex; and
- you don't intentionally engage in forms of livelihood that would harm yourself or others.

The blamelessness that comes from following these path factors induces a sense of joy conducive to concentration. As you follow these factors skillfully, you also develop some of the mental skills required for making concentration right. To begin with, in highlighting the issue of intention, these factors turn your attention inside, so that you become more observant of the mind. At the same time, they require that you be mindful, in the Buddha's original sense of the word, which is to keep something in mind. Here you keep in mind the principles of virtue. At the same time, you have to be alert to what you're doing, to make sure that your actions stay within the bounds of those principles. These two qualities, mindfulness and alertness, are basic to the practice of right concentration.

Building on the joy developed by the path factors related to virtue, the next factor—*right effort*—brings the mind into concentration by turning your attention fully inside. Its purpose is to take the general principles of right resolve—to avoid unskillful mental states—and to apply them to individual events arising and passing away in the mind. An important part of right effort is to generate desire to do this, so that you aren't simply forcing the mind into a mold, but are actively getting it to see the value of taking on this training. This induces a sense of rapture and joy conducive to concentration.

The practice of right concentration proper begins with the establishings of *right mindfulness*, which the discourses call the "themes of concentration" (MN 44). The formula for right mindfulness states that you "remain focused on the body in and of itself—ardent, alert, and mindful—putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world." The formula is then repeated for three other frames of reference: feelings in and of themselves, mind states in and of themselves, and mental qualities in and of themselves.

The focus in every case is on events as they are directly experienced, devoid of any reference to the world outside. This is a first step in getting the mind to observe events "as they have come to be," before they are viewed in reference to any level of becoming involving the outside world. However, the instructions for right mindfulness still make reference to "I" and "me": "I will train myself to breath in sensitive to the whole body"; "Mindfulness as a factor of awakening

has arisen within me” (MN 10). This shows that the instructions still assume a subtle level of becoming in the world inside the body and mind.

When mindfulness is firmly established, it gets the mind into the first jhāna (MN 125), and so connects directly with *right concentration*. Although the standard description of the path lists, under the heading of right concentration, only the four jhānas—which are on the level of form—other descriptions of right concentration include four additional formless states that are based on the equanimity of the fourth jhāna (MN 140; MN 52).

The Buddha’s strategy here is obvious: He’s redirecting your desires, getting you to practice craving-substitution by cultivating cravings for becoming on the levels of form and formlessness as alternatives to craving for becoming on the level of sensuality. The subtle but pervasive pleasures to be found in these states of concentration make it easier for the mind to lose interest in sensual pleasures and fantasies.

However, they’re not enough to bring craving for sensuality to a halt. If your practice were to stop here, then after death you might be headed, at best, to one of the heavens on the level of form or formlessness, only to fall from that heaven when your concentration began to unravel. The Canon contains stories of devas on these levels returning to the sensual levels out of sheer wantonness (DN 1). That’s because of the willful nature of craving for pleasure. As the Buddha notes, craving can focus “now here, now there” (SN 56:11), depending on whatever happens to strike your fancy.

It’s also because craving for sensuality includes within it the terms of becoming: a sense of “you” obtaining or experiencing a pleasure in a particular world of experience. If you don’t develop at least some dispassion toward the terms of becoming, you won’t be able to get past sensuality.

This point is illustrated in a famous scene in the Canon where a libertine tries to seduce a nun (Thig 14). He makes only veiled allusions to the pleasures of sex, and instead dwells on the type of person she will become, and the world in which she will live, if she agrees to his proposition.

“Like a doll made of gold, you will go about,
like a goddess in the gardens of heaven...
Dwelling in the calm of a palace,
have women wait on you...
I will make you many & varied ornaments
of gold, jewels, & pearls.
Climb onto a costly bed,
scented with sandalwood carvings,
with a well-washed coverlet, beautiful,
spread with a woolen quilt, brand new.”

She doesn't fall for his words, but the fact that the terms of becoming are integral to his sensual fantasy—and the fact that this is a common feature of all such fantasies—underscores an important point: sensuality is firmly embedded in becoming.

So the only way to completely end *any* of the three forms of craving is to focus on the limitations of becoming itself, regardless of its level. For that, the Buddha prescribes the stronger medicine of transcendent right view.

DEALING WITH BECOMING & NON-BECOMING

Transcendent right view looks at experience in terms of the four noble truths and the duties appropriate to each truth: Suffering is to be comprehended, its origination abandoned, its cessation realized, and the path leading to its cessation developed. This level of right view functions in two ways.

- First, it points out the drawbacks of all types of becoming, in that they are based on clinging, and clinging is identical with suffering (SN 56:11). In doing so, it contrasts these drawbacks with the happiness to be found when clinging is abandoned.

- Second, in inducing dispassion for becoming, right view has to avoid the danger of giving rise to craving for non-becoming and the states of becoming that would follow inevitably on that type of craving.

The four noble truths—and their expanded explanation, dependent co-arising—accomplish both tasks by focusing on the causal chain of events leading up to becoming (SN 12:2). Unlike mundane right view, which speaks in terms appropriate to becoming—of beings acting in ways that lead to their taking on identities in pleasant or unpleasant worlds—the four noble truths dispense with those terms entirely. Instead, they speak simply of actions and their results. These are terms appropriate for seeing the events leading up to becoming simply as events as they have come to be, in a causally-originated series, before notions of “self,” “beings,” or “world” get applied to them.

To comprehend, in line with the duty of the first noble truth, the events in these series that entail suffering; and to abandon, in line with the duty of the second noble truth, any craving for the events leading up to them, you have to develop dispassion for all of them. The Buddha lays out a five-step program for doing this (SN 22:5; SN 22:26; SN 35:13–14). (1) See their origination. (2) Observe their passing away. These two steps allow you to discern their fabricated nature as steps in a process. (3) Look for their allure—why the mind is attracted to them. (4) Look for the drawbacks of clinging to them. When you see that the drawbacks far outweigh the allure, (5) dispassion arises, providing the escape from them.

The crucial step in this approach is the fourth. The Buddha prescribes many perceptions to apply to these fabricated events to help you see that they're not

worth the effort of fabricating states of becoming around them. These perceptions fall into three main groups:

- focusing on the inconstancy of fabrications,
- focusing on the stress of whatever is inconstant, and
- focusing on the fact that if something is inconstant and stressful, it's not-self.

In other words, any state of becoming that you construct out of such raw materials won't lie under your control and so inevitably will lead to disappointment. The effort required to construct a sense of self around such things is simply not worth it.

Just as the terms of analysis get changed as you move from mundane to transcendent right view, so do the terms in two other path factors.

Right resolve becomes focused directly on the fabrications that get the mind into right concentration: your internal conversation composed of acts of directed thought and evaluation (MN 117).

Right mindfulness moves to a level called "the development of the establishing of mindfulness" (SN 47:40), in which you're mindful to focus on the phenomenon of origination and passing away with regard to any of the four frames of reference, without trying to place them in a context defining where those events are happening or who is doing the analysis. In other words, you focus on events simply as events in a process, as they are caused and pass away, without trying to frame them in the terms of a becoming.

Putting these two path factors together with transcendent right view means that the analysis of things "as they have come to be" is now focused on observing the practice of concentration itself. This is the best place to focus on craving for becoming because, of the various types of becoming, concentration is the most transparent, in that it allows you to clearly see the steps that go into its formation. It's the ideal state of mind for applying the Buddha's five-step program to the aggregates (SN 22:5).

First you use that program to develop dispassion for any distractions that would pull you out of concentration. Then you apply the same program to states of concentration themselves, to see that even these refined becomings on the form and formless levels are made out of fabricated events (AN 9:36; MN 52). This means that they can never provide a happiness that's totally stable and secure. When this insight hits home, the mind realizes that it can't find security in the concentration it's experiencing, but neither can it fabricate an alternative that would provide that security, either. As a result, it develops dispassion for all fabrications and all types of craving, and inclines to the deathlessness of what is unfabricated: the third noble truth.

At that point, if the mind drops all clinging, it gains total awakening. If, however, it develops a sense of passion around the discernment that brought about the experience of the deathless, it attains the penultimate level of awakening, called non-return. It drops once and for all any interest in craving for sensuality, but still clings to a subtle craving for becoming or non-becoming.

This is where you have to use the third level of right view, *beyond the transcendent*, in which right view turns the terms of analysis on right view itself, enabling the mind to go beyond any attachment to views.

In other words, you don't go beyond views by deciding to be agnostic. After all, that, too, would count as a view (DN 1; SN 22:81). And you don't go beyond views by being fluid in your views, for that would simply lead to inconsistent behavior and serial clinging. Instead, you go beyond views, including right view, by seeing them in terms of how they are formed as processes. This enables you to see how they're constructed from events "as they have come to be," and realize that—no matter how right or true they may be—anything constructed in this way is worthy of dispassion (AN 10:93). Because right view is the only view that allows for itself to be viewed in this way, it's the only view that can accomplish the work of putting an end to all craving: the desires listed in the second noble truth, along with those listed under the path itself.

THINGS AS THEY HAVE COME TO BE

The knowledge that forms the last step to awakening is, in some discourses, termed *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* (SN 56:11). Because *bhūta* can mean "truth" in addition to "what has come to be," this compound is often translated as "knowledge and vision of things as they truly are." However, when we see the way the term *bhūta* is used in describing the strategy that reaches awakening by avoiding the twin pitfalls of craving for becoming and craving for non-becoming, a more accurate translation would seem to be "knowledge and vision of things as they have come to be." This translation has the advantage of being strategically more precise, emphasizing that the knowledge in question is not simply a matter of viewing reality as a whole in a particular way, but more a way of focusing on mental processes in and of themselves, as they are happening, so as to induce dispassion for them and, through dispassion, to gain release from them.

The liberation that results is total. When every possible object of desire has been abandoned through dispassion, all phenomena—all activities around the six senses—disband. Some passages describe unbinding as the ending of phenomena (AN 10:58); others, as the point where they are done away with (Sn 5:6). All that remains is a consciousness without surface (DN 11; MN 49)—although because it's outside of space and time, the word "remains" doesn't do it full justice. This experience of the unfabricated, the highest happiness, leaves

nothing to be desired. This is how craving is ended: not because it has been suppressed, but because there's no longer any need for it.

After the experience of awakening, arahants return to the six senses, but experience them disjoined from them (MN 140)—not in an alienated way, but simply with no need to feed on them. Arahants can still act, and can still desire that their actions lead to good results for beings of the world, but they no longer cling to their desires, so they no longer experience mental suffering. When life ends, their freedom has no constraints at all. This, in the Buddha's words, is the attainment of true health (MN 75).

DHAMMA MEDICINE

This is how the Buddha's prescription of the noble eightfold path deals effectively with the strategic challenges presented by the cravings that cause mental suffering:

- Right view does the work of pinpointing the crucial symptom of suffering, identifying the underlying cause of the symptom, and then figuring out the strategies needed to develop the dispassion that puts an end to the cause. Without right view, you wouldn't know where to attack the problem of suffering, you wouldn't know the strategic challenges presented by craving and the processes of becoming, and you wouldn't know how to overcome them.
- Right effort generates the desire needed to follow through with the course of treatment indicated by right view.
- Right mindfulness and right concentration together provide the solid state of mind where the treatment can be accomplished. Without the pleasure of right concentration, you wouldn't be able to pull yourself away from sensual cravings long enough to follow the complete course of treatment. Without the stillness and alertness of right concentration, you wouldn't be able to see the factors that ordinarily lead to becoming "as they have come to be."
- The four other path factors—right resolve, right speech, right action, and right livelihood—play supporting roles in allowing for right mindfulness and right concentration to be established in a reliable way.

The Buddha's teachings are like a chest full of medicines. When we gain an overall view of how the noble eightfold path works, we can see how it's uniquely suited as a course of treatment for using those medicines to attack suffering at its underlying cause. This gives us confidence that the path is well suited to curing the basic problem in our hearts and minds. At the same time, we learn which medicines to take, and in what order, so that we can more quickly enjoy the absolute inner health for which the Buddha prescribed them.