



A MEDITATOR'S TOOLS

A Meditator's Tools

A Study Guide

Compiled by

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Introduction

Meditation is not simply a matter of bare attention. It is more a matter of *appropriate* attention, seeing experience in terms of the four noble truths and responding in line with the tasks appropriate to those truths: stress is to be comprehended, its cause abandoned, its cessation realized, and the path to its cessation developed. These tasks involve processes of thought, analysis, and memory—which means that these processes, instead of being enemies of meditation, are actually the means by which awakening is attained.

The ten recollections are a set of meditation themes that highlight the positive role that memory and thought play in training the mind. They employ memory to sensitize the mind to the need for training, to induce feelings of confidence and well-being conducive for concentration, to keep the topics of concentration in mind, to produce tranquility and insight, and to incline the mind toward the deathless when tranquility and insight have grown sufficiently strong.

Strictly speaking, only seven of the ten are actually “recollections” (*anussati*): recollection of the Buddha, recollection of the Dhamma, recollection of the Saṅgha, recollection of virtue, recollection of generosity, recollection of the devas, and recollection of stilling. The other three are called mindfulness (*sati*) practices: mindfulness of in-and-out breathing, mindfulness of death, and mindfulness immersed in the body. However, the Pāli words for mindfulness and recollection—*sati* and *anussati*—are intimately related. In the Pāli Canon, *sati* does not simply mean awareness. It means the ability to keep something in mind; it is a function of the active memory. This point is clear in the Buddha’s definition of the faculty of mindfulness (§11), and it crops up again and again in the descriptions of these three mindfulness practices: mindfulness involves keeping particular themes or intentions in mind so as to induce mental states necessary for concentration, clear insight, and release. Thus all ten of these practices—the recollections and mindfulness practices—employ memory as an essential factor. For

convenience's sake, it seems best to stick to the traditional label of "recollection" for all ten.

Unlike other sets of meditation practices, such as the four establishings of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) or the four sublime abidings (*brahmavihāra*), the ten recollections do not have a single canonical discourse devoted to the entire set. Thus the way they interact and support one another has to be pieced together from many different discourses scattered throughout the Canon. The only place where they are listed as a set is in a series of ten short discourses in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (§1-10). These discourses suggest that all ten recollections function in the same way, for all are described in the same terms: "This is one thing that—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding." From this formulaic statement, it might be concluded that all ten are equivalent and interchangeable, and that the choice of one theme over the others is simply a matter of personal preference. However, other passages in the Canon indicate that this is not so. Each recollection plays a specific role in the practice, and all are needed to provide a complete and effective training for the mind. In this way, they are like the contents of a meditator's toolbox: a range of approaches that every meditator should master so as to respond skillfully to whatever issue arises in the practice.

Broadly speaking, the roles of these practices are these:

- 1) Mindfulness of death is meant to evoke a sense of *saṃvega*—a sense of dismay over the dangers and futility of human life as it is normally lived, with its ordinary defilements, and a sense of urgency in trying to find a way beyond those limitations. This sense of urgency further induces the quality of heedfulness in approaching the practice, which the Buddha said is basic to all skillful endeavors.

- 2) The first six recollections—of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, virtue, generosity, and the devas—are meant to induce a sense of joy and confidence (*pasāda*) in the practice. The first two induce a sense of confidence in the practice itself; the last three, a sense of confidence in one's own worthiness to follow the practice;

while the third theme—recollection of the Saṅgha—can induce both. The texts say that the joy and confidence induced by these practices can bring the mind to concentration and cleanse it of defilement, although they do not describe in any detail as to how far this cleansing goes or how it occurs. Passage §16, however, suggests that these themes can perform this function as adjuncts to mindfulness practice.

3) Mindfulness of in-and-out breathing and mindfulness immersed in the body are the primary themes for developing tranquility and insight so as to lead to strong concentration in terms of the four jhānas, or absorptions; and they develop jhāna in such a way that it gives added power to tranquility and insight in leading the mind to release (§36).

Of all the meditation themes taught in the Canon, mindfulness of in-and-out breathing is treated in the most detail, and so it seems to have pride of place among the ten recollections. The Buddha himself, prior to his awakening, apparently practiced this theme more than any other (§32). After his awakening, he frequently continued to practice it as well (§40). However, mindfulness of in-and-out breathing and mindfulness immersed in the body play complementary roles on the path. To begin with, there is some overlap in the two, in that the first four steps of breath meditation are also listed as techniques in mindfulness immersed in the body. In addition, mindfulness immersed in the body—especially in its aspect as contemplation of the unattractiveness of the body—can handle strong defilements that in some cases do not respond to the tranquil concentration induced by mindfulness of in-and-out breathing (§53). At the same time, mindfulness immersed in the body can sometimes induce strong feelings of disgust and revulsion that cause the mind to respond in unskillful ways. When this happens, mindfulness of in-and-out breathing can help dispel those feelings and replace them with a feeling of refreshment that helps the mind stay skillfully on the path (§33). In this way, these two mindfulness practices work together to keep the mind balanced and on course.

4) Once the mind has been brought to a developed state of tranquility and insight—able to see even the pleasures of jhāna as

inconstant, stressful, and not-self—recollection of stilling is brought to bear so that the mind does not simply stay focused on the drawbacks of fabricated experiences. It does this by inclining the mind to the exquisite peace of the deathless, experienced through dispassion, cessation, and Unbinding (§57).

When viewed in this way—starting with mindfulness of death and ending with a recollection aimed at Unbinding—the ten recollections illustrate the principle stated in §42-43, that mindfulness of death has, as its final end, not death but the deathless.

The seven sections of this study guide are designed to flesh out this general outline. The material in each section is drawn from the Pāli Canon and has been selected to provide more specifics as to the *how*, the *what*, and the *why* of each of these practices: how they function, what is supposed to be recollected in each of these themes, and why each recollection is useful in training the mind. In reading these sections, the following overview is useful to keep in mind:

Section One

This section contains the only section of the Canon where the ten recollections are presented as a list. It also contains the Buddha's definition of the faculty of mindfulness, to show that "mindfulness" in his vocabulary means something similar to "recollection."

Section Two

This section covers the first six recollections as a set. Passages §12-13 describe exactly what is to be recollected in these practices. §12 deals both with the qualities of mind that should be brought to these recollections—the five strengths of conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment—and the rewards of these recollections in terms of joy and increased concentration. §13 emphasizes that this increased joy and concentration can also lead to cleansing the mind of defilements; it also stresses that these recollections are a useful part of any uposatha practice: the practice by which lay people rest from their daily work on the full moon, new

moon, and quarter moon days, devoting those days to listening to the Dhamma and training the mind in meditation. Passages §14-16 indicate two other uses for this joy and concentration: cleansing the mind of fear and other unskillful thoughts while dwelling in seclusion, and relieving the mind and body of any feverish or unsettling feelings that would prevent mindfulness practice from yielding higher states of jhāna.

Section Three

This section contains passages that aid in the recollection of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, adding more detail to the standard passages for each of these recollections. Because these recollections are meant to be inspiring, it is helpful to know in more detail some of the inspiring attributes of their objects. Yet, because different people will find different aspects of these objects more or less inspiring at any particular time, this section cannot begin to cover the full range of passages that might be helpful in offering inspiration. Instead, they focus more on the basics. In the case of the Buddha, this means focusing on his awakening and the way he found it (§17). In the case of the Dhamma, this means focusing on the qualities of mind the practice of the Dhamma is meant to induce (§18) and on the manner in which the Dhamma is taught (§19-22). In the case of the Saṅgha, this means focusing on how the Buddha's noble disciples were able to overcome inner and outer obstacles in the path. This last set of passages focuses on what honorable and admirable people they became, thus inspiring confidence in them. But it also focuses on the fact that they began their practice with weaknesses similar to—or even worse than—ours, and yet they were able to overcome those weaknesses using personal qualities that we all have in potential form. This latter consideration helps to inspire confidence in our own ability to follow the path as well.

Section Four

This section covers the practice of mindfulness of in-and-out breathing. It includes passages that discuss the conditions that enable this practice to give quick results (§29), and passages that go into detail as to how rewarding those results can be (§30, §32, §33, §40). Central to this section are the repeated references to the sixteen steps that

comprise the Buddha's approach to mindfulness of in-and-out breathing:

"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication [in-&-out breathing].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication [feeling & perception].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in gladdening the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out gladdening the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [*literally, fading*].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishing.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.'"

These sixteen steps show that the Buddha did not regard this practice simply as a preliminary to other, more advanced practices. These steps cover the entire path leading to full release. As §31 shows in its presentation of these steps, mindfulness of breathing does not simply mean staying with the breath in the present; it involves training the mind to develop a range of skills with each in and out breath.

The irony of these sixteen steps is that even though they are the Buddha's most detailed meditation instructions, the Canon leaves unanswered a number of important questions concerning them. The most prominent question concerns how the sixteen steps are related to one another. Are they meant to be sequential, or can they be developed in a non-sequential way? Should the meditator try to cover all sixteen, or is it enough to focus on just one of the four tetrads making up the sixteen? And in either case, how is this done?

Different passages suggest different answers to these questions. The suttas that present the sixteen steps without further explanation seem to indicate that all sixteen steps are to be followed, and in a sequential way. Passage §30, however, equates each of the tetrads with an establishing of mindfulness, and then goes on to state that each establishing of mindfulness is sufficient to fulfill the seven factors for awakening, which in turn lead to full release. This suggests that it's enough to focus on any one of the tetrads. But in either case, the suttas don't explain how one step leads to another. Perhaps this lack of explanation was an intentional part of the Buddha's teaching style, forcing his students to make discoveries on their own. But it can be helpful to share a few thoughts on the matter based on what the suttas, taken together, seem to suggest.

Passage §32 indicates that the steps are meant, among other things, to lead to the jhānas. Thus the practice of the sixteen steps, in one way or another, should relate to the practice of jhāna. And there are at least two possible ways in which this can happen: one based on following the path of all sixteen steps, and the other based on following the path of one of the tetrads.

First, taking the path of all sixteen steps:

Steps 1 and 2 involve two of the factors of the first jhāna, directed thought and evaluation: directing one's thoughts and

attention to the breath in and of itself in the present, at the same time evaluating it as one begins to discern variations in the length of the breath. Some modern teachers maintain that the factor of evaluation here also includes taking one's observations of short and long breathing as a basis for adjusting the rhythm of the breath to make it as comfortable as possible. Because the first level of jhāna must be based on a sense of pleasure, this advice is very practical.

The remaining steps are willed or determined: one "trains oneself," first by manipulating one's sense of conscious awareness, making it sensitive to the body as a whole (step 3). Then one can begin manipulating the bodily sensations that become apparent within that full-body awareness, reducing them to a single sensation of calm by letting "bodily fabrication"—the in and out breathing—grow calm (step 4). As the breathing grows calm, it allows for easeful sensations of rapture and pleasure to grow prominent. A comparison between the stages of breath meditation and the similes for the jhānas (§49) suggests that steps 5 and 6—being sensitive to rapture and pleasure—involve making these feelings "single" as well, by letting them suffuse the entire body, just as the bathman kneads the moisture throughout his ball of bath powder. With bodily fabrications stilled, mental fabrications—feelings and perceptions—become clearly apparent as they occur (step 7), just as tuning a radio precisely to a certain frequency eliminates static and allows the message sent by the radio station broadcasting at that frequency to become clear. These mental fabrications, too, are calmed (step 8), a step symbolized in the similes for the jhānas by the still waters in the simile for the third jhāna, in contrast to the spring waters welling up in the second. What remains is simply a sense of the mind itself (step 9), corresponding to the level of fourth jhāna, in which the body is filled from head to toe with a single sense of bright, radiant awareness.

Once this stage is reached, one can now turn one's attention to consolidating one's mastery of concentration. This is done by reviewing the various levels of jhāna, focusing not so much on the breath as on the mind as it relates to the breath. This develops a sensitivity to the different ways in which the mind can be brought

to the desired state for gaining greater tranquility or insight. For instance, if it needs to be gladdened (step 10), one can gladden it with refreshing breathing or with any of the inspiring recollections (see §16). If it needs to be steadied (step 11), one can develop full-body awareness and calm any disturbances that can be detected in terms of bodily or mental fabrication. In the process of mastering these skills, one also begins to grow sensitive to the different factors from which the mind can be released (step 12) as it goes through the different levels of jhāna—for example, releasing it from sensuality by taking it to the first jhāna, releasing it from directed thought and evaluation by taking it from the first jhāna to the second, releasing it from rapture by taking it from the second level to the third, and so forth (§38-39). One comes to see that, although the breath feels different on the different levels of jhāna, the cause is not so much the breath as it is the way the mind relates to the breath, shedding the various mental activities surrounding its single preoccupation.

The mastery of concentration developed in steps 9-12 provides an excellent chance to develop discernment into the pattern of cause and effect in the process of concentrating the mind, in that one must master the causal factors before gaining the desired results in terms of gladness, steadiness, and release. This insight into cause and effect provides the basis for insight, the ability to see events in the mind simply as events, arising and passing away as part of a chain of causes and effects that also arise and pass away.

Realizing the inconstancy and unreliability of the events in this pattern (step 13) gives rise to the realization that they are also stressful and not-self: neither “me” nor “mine,” but simply instances of the first noble truth of suffering and stress. When this discernment goes straight to the heart, there occurs a sense of dispassion for any craving directed at them (step 14, which corresponds to the duty of abandoning the second noble truth) and an experience of their fading away and cessation (step 15, the third noble truth). Finally, one relinquishes attachment not only to these events (step 16), but also to the discernment that sees through to their true nature (thus abandoning the fourth noble truth that, now

that it has been fully developed, has completed its tasks). This brings the seven factors for awakening to completion in a state “dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go,” where “letting go” would appear to be equivalent to the “relinquishing” in step 16. When one is able simply to experience the act of relinquishing, without feeling that one is “doing” the relinquishing, one stands at the threshold to total release.

In this interpretation of the sixteen steps, the first two tetrads constitute the stage of familiarizing oneself with the potentials of concentration that can be attained by focusing on the breath, the third tetrad constitutes the stage of gaining insight to the patterns of cause and effect through mastering the concentration, and the fourth tetrad constitutes the stage of bringing the mind to a point of relinquishing all activity, even the activity of the path. These three stages correspond to the three stages of frames-of-reference practice described in detail in *The Wings to Awakening*.

As for the interpretation in which each of the four tetrads is regarded as sufficient for full release, this is best understood by first looking at the underlying pattern of the seven factors for awakening, which each tetrad is said to fulfill. The seven factors begin with mindfulness established on a particular frame of reference: the body in and of itself, feelings in and of themselves, the mind in and of itself, or mental qualities in and of themselves. This is followed by analysis of qualities (*dhammas*), which not only perceives the chosen frame of reference in terms of dhammas, but also how these dhammas may be skillful or unskillful (§35). Then follows persistence, which—as right effort—abandons the unskillful qualities and develops the skillful ones, leading to the factors of rapture, calm, concentration, and equanimity. Thus the general pattern consists of (1) focusing on a particular frame of reference, (2) seeing it as dhammas, and (3) dealing with those dhammas in a skillful way so as to bring about calming and peace.

This is precisely the pattern followed in each of the four tetrads. As one stays focused on the breath as one’s basic theme to the point of giving rise to jhāna, one has the choice of viewing the events of the developing concentration in terms of any one of the four establishing of mindfulness: the body (corresponding to the first tetrad), feelings

(corresponding to the second), the mind (corresponding to the third), and mental qualities (corresponding to the fourth). As long as one's practice is skillful, events will develop in line with the above pattern regardless of the chosen frame. Thus each tetrad provides a particular perspective on these events, as they relate to the corresponding establishing of mindfulness.

The first tetrad shows how the development of breath concentration registers in terms of the body. In steps 1 and 2, one becomes sensitized to the breath in terms of its length. In step 3, one becomes sensitive to the breath as a whole-body process (this corresponds to the full-body awareness described in the similes for the jhānas). In step 4, this full-body awareness enables one to see the breath as a process fabricating the experience of the body. This in turn inclines one to allow that fabrication to grow calm (step 4), creating feelings of rapture, pleasure, and ultimately, equanimity. According to §38, this can lead—in the fourth jhāna—to the absolute stilling of the in-and-out breath, as the oxygen needs of the body decrease when the mind reaches a firm stillness.

The second tetrad shows how the development of breath concentration registers in terms of feelings. In steps 5 and 6, one becomes sensitive to feelings of rapture and pleasure as they begin to manifest in the course of developing concentration: first in a gentle way, then in stronger ways. In step 7, this sensitivity allows one to see the impact that these feelings have in fabricating the mind, together with the perceptions (mental labels) that allow for one to maximize this sensitivity and its impact in the first place. This in turn inclines one to allow these feelings and perceptions to grow calm (step 8). An example of calming feeling would be abandoning rapture for equanimity. An example of calming perception would be to perceive the body as a full energy field, rather than as a solid mass, thus making it easier for the in-and-out breathing to grow still. According to §38, this step-by-step process of calming can lead through the jhānas and into the formless states, culminating in the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling.

The third tetrad charts the development of breath concentration in terms of the mind. In step 9, one simply becomes sensitive to the state of the mind's awareness as it focuses on the breath in the present moment. In response to that sensitivity, one can use the breath to induce desired states in the mind. If the mind needs gladdening (step 10), one can breathe in ways that induce rapture and pleasure. (If this can't be accomplished with the breath, [§16](#) suggests using any of the recollections that will produce the desired effect.) If the mind needs steadying (step 11), one can bring it to strong states of jhāna by developing a strong, full-body awareness, and by allowing both bodily fabrication and mental fabrication to grow calm. As concentration develops, one can release the mind (step 12) from the affliction of sensuality by bringing it into jhāna, and from the "afflictions" of the lower jhānas ([§38-39](#)) by bringing it to the higher jhānas. This process of release, if it involves only the jhānas, is temporary, but if it leads to the release of unbinding, it is total and permanent.

The fourth tetrad describes the development of breath concentration in terms of mental qualities (dhammas). To be sensitive to mental qualities, one first has to be sensitive to their arising and passing away. Thus the first step is to look for their inconstancy (step 13), to see when they arise, *how* they arise; when they pass away, *how* they pass away. As one is developing concentration based on the breath, one has to watch both for the inconstancy of the unskillful qualities that block concentration—the hindrances—and for the skillful qualities that nurture it: the factors for awakening ([§34](#)). In seeing the hindrances simply as events, one can pull away from them, weigh their allure and drawbacks, and develop dispassion for them (step 14). Because one feels dispassionate toward them, one no longer participates in fabricating them. Thus they cease (step 15). On this preliminary level, however, the cessation is temporary, and lasts only as long as concentration can be maintained.

However, the practice of dealing with the hindrances in this way strengthens the first three factors for awakening: mindfulness, analysis of qualities, and persistence. In watching these factors as events, one focuses on their inconstancy with a different agenda in

mind: instead of trying to develop dispassion for them immediately, one tries to understand the causal factors behind their arising and passing away so that the factors for awakening can be brought into being more often and maintained for longer periods of time (§34). This process, combined with the continued absence of the hindrances, allows one's concentration to grow stronger and more solid.

As one attains the higher jhānas, one is in a position to change tactics. One can now view the lower jhānas in terms of their inconstancy so as to induce dispassion for them, too (step 14). This tactic can be applied to higher and higher levels of jhāna as one's powers of concentration and insight advance. Here again, the sense of dispassion at first leads only to temporary cessation (step 15). But as this process continues, there come stages of realization in which various hindrances and fetters are totally relinquished once and for all (step 16), yielding the ultimate in calm and release.

Thus in this interpretation, each of the four tetrads of mindfulness of in-and-out breathing charts the way in which meditation progresses as seen from a particular point of view. They all touch on the same process—with the same three-step dynamic of (1) sensitizing, (2) viewing as dhammas, and then (3) calming—showing how this process appears simultaneously from different establishings of mindfulness. In the course of one's practice, one is likely to shift among all four of these establishings of mindfulness, for they are all interrelated. For example, in gladdening the mind, one focuses on the breath to calm bodily fabrication, and on feelings of rapture and pleasure as means of inducing gladness. In becoming sensitive to the entire body, one naturally notices mental qualities that interfere with whole-body awareness, and mental qualities that nurture it. However, as the practice develops, individual meditators will tend to focus on one frame more than the others. The four tetrads show how, regardless of the chosen frame, all four frames can simultaneously be brought into line with the basic pattern of the seven factors for awakening.

Regardless of which of these two interpretations one follows—and it is possible in practice to follow both—mindfulness of in-and-out breathing is obviously a method in which tranquility and insight develop

in tandem. As §37 shows, tranquility is a matter of allowing the mind to settle and become unified; insight, a matter of regarding experience in terms of fabrications. In the Buddha's practice of mindfulness of in-and-out breathing, the mind is brought to stillness and unity through watching the breath—and its attendant feelings and mind-states—in terms of fabrication, and allowing those fabrications to grow calm. Calm is thus attained through insight, insight through calm. Perhaps it was because this method progresses in such a balanced way that the Buddha used it as his preferred theme of meditation, and taught it more frequently and in more detail than any other.

Section Five

This section covers mindfulness of death. As the passages collected here show, the Buddha taught this topic not to induce a feeling of depression or hopelessness, or a sense of sentimental nostalgia for the beauties of the world. He taught it to encourage heedfulness, a sense that a great deal needs to be done in training the mind, and that not much time remains to do it. Thus mindfulness of death fosters an appreciation of what human life offers the opportunity to *do*. What is valuable about life is not the pleasures that can be experienced, but the skillful mental qualities that can be developed. Death is not the end, but a transition, and the transition will be easy or difficult depending on the qualities one has built into one's mind. Because there is no way of knowing when death will come, one should focus each day on which skillful qualities of mind most need developing, and which unskillful ones most need abandoning. Mindfulness of death is thus an excellent practice for ordering one's priorities. As §42-45 point out, today may be one's last day in this life. What remains to be done? Some ideas are offered by §46, which point out the mental traits that lead one to fear death, and §47-48, which point out the traits by which death leads to rebirth. If one focuses on lessening and eradicating these traits, one's mindfulness of death can actually lead to the deathless.

Section Six

This section covers mindfulness immersed in the body. Passage §49, in discussing how the body is a theme for both mindfulness practice

and jhāna practice, illustrates a consistent theme in the suttas: that there is no sharp divide between mindfulness and concentration practices, and that mindfulness is intended to lead to jhāna. It also contains the most complete discussion of the methods of this practice, along with its rewards. In addition to the benefits listed in this sutta, however, other passages list other benefits as well: mindfulness immersed in the body helps in overcoming lust (§51), pride based one's appearance or race (§50), and fear of death (§46). It also provides a solid basis for restraint of the senses (§52-53). Passage §33 points out that one of the practices listed under this heading—contemplation of the unattractiveness of the body—can lead to unskillful mental states that are best cleared away by turning to mindfulness of in-and-out breathing. People who resist the theme of unattractiveness tend to focus on this passage, citing it as proof that the perception of unattractiveness is a dangerous and unhealthy meditation theme. However, §54 points out that some strong defilements will respond only to this theme. And there is nothing inherently unhealthy about focusing on the unattractiveness of the body. Instead of fostering an unhealthy negative image of the body—in which other people's bodies are attractive while one's own is not—it fosters an accurate perception of aspects of the body that are often ignored, and yet which are unattractive in everybody. This sort of negative image is thus healthy, in that it helps cure the mind of its blind infatuations. Thus the two themes of breathing and unattractiveness are best practiced together, as complementary tools in one's meditative repertoire, to be mastered and honed so that they will be ready for use whenever needed.

Section Seven

As mentioned above, the recollection of stilling—the topic of the final section—guarantees that mindfulness of death does not stop at the topic of death, but leads to the deathless. It also ensures that tranquility and insight do not stay focused on fabricated experiences, but incline to the unfabricated. Passage §57 shows the ideal stage in the practice for this recollection: when one has mastered jhāna and begun to see even its refined pleasures as inconstant, stressful, and not-self, this recollection helps to turn the mind in the direction of what lies beyond

tranquility and insight: total unbinding. As this passage points out, if—after utilizing this recollection—one still regards unbinding as an object of passion, one’s awakening will not be complete. This is why the Buddha taught that all dhammas—not just fabricated ones—are to be seen as not-self, so as to overcome this passion. But when unbinding is fully experienced not as an object, but as the end of objects, insight and tranquility are no longer needed for the purpose of liberation, and can be used instead simply as pleasant means of abiding until the end of one’s life (see [§40](#)), when “all this”—the experience of the senses —“grows cold right here.” ([Iti 44](#))

The Ten Recollections

§ 1. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of the Buddha. This is one thing that—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.”

§ 2. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of the Dhamma....”

§ 3. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of the Saṅgha....”

§ 4. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of virtue....”

§ 5. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of generosity....”

§ 6. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Recollection of the devas....”

§ 7. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing?
Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing....”

§ 8. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing? *Mindfulness of death...*”

§ 9. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing? *Mindfulness immersed in the body...*”

§ 10. “One thing—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. Which one thing? *Recollection of stilling*. This is one thing that—when developed & pursued—leads solely to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.”

– AN 1:287-296

§ 11. “And what is the faculty of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is mindful, is endowed with excellent proficiency in mindfulness, remembering & able to call to mind even things that were done & said long ago. He remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness.”

– SN 48:10

The First Six Recollections

§ 12. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Now at that time Mahānāma... went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “I have heard that many monks are at work making robes for the Blessed One, (thinking,) ‘When the robes are finished, at the end of the three months, the Blessed One will set out wandering.’ For those of us living by means of various dwelling places [for the mind], by means of which dwelling place should we live?”

“Excellent, Mahānāma, excellent! It is fitting for clansmen like you to approach the Tathāgata and ask, ‘For those of us living by means of various dwelling places [for the mind], by means of which dwelling place should we live?’

“One who is aroused to practice is one of conviction, not without conviction... is one with persistence aroused, not lazy... is one of established mindfulness, not muddled mindfulness... is centered in concentration, not uncentered. One aroused to practice is discerning, not undiscerning.

“Established in these five qualities, you should further develop six qualities:

[1] “There is the case where you recollect the Tathāgata: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & and rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Tathāgata. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous,

the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of the Buddha while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

[2] “Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the observant for themselves.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Dhamma, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Dhamma. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of the Dhamma while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

[3] “Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types of noble disciples when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples: worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Saṅgha, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Saṅgha. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous,

the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of the Saṅgha while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

[4] “Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect your own virtues: ‘(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, conducive to concentration.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting virtue, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on virtue. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of virtue while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

[5] “Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect your own generosity: ‘It is a gain, a great gain for me, that—among people overcome with the stain of possessiveness—I live at home, my awareness cleansed of the stain of possessiveness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting generosity, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on generosity. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of generosity while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.

[6] “Furthermore, you should recollect the devas: ‘There are the devas of the Four Great Kings, the devas of the Thirty-three, the devas of the Hours, the Contented Devas, the devas who delight in creation, the devas who rule over the creations of others, the devas of Brahma’s retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever *conviction* they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever *virtue* they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of virtue is present in me as well. Whatever *learning* they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of learning is present in me as well. Whatever *generosity* they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of generosity is present in me as well. Whatever *discernment* they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, and discernment found both in himself and the devas, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the (qualities of the) devas. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed senses pleasure. In one sensing pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of the devas while you are walking, while you are standing, while you are sitting, while you are lying down, while you are busy at work, while you are resting in your home crowded with children.”

– [AN 11:13](#)

§ 13. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Sāvattthī at the Eastern Monastery, the palace of Migāra’s mother. Now at that time—it being the uposatha day—Visākhā, Migāra’s mother, went to the Blessed One in the middle of the day and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As she was sitting there the Blessed One said to her, “Well now, Visākhā, why are you coming in the middle of the day?”

“Today I’m observing the uposatha, lord.”

“Visākhā, there are these three uposathas. Which three? The uposatha of a cowherd, the uposatha of the Jains, and the uposatha of the noble ones.

“And what is the uposatha of a cowherd? Just as when a cowherd returns the cattle to their owners in the evening, he reflects: ‘Today the cattle wandered to that spot and this; they drank at this spot and that; tomorrow they will wander to that spot and this; they will drink at this spot and that’; in the same way, there is the case where a certain person observing the uposatha reflects, ‘Today I ate this sort of non-staple food and that sort of staple food. Tomorrow I will eat that sort of non-staple food and this sort of staple food.’ He spends the day with an awareness imbued with that covetousness, with that greed. Such is the uposatha of a cowherd, Visākhā. When this uposatha of a cowherd is undertaken, it is not of great fruit or great benefit, not of great glory or radiance.

“And what is the uposatha of the Jains? There are the contemplatives called the Nigaṇṭhas [Jains]. They get their disciple to undertake the following practice: ‘Here, my good man. Lay down the rod with regard to beings who live more than 100 leagues to the east... more than 100 leagues to the west... more than 100 leagues to the north... more than 100 leagues to the south.’ Thus they get the disciple to undertake kindness & sympathy to some beings, but not to others.

“On the uposatha day, they get their disciple to undertake the following practice: ‘Here, my good man. Having stripped off all your clothing, say this: “I am nothing by anything or of anything. Thus there is nothing by anything or of anything that is mine.”’ Yet in spite of that, his parents know of him that ‘This is our child.’ And he knows of them that ‘These are my parents.’ His wives & children know of him that ‘This is our husband & father.’ And he knows of them that ‘These are my

wives & children.' His workers & slaves know of him that 'This is our master.' And he knows of them that 'These are my workers & slaves.' Thus at a time when he should be persuaded to undertake truthfulness, he is persuaded to undertake falsehood. At the end of the night, he resumes the consumption of his belongings, even though they aren't given back to him. This counts as stealing, I tell you. Such is the uposatha of the Jains, Visākhā. When this uposatha of the Jains is undertaken, it is not of great fruit or great benefit, not of great glory or radiance.

"And what is the uposatha of the noble ones? It is the cleansing of the defiled mind through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique?

"There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones recollects the Tathāgata, thus: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & and rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' As he is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is brightened, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned, just as when the head is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the head cleansed through the proper technique? Through the use of cosmetic paste & clay & the appropriate human effort. This is how the head is cleansed through the proper technique. In the same way, the defiled mind is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the Tathāgata.... As he is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is cleansed, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned. He is thus called a disciple of the noble ones undertaking the Brahmā-uposatha. He lives with Brahmā [= the Buddha]. It is owing to Brahma that his mind is brightened, that joy arises, and that whatever defilements there are in his mind are abandoned. This is how the mind is cleansed through the proper technique.

"[Again, the uposatha of the noble ones] is the cleansing of the mind through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the Dhamma, thus: ‘The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the wise for themselves.’ As he is recollecting the Dhamma, his mind is brightened, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned, just as when the body is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the body cleansed through the proper technique? Through the use of scouring balls & bath powder & the appropriate human effort. This is how the body is cleansed through the proper technique. In the same way, the defiled mind is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the Dhamma.... As he is recollecting the Dhamma, his mind is cleansed, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned. He is thus called a disciple of the noble ones undertaking the Dhamma-uposatha. He lives with Dhamma. It is owing to Dhamma that his mind is brightened, that joy arises, and that whatever defilements there are in his mind are abandoned. This is how the mind is cleansed through the proper technique.

“[Again, the uposatha of the noble ones] is the cleansing of the mind through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the Saṅgha, thus: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types of noble disciples when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples: worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.’ As he is recollecting the Saṅgha, his mind is brightened, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned, just as when clothing is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is clothing cleansed through the proper technique? Through the use of salt earth & lye & cow dung & the appropriate human effort. This is how clothing is cleansed through the proper technique. In the same way, the defiled

mind is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the Saṅgha.... As he is recollecting the Saṅgha, his mind is cleansed, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned. He is thus called a disciple of the noble ones undertaking the Saṅgha-uposatha. He lives with the Saṅgha. It is owing to the Saṅgha that his mind is brightened, that joy arises, and that whatever defilements there are in his mind are abandoned. This is how the mind is cleansed through the proper technique.

“[Again, the uposatha of the noble ones] is the cleansing of the mind through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects his own virtues, thus: ‘(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, conducive to concentration.’ As he is recollecting virtue, his mind is brightened, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned, just as when a mirror is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is a mirror cleansed through the proper technique? Through the use of oil & ashes & chamois & the appropriate human effort. This is how a mirror is cleansed through the proper technique. In the same way, the defiled mind is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects his own virtues.... As he is recollecting virtue, his mind is cleansed, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned. He is thus called a disciple of the noble ones undertaking the virtue-uposatha. He lives with virtue. It is owing to virtue that his mind is brightened, that joy arises, and that whatever defilements there are in his mind are abandoned. This is how the mind is cleansed through the proper technique.

“[Again, the uposatha of the noble ones] is the cleansing of the mind through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the devas, thus: ‘There are the devas of the Four Great Kings, the devas of the Thirty-three, the devas of the Hours, the Contented Devas, the

devas who delight in creation, the devas who have power over the creations of others, the devas of Brahma's retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever conviction they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever virtue they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of virtue is present in me as well. Whatever learning they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of learning is present in me as well. Whatever generosity they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of generosity is present in me as well. Whatever discernment they were endowed with that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well.' As he is recollecting the devas, his mind is brightened, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned, just as when a gold is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is gold cleansed through the proper technique? Through the use of a furnace, salt earth, red chalk, a blow-pipe, tongs, & the appropriate human effort. This is how gold is cleansed through the proper technique. In the same way, the defiled mind is cleansed through the proper technique. And how is the defiled mind cleansed through the proper technique? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones recollects the devas.... As he is recollecting the devas, his mind is cleansed, and joy arises; the defilements of his mind are abandoned. He is thus called a disciple of the noble ones undertaking the deva-uposatha. He lives with the devas. It is owing to the devas that his mind is brightened, that joy arises, and that whatever defilements there are in his mind are abandoned. This is how the mind is cleansed through the proper technique.

"Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones reflects thus: 'As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning the taking of life—abstain from the taking of life. They dwell with their rod laid down, their knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning the taking of life—abstain from the taking of life. I dwell with my rod laid down, my knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living

beings. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning the taking of what is not given—abstains from taking what is not given. They take only what is given, accept only what is given, live not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning the taking of what is not given—abstain from taking what is not given. I take only what is given, accept only what is given, live not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning uncelibacy—live a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager’s way. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning uncelibacy—live a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager’s way. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning false speech—abstain from false speech. They speak the truth, hold to the truth, are firm, reliable, no deceivers of the world. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning false speech—abstain from false speech. I speak the truth, hold to the truth, am firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness—abstain from fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness—abstain from fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants live on one meal a day, abstaining from food at night, refraining from food at the wrong time of day [from noon until dawn]. Today I too, for this day & night, live on one meal, abstaining from food at night, refraining from food at the wrong time of day. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants abstain from dancing, singing, music, watching shows, wearing garlands, beautifying themselves with perfumes & cosmetics. Today I too, for this day & night, abstain from dancing, singing, music, watching shows, wearing garlands, beautifying myself with perfumes & cosmetics. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning high & imposing seats & beds—abstain from high & imposing seats & beds. They make low beds, on a pallet or a spread of straw. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning high & imposing seats & beds—abstain from high & imposing seats & beds. I make a low bed, on a pallet or a spread of straw.’

“Such is the uposatha of the noble ones, Visākhā. When this uposatha of the noble ones is undertaken, it is of great fruit & great benefit, of great glory & radiance. And how is it of great fruit & great benefit, of great glory & radiance?

“Suppose that one were to exercise kingship, rule, and sovereignty over these sixteen great lands replete with the seven treasures, i.e., over the Aṅgas, Maghadans, Kāsīs, Kosalans, Vajjians, Mallas, Cetis, Vaṃsas, Kurus, Pañcālas, Macchas, Surasenas, Assakas, Avantīs, Gandhārans, & Kambojans: It would not be worth one-sixteenth of this uposatha endowed with eight factors. Why is that? Kingship over human beings is a meager thing when compared with heavenly bliss.

“Fifty human years are equal to one day & night among the Devas of the Four Great Kings. Thirty such days & nights make a month. Twelve such months make a year. Five hundred such heavenly years is the life-span among the Devas of the Four Great Kings. Now, it is possible that a certain man or woman—from having observed this uposatha endowed with eight factors—on the break-up of the body, after death, might be reborn among the Devas of the Four Great Kings. It was in reference to this that it was said, ‘Kingship over human beings is a meager thing when compared with heavenly bliss.’

“A human century is equal to one day & night among the Devas of the Thirty-Three. Thirty such days & nights make a month... One thousand such heavenly years is the life-span among the Devas of the Thirty-three. Now, it is possible that a certain man or woman—from

having observed this uposatha endowed with eight factors—on the break-up of the body, after death, might be reborn among the Devas of the Thirty-three. It was in reference to this that it was said, ‘Kingship over human beings is a meager thing when compared with heavenly bliss.’

“Two human centuries is equal to one day & night among the Yāma Devas... Two thousand such heavenly years is the life-span among the Yāma Devas...

“Four human centuries is equal to one day & night among the Contented Devas... Four thousand such heavenly years is the life-span among the Contented Devas...

“Eight human centuries is equal to one day & night among the devas who delight in creation... Eight thousand such heavenly years is the life-span among the devas who delight in creation...

“Sixteen human centuries is equal to one day & night among the devas who rule over the creations of others. Thirty such days & nights make a month. Twelve such months make a year. Sixteen thousand such heavenly years is the life-span among the devas who rule over the creations of others. Now, it is possible that a certain man or woman—from having observed this uposatha endowed with eight factors—on the break-up of the body, after death, might be reborn among the devas who rule over the creations of others. It was in reference to this that it was said, ‘Kingship over human beings is a meager thing when compared with heavenly bliss.’”

– [AN 3:70](#)

§ 14. The Blessed One said, “Monks, once the devas & asuras were arrayed for battle. Then Sakka, the chief of the devas, addressed the devas of the Thirty-three: ‘If, dear sirs, when the devas have gone into battle, there should arise fear, terror, or horripilation, then on that occasion you should catch sight of the top of my standard. For when you have caught sight of the top of my standard, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation there is will be abandoned.’

“If you can’t catch sight of the top of my standard, then you should catch sight of the top of the deva-king Pajāpati’s standard...

“If you can’t catch sight of the top of the deva-king Pajāpati’s standard, then you should catch sight of the top of the deva-king Varuṇa’s standard...

“If you can’t catch sight of the top of the deva-king Varuṇa’s standard, then you should catch sight of the top of the deva-king Isāna’s standard. For when you have caught sight of the top of the deva-king Isāna’s standard, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation there is will be abandoned.’

“But, monks, when the top of the deva-chief Sakka’s standard is caught sight of, or when the top of the deva-king Pajāpati’s standard... the top of the deva-king Varuṇa’s standard... or the top of the deva-king Isāna’s standard is caught sight of, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation there is may be abandoned or may *not* be abandoned. Why is that? Because Sakka the chief of the devas is not devoid of passion, not devoid of aversion, not devoid of delusion. He feels fear, feels terror, feels dread. He runs away.

“But I tell you this: If—when you have gone into the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building—there should arise fear, terror, or horripilation, then on that occasion you should recollect me: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.’ For when you have recollected me, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation there is will be abandoned.

“If you can’t recollect me, then you should recollect the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the observant for themselves.’ For when you have recollected the Dhamma, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation there is will be abandoned.

“If you can’t recollect the Dhamma, then you should recollect the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types of noble disciples when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples:

worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the unexcelled field of merit for the world.’ For when you have recollected the Saṅgha, whatever fear, terror, or horripilation where is will be abandoned. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata—worthy & rightly self-awakened—is devoid of passion, devoid of aversion, devoid of delusion. He feels no fear, feels no terror, feels no dread. He doesn’t run away.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said that, the One-well-gone, the Teacher, further said this:

In the wilderness,
in the shade of a tree,
in an empty building, monks,
recollect the Buddha.

Your fear won’t exist.

If you can’t recall the Buddha
—best in the world,
the bull of men—
then you should recall the Dhamma:
leading outward, well-taught.

If you can’t recall the Dhamma
—leading outward,
well-taught—
then you should recall the Saṅgha:
the field of merit unexcelled.

When thus recalling
the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha, monks,
there’ll be no horripilation,
terror,
or fear.

– [*SN 11:3*](#)

§ 15. I have heard that on one occasion a certain monk was dwelling among the Kosalans in a forest thicket. Now at that time, he spent the

day's abiding thinking evil, unskillful thoughts: i.e., thoughts of sensuality, thoughts of ill will, thoughts of doing harm.

Then the devatā inhabiting the forest thicket, feeling sympathy for the monk, desiring his benefit, desiring to bring him to his senses, approached him and addressed him with this verse:

“From inappropriate attention
you're being chewed by your thoughts.
Relinquishing what's inappropriate,
contemplate
appropriately.

Keeping your mind on the Teacher,
the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, your virtues,
you will arrive at
joy,
rapture,
pleasure
without doubt.

Then, saturated
with joy,
you will put an end
to suffering & stress.”

The monk, chastened by the devatā, came to his senses.

– SN 9:11

§ 16. “There is the case of a monk who remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, a fever based on the body arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme [Comm: such as recollection of the Buddha]. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, delight arises within him. In one who feels delight, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows serene. His body serene, he feels pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows

concentrated. He reflects, 'I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw [my mind from the inspiring theme].' He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, 'I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.'

"Furthermore, he remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, a fever based on mental qualities arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, delight arises within him. In one who feels delight, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows serene. His body serene, he is sensitive to pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, 'I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw.' He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, 'I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.'"

– [SN 47:10](#)

More on Recollection of the Triple Gem

The Buddha

§ 17. The Blessed One [speaking to Saccaka Aggivessana] said, “And how is one undeveloped in body and undeveloped in mind? There is the case where a pleasant feeling arises in an uneducated run-of-the-mill person. On being touched by the pleasant feeling, he becomes impassioned with pleasure, and is reduced to being impassioned with pleasure. His pleasant feeling ceases. With the cessation of the pleasant feeling there arises a painful feeling. On being touched with the painful feeling, he sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. When that pleasant feeling had arisen in him, it invaded his mind and remained because of his lack of development of the body. When that painful feeling had arisen in him, it invaded his mind and remained because of his lack of development of the mind. This is how one is undeveloped in body and undeveloped in mind.

“And how is one developed in body and developed in mind? There is the case where a pleasant feeling arises in a well-educated disciple of the noble ones. On being touched by the pleasant feeling, he doesn’t become impassioned with pleasure, and is not reduced to being impassioned with pleasure. His pleasant feeling ceases. With the cessation of the pleasant feeling there arises a painful feeling. On being touched with the painful feeling, he doesn’t sorrow, grieve, or lament, beat his breast or becomes distraught. When that pleasant feeling had arisen in him, it didn’t invade his mind and remain because of his development of the body. When that painful feeling had arisen in him, it didn’t invade his mind and remain because of his development of the mind. This is how one is developed in body and developed in mind.”

“I have confidence in Master Gotama that Master Gotama is developed in body and developed in mind.”

““Well, Aggivessana, you are certainly being rude and presumptuously speaking your words, but nevertheless I will respond to

you. Ever since I shaved my hair & beard, put on the ochre robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness, it has not been possible for a pleasant feeling that has arisen to invade my mind and remain, or for a painful feeling that has arisen to invade my mind and remain.”

“But perhaps there has never arisen in Master Gotama the sort of pleasant feeling that, having arisen, would invade the mind and remain. Perhaps there has never arisen in Master Gotama the sort of painful feeling that, having arisen, would invade the mind and remain.”

“Why wouldn’t it have, Aggivessana? Before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta, the thought occurred to me: ‘Household life is confining, a dusty path. Life gone forth is the open air. It isn’t easy, living in a home, to practice the holy life totally perfect, totally pure, a polished shell. What if I, having shaved off my hair & beard and putting on the ochre robe, were to go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

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

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

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

“It was not long before I quickly learned that Dhamma. As far as mere lip-reciting & repetition, I could speak the words of knowledge, the words of the elders, and I could affirm that I knew & saw—I, along with others.

“I thought: ‘It isn’t through mere conviction alone that Āḷāra Kālāma declares, “I have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.” Certainly he dwells knowing &

seeing this Dhamma.' So I went to him and said, 'To what extent do you declare that you have entered & dwell in this Dhamma?' When this was said, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

"I thought: 'Not only does Āḷāra Kālāma have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. I, too, have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. What if I were to endeavor to realize for myself the Dhamma that Āḷāra Kālāma declares he has entered & dwells in, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge.' So it was not long before I quickly entered & dwelled in that Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge. I went to him and said, 'Friend Kālāma, is this the extent to which you have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge?'

"Yes, my friend....'

"This, friend, is the extent to which I, too, have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.'

"It is a gain for us, my friend, a great gain for us, that we have such a companion in the holy life. So the Dhamma I declare I have entered & dwell in, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge. And the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma I declare I have entered & dwell in, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge. The Dhamma I know is the Dhamma you know; the Dhamma you know is the Dhamma I know. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come friend, let us now lead this community together.'

"In this way did Āḷāra Kālāma, my teacher, place me, his pupil, on the same level with himself and pay me great honor. But the thought occurred to me, 'This Dhamma leads not to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, nor to unbinding, but only to reappearance in the dimension of nothingness.' So, dissatisfied with that Dhamma, I left.

"In search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I went to Uddaka Rāmaputta and, on arrival, said to him: 'Friend Uddaka, I want to practice in this Dhamma & discipline.'

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

“It was not long before I quickly learned that Dhamma. As far as mere lip-reciting & repetition, I could speak the words of knowledge, the words of the elders, and I could affirm that I knew & saw—I, along with others.

“I thought: ‘It wasn’t through mere conviction alone that Rāma declared, “I have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.” Certainly he dwelled knowing & seeing this Dhamma.’ So I went to Uddaka and said, ‘To what extent did Rāma declare that he had entered & dwelled in this Dhamma?’ When this was said, Uddaka declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

“I thought: ‘Not only did Rāma have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. I, too, have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, & discernment. What if I were to endeavor to realize for myself the Dhamma that Rāma declared he entered & dwelled in, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge.’ So it was not long before I quickly entered & dwelled in that Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge. I went to Uddaka and said, ‘Friend Uddaka, is this the extent to which Rāma entered & dwelled in this Dhamma, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge?’

“‘Yes, my friend...’

“‘This, friend, is the extent to which I, too, have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.’

“‘It is a gain for us, my friend, a great gain for us, that we have such a companion in the holy life. So the Dhamma Rāma declared he entered & dwelled in, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge. And the Dhamma you declare you have entered & dwell in, having realized it for yourself through direct knowledge, is the Dhamma Rāma declared he entered & dwelled in, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge. The

Dhamma he knew is the Dhamma you know; the Dhamma you know is the Dhamma he knew. As he was, so are you; as you are, so was he. Come friend, lead this community.'

"In this way did Uddaka Rāmaputta, my companion in the holy life, place me in the position of teacher and pay me great honor. But the thought occurred to me, 'This Dhamma leads not to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, nor to unbinding, but only to reappearance in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' So, dissatisfied with that Dhamma, I left.

"In search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I wandered by stages in the Magadhan country and came to the military town of Uruvelā. There I saw some delightful countryside, with an inspiring forest grove, a clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. The thought occurred to me: 'How delightful is this countryside, with its inspiring forest grove, clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. This is just right for the striving of a clansman intent on striving.' So I sat down right there, thinking, 'This is just right for striving.'

"Then these three similes—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying in the water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll produce fire. I'll make heat appear.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying in the water?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, and besides it is lying in the water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment."

"So it is with any contemplative or brahman who does not live withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving (for awakening), he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the first simile—spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

“Then a second simile—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, ‘I’ll produce fire. I’ll make heat appear.’ Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying on land far from water?”

“No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, even though it is lying on land far from water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment.”

“So it is with any contemplative or brahman who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body only, but whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the second simile—spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

“Then a third simile—spontaneous, never before heard—appeared to me. Suppose there were a dry, sapless piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, ‘I’ll produce fire. I’ll make heat appear.’ Now what do you think? Would he be able to produce fire and make heat appear by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the dry, sapless timber lying on land?”

“Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is dry & sapless, and besides it is lying on land far from water.”

“So it is with any contemplative or brahman who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is capable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the third simile—spontaneous, never before heard—that appeared to me.

“I thought: ‘What if I, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, were to beat down, constrain, & crush my mind with my awareness?’ So, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrained, &

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

"I thought: 'What if I were to become absorbed in the trance of non-breathing?' So I stopped the in-breaths & out-breaths in my nose & mouth. As I did so, there was a loud roaring of winds coming out my earholes, just like the loud roar of winds coming out of a smith's bellows.... So I stopped the in-breaths & out-breaths in my nose & mouth & ears. As I did so, extreme forces sliced through my head, just as if a strong man were slicing my head open with a sharp sword.... Extreme pains arose in my head, just as if a strong man were tightening a turban made of tough leather straps around my head.... Extreme forces carved up my stomach cavity, just as if a butcher or his apprentice were to carve up the stomach cavity of an ox.... There was an extreme burning in my body, just as if two strong men, grabbing a weaker man by the arms, were to roast & broil him over a pit of hot embers. And although tireless persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established, my body was aroused & uncalm because of the painful exertion. But the painful feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"Devas, on seeing me, said, 'Gotama the contemplative is dead.' Other devas said, 'He isn't dead, he's dying.' Others said, 'He's neither dead nor dying, he's an arahant, for this is the way arahants live.'

"I thought: 'What if I were to practice going altogether without food?' Then devas came to me and said, 'Dear sir, please don't practice going altogether without food. If you go altogether without food, we'll infuse divine nourishment in through your pores, and you will survive on that.' I thought, 'If I were to claim to be completely fasting while these devas are infusing divine nourishment in through my pores, I would be lying.' So I dismissed them, saying, 'Enough.'

“I thought: ‘What if I were to take only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup?’ So I took only a little food at a time, only a handful at a time of bean soup, lentil soup, vetch soup, or pea soup. My body became extremely emaciated. Simply from my eating so little, my limbs became like the jointed segments of vine stems or bamboo stems.... My backside became like a camel’s hoof.... My spine stood out like a string of beads.... My ribs jutted out like the jutting rafters of an old, run-down barn.... The gleam of my eyes appeared to be sunk deep in my eye sockets like the gleam of water deep in a well.... My scalp shriveled & withered like a green bitter gourd, shriveled & withered in the heat & the wind.... The skin of my belly became so stuck to my spine that when I thought of touching my belly, I grabbed hold of my spine as well; and when I thought of touching my spine, I grabbed hold of the skin of my belly as well.... If I urinated or defecated, I fell over on my face right there.... Simply from my eating so little, if I tried to ease my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair—rotted at its roots—fell from my body as I rubbed, simply from eating so little.

“People on seeing me would say, ‘Gotama the contemplative is black. Other people would say, ‘Gotama the contemplative isn’t black, he’s brown.’ Others would say, ‘Gotama the contemplative is neither black nor brown, he’s golden-skinned.’ So much had the clear, bright color of my skin deteriorated, simply from eating so little.

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

“I thought: ‘I recall once, when my father the Sakyan was working, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, then—quite

secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Could that be the path to awakening?’ Then there was the consciousness following on that memory: ‘That is the path to awakening.’ I thought: ‘So why am I afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful qualities?’ I thought: ‘I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful qualities, but that pleasure is not easy to achieve with a body so extremely emaciated. What if I were to take some solid food: some rice & porridge?’ So I took some solid food: some rice & porridge. Now five monks had been attending on me, thinking, ‘If Gotama, our contemplative, achieves some higher state, he will tell us.’ But when they saw me taking some solid food—some rice & porridge—they were disgusted and left me, thinking, ‘Gotama the contemplative is living luxuriously. He has abandoned his exertion and is backsliding into abundance.’

“So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the fading of rapture I remained equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—I entered & remained in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

“When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two... five, ten... fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion: ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’ Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.

“This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

“When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings. I saw—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, & mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech & mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destinations, a heavenly world.’ Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—I saw beings passing away & re-

appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma.

“This was the second knowledge I attained in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

“When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the ending of the effluents [*āsavas*]. I discerned, as it had come to be, that ‘This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are effluents... This is the origination of effluents... This is the cessation of effluents... This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.’ My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there was the knowledge, ‘Released.’ I discerned that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

“I recall having taught the Dhamma to an assembly of many hundreds, and yet each one of them assumes of me, ‘Gotama the contemplative is teaching the Dhamma attacking just me,’ but it shouldn’t be seen in that way. The Tathāgata rightly teaches them the Dhamma simply for the purpose of giving knowledge. At the end of that very talk I steady the mind inwardly, settle it, concentrate it, and unify it in the same theme of concentration as before, in which I almost constantly dwell.”

“That is credible for the Master Gotama, as would be the case for one who is worthy & rightly self-awakened. But does the Master Gotama recall sleeping during the day?”

“I recall, Aggivessana, in the last month of the hot season, after the meal, returning from my almsround, setting out my outer robe folded in four, lying down on my right side, and falling asleep while mindful & alert.”

“There are some contemplatives & brahmans, Master Gotama, who would call that dwelling in delusion.”

“It’s not to that extent that one is deluded or undeluded, Aggivessana. As to how one is deluded or undeluded, listen and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, Master Gotama,” Saccaka responded.

The Blessed One said: “In whomever the effluents that defile, that lead to renewed becoming, that give trouble, that ripen in stress, and lead to future birth, aging, & death are not abandoned: Him I call deluded. For it is from not abandoning the effluents that one is deluded. In whomever the effluents that defile, that lead to renewed becoming, that give trouble, that ripen in stress, and lead to future birth, aging, & death *are* abandoned: Him I call undeluded. For it is from abandoning the effluents that one is undeluded. In the Tathāgata, Aggivessana, the effluents that defile, that lead to renewed becoming, that give trouble, that ripen in stress, and lead to future birth, aging, & death have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Just as a palmyra cut off at the crown is incapable of further growth, in the same way in the Tathāgata the effluents that defile, that lead to renewed becoming, that give trouble, that ripen in stress, and lead to future birth, aging, & death have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.”

– [MN 36](#)

The Dhamma

§ 18. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, stood to one side. As she was standing there she said to him: “It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would teach me the Dhamma in brief such that, having

heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.”

“Gotamī, the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead to passion, not to dispassion; to being fettered, not to being unfettered; to accumulating, not to shedding; to self-aggrandizement, not to modesty; to discontent, not to contentment; to entanglement, not to seclusion; to laziness, not to aroused persistence; to being burdensome, not to being unburdensome’: You may definitely hold, ‘This is not the Dhamma, this is not the Vinaya, this is not the Teacher’s instruction.’

“As for the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead to dispassion, not to passion; to being unfettered, not to being fettered; to shedding, not to accumulating; to modesty, not to self-aggrandizement; to contentment, not to discontent; to seclusion, not to entanglement; to aroused persistence, not to laziness; to being unburdensome, not to being burdensome’: You may definitely hold, ‘This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī delighted in his words.

– [AN 8:53](#)

§ 19. The Blessed One said, “It’s through direct knowledge that I teach the Dhamma, not without direct knowledge. It’s with a cause that I teach the Dhamma, not without a cause. It’s with marvels that I teach the Dhamma, not without marvels [see [§22](#)]. Because I teach the Dhamma through direct knowledge and not without direct knowledge, because I teach the Dhamma with a cause and not without a cause, because I teach the Dhamma with marvels and not without marvels, there is good reason for my instruction, good reason for my admonition. And it is enough for you to be content, enough for you to be gratified, enough for you to take joy, that the Blessed One is rightly self-awakened, the Dhamma is well-taught by the Blessed One, and the community has practiced rightly.”

– [AN 3:126](#)

§ 20. Now at that time a baby boy was lying face-up on Prince Abhaya’s lap. So the Blessed One said to the prince, “What do you

think, prince? If this young boy, through your own negligence or that of the nurse, were to take a stick or a piece of gravel into its mouth, what would you do?”

“I would take it out, venerable sir. If I couldn’t get it out right away, then holding its head in my left hand and crooking a finger of my right, I would take it out, even if it meant drawing blood. Why is that? Because I have sympathy for the young boy.”

“In the same way, prince:

[1] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial [or: not connected with the goal], unendearing & disagreeable to others, he does not say them.

[2] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, unendearing & disagreeable to others, he does not say them.

[3] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, beneficial, but unendearing & disagreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them.

[4] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial, but endearing & agreeable to others, he does not say them.

[5] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, but endearing & agreeable to others, he does not say them.

[6] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, beneficial, and endearing & agreeable to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has sympathy for living beings.”

– [MN 58](#)

§ 21. Once the Blessed One was staying at Kosambī in the Simsapā forest. Then, picking up a few simsapā leaves with his hand, he asked the monks, “What do you think, monks? Which are more numerous, the few simsapā leaves in my hand or those overhead in the simsapā forest?”

“The leaves in the hand of the Blessed One are few in number, lord. Those overhead in the forest are far more numerous.”

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

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

– [SN 56:31](#)

§ 22. Then Kevaṭṭa the householder approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, this Nālanda is powerful, both prosperous and populous, filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One were to direct a monk to display a marvel of psychic power from his superior human state so that Nālanda would to an even greater extent have faith in the Blessed One.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Kevaṭṭa the householder, “Kevaṭṭa, I don’t teach the monks in this way: ‘Come, monks, display a marvel of psychic power to the lay people clad in white.’”

A second time.... A third time, Kevaṭṭa the householder said to the Blessed One: “I won’t argue with the Blessed One, but I tell you: Venerable sir, this Nālanda is powerful, both prosperous and populous, filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One were to direct a monk to display a marvel of psychic

power from his superior human state so that Nālanda would to an even greater extent have faith in the Blessed One.”

A third time, the Blessed One said to Kevaṭṭa the householder, “Kevaṭṭa, I don’t teach the monks in this way: ‘Come, monks, display a marvel of psychic power to the lay people clad in white.’

“Kevaṭṭa, there are these three marvels that I have declared, having directly known and realized them for myself. Which three? The marvel of psychic power, the marvel of telepathy, and the marvel of instruction.

“And what is the marvel of psychic power? There is the case where a monk wields manifold psychic powers. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds.

“Then someone who has faith and conviction in him sees him wielding manifold psychic powers... exercising influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds. He reports this to someone who has no faith and no conviction, telling him, ‘Isn’t it awesome. Isn’t it astounding, how great the power, how great the prowess of this contemplative. Just now I saw him wielding manifold psychic powers... exercising influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds.’

“Then the person without faith, without conviction, would say to the person with faith and with conviction: ‘Sir, there is a charm called the Gandhāri charm by which the monk wielded manifold psychic powers... exercising influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds.’ What do you think, Kevaṭṭa? Isn’t that what the man without faith, without conviction, would say to the man with faith and with conviction?”

“That’s what he would say, venerable sir.”

“Seeing this drawback to the marvel of psychic power, Kevaṭṭa, I feel repelled, ashamed, & disgusted with the marvel of psychic power.

“And what is the marvel of telepathy? There is the case where a monk reads the minds, the mental events, the thoughts, the ponderings of other beings, other individuals, (saying,) ‘Such is your thinking, here is where your thinking is, thus is your mind.’

“Then someone who has faith and conviction in him sees him reading the minds... of other beings.... He reports this to someone who has no faith and no conviction, telling him, ‘Isn’t it awesome. Isn’t it astounding, how great the power, how great the prowess of this contemplative. Just now I saw him reading the minds... of other beings....’

Then the person without faith, without conviction, would say to the person with faith and with conviction: ‘Sir, there is a charm called the Maṇikā charm by which the monk read the minds... of other beings....’ What do you think, Kevaṭṭa? Isn’t that what the man without faith, without conviction, would say to the man with faith and with conviction?”

“That’s what he would say, venerable sir.”

“Seeing this drawback to the marvel of telepathy, Kevaṭṭa, I feel repelled, ashamed, & disgusted with the marvel of telepathy.

“And what is the marvel of instruction? There is the case where a monk gives instruction in this way: ‘Direct your thought in this way, don’t direct it in that. Attend to things in this way, don’t attend to them in that. Let go of this, enter and remain in that.’ This, Kevaṭṭa, is called the marvel of instruction.

“Then there is the case where a Tathāgata appears in the world, worthy and rightly self-awakened. He teaches the Dhamma admirable in its beginning, admirable in its middle, admirable in its end. He proclaims the holy life both in its particulars and in its essence, entirely perfect, surpassingly pure.

“A householder or householder’s son, hearing the Dhamma, gains conviction in the Tathāgata and reflects: ‘Household life is confining, a dusty path. The life gone forth is like the open air. It is not easy living at home to practice the holy life totally perfect, totally pure, like a polished shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the ochre robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

“So after some time he abandons his mass of wealth, large or small; leaves his circle of relatives, large or small; shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the ochre robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

“When he has thus gone forth, he [follows the Buddha’s instructions until, after attaining the fourth jhāna:] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to knowledge & vision... to creating a mind-made body... to the modes of supranormal powers... to the divine ear-element... to knowledge of the awareness of other beings... to knowledge of the recollection of past lives... to knowledge of the passing away & re-appearance of beings... to the knowledge of the ending of the effluents. He discerns, as it has come to be, that ‘This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are effluents... This is the origination of effluents... This is the cessation of effluents... This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.’ His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, the effluent of becoming, the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’ Just as if there were a pool of water in a mountain glen—clear, limpid, and unsullied—where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting, and it would occur to him, ‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.’ In the same way—with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability—the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the effluents. He discerns, as it is has come to be, that ‘This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are effluents... This is the origination of effluents... This is the cessation of effluents... This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.’ His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, the effluent of becoming, the effluent of

ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“This, too, is called the marvel of instruction.

“These are the three marvels that I declare, Kevaṭṭa, having directly known and realized them for myself.”

– [DN 11](#)

The Saṅgha

§ 23. Mātāṅgaputta:

*It’s too cold,
too hot,
too late in the evening—*
people who say this,
shirking their work:
the moment passes them by.
Whoever regards cold & heat
as no more than grass,
doing his manly duties,
won’t fall away
from ease.
With my chest
I push through wild grasses—
spear-grass,
ribbon-grass,
rushes—
cultivating a heart
bent on seclusion.

– [Thag 3:5](#)

§ 24. Vakkali:

Stricken by sharp, wind-like pains,
you, monk, living in the forest grove
—harsh, with limited range for alms—

what, what will you do?

Suffusing my body
with abundant rapture & joy,
& enduring what's harsh,
I'll stay in the grove.

Developing the establishings of mindfulness,
strengths, faculties,
the factors for awakening,
I'll stay in the grove.

Reflecting on those who are resolute,
their persistence aroused,
constantly firm in their effort,
united in concord,
I'll stay in the grove.

Recollecting the One Self-awakened,
self-tamed & centered,
untiring both day & night,
I'll stay
in the grove.

– *Thag 5:8*

§ 25. *Tekicchakāni*:

The grain: harvested.
The rice: gone to be threshed.
But I don't get any alms.
How will I get by?

Confident, recollect
the immeasurable Buddha.
Your body pervaded with rapture,
you'll be at the height
of continual joy.
Confident, recollect
the immeasurable Dhamma.

Your body pervaded with rapture,
you'll be at the height
of continual joy.

Confident, recollect
the immeasurable Saṅgha.

Your body pervaded with rapture,
you'll be at the height
of continual joy.

You live in the open air.
Cold are these wintry nights.
Don't suffer, overcome with the cold.
Go into your hut, with its fastened bolt.

I'll fasten the four
immeasurables.
With them, I'll dwell
in comfort.
I won't suffer from the cold,
dwelling
unperturbed.

– Thag 6:2

§ 26. *Sappadāsa*:

Twenty five years since my going forth,
and no peace of awareness
—not a finger-snap's worth—
attained.

Having gained no oneness of mind,
I was wracked with lust.
Wailing, with my arms upheld,
I ran amok from my dwelling—
“Or... or shall I take the knife?
What's the use of life to me?
If I were to renounce the training,
what sort of death would I have?”

So, taking a razor,
I sat down on a bed.
And there was the razor,
placed ready to cut my own vein,
 when apt attention arose in me,
the drawbacks appeared,
 disenchantment stood
 at an even keel:

With that, my heart was released.
See the Dhamma's true rightness!
The three knowledges
have been attained;
the Awakened One's bidding,
 done.

– *Thag 6:6*

§ 27. *A bandit chief:*

“Those who
 for the sake of sacrifice
 for the sake of wealth
we have killed in the past,
 against their will
 have trembled & babbled
 from fear.
But you—
 you show no fear;
 your complexion brightens.
Why don't you lament
in the face of what's greatly to be feared?”

Ven. Adhimutta:

“There are no painful mind-states, chieftain,
in one without longing.
In one whose fetters are ended,

all fears are overcome.
With the ending of (craving)
the guide to becoming,
when phenomena are seen
for what they are,
then as in the laying down of a burden,
there's no fear in death.

I've lived well the holy life,
well-developed the path.
Death holds no fear for me.
It's like the end of a disease.

I've
lived well the holy life,
well-developed the path,
seen states of becoming
as devoid of allure,
like poison spit out
after it's drunk.

One gone to the far shore
without clinging,
effluent-free
his task completed,
welcomes the ending of life,
as if freed from a place of execution.
Having attained the supreme Rightness,
unconcerned with all the world,
as if released from a burning house,
he doesn't sorrow at death.

Whatever's fabricated,
wherever a state of becoming's obtained,
all that has no one in charge:
So says the Great Seer.
Whoever discerns this,
as taught by the Awakened One,
would no more grasp hold

of any state of becoming
than he would
a hot iron ball.

I have no 'I was,'
no 'I will be.'

Fabrications will simply
go out of existence.

What's to lament there in that?
For one who sees, as it has come to be,
the pure arising of phenomena,
the pure seriality of fabrications,
there's no fear.

When seeing the world,
with discernment,
as on a par
with grass & twigs,
finding no 'mine-ness,'
thinking, 'There's nothing of mine,'
he feels no sorrow.

Dissatisfied with this carcass,
I'm unconcerned with becoming.
This body will break up
and there will not be another.
Do as you like with this carcass.
From that I will feel
neither hatred nor love."

Hearing these awesome, hair-raising words, the young men threw
down their weapons & said:

"What have you done, sir,
or who have you taken as mentor?
Because of whose teachings
is this lack of sorrow acquired?"

Ven. Adhimutta:

“The
all-knowing,
all-seeing conqueror:
He is my mentor.
Greatly compassionate teacher,
all the world’s healer,
this doctrine is his,
unexcelled, leading to ending.
Because of his teachings
is this lack of sorrow acquired.”

The bandits, hearing the good words of the seer,
threw down their swords & their weapons.
Some relinquished their life of crime,
some chose the Going-forth.
Having gone forth in the teachings
of the One Well-Gone,
developing the strengths
& factors for awakening,
wise, happy,
exultant in mind,
their faculties ripened,
they touched unfabricated unbinding.

– Thag 16:1

§ 28. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels’ Sanctuary. Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there the Blessed One said to him, “You are now old, Kassapa. Your robes made of cast-off hemp rags are heavy for you. So wear robes donated by householders, eat invitational meals, and live close by me.”

“Lord, for a long time I have lived in the wilderness and have extolled living in the wilderness. I have been an almsgoer and have extolled being an almsgoer. I have worn cast off rags and have extolled wearing cast off rags. I have worn only one set of the triple robe and

have extolled wearing only one set of the triple robe. I have been modest and have extolled being modest. I have been content and have extolled being content. I have been reclusive and have extolled being reclusive. I have been unentangled and have extolled being unentangled. I have kept my persistence aroused and have extolled having persistence aroused."

"But, Kassapa, what compelling reason do you see that you for a long time have lived in the wilderness and have extolled living in the wilderness... that you have kept your persistence aroused and have extolled having persistence aroused?"

"Lord, I see two compelling reasons that for a long time I have lived in the wilderness and have extolled living in the wilderness... that I have kept my persistence aroused and have extolled having persistence aroused: seeing a pleasant abiding for myself in the here & now, and feeling sympathy for later generations: 'Perhaps later generations will take it as an example: "It seems that the disciples of the Awakened One and those who awakened after him lived for a long time in the wilderness and extolled living in the wilderness; were almsgoers and extolled being almsgoers; wore cast off rags and extolled wearing cast off rags; wore only one set of the triple robe and extolled wearing only one set of the triple robe; were modest and extolled being modest; were content and extolled being content; were reclusive and extolled being reclusive; were unentangled and extolled being unentangled; kept their persistence aroused and extolled having persistence aroused.'"

"Good, Kassapa. Very good. It seems that you are one who practices for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, benefit, & happiness of beings human & divine. So continue wearing your robes of cast off hemp cloth, go for alms, and live in the wilderness."

– [SN 16:5](#)

Mindfulness of In-&-Out Breathing

§ 29. “Endowed with five qualities, a monk pursuing mindfulness of in-&-out breathing will in no long time penetrate the unprovoked (release). Which five?

“He is a person who imposes only a little (on others): one of few duties & projects, easy to support, easily contented with the requisites of life.

“He is a person who eats only a little food, committed to not indulging his stomach.

“He is a person of only a little sloth, committed to wakefulness.

“He is a person of much learning, who has retained what he heard, has stored what he has heard. Whatever teachings are admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end, that—in their meaning & expression—proclaim the holy life that is entirely complete & pure: those he has listened to often, retained, discussed, accumulated, examined with his mind, and well-penetrated in terms of his views.... He gets to hear at will, easily & without difficulty, talk that is truly sobering & conducive to the opening of awareness: talk on modesty, contentment, seclusion, non-entanglement, arousing persistence, virtue, concentration, discernment, release, and the knowledge & vision of release.... He lives in the wilderness, in an isolated dwelling place.

“He reflects on the mind as it is released [see step 12 in the sixteen steps described in [§30](#)].

“Endowed with these five qualities, a monk pursuing mindfulness of in-&-out breathing will in no long time penetrate the Unprovoked.”

– [AN 5:96-98](#)

§ 30. “Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination. The four establishings of mindfulness, when developed & pursued, bring the seven factors for awakening to

their culmination. The seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, bring clear knowing & release to their culmination.

Mindfulness of In-&-Out Breathing

“Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?

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

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’ [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in short’; or breathing out short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out short.’ [3] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.’ [4] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication [in-&-out breathing].’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.’

“[5] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.’ [6] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.’ [7] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication [feeling & perception].’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.’ [8] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.’

“[9] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.’ [10] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in gladdening the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out gladdening the mind.’ [11] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in steadying the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out steadying the mind.’ [12] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in releasing the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out releasing the mind.’

“[13] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.’ [14] He trains

himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [*literally, fading*].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishing.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.'

"This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit.

The Four Establishings of Mindfulness

"And how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination?

"[1] On whatever occasion a monk breathing in long discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, discerns, 'I am breathing out long'; or breathing in short, discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, discerns, 'I am breathing out short'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out sensitive to the entire body'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out calming bodily fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—the in-&-out breath—is classed as a body among bodies, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[2] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out sensitive to rapture'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out sensitive to pleasure'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out sensitive to mental fabrication'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in... &... out calming mental fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on *feelings* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—careful attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

“[3] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out sensitive to the mind’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out gladdening the mind’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out steadying the mind’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out releasing the mind’: On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *mind* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I don’t say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of lapsed mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

“[4] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out focusing on inconstancy’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out focusing on dispassion’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out focusing on cessation’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in... &... out focusing on relinquishing’: On that occasion the monk remains focused on *mental qualities* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one who watches carefully with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

“This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination.

The Seven Factors for Awakening

“And how are the four establishings of mindfulness developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination?

[1] “On whatever occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion his mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When his mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then

mindfulness as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[2] “Remaining mindful in this way, he examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment. When he remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then *analysis of qualities* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[3] “In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, unflagging persistence is aroused. When unflagging persistence is aroused in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then *persistence* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[4] “In one whose persistence is aroused, a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises. When a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then *rapture* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[5] “For one who is enraptured, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of an enraptured monk grow calm, then *calm* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[6] “For one who is at ease—his body calmed—the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind of one who is at ease—his body calmed—becomes concentrated, then *concentration* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[7] “He oversees the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When he oversees the mind thus concentrated with equanimity, *equanimity* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[Similarly with the other three establishing of mindfulness: feelings, mind, & mental qualities.]

“This is how the four establishing of mindfulness are developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their

culmination.

Clear Knowing & Release

“And how are the seven factors for awakening developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination? There is the case where a monk develops *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion... *dispassion*... *cessation*, resulting in relinquishing. He develops *analysis of qualities* as a factor for awakening... *persistence* as a factor for awakening... *rapture* as a factor for awakening... *calm* as a factor for awakening... *concentration* as a factor for awakening... *equanimity* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion... *dispassion*... *cessation*, resulting in relinquishing.

“This is how the seven factors for awakening are developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination.”

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

– [MN 118](#)

§ 31. At Sāvattthī. There the Blessed One said, “Monks, do you develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing?”

When this was said, Ven. Ariṭṭha replied to the Blessed One, “I develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, lord.”

“But how do you develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, Ariṭṭha?”

“Having abandoned sensual desire for past sensual pleasures, lord, having done away with sensual desire for future sensual pleasures, and having thoroughly subdued perceptions of irritation with regard to internal & external events, I breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully.”

“There is that mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, Ariṭṭha. I don’t say that there isn’t. But as to how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination, listen and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” Ven. Ariṭṭha responded to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, “And how, Aritṭha, is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing brought in detail to its culmination? There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’... [16] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on relinquishing.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.’

“This, Aritṭha, is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination.”

– [SN 54:6](#)

§ 32. “Monks, concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. And how is concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?

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

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’... [16] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on relinquishing.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.’

“This is how concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit.

“I, too, monks, before my awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta, frequently remained with this abiding. When I frequently remained with this abiding, neither my body was fatigued nor were my eyes, and my mind, through lack of clinging/sustenance, was released from effluents.

“So if a monk should wish: ‘May neither my body be fatigued nor my eyes, and may my mind, through lack of clinging/sustenance, be

released from effluents,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May my memories & resolves related to the household life be abandoned,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I remain percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I remain percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome... percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is... percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting myself off from both—remain equanimous, mindful, & alert,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enter & remain in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enter & remain in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the fading of rapture, remain equanimous, mindful, & alert, sense pleasure with the body, and enter & remain in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, “Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding,”’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the abandoning of pleasure & stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—enter & remain in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite space,’ enter & remain in the dimension of the infinitude of space,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite consciousness,’ enter & remain in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) ‘There is nothing,’ enter & remain in the dimension of nothingness,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, enter & remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“If a monk should wish: ‘May I, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enter & remain in the cessation of perception & feeling,’ then he should attend carefully to this same concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“When concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is thus developed, thus pursued, then if he senses a feeling of pleasure, he discerns that it is inconstant, not grasped at, not relished. If he senses a feeling of pain, he discerns that it is inconstant, not grasped at, not relished. If he senses a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he discerns that it is inconstant, not grasped at, not relished. If he senses a feeling

of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. If he senses a feeling of pain, he senses it disjoined from it. If he senses a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. When sensing a feeling limited to the body, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.’ When sensing a feeling limited to life, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to life.’ He discerns that ‘With the break-up of the body, after the termination of life, everything that is experienced, not being relished, will grow cold right here.’

“Just as an oil lamp burns in dependence on oil & wick; and from the termination of the oil & wick—and from not being provided any other sustenance—it goes out unnourished; in the same way, when sensing a feeling limited to the body, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.’ When sensing a feeling limited to life, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to life.’ He discerns that ‘With the break-up of the body, after the termination of life, everything that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here.’”

– [SN 54:8](#)

§ 33. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesālī in the Great Wood, at the Gabled Hall. Now on that occasion the Blessed One, with many lines of reasoning, was giving the monks a talk on the unattractiveness (of the body), was speaking in praise of (the perception of) unattractiveness, was speaking in praise of the development of (the perception of) unattractiveness. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Monks, I wish to go into seclusion for half a month. I am not to be approached by anyone at all except for the one who brings almsfood.”

“As you say, lord,” the monks responded to him. And no one approached the Blessed One except for the one who brought almsfood.

Then the monks—(thinking,) “The Blessed One, with many lines of reasoning, has given a talk on the unattractiveness (of the body), has spoken in praise of (the perception of) unattractiveness, has spoken in praise of the development of (the perception of) unattractiveness”—remained committed to the development of (the perception of) unattractiveness in many modes & manners. They—ashamed, repelled, & disgusted with this body—sought for an assassin. In one day, ten

monks took the knife. In one day, twenty monks took the knife. In one day, thirty monks took the knife.

Then the Blessed One, emerging from his seclusion after half a month's time, said to Ven. Ānanda, "Ānanda, why does the community of monks seem so depleted?"

"Because, lord, the Blessed One, with many lines of reasoning, gave the monks a talk on the unattractiveness (of the body), spoke in praise of (the perception of) unattractiveness, spoke in praise of the development of (the perception of) unattractiveness. The monks... remained committed to the development of (the perception of) unattractiveness in many modes & manners. They—ashamed, repelled, & disgusted with this body—sought for an assassin. In one day, ten monks... twenty monks... thirty monks took the knife. It would be good, lord, if the Blessed One would explain another method so that this community of monks might be established in gnosis."

"In that case, Ānanda, gather in the assembly hall all the monks who live in dependence on Vesālī."

"As you say, lord," Ven. Ānanda responded. When he had gathered in the assembly hall all the monks who lived in dependence on Vesālī, he went to the Blessed One and said, "The community of monks is gathered, lord. Now is the time to do as the Blessed One sees fit."

Then the Blessed One went to the assembly hall and sat down on a seat made ready. As he was sitting there, he addressed the monks: "Monks, this concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is both peaceful & exquisite, a refreshing & pleasant abiding that immediately disperses & allays any evil, unskillful (mental) qualities that have arisen. Just as when, in the last month of the hot season, a great rain-cloud out of season immediately disperses & allays the dust & dirt that have been stirred up, in the same way this concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is both peaceful & exquisite, a refreshing & pleasant abiding that immediately disperses & allays any evil, unskillful (mental) qualities that have arisen.

"And how is concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be both peaceful & exquisite, a

refreshing & pleasant abiding that immediately disperses & allays any evil, unskillful (mental) qualities that have arisen?

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

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’... [16] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on relinquishing.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.’

“This is how concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be both peaceful & exquisite, a refreshing & pleasant abiding that immediately disperses & allays any evil, unskillful (mental) qualities that have arisen.”

– [SN 54:9](#)

§ 34. “There is the case where a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the *five hindrances*. And how does a monk remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the five hindrances? There is the case where, there being sensual desire present within, a monk discerns that ‘There is sensual desire present within me.’ Or, there being no sensual desire present within, he discerns that ‘There is no sensual desire present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen sensual desire. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of sensual desire once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of sensual desire that has been abandoned. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining hindrances: ill will, sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty.] ...

“Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the *seven factors for awakening*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for awakening? There is the case where, there being mindfulness as a factor for awakening present within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is present within me.’ Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor for awakening present

within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is not present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.” [The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors for awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, calm, concentration, & equanimity.]

– [DN 22](#)

§ 35. “And what is the food for the arising of unarisen *analysis of qualities* as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.”

– [SN 46:51](#)

§ 36. “If a monk would wish, ‘May I attain—whenever I want, without strain, without difficulty—the four jhānas that are heightened mental states, pleasant abidings in the here-&-now,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who does not neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I—with the ending of effluents—remain in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for myself right in the here-&-now,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who does not neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.”

– [AN 10:71](#)

§ 37. “The individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened

discernment, should approach an individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and ask him: 'How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquility of awareness, he should approach an individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness... and ask him, 'How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment."

– [AN 4:94](#)

§ 38. "I have also taught the step-by-step cessation of fabrications. When one has attained the first jhāna, speech has ceased. When one has attained the second jhāna, directed thoughts & evaluations [verbal fabrications] have ceased. When one has attained the third jhāna, rapture has ceased. When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breaths [bodily fabrications] have ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of space, the perception of forms has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of neither-perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has

ceased. When one has attained the cessation of perception & feeling, perceptions & feelings [mental fabrications] have ceased.

“Then, monk, I have also taught the step-by-step stilling of fabrications. When one has attained the first jhāna, speech has been stilled. When one has attained the second jhāna, directed thought & evaluation have been stilled. When one has attained the third jhāna, rapture has been stilled. When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breathing has been stilled. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of space, the perception of forms has been stilled. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space has been stilled. When one has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness has been stilled. When one has attained the dimension of neither-perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has been stilled. When one has attained the cessation of perception & feeling, perception & feeling have been stilled. When a monk’s effluents have ended, passion has been stilled, aversion has been stilled, delusion has been stilled.

“There are these six calmings. When one has attained the first jhāna, speech has been calmed. When one has attained the second jhāna, directed thought & evaluation have been calmed. When one has attained the third jhāna, rapture has been calmed. When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breathing has been calmed. When one has attained the cessation of perception & feeling, perception & feeling have been calmed. When a monk’s effluents have ended, passion has been calmed, aversion has been calmed, delusion has been calmed.”

– [SN 36:11](#)

§ 39. I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Sāriputta was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels’ Feeding Sanctuary. There he said to the monks, “This unbinding is pleasant, friends. This unbinding is pleasant.”

When this was said, Ven. Udāyin said to Ven. Sāriputta, “But what is the pleasure here, my friend, where there is nothing felt?”

“Just that is the pleasure here, my friend: where there is nothing felt. There are these five strands of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Whatever pleasure or joy arises in dependence on these five strands of sensuality, that is sensual pleasure.

“Now there is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *sensuality*, that is an affliction for him. Just as pain arises as an affliction in a healthy person for his affliction, even so the attention to perceptions dealing with sensuality that beset the monk is an affliction for him. Now, the Blessed One has said that whatever is an affliction is stress. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant.

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *directed thought*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the fading of rapture, remains in equanimity, mindful & alert, senses pleasure with the body, and enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *rapture*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the abandoning of pleasure & stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *equanimity*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite space,’ enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *form*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite consciousness,’ enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of the infinitude of space*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) ‘There is nothing,’ enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness*, that is an affliction for him...

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, enters & remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. If, as he remains there, he is beset with attention to perceptions dealing with *the dimension of nothingness*, that is an affliction for him. Now, the Blessed One has said that whatever is an affliction is stress. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant.

“Then there is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And, having seen (that) with discernment, his effluents are completely ended. So by this line of reasoning it may be known how unbinding is pleasant.”

– [AN 9:34](#)

§ 40. Then the Blessed One, emerging from his seclusion after three months’ time, addressed the monks: “Monks, if wanderers of other sects should ask you, ‘With what abiding did Master Gotama often remain

during the Rains retreat?’—thus asked, you should answer them: ‘The Blessed One often remained with concentration through in-&-out breathing during the Rains retreat’...

“Monks, if anyone speaking rightly were to described something as ‘a noble dwelling,’ ‘a brahmā-dwelling,’ ‘the Tathāgata’s dwelling,’ he would, speaking rightly, describe concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing as ‘a noble dwelling,’ ‘a brahma-dwelling,’ ‘the Tathāgata’s dwelling.’

“Those monks who are trainees, yearning for the unexcelled relief from bondage, their aspirations as yet unfulfilled: for them concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, leads to the ending of the effluents.

“As for those monks who are worthy ones, devoid of effluents—who have attained completion, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, destroyed the fetters of becoming, and are released through right knowledge: for them concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, leads to a pleasant dwelling here & now, and to mindfulness & alertness.

“If anyone speaking rightly were to described something as ‘a noble dwelling,’ ‘a brahma-dwelling,’ ‘the Tathāgata’s dwelling,’ he would, speaking rightly, describe concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing as ‘a noble dwelling,’ ‘a brahmā-dwelling,’ ‘the Tathāgata’s dwelling.’”

– SN 54:11

Mindfulness of Death

§ 41. “Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that ‘I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death’? There are beings who are intoxicated with a (typical) living person’s intoxication with life. Because of that intoxication with life, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that living person’s intoxication with life will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker....

“Now, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘I am not the only one subject to death, who has not gone beyond death. To the extent that there are beings—past and future, passing away and re-arising—all beings are subject to death, have not gone beyond death.’ When he/she often reflects on this, the (factors of the) path take birth. He/she sticks with that path, develops it, cultivates it. As he/she sticks with that path, develops it and cultivates it, the fetters are abandoned, the latent tendencies destroyed.”

– [AN 5:57](#)

§ 42. I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying at Nāḍika, in the Brick Hall. There he addressed the monks, “Monks!”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, ‘Mindfulness of death, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit & great benefit. It gains a footing in the deathless, has the deathless as its final end. Therefore you should develop mindfulness of death.’

When this was said, a certain monk addressed the Blessed One, “I already develop mindfulness of death.”

“And how do you develop mindfulness of death?”

“I think, ‘O, that I might live for a day & night, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal.’ This is how I develop mindfulness of death.”

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, “I, too, already develop mindfulness of death.”

“And how do you develop mindfulness of death?”

“I think, ‘O, that I might live for a day, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal.’ This is how I develop mindfulness of death.”

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, “I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... “I think, ‘O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to eat a meal, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal’”....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, “I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... “I think, ‘O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal’”....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, “I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... “I think, ‘O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal’”....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, “I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... “I think, ‘O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal.’ This is how I develop mindfulness of death.”

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed the monks. “Whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, ‘O, that I might live for a day & night... for a day... for the interval that it takes to eat a meal... for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal’—they are said to dwell heedlessly. They develop mindfulness of death slowly for the sake of ending the effluents.

“But whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, ‘O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food... for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal’—they are said to dwell heedfully. They develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents.

“Therefore you should train yourselves: ‘We will dwell heedfully. We will develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents.’ That is how you should train yourselves.”

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

– [AN 6:19](#)

§ 43. I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying at Nāḍika, in the Brick Hall. There he addressed the monks, “Monks, mindfulness of death—when developed & pursued—is of great fruit & great benefit. It gains a footing in the deathless, has the deathless as its final end. And how is mindfulness of death developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end?

“There is the case where a monk, as day departs and night returns, reflects: ‘Many are the (possible) causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm... piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.’ Then the monk should investigate: ‘Are there any evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die in the night?’ If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose

turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training himself day & night in skillful qualities.

“Further, there is the case where a monk, as night departs and day returns, reflects: ‘Many are the (possible) causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm... piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.’ Then the monk should investigate: ‘Are there any evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die during the day?’ If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful mental qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training himself day & night in skillful qualities.

“This, monks, is how mindfulness of death is developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end.”

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

– AN 6:20

§ 44. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala approached the Blessed One in the middle of the day and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him: “Well now, your majesty, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?”

“Just now, lord, I was engaged in the sort of royal affairs typical of head-anointed noble-warrior kings intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth.”

“What do you think, your majesty? Suppose a man, trustworthy and reliable, were to come to you from the east and on arrival would say: ‘If it please your majesty, you should know that I come from the east. There I saw a great mountain, as high as the clouds, coming this way, crushing all living beings [in its path]. Do whatever you think should be done.’ Then a second man were to come to you from the west... Then a third man were to come to you from the north... Then a fourth man were to come to you from the south and on arrival would say: ‘If it please your majesty, you should know that I come from the south. There I saw a great mountain, as high as the clouds, coming this way, crushing all living beings. Do whatever you think should be done.’ If, your majesty, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life—the human state being so hard to obtain—what should be done?”

“If, lord, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life—the human state being so hard to obtain—what else should be done but Dhamma-conduct, right conduct, skillful deeds, meritorious deeds?”

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

"As aging and death are rolling in on me, lord, what else should be done but Dhamma-conduct, right conduct, skillful deeds, meritorious deeds?"

"There are, lord, elephant battles (fought by) head-anointed noble-warrior kings intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth; but there is no use for those elephant battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. There are cavalry battles... chariot battles... infantry battles... but there is no use for those infantry battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. In this royal court there are counselors who, when the enemies arrive, are capable of dividing them by their wits; but there is no use for those battles of wits, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. In this royal court there is abundant bullion and gold stored in vaults and depositories, and with such wealth we are capable of buying off enemies when they come; but there is no use for those battles of wealth, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. As aging and death are rolling in on me, venerable sir, what else should be done but Dhamma-conduct, right conduct, skillful deeds, meritorious deeds?"

"So it is, your majesty! So it is, your majesty! As aging and death are rolling in on you, what else should be done but Dhamma-conduct, right conduct, skillful deeds, meritorious deeds?"

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said that, the One Well-Gone, the Teacher, further said this:

"Like massive boulders,
mountains pressing against the sky,
moving in from all sides,
crushing the four directions,
so aging and death
come rolling over living beings:
noble warriors, priests, priests,

workers, outcastes, & scavengers.

They spare nothing.
They trample everything.

Here elephant troops can hold no ground,
nor can chariots or infantry,
nor can a battle of wits
or wealth win out.

So a wise person,
seeing his own good,
steadfast, secures confidence
in the Buddha, Dhamma, & Saṅgha.

One who practices the Dhamma
in thought, word, & deed,
receives praise here on earth
and after death rejoices in heaven.”

– [SN 3:25](#)

§ 45. You shouldn’t chase after the past,
or place expectations on the future.

What is past
is left behind.

The future
is as yet unreached.

Whatever quality is present
you clearly see right there,
right there.

Not taken in, unshaken,
that’s how you develop the heart.

Ardently doing
what should be done today,
for—who knows?— tomorrow
death.

There is no bargaining

with Mortality & his mighty horde.
Whoever lives thus ardently,
 relentlessly
 both day & night,
has truly had an auspicious day:
So says the Peaceful Sage.

– [MN 131](#)

§ 46. “And who is the person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death? There is the case of the person who has abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, and craving for sensuality.... who has abandoned passion, desire, fondness, thirst, fever, and craving for the body.... who has done what is good, what is skillful, has given protection to those in fear, and has not done what is evil, savage, or cruel.... who has no doubt or perplexity, who has arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma. When he comes down with a serious disease... he does not grieve, is not tormented, does not weep or beat his breast or grow delirious. This is another person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death.”

– [AN 4:184](#)

§ 47. “Just as a fire, Vaccha, burns with sustenance, and not without sustenance, even so I declare the rebirth of one who has sustenance, and not of one without sustenance.”

“But, Venerable Gotama, at the moment a flame is being swept on by the wind and goes a far distance, what do you say is its sustenance then?”

“Vaccha, when a flame is being swept on by the wind and goes a far distance, I say that it is wind-sustained. The wind, Vaccha, is its sustenance at that time.”

“And at the moment when a being sets this body aside and has not yet attained another body, what do you say is its sustenance then?”

“Actually, Vaccha, when a being sets this body aside and has not yet attained another body, I say that it is craving-sustained. Craving, Vaccha, is its sustenance at that time.”

– [SN 44:9](#)

§ 48. *Mogharāja*:

How does one view the world
so as not to be seen
by Death's king?

The Buddha:

View the world, Mogharāja,
as empty—
always mindful
to have removed any view
about self.
This way one is above & beyond death.
This is how one views the world
so as not to be seen
by Death's king.

– [Sn 5:15](#)

Mindfulness Immersed in the Body

§ 49. “Now, how is mindfulness immersed in the body developed, how is it pursued, so as to be of great fruit & great benefit?

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

“Breathing in long, he discerns that he is breathing in long; or breathing out long, he discerns that he is breathing out long. Or breathing in short, he discerns that he is breathing in short; or breathing out short, he discerns that he is breathing out short. He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to the entire body and to breathe out sensitive to the entire body. He trains himself to breathe in calming bodily fabrication [the breath] and to breathe out calming bodily fabrication. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

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

“Furthermore, when going forward & returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward & looking away... when bending & extending his limbs... when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe & his bowl... when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring... when urinating & defecating... when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert.... This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“Furthermore... just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain—wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans,

sesame seeds, husked rice—and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, ‘This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice’; in the same way, the monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: ‘In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine’.... This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“Furthermore... just as a skilled butcher or his apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it up into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body—however it stands, however it is disposed—in terms of properties: ‘In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property’.... This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“Furthermore, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground—one day, two days, three days dead—bloated, livid, & festering, he applies it to this very body, ‘This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate’....

“Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, & various other creatures... a skeleton smeared with flesh & blood, connected with tendons... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons... a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons... bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions—here a hand bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib, there a chest bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull... the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells... piled up, more than a year old... decomposed into a powder: He applies it to this very body, ‘This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate.’

“And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their

abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

The Four Jhānas

“Furthermore, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful mental qualities, he enters and remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. Just as if a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without—would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“And furthermore, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and with the skies supplying abundant showers time & again, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate & pervade, suffuse & fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and

with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“And furthermore, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a lotus pond, some of the lotuses, born & growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated & pervaded, suffused & filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

“And furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. Just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

Fullness of Mind

“Monks, whoever develops & pursues mindfulness immersed in the body encompasses whatever skillful qualities are on the side of clear knowing. Just as whoever pervades the great ocean with his awareness encompasses whatever rivulets flow down into the ocean, in the same way, whoever develops & pursues mindfulness immersed in the body encompasses whatever skillful qualities are on the side of clear knowing.

“In whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is not developed, not pursued, Māra gains entry, Māra gains a foothold.

“Suppose that a man were to throw a heavy stone ball into a pile of wet clay. What do you think, monks? Would that heavy stone ball gain entry into the pile of wet clay?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is not developed, not pursued, Māra gains entry, Māra gains a foothold.

“Now, suppose that there were a dry, sapless piece of timber, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, ‘I’ll light a fire. I’ll produce heat.’ What do you think? Would he be able to light a fire and produce heat by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the dry, sapless piece of timber?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is not developed, not pursued, Māra gains entry, Māra gains a foothold.

“Now, suppose that there were an empty, hollow water-pot set on a stand, and a man were to come along carrying a load of water. What do you think? Would he get a place to pour out his water?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is not developed, not pursued, Māra gains entry, Māra gains a foothold.

“Now, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is developed, is pursued, Māra gains no entry, Māra gains no foothold. Suppose that a man were to throw a ball of string against a door panel made entirely of

heartwood. What do you think? Would that light ball of string gain entry into the door panel made entirely of heartwood?"

"No, venerable sir."

"In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is developed, is pursued, Māra gains no entry, Māra gains no foothold.

"Now, suppose that there were a wet, sappy piece of timber, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll light a fire. I'll produce heat.' What do you think? Would he be able to light a fire and produce heat by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy piece of timber?"

"No, venerable sir."

"In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is developed, is pursued, Māra gains no entry, Māra gains no foothold.

"Now, suppose that there were a water-pot set on a stand, full of water up to the brim so that crows could drink out of it, and a man were to come along carrying a load of water. What do you think? Would he get a place to pour out his water?"

"No, lord."

"In the same way, in whomever mindfulness immersed in the body is developed, is pursued, Māra gains no entry, Māra gains no foothold.

An Opening to the Higher Knowledges

"When anyone has developed & pursued mindfulness immersed in the body, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know and realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

"Suppose that there were a water jar, set on a stand, brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to tip it in any way at all, would water spill out?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, when anyone has developed & pursued mindfulness immersed in the body, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know and realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

“Suppose there were a rectangular water tank—set on level ground, bounded by dikes—brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to loosen the dikes anywhere at all, would water spill out?”

“Yes, lord.”

“In the same way, when anyone has developed & pursued mindfulness immersed in the body, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know and realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

“Suppose there were a chariot on level ground at four crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with whips lying ready, so that a skilled driver, a trainer of tamable horses, might mount and—taking the reins with his left hand and the whip with his right—drive out and back, to whatever place and by whichever road he liked; in the same way, anyone has developed & pursued mindfulness immersed in the body, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know and realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

Ten Benefits

“Monks, for one in whom mindfulness immersed in the body is cultivated, developed, pursued, given a means of transport, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, & well-undertaken, ten benefits can be expected. Which ten?

[1] “He conquers displeasure & delight, and displeasure does not conquer him. He remains victorious over any displeasure that has arisen.

[2] “He conquers fear & dread, and fear & dread do not conquer him. He remains victorious over any fear & dread that have arisen.

[3] “He is resistant to cold, heat, hunger, thirst, the touch of gadflies & mosquitoes, wind & sun & creeping things; to abusive, hurtful language; he is the sort that can endure bodily feelings that, when they arise, are painful, sharp, stabbing, fierce, distasteful, disagreeable, deadly.

[4] “He can attain at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas—heightened mental states providing a pleasant abiding in the here & now.

[5] “He wields manifold supranormal powers. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds.

[6] “He hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

[7] “He knows the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with his own awareness. He discerns a mind with passion as a mind with passion, and a mind without passion as a mind without passion. He discerns a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion, and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion. He discerns a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion, and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion. He discerns a restricted mind as a restricted mind, and a scattered mind as a scattered mind. He discerns an enlarged mind as an enlarged mind, and an unenlarged mind as an unenlarged mind. He discerns an excelled mind [one that is not at the most excellent level] as an excelled mind, and an unexcelled mind as an unexcelled mind. He discerns a centered mind as a centered mind, and an uncentered mind as an uncentered mind. He discerns a released mind as a released mind, and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind.

[8] “He recollects his manifold past lives [*literally*, previous homes], i.e., one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction and expansion, (recollecting,) ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’ Thus he remembers his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

[9] “He sees—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.’ Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma.

[10] “Through the ending of the effluents, he remains in the effluent-free release of awareness and release of discernment, having known and made them manifest for himself right in the here and now.

“Monks, for one in whom mindfulness immersed in the body is cultivated, developed, pursued, given a means of transport, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, & well-undertaken, these ten benefits can be expected.”

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

– [*MN 119*](#)

§ 50. Whether walking, standing,
sitting, or lying down,
it flexes & stretches:

This is the body's movement.
Joined together with tendons & bones,
plastered over with muscle & skin,
hidden by complexion,
the body isn't seen
for what it is:
filled with intestines, filled with stomach,
with the lump of the liver,
bladder, lungs, heart,
kidneys, spleen,
mucus, sweat, saliva, fat,
blood, synovial fluid, bile, & oil.
On top of that,
in nine streams,
filth is always flowing from it:
from the eyes : eye secretions,
from the ears : ear secretions,
from the nose : mucus,
from the mouth it vomits :
now vomit,
now phlegm,
now bile;
from the body : beads of sweat.
And on top of that,
its hollow head is filled with brains.

The fool, beset by ignorance,
thinks it beautiful.
but when it lies dead,
swollen, livid,
cast away in a charnel ground,
even relatives don't care for it.
Dogs feed on it,
jackals, wolves, & worms.
Crows & vultures feed on it,
along with any other animals there.

Having heard the Awakened One's words,

the discerning monk
comprehends, for he sees it
for what it is:
“As this is, so is that.
As that, so this.”
Within & without,
he should let desire for the body
fade away.
With desire & passion faded away,
the discerning monk arrives here:
at the deathless,
the calm,
the unfallen, undying state
of unbinding.

This two-footed thing is cared for,
filthy, evil-smelling,
filled with various carcasses,
oozing out here & there:
Whoever would think,
on the basis of a body like this,
to exalt himself or disparage another:
What is that
if not blindness?

– [Sn 1:11](#)

§ 51. “I will teach you a Dhamma discourse on bondage & lack of bondage. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded.

The Blessed One said: “A woman attends inwardly to her feminine faculties, her feminine gestures, her feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voice, feminine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, she attends outwardly to masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voices, masculine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being

excited & delighted by that, she wants to be bonded to what is outside her, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in her femininity, a woman goes into bondage with reference to men. This is how a woman does not transcend her femininity.

“A man attends inwardly to his masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voice, masculine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he attends outwardly to feminine faculties, feminine gestures, feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voices, feminine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he wants to be bonded to what is outside him, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in his masculinity, a man goes into bondage with reference to women. This is how a man does not transcend his masculinity.

“And how is there lack of bondage? A woman does not attend inwardly to her feminine faculties... feminine charms. She is not excited by that, not delighted by that... does not attend outwardly to masculine faculties... masculine charms. She is not excited by that, not delighted by that... does not want to be bonded to what is outside her, does not want whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Not delighting, not caught up in her femininity, a woman does not go into bondage with reference to men. This is how a woman transcends her femininity.

“A man does not attend inwardly to his masculine faculties... masculine charms. He is not excited by that, not delighted by that... does not attend outwardly to feminine faculties... feminine charms. He is not excited by that, not delighted by that... does not want to be bonded to what is outside him, does not want whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Not delighting, not caught up in his masculinity, a man does not go into bondage with reference to women. This is how a man transcends his masculinity.

“This is how there is lack of bondage. And this is the Dhamma discourse on bondage & lack of bondage.”

– [AN 7:48](#)

§ 52. The Blessed One said, “Suppose, monks, that a large crowd of people comes thronging together, saying, ‘A beauty queen! A beauty queen!’ And suppose that the beauty queen is highly accomplished at singing & dancing, so that an even greater crowd comes thronging, saying, ‘The beauty queen is singing! The beauty queen is dancing!’ Then a man comes along, desiring life & shrinking from death, desiring pleasure & abhorring pain. They say to him, ‘Now look here, mister. You must take this bowl filled to the brim with oil and carry it on your head in between the great crowd & the beauty queen. A man with a raised sword will follow right behind you, and wherever you spill even a drop of oil, right there will he cut off your head.’ Now what do you think, monks? Will that man, not paying attention to the bowl of oil, let himself get distracted outside?”

“No, lord.”

“I have given you this parable to convey a meaning. The meaning is this: The bowl filled to the brim with oil stands for mindfulness immersed in the body. Thus you should train yourselves: ‘We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, give it a means of transport, give it a grounding, steady it, consolidate it, and undertake it well.’ That is how you should train yourselves.”

– [SN 47:20](#)

§ 53. “And what is lack of restraint? There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is set on pleasing forms, is repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness unestablished, with limited awareness. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where any evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

“Hearing a sound with the ear....

“Smelling an aroma with the nose....

“Tasting a flavor with the tongue....

“Touching a tactile sensation with the body....

“Cognizing an idea with the intellect, he is set on pleasing ideas, is repelled by unpleasing ideas, and remains with body-mindfulness unestablished, with limited awareness. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where any

evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

“Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope. Catching a snake, he would bind it with a strong rope. Catching a crocodile... a bird... a dog... a hyena... a monkey, he would bind it with a strong rope. Binding them all with a strong rope, and tying a knot in the middle, he would set chase to them.

“Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat. The snake would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the anthill.’ The crocodile would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the water.’ The bird would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll fly up into the air.’ The dog would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the village.’ The hyena would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the charnel ground.’ The monkey would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the forest.’ And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would submit, they would surrender, they would come under the sway of whichever among them was the strongest. In the same way, when a monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is undeveloped & unpursued, the eye pulls toward pleasing forms, while unpleasing forms are repellent. The ear pulls toward pleasing sounds.... The nose pulls toward pleasing aromas.... The tongue pulls toward pleasing flavors.... The body pulls toward pleasing tactile sensations.... The intellect pulls toward pleasing ideas, while unpleasing ideas are repellent. This, monks, is lack of restraint.

“And what is restraint? There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is not set on pleasing forms, is not repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness established, with immeasurable awareness. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where all evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

“Hearing a sound with the ear....

“Smelling an aroma with the nose....

“Tasting a flavor with the tongue....

“Touching a tactile sensation with the body....

“Cognizing an idea with the intellect, he is not set on pleasing ideas, is not repelled by unpleasing ideas, and remains with body-mindfulness established, with immeasurable awareness. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where all evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without remainder.

“Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope. Catching a snake, he would bind it with a strong rope. Catching a crocodile... a bird... a dog... a hyena... a monkey, he would bind it with a strong rope. Binding them all with a strong rope, he would tether them to a strong post or stake.

“Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat. The snake would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the anthill.’ The crocodile would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the water.’ The bird would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll fly up into the air.’ The dog would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the village.’ The hyena would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the charnel ground.’ The monkey would pull, thinking, ‘I’ll go into the forest.’ And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would stand, sit, or lie down right there next to the post or stake. In the same way, when a monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is developed & pursued, the eye does not pull toward pleasing forms, and unpleasing forms are not repellent. The ear does not pull toward pleasing sounds.... The nose does not pull toward pleasing aromas.... The tongue does not pull toward pleasing flavors.... The body does not pull toward pleasing tactile sensations.... The intellect does not pull toward pleasing ideas, and unpleasing ideas are not repellent. This, monks, is restraint.

“The ‘strong post or stake’ is a term for mindfulness immersed in the body.

“Thus you should train yourselves: ‘We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, give it a means of transport, give it a grounding. We will steady it, consolidate it, and set about it properly.’ That is how you should train yourselves.”

– [SN 35:206](#)

§ 54. “These are the four modes of practice. Which four? Painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition, & pleasant practice with quick intuition.

“And which is painful practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a monk remains focused on unattractiveness with regard to the body. Percipient of loathsomeness with regard to food & non-delight with regard to the entire world, he remains focused on impermanence with regard to all fabrications. The perception of death is well established within him. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner—strength of conviction, strength of conscience, strength of concern, strength of persistence, & strength of discernment—but his five faculties... are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with slow intuition.

“And which is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk remains focused on unattractiveness with regard to the body...focused on impermanence with regard to all fabrications. The perception of death is well established within him. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... and his five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.

“And which is pleasant practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna... second jhāna... third jhāna... fourth jhāna. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... but his five faculties... are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with slow intuition.

“And which is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna... second jhāna... third jhāna... fourth jhāna. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... and his five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that

leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition.

“These are the four modes of practice.”

– [AN 4:163](#)

§ 55. “Whoever pervades the great ocean with his awareness encompasses whatever rivulets flow down into the ocean. In the same way, whoever develops & pursues mindfulness immersed in the body encompasses whatever skillful qualities are on the side of clear knowing.”

“When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed, the mind is calmed, thinking & evaluating are stilled, and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body.”

“When one thing is practiced & pursued, ignorance is abandoned, clear knowing arises, the conceit ‘I am’ is abandoned, latent tendencies are uprooted, fetters are abandoned. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body.”

“Those who do not taste mindfulness of the body do not taste the deathless. Those who taste mindfulness of the body taste the deathless.”

“Those who are heedless of mindfulness of the body are heedless of the deathless.”

“Those who comprehend mindfulness of the body comprehend the deathless.”

– *AN 1:225, 1:227, 1:230, 1:235, 1:239, 1:245*

Recollection of Stilling

§ 56. “Whereas formerly he foolishly had greed—as well as desire & infatuation—he has now abandoned them, their root destroyed like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Whereas formerly he foolishly had malice—as well as ill-will & hatred—he has now abandoned them.... Whereas formerly he foolishly had ignorance—as well as delusion & confusion—he has now abandoned them, their root destroyed like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Thus a monk so endowed is endowed with the highest determination for stilling, for this—the stilling of passions, aversions, & delusions—is the highest noble stilling.”

– *MN 140*

§ 57. “I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the first jhāna... the second jhāna... the third... the fourth... the dimension of the infinitude of space... the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness... the dimension of nothingness. I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

“‘I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the first jhāna.’ Thus it has been said. In reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

“Suppose that an archer or archer’s apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

“Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the effluents. Or, if not, then—through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the five lower fetters [self-identity views, grasping at habits & practices, uncertainty, sensual passion, and irritation]—he is due to be reborn (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

“‘I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the first jhāna.’ Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with the second, third, and fourth jhāna.]

“‘I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the dimension of the infinitude of space.’ Thus it has been said. In reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk—with the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite space’—enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite — the

pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

“Suppose that an archer or archer’s apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the pacification of all fabrications; the relinquishing of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

“Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the effluents. Or, if not, then—through this very Dhamma-passion, this very Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the five lower fetters—he is due to be reborn (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

“‘I tell you, the ending of the effluents depends on the dimension of the infinitude of space.’ Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness and the dimension of nothingness.]

“Thus, as far as the perception-attainments go, that is as far as gnosis-penetration goes. As for these two dimensions—the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception & the attainment of the cessation of feeling & perception—I tell you that they are to be rightly explained by those monks who are meditators, skilled in attaining, skilled in attaining & emerging, who have attained & emerged in dependence on them.”

– [AN 9:36](#)

§ 58. “Among whatever qualities [*dhammas*] there may be, fabricated or unfabricated, the quality of dispassion—the subduing of intoxication,

the elimination of thirst, the uprooting of attachment, the breaking of the round, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, the realization of unbinding—is considered supreme. Those who have confidence in the quality of dispassion have confidence in what is supreme; and for those with confidence in the supreme, supreme is the result.”

– [Iti 90](#)

§ 59. “There is that dimension where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind; neither dimension of the infinitude of space, nor dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, nor dimension of nothingness, nor dimension of neither perception nor non-perception; neither this world, nor the next world, nor sun, nor moon. And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor staying; neither passing away nor arising: unestablished, unevolving, without support (mental object). This, just this, is the end of stress.”

– [Ud 8:1](#)

§ 60. It’s hard to see the unaffected,
for the truth is not easily seen.
Craving is pierced
in one who knows;
For one who sees,
there is nothing.

– [Ud 8:2](#)

§ 61. “There is, monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated. If there were not that unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated, there would not be the case that emancipation from the born, become, made, fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated, emancipation from the born, become, made, fabricated is discerned.”

– [Ud 8:3](#)

§ 62. “One who is dependent has wavering. One who is independent has no wavering. There being no wavering, there is calm. There being

calm, there is no desire. There being no desire, there is no coming or going. There being no coming or going, there is no passing away or arising. There being no passing away or arising, there is neither a here nor a there nor a between-the-two. This, just this, is the end of stress.”

– [Ud 8:4](#)

§ 64. ““He has been stilled where the currents of construing do not flow. And when the currents of construing do not flow, he is said to be a sage at peace.’ Thus it was said. With reference to what was it said? ‘I am’ is a construing. ‘I am this’ is a construing. ‘I shall be’ is a construing. ‘I shall not be’... ‘I shall be possessed of form’... ‘I shall not be possessed of form’... ‘I shall be percipient’... ‘I shall not be percipient’... ‘I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient’ is a construing. Construing is a disease, construing is a cancer, construing is an arrow. By going beyond all construing, he is called a sage at peace.

“Furthermore, a sage at peace does not take birth, does not age, does not die, is unagitated, and is free from longing. He has nothing whereby he would take birth. Not taking birth, will he age? Not aging, will he die? Not dying, will he be agitated? Not being agitated, for what will he long? It was in reference to this that it was said, ‘He has been stilled where the currents of construing do not flow. And when the currents of construing do not flow, he is said to be a sage at peace.’”

– [MN 140](#)

§ 63. There’s no fire like passion,
no loss like anger,
no pain like the aggregates,
no bliss other than peace.

Hunger: the foremost illness.
Fabrications: the foremost pain.
For one knowing this truth
as it has come to be,
 unbinding
is the foremost bliss.

– [Dhp 202-203](#)

§ 65. How inconstant
are fabricated things!
Their nature: to arise & pass away.
They disband as they are arising.
Their total stilling is bliss.

– DN 16

Glossary

Arahant: A “worthy one” or “pure one;” a person whose mind is free of defilement and thus is not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

Āsava: Effluent; fermentation. Four qualities—sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance—that “flow out” of the mind and create the flood of the round of death and rebirth.

Asura: A member of a race of beings who, like the Titans in Greek mythology, battled the devas for sovereignty in heaven and lost.

Bodhisatta: “A being (striving) for awakening;” the term used to describe the Buddha before he actually became Buddha, from his first aspiration to Buddhahood until the time of his full awakening. Sanskrit form: *Bodhisattva*.

Brahmā: An inhabitant of the heavenly realms of form or formlessness. Sometimes used metaphorically to refer to the Buddha as well.

Brahman: In common usage, a brahman is a member of the priestly caste, which claimed to be the highest caste in India, based on birth. In a specifically Buddhist usage, “brahman” can also mean an arahant, conveying the point that excellence is based, not on birth or race, but on the qualities attained in the mind.

Brahmavihāra: Sublime abiding. The development of four attitudes toward the beings of the cosmos, oneself included: unlimited goodwill, unlimited compassion, unlimited empathetic joy, and unlimited equanimity. Also called the four immeasurables.

Deva (-tā): Literally, “shining one.” An inhabitant of the terrestrial or heavenly realms higher than the human.

Dhamma: (1) Event; action; (2) a phenomenon in and of itself; (3) mental quality; (4) doctrine, teaching; (5) *nibbāna* (although there are passages describing nibbāna as the abandoning of all dhammas). Sanskrit form: *Dharma*.

Jhāna: Mental absorption. A state of strong concentration focused on a single sensation or mental notion. This term is derived from the verb *jhāyati*, which means to burn with a steady, still flame.

Kamma: Intentional act. Sanskrit form: *Karma*.

Māra: The personification of temptation and all forces, within and without, that create obstacles to release from *saṃsāra*.

Nibbāna: Literally, the “unbinding” of the mind from passion, aversion, and delusion, and from the entire round of death and rebirth. As this term also denotes the extinguishing of a fire, it carries connotations of stilling, cooling, and peace. “Total nibbāna” in some contexts denotes the experience of awakening; in others, the final passing away of an arahant. Sanskrit form: *Nirvāṇa*.

Nigaṇṭha: Literally, one without ties. An ascetic in the Jain religion.

Pāli: The name of the early extant canon of the Buddha’s teachings and, by extension, of the language in which it was recorded.

Samvega: A sense of dismay over the meaninglessness and futility of life as it is ordinarily lived, combined with a strong sense of urgency in looking for a way out.

Saṅgha: On the conventional (*sammatti*) level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns. On the ideal (*ariya*) level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry.

Tathāgata: Literally, “one who has become authentic (*tatha-āgata*) or is truly gone (*tathā-gata*)”: an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his arahant disciples.

Upasatha: Observance day, coinciding with the full moon, new moon, and half moons. Lay Buddhists often observe the eight precepts on this day. Monks recite the Pāṭimokkha on the full moon and new moon uposathas.

Vinaya: The monastic discipline, whose rules and traditions comprise six volumes in printed text.

Abbreviations

AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Dhp	Dhammapada
DN	Dīgha Nikāya
Iti	Itivuttaka
MN	Majjhima Nikāya
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sn	Sutta Nipāta
Thag	Theragāthā
Ud	Udāna