



*Into
the
Stream*

Into the Stream

A STUDY GUIDE ON THE
FIRST STAGE OF AWAKENING

PREPARED BY

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*Sole dominion over the earth,
going to heaven,
lordship over all worlds:
The fruit of stream entry
excels them.*

—Dhp 178

THE WAY TO STREAM ENTRY

The Pali Canon recognizes four levels of Awakening, the first of which is called stream entry. This gains its name from the fact that a person who has attained this level has entered the "stream" flowing inevitably to nibbana. He/she is guaranteed to achieve full awakening within seven lifetimes at most, and in the interim will not be reborn in any of the lower realms.

This study guide on stream entry is divided into two parts. The first deals with the practices leading to stream entry; the second, with the experience of stream entry and its results.

The practices leading to stream entry are encapsulated in four factors:

Association with people of integrity is a factor for stream entry.

Listening to the true Dhamma is a factor for stream entry.

Appropriate attention is a factor for stream entry.

Practice in accordance with the Dhamma is a factor for stream entry.

—SN 55:5

These factors form the framework for the first part of this study guide.

The Canon's treatment of these factors touches on questions of interest to all meditators, regardless of whether their practice aims all the way to Awakening: How can you recognize a trustworthy teacher? How can you tell the true Dhamma from counterfeit Dhamma? What are the rewards that come from listening to the Dhamma? Which questions should you ask yourself in the course of the practice? What kind of practice qualifies as being in accordance with the Dhamma? What kind of qualities do you need to develop to benefit most from your practice?

For your practice to lead to Awakening, you must develop reliable standards for answering these questions. The Buddha offers some preliminary guidance on developing these standards in his instructions to the brahman teenager, Kapadika Bharadvaja.

Kapadika Bharadvaja: "To what extent is there an awakening to the truth? To what extent does one awaken to the truth? We ask Master Gotama about awakening to the truth."

The Buddha: "There is the case, Bharadvaja, where a monk lives in

dependence on a certain village or town. Then a householder or householder's son goes to him and observes him with regard to three mental qualities—qualities based on greed, qualities based on aversion, qualities based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on greed that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on greed.... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not greedy. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by a person who's greedy.

"When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on greed, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on aversion... based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on delusion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on delusion.... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not deluded. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by a person who's deluded.

"When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on delusion, he places conviction in him. With the arising of conviction, he visits him & grows close to him. Growing close to him, he lends ear. Lending ear, he hears the Dhamma. Hearing the Dhamma, he remembers it. Remembering it, he penetrates the meaning of those dhammas. Penetrating the meaning, he comes to an agreement through pondering those dhammas. There being an agreement through pondering those dhammas, desire arises. With the arising of desire, he becomes willing. Willing, he contemplates [lit: "weighs," "compares"]. Contemplating, he makes an exertion. Exerting himself, he both realizes the ultimate meaning of the truth with his body and sees by penetrating it with discernment.

"To this extent, Bharadvaja, there is an awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. I describe this as an awakening to the truth. But it is not yet the final attainment of the truth."

Kapadika Bharadvaja: "Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is an

awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. We regard this as an awakening to the truth. But to what extent is there the final attainment of the truth? To what extent does one finally attain the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final attainment of the truth.”

The Buddha: “The cultivation, development, & pursuit of those very same qualities: to this extent, Bharadvaja, there is the final attainment of the truth. To this extent one finally attains the truth. I describe this as the final attainment of the truth.”

—MN 95

Association with People of Integrity

“With regard to external factors, I don’t envision any other single factor like friendship with admirable people as doing so much for a monk in training, who has not attained the goal but remains intent on the unsurpassed safety from bondage. A monk who is a friend with admirable people abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful.”

A monk who is a friend
to admirable people
—who’s reverential, respectful,
doing what his friends advise—
mindful, alert,
attains step by step
the ending of all fetters.

—Iti 17

As he was seated to one side, Ven. Ananda said to the Blessed One, “This is half of the holy life, lord: having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues.”

“Don’t say that, Ananda. Don’t say that. Having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, he can be expected to develop & pursue the noble eightfold path.

“And how does a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develop & pursue the noble eightfold path? There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops right resolve... right speech... right action... right livelihood... right effort... right

mindfulness... right concentration dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is how a monk who has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, develops & pursues the noble eightfold path.

“And through this line of reasoning one may know how having admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues is actually the whole of the holy life: It’s in dependence on me as an admirable friend that beings subject to birth have gained release from birth, that beings subject to aging have gained release from aging, that beings subject to death have gained release from death, that beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair have gained release from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair.”

—SN 45:2

“And what does it mean to have admirable people as friends? There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders’ sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called having admirable people as friends....

“And what does it mean to be consummate in conviction? There is the case where a noble disciple has conviction, is convinced of the Tathagata’s Awakening: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge and 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.’ This is called being consummate in conviction.

“And what does it mean to be consummate in virtue? There is the case where a noble disciple abstains from taking life, abstains from stealing, abstains from illicit sexual conduct, abstains from lying, abstains from taking intoxicants that cause heedlessness. This is called being consummate in virtue.

“And what does it mean to be consummate in generosity? There is the case of a noble disciple, his awareness cleansed of the stain of miserliness, living at home, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called being consummate in generosity.

“And what does it mean to be consummate in discernment? There is the

case where a noble disciple is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising and passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. This is called being consummate in discernment.”

—AN 8:54

Admirable friends are to be recognized both by what they say and by what they do.

“For the person who transgresses in one thing, I tell you, there is no evil deed that is not to be done. Which one thing? This: telling a deliberate lie.”

The person who lies,
who transgress in this one thing,
transcending concern for the world beyond:
there’s no evil
he might not do.

—Iti 25

“A friend endowed with these three qualities is worth associating with. Which three? He/she gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, endures what is hard to endure. A friend endowed with these three qualities is worth associating with.”

—AN 3:133

“These three things have been promulgated by wise people, by people who are truly good. Which three? Generosity...going-forth [from the home life]...& service to one’s mother & father. These three things have been promulgated by wise people, by people who are truly good.”

—AN 3:45

“Now what is the level of a person of no integrity? A person of no integrity is ungrateful, does not acknowledge the help given to him. This ingratitude, this lack of acknowledgment is second nature among rude people. It is entirely on the level of people of no integrity. A person of integrity is grateful & acknowledges the help given to him. This gratitude, this acknowledgment is second nature among admirable people. It is entirely on the level of people of integrity.”

—AN 2:31

“A person endowed with these four qualities can be known as ‘a person of integrity.’ Which four?”

“There is the case where a person of integrity, when asked, doesn’t reveal another person’s bad points, to say nothing of when unasked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person’s bad points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back....

“Then again, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals another person’s good points, to say nothing of when asked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person’s good points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back....

“Then again, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals his own bad points, to say nothing of when asked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own bad points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back....

“Then again, a person of integrity, when asked, doesn’t reveal his own good points, to say nothing of when unasked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own good points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back....

“Monks, a person endowed with these four qualities can be known as ‘a person of integrity.’”

—AN 4:73

[1] “It’s through living together that a person’s virtue may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning’: Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said?

“There is the case where one individual, through living with another, knows this: ‘For a long time this person has been torn, broken, spotted, splattered in his actions. He hasn’t been consistent in his actions. He hasn’t practiced consistently with regard to the precepts. He is an unprincipled person, not a virtuous, principled one.’ And then there is the case where one individual, through living with another, knows this: ‘For a long time this person has been untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered in his actions. He has been consistent in his actions. He has practiced consistently with regard to the precepts. He is a virtuous, principled person, not an unprincipled one.’

“It’s through living together that a person’s virtue may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning’: Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said.

[2] “It’s through dealing with a person that his purity may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not

by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said?

"There is the case where one individual, through dealing with another, knows this: 'This person deals one way when one-on-one, another way when with two, another way when with three, another way when with many. His earlier dealings do not jibe with his later dealings. He is impure in his dealings, not pure.' And then there is the case where one individual, through dealing with another, knows this: 'The way this person deals when one-on-one, is the same way he deals when with two, when with three, when with many. His earlier dealings jibe with his later dealings. He is pure in his dealings, not impure.'

"It's through dealing with a person that his purity may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said.

[3] "It's through adversity that a person's endurance may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said?

"There is the case where a person, suffering loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease, does not reflect: 'That's how it is when living together in the world. That's how it is when gaining a personal identity [*atta-bhava*, literally "self-state"]. When there is living in the world, when there is the gaining of a personal identity, these eight worldly conditions spin after the world, and the world spins after these eight worldly conditions: gain, loss, status, disgrace, censure, praise, pleasure, & pain.' Suffering loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease, he sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. And then there is the case where a person, suffering loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease, reflects: 'That's how it is when living together in the world. That's how it is when gaining a personal identity. When there is living in the world, when there is the gaining of a personal identity, these eight worldly conditions spin after the world, and the world spins after these eight worldly conditions: gain, loss, status, disgrace, censure, praise, pleasure, & pain.' Suffering loss of relatives, loss of wealth, or loss through disease, he does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught.

"It's through adversity that a person's endurance may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not

discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said.

[4] "It's through discussion that a person's discernment may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said?

"There is the case where one individual, through discussion with another, knows this: 'From the way this person rises to an issue, from the way he applies [his reasoning], from the way he addresses a question, he is dull, not discerning. Why is that? He does not make statements that are deep, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. He cannot declare the meaning, teach it, describe it, set it forth, reveal it, explain it, or make it plain. He is dull, not discerning.' Just as if a man with good eyesight standing on the shore of a body of water were to see a small fish rise. The thought would occur to him, 'From the rise of this fish, from the break of its ripples, from its speed, it is a small fish, not a large one.' In the same way, one individual, in discussion with another, knows this: 'From the way this person rises to an issue, from the way he applies [his reasoning], from the way he addresses a question... he is dull, not discerning.'

"And then there is the case where one individual, through discussion with another, knows this: 'From the way this person rises to an issue, from the way he applies [his reasoning], from the way he addresses a question, he is discerning, not dull. Why is that? He makes statements that are deep, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. He can declare the meaning, teach it, describe it, set it forth, reveal it, explain it, & make it plain. He is discerning, not dull.' Just as if a man with good eyesight standing on the shore of a body of water were to see a large fish rise. The thought would occur to him, 'From the rise of this fish, from the break of its ripples, from its speed, it is a large fish, not a small one.' In the same way, one individual, in discussion with another, knows this: 'From the way this person rises to an issue, from the way he applies [his reasoning], from the way he addresses a question... he is discerning, not dull.'

"It's through discussion that a person's discernment may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning': Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said."

—AN 4:192

In addition to requiring time and clear powers of observation, the ability to recognize a person of integrity requires that you be a person of integrity as well.

“Monks, could a person of no integrity know of a person of no integrity: ‘This is a person of no integrity?’”

“No, lord.”

“Good, monks. It’s impossible, there’s no way, that a person of no integrity would know of a person of no integrity: ‘This is a person of no integrity.’”

“Could a person of no integrity know of a person of integrity: ‘This is a person of integrity?’”

“No, lord.”

“Good, monks. It’s impossible, there’s no way, that a person of no integrity would know of a person of integrity: ‘This is a person of integrity.’”

“Now, monks, could a person of integrity know of a person of no integrity: ‘This is a person of no integrity?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Good, monks. It is possible that a person of integrity would know of a person of no integrity: ‘This is a person of no integrity.’”

“Could a person of integrity know of a person of integrity: ‘This is a person of integrity?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Good, monks. It is possible that a person of integrity would know of a person of integrity: ‘This is a person of integrity.’”

“A person of integrity is endowed with qualities of integrity; he is a person of integrity in his friendship, in the way he wills, the way he gives advice, the way he speaks, the way he acts, the views he holds, & the way he gives a gift.

“And how is a person of integrity endowed with qualities of integrity? There is the case where a person of integrity is endowed with conviction, conscience, concern; he is learned, with aroused persistence, unmuddled mindfulness, & good discernment. This is how a person of integrity is endowed with qualities of integrity.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in his friendship? There is the case where a person of integrity has, as his friends & companions, those contemplatives & brahmins who are endowed with conviction, shame, compunction; who are learned, with aroused persistence, unmuddled mindfulness, & good discernment. This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in his friendship.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the way he wills? There is the case where a person of integrity wills neither for his own affliction, nor for the affliction of others, nor for the affliction of both. This is how a

person of integrity is a person of integrity in the way he wills.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the way he gives advice? There is the case where a person of integrity gives advice neither for his own affliction, nor for the affliction of others, nor for the affliction of both. This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in the way he gives advice.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the way he speaks? There is the case where a person of integrity is one who refrains from lies, refrains from divisive tale-bearing, refrains from harsh speech, refrains from idle chatter. This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in the way he speaks.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the way he acts? There is the case where a person of integrity is one who refrains from taking life, refrains from stealing, refrains from illicit sex. This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in the way he acts.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the views he holds? There is the case where a person of integrity is one who holds a view like this: ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in the views he holds.

“And how is a person of integrity a person of integrity in the way he gives a gift? There is the case where a person of integrity gives a gift attentively, with his own hand, respectfully, not as if throwing it away, with the view that something will come of it. This is how a person of integrity is a person of integrity in the way he gives a gift.

“This person of integrity—thus endowed with qualities of integrity; a person of integrity in his friendship, in the way he wills, the way he gives advice, the way he speaks, the way he acts, the views he holds, & the way he gives a gift—on the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in the destination of people of integrity. And what is the destination of people of integrity? Greatness among devas or among human beings.”

—MN 110

Regard him as one who
points out
treasure,

the wise one who
seeing your faults
rebukes you.

Stay with this sort of sage.
For the one who stays
with a sage of this sort,
things get better,
not worse.

—Dhp 76

Listening to the True Dhamma

The opportunity to listen to the Dhamma is considered valuable both because it is rare and because it yields great benefits.

Hard the chance to hear the true Dhamma.

—Dhp 182

“There are these five rewards in listening to the Dhamma. Which five?”

“[1] One hears what one has not heard before. [2] One clarifies what one has heard before. [3] One gets rid of doubt. [4] One’s views are made straight. [5] One’s mind grows calm.

“These are the five rewards in listening to the Dhamma.”

—AN 5:202

To obtain these benefits, one must come to the Dhamma both with the right karmic background and with the right attitude.

“Endowed with these six qualities, a person is capable of alighting on the lawfulness, the rightness of skillful mental qualities even while listening to the true Dhamma. Which six?”

“He is not endowed with a (present) kamma obstruction, a defilement obstruction, or a result-of-(past)-kamma obstruction; he has conviction, has the desire (to listen), and is discerning.

“Endowed with these six qualities, a person is capable of alighting on the lawfulness, the rightness of skillful mental qualities even while listening to the true Dhamma.”

—AN 6:86

Understanding's the heartwood
of well-spoken words;
concentration, the heartwood
of learning & understanding.

When a person is hasty & heedless
his discernment & learning
don't grow.

While those who delight
in the doctrines taught by the noble ones,
are unexcelled
in word, action, & mind.

They, established in
calm,
composure, &
concentration,
have reached
what discernment & learning
have as their heartwood."⁴

—Sn 2:9

NOTES

1. According to the Commentary, one's superiors include those who have more wisdom than oneself, more skill in concentration and other aspects of the path than oneself, and those senior to oneself.

2. The Commentary says that the right time to see a teacher is when one is overcome with passion, aversion, and delusion, and cannot find a way out on one's own. This echoes a passage in AN 6:26, in which Ven. Maha Kaccana says that the right time to visit a "monk worthy of esteem" is when one needs help in overcoming any of the five hindrances or when one doesn't yet have an appropriate theme to focus on to put an end to the mind's effluents.

3. The Commentary equates "words destructive of the Dhamma" with "animal talk." See the discussion under Pacittiya 85 in *The Buddhist Monastic Code*.

4. The heartwood of learning & discernment is release.

Ven. Yasadatta:

Intent on quibbling,
the dullard hears the Conqueror's teaching.

He's as far from the True Dhamma
as the ground is from the sky.

Intent on quibbling,
the dullard hears the Conqueror's teaching.

He wanes from the True Dhamma
like the moon in the dark half of the month.

Intent on quibbling,
the dullard hears the Conqueror's teaching.

He dries up in the True Dhamma
like a fish in next to no water.

Intent on quibbling,
the dullard hears the Conqueror's teaching.

He doesn't grow in the True Dhamma,
like a rotten seed in a field.

But whoever hears the Conqueror's teaching
with guarded intent,
doing away with effluents
—all—
realizing the unshakable,
attaining the foremost peace,
is—effluent-free—
totally unbound.

—*Thag 5:10*

It's also important to understand clearly the standards for distinguishing true Dhamma from false. These standards come down to a pragmatic test: How does one behave, and what results come from one's behavior, when one puts the Dhamma into practice?

As they were sitting to one side, the Kalamas of Kesaputta said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, there are some contemplatives & brahmins who come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, revile them, show contempt for them, & disparage them. And then other contemplatives & brahmins come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, revile them, show contempt for them, & disparage them. They leave us simply uncertain & doubtful: Which of these venerable contemplatives & brahmins are speaking the truth, and which ones are lying?"

“Of course you are uncertain, Kalamas. Of course you are doubtful. When there are reasons for doubt, uncertainty is born. So in this case, Kalamas, don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are unskillful; these qualities are blameworthy; these qualities are criticized by the wise; these qualities, when undertaken & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering’—then you should abandon them...

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

“For harm, lord.”

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

“Yes, lord.”

[Similarly for aversion & delusion.]

“So what do you think, Kalamas: Are these qualities skillful or unskillful?”

“Unskillful, lord.”

“Blameworthy or blameless?”

“Blameworthy, lord.”

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

“Criticized by the wise, lord.”

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

“When undertaken & carried out, they lead to harm & to suffering...”

“...Now, Kalamas, don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when undertaken & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness’—then you should enter & remain in them.

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

“For welfare, lord.”

“And this ungreedy person, not overcome by greed, his mind not possessed by greed: He doesn’t kill living beings, take what is not given, go after another person’s wife, tell lies, or induce others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term welfare & happiness—right?”

“Yes, lord.”

[Similarly for lack of aversion & lack of delusion.]

“So what do you think, Kalamas: Are these qualities skillful or unskillful?”

“Skillful, lord.”

“Blameworthy or blameless?”

“Blameless, lord.”

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

“Praised by the wise, lord.”

“When undertaken & carried out, do they lead to welfare & to happiness, or not?”

“When undertaken & carried out, they lead to welfare & to happiness...”

—AN 3:65

“Gotami, 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 categorically 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 categorically hold, "This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction."

—AN 8:53

"Upali, the qualities of which you may know, 'These qualities do not lead to utter disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, nor to Unbinding': You may categorically 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 utter disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding': You may categorically hold, 'This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction.'"

—AN 7:80

The test for the true Dhamma being pragmatic, this means that even when you are convinced that you have heard the true Dhamma, you must be careful to realize that simply hearing the truth is not enough to know it for sure.

The Buddha: "There are five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Which five? Conviction, liking, unbroken tradition, reasoning by analogy, & an agreement through pondering views. These are the five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Now some things are firmly held in conviction and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not firmly held in conviction, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistakable. Some things are well-liked... truly an unbroken tradition... well-reasoned... Some things are well-pondered and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not well-pondered, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistakable. In these cases it isn't proper for a knowledgeable person who safeguards the truth to come to a definite conclusion, 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless.'"

Kapadika Bharadvaja: "But to what extent, Master Gotama, is there the safeguarding of the truth? To what extent does one safeguard the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the safeguarding of the truth."

The Buddha: "If a person has conviction, his statement, 'This is my conviction,' safeguards the truth. But he doesn't yet come to the definite conclusion that 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless.' To this extent, Bharadvaja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet an

awakening to the truth.”

—MN 95

Appropriate Attention

Having heard the Dhamma, it is important to bring appropriate attention—seeing things in terms of cause and effect—both to what you have heard and to your experiences in general, for this one factor can make all the difference in the success or failure of your practice.

“With regard to internal factors, I don’t envision any other single factor like appropriate attention as doing so much for a monk in training, who has not attained the goal but remains intent on the unsurpassed safety from bondage. A monk who attends appropriately abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful.

Appropriate attention
as a quality
of a monk in training:
nothing else
does so much
for attaining the superlative goal.
A monk, striving appropriately,
attains the ending of stress.

—Iti 16

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 harmfulness.

Then the devata 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 Sangha, 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 devata, came to his senses.

—SN 9:11

Appropriate attention is essentially the ability to frame your understanding of experience in the right terms. In many cases, this means framing the right questions for gaining insight into suffering and its end.

"This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a contemplative or brahman, to ask: 'What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?'"

—MN 135

"There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person...does not discern what ideas are fit for attention, or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas unfit for attention. And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality arises, and the arisen effluent of sensuality increases; the unarisen effluent of becoming... the unarisen effluent of ignorance arises, and the arisen effluent of ignorance increases.... This is how he attends inappropriately: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?'"

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

“The well-instructed noble disciple... discerns what ideas are fit for attention, and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas fit for attention.... And what are the ideas fit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality does not arise, and the arisen effluent of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of becoming... the unarisen effluent of ignorance does not arise, and the arisen effluent of ignorance is abandoned.... He attends appropriately, *This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress*. As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing.”

—MN 2

Appropriate attention can also mean framing the way you understand events as they occur.

Ven. MahaKotthita: “Sariputta my friend, which things should a virtuous monk attend to in an appropriate way?”

Ven. Sariputta: “A virtuous monk, Kotthita my friend, should attend in an appropriate way to the five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. Which five? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate. A virtuous monk should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. For it is possible that a virtuous monk,

attending in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant... not-self, would realize the fruit of stream-entry."

Ven. MahaKotthita: "Then which things should a monk who has attained stream-entry attend to in an appropriate way?"

Ven. Sariputta: "A monk who has attained stream-entry should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. For it is possible that a monk who has attained stream-entry, attending in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant... not-self, would realize the fruit of once-returning."

Ven. MahaKotthita: "Then which things should a monk who has attained once-returning attend to in an appropriate way?"

Ven. Sariputta: "A monk who has attained once-returning should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. For it is possible that a monk who has attained once-returning, attending in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant... not-self, would realize the fruit of non-returning."

Ven. MahaKotthita: "Then which things should a monk who has attained non-returning attend to in an appropriate way?"

Ven. Sariputta: "A monk who has attained non-returning should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. For it is possible that a monk who has attained non-returning, attending in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant... not-self, would realize the fruit of arahantship."

Ven. MahaKotthita: "Then which things should an arahant attend to in an appropriate way?"

Ven. Sariputta: "An arahant should attend in an appropriate way to these five clinging-aggregates as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, not-self. Although, for an arahant, there is nothing further to do, and nothing to add to what has been done, still these things—when developed & pursued—lead both to a pleasant abiding in the here-&-now and to mindfulness & alertness."

—SN 22:122

Practice in Accordance with the Dhamma

In developing dispassion for the clinging-aggregates, appropriate attention is an important first step in practicing the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma.

“For a monk practicing the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, this is what accords with the Dhamma: that he keep cultivating disenchantment with regard to form, that he keep cultivating disenchantment with regard to feeling, that he keep cultivating disenchantment with regard to perception, that he keep cultivating disenchantment with regard to fabrications, that he keep cultivating disenchantment with regard to consciousness. As he keeps cultivating disenchantment with regard to form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness, he comprehends form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. As he comprehends form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness, he is totally released from form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. He is totally released from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is totally released, I tell you, from suffering & stress.”

“For a monk practicing the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, this is what accords with the Dhamma: that he keep focused on inconstancy... stress... not-self with regard to form, that he keep focused on inconstancy... stress... not-self with regard to feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. As he keeps focusing on inconstancy... stress... not-self with regard to form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness, he comprehends form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. As he comprehends form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness, he is totally released from form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. He is totally released from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is totally released, I tell you, from suffering & stress.”

—SN 22:39-42

“If a monk teaches the Dhamma for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, & cessation with regard to aging & death... birth... becoming... clinging/sustenance... craving... feeling... contact... the six sense media... name & form... consciousness... fabrications... ignorance, he deserves to be called a monk who is a speaker of Dhamma. If he practices for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, & cessation with regard to aging & death... ignorance, he deserves to be called a monk who practices the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma. If—through disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, and lack of clinging/sustenance with regard to aging & death... ignorance—he is released, then he deserves to be called a monk who has

attained Unbinding in the here-&-now.”

—SN 22:67

The practice leading to disenchantment, dispassion, and release follows a stepwise path of cause and effect.

“Now, I tell you, clear knowing & release have their nutriment. They are not without nutriment. And what is their nutriment? The seven factors for awakening... And what is the nutriment for the seven factors for awakening? The four establishing of mindfulness... And what is the nutriment for the four establishing of mindfulness? The three forms of right conduct... And what is the nutriment for the three forms of right conduct? Restraint of the senses... And what is the nutriment for restraint of the senses? Mindfulness & alertness... And what is the nutriment for mindfulness & alertness? Appropriate attention... And what is the nutriment for appropriate attention? Conviction... And what is the nutriment for conviction? Hearing the true Dhamma... And what is the nutriment for hearing the true Dhamma? Associating with people who are truly good....

“Just as when the gods pour rain in heavy drops & crash thunder on the upper mountains: The water, flowing down along the slopes, fills the mountain clefts & rifts & gullies... the little ponds... the big lakes... the little rivers... the big rivers. When the big rivers are full, they fill the great ocean, and thus is the great ocean fed, thus is it filled. In the same way, when associating with truly good people is brought to fulfillment, it fulfills [the conditions for] hearing the true Dhamma... conviction... appropriate attention... mindfulness & alertness... restraint of the senses... the three forms of right conduct... the four establishing of mindfulness... the seven factors for awakening. When the seven factors for awakening are brought to fulfillment, they fulfill [the conditions for] clear knowing & release. Thus is clear knowing & release fed, thus is it brought to fulfillment.”

—AN 10:61

Mindfulness & Alertness

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

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

—SN 47:35

Restraint of the Senses

“And how does a monk guard the doors of his senses? On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at any theme or details by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. On hearing a sound with the ear.... On smelling an odor with the nose.... One tasting a flavor with the tongue.... On touching a tactile sensation with the body.... On cognizing an idea with the intellect, he does not grasp at any theme or details by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the intellect—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. Endowed with this noble restraint over the sense faculties, he is inwardly sensitive to the pleasure of being blameless. This is how a monk guards the doors of his senses.”

—DN 2

The Three Forms of Right Conduct

“Now, Cunda, there are three ways in which one is made pure by bodily action, four ways in which one is made pure by verbal action, and three ways in which one is made pure by mental action.

“And how is one made pure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not take, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. Abandoning sensual misconduct, he abstains from sensual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made pure in three ways by

bodily action.

“And how is one made pure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty, if he is asked as a witness, ‘Come & tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ Thus he doesn’t consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech, he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he doesn’t tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he doesn’t tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This is how one is made pure in four ways by verbal action.

“And how is one made pure in three ways by mental action? There is the case where a certain person is not covetous. He does not covet the belongings of others, thinking, ‘O, that what belongs to others would be mine!’ He bears no ill will and is not corrupt in the resolves of his heart. [He thinks,] ‘May these beings be free from animosity, free from oppression, free from trouble, and may they look after themselves with ease!’ He has right view and is not warped in the way he sees things: ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is how one is made pure in three ways by mental action.

“These, Cunda, are the ten courses of skillful action.”

—AN 10:176

The Four Establishings of Mindfulness

“[1] Now, on whatever occasion a monk breathing in long discerns that he is breathing in long; or breathing out long, discerns that he is breathing out long; or breathing in short, discerns that he is breathing in short; or breathing out short, discerns that he is breathing out short; trains himself to breathe in... &... out sensitive to the entire body; trains himself to breathe in... &... out calming bodily fabrication: On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing 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 to breathe in... &... out sensitive to rapture; trains himself to breathe in... &... out sensitive to pleasure; trains himself to breathe in... &... out sensitive to mental fabrication; trains himself to breathe in... &... out calming mental fabrication: On that occasion the monk remains focused on *feelings* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—close 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 to breathe in... &... out sensitive to the mind; trains himself to breathe in... &... out satisfying the mind; trains himself to breathe in... &... out steadying the mind; trains himself to breathe in... &... out releasing the mind: On that occasion the monk remains focused on the *mind* in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I don’t say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of confused 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 to breathe in... &... out focusing on inconstancy; trains himself to breathe in... &... out focusing on dispassion; trains himself to breathe in... &... out focusing on cessation; trains himself to breathe in... &... out focusing on relinquishment: On that occasion the monk remains focused on *mental qualities* in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees clearly with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one

who oversees 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 establishing of mindfulness to their culmination.

The Seven Factors for Awakening

“And how are the four establishing 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 relinquishment. 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 relinquishment.

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

—MN 118

The ability to follow this path to completion is not just a matter of mastering technique. It also depends on the ability to develop strong character traits.

“Now, what are the eight thoughts of a great person? This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing. This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent. This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one who is entangled. This Dhamma is for one whose persistence is aroused, not for one who is lazy. This Dhamma is for one whose mindfulness is established, not for one whose mindfulness is confused. This Dhamma is for one whose mind is concentrated, not for one whose mind is unconcentrated. This Dhamma is for one endowed with discernment, not for one whose discernment is weak. This Dhamma is for one who enjoys non-objectification, who delights in non-objectification, not for one who enjoys & delights in objectification.

“This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, being modest, does not want it to be known that ‘He is modest.’ Being content, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is content.’ Being reclusive, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is reclusive.’ His persistence being aroused, he does not want it to be known that ‘His persistence is aroused.’ His mindfulness being established, he does not want it to be known that ‘His mindfulness is established.’ His mind being concentrated, he does not want it to be known that ‘His mind is concentrated.’ Being endowed with discernment, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is endowed with discernment.’ Enjoying non-objectification, he does not want it to be known that ‘He is enjoying non-objectification.’ ‘This Dhamma is for one who is modest, not for one who is self-aggrandizing.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk is content with any old robe cloth at all, any old almsfood, any old lodging, any old medicinal requisites for curing sickness at all. ‘This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one who is entangled.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk, when living in seclusion, is visited by monks, nuns, lay men, lay women, kings, royal ministers, sectarians & their disciples. With his mind bent on seclusion, tending toward seclusion, inclined toward seclusion, aiming at seclusion, relishing renunciation, he converses with them only as much as necessary for them to take their leave. ‘This Dhamma is for one who is reclusive, not for one in entanglement.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“This Dhamma is for one whose persistence is aroused, not for one who is lazy.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. ‘This Dhamma is for one whose persistence is aroused, not for one who is lazy.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“This Dhamma is for one whose mindfulness is established, not for one whose mindfulness is confused.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk is mindful, highly meticulous,

remembering & able to call to mind even things that were done & said long ago. ‘This Dhamma is for one whose mindfulness is established, not for one whose mindfulness is confused.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“‘This Dhamma is for one whose mind is concentrated, not for one whose mind is unconcentrated.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. ‘This Dhamma is for one whose mind is concentrated, not for one whose mind is unconcentrated.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“‘This Dhamma is for one endowed with discernment, not for one whose discernment is weak.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. ‘This Dhamma is for one endowed with discernment, not for one whose discernment is weak.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.

“‘This Dhamma is for one who enjoys non-objectification, who delights in non-objectification, not for one who enjoys & delights in objectification.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said? There is the case where a monk’s mind leaps up, grows confident, steadfast, & firm in the cessation of objectification. ‘This Dhamma is for one who enjoys non-objectification, who delights in non-objectification, not for one who enjoys & delights in objectification.’ Thus was it said. And with reference to this was it said.”

—AN 8:30

“A monk endowed with these seven qualities is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world. Which seven? There is the case where a monk is one with a sense of Dhamma, a sense of meaning, a sense of himself, a sense of moderation, a sense of time, a sense of social gatherings, & a sense of distinctions among

individuals.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of Dhamma? There is the case where a monk knows the Dhamma: dialogues, narratives of mixed prose & verse, explanations, verses, spontaneous exclamations, quotations, birth stories, amazing events, question & answer sessions [this is a list of the earliest classifications of the Buddha’s teachings]. If he didn’t know the Dhamma—dialogues, narratives of mixed prose & verse, explanations, verses, spontaneous exclamations, quotations, birth stories, amazing events, question & answer sessions—he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of Dhamma. So it’s because he does know the Dhamma—dialogues... question & answer sessions—that he is said to be one with a sense of Dhamma. This is one with a sense of Dhamma.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of meaning? There is the case where a monk knows the meaning of this & that statement—‘This is the meaning of that statement; that is the meaning of this.’ If he didn’t know the meaning of this & that statement—‘This is the meaning of that statement; that is the meaning of this’—he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of meaning. So it’s because he does know the meaning of this & that statement—‘This is the meaning of that statement; that is the meaning of this’—that he is said to be one with a sense of meaning. This is one with a sense of Dhamma & a sense of meaning.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of himself? There is the case where a monk knows himself: ‘This is how far I have come in conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, discernment, quick-wittedness.’ If he didn’t know himself—‘This is how far I have come in conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, discernment, quick-wittedness’—he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of himself. So it’s because he does know himself—‘This is how far I have come in conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, discernment, quick-wittedness’—that he is said to be one with a sense of himself. This is one with a sense of Dhamma, a sense of meaning, & a sense of himself.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of moderation? There is the case where a monk knows moderation in accepting robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick. If he didn’t know moderation in accepting robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of moderation. So it’s because he does know moderation in accepting robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, that he is said to be one with a sense of moderation. This is one with a sense of Dhamma, a sense of meaning, a sense of himself, & a sense of moderation.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of time? There is the case where a monk knows the time: ‘This is the time for recitation; this, the time for questioning; this, the time for making an effort [in meditation]; this, the time for seclusion.’ If he didn’t know the time—‘This is the time for recitation; this, the time for questioning; this, the time for making an effort; this, the time for seclusion’—he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of time. So it’s because he does know the time—‘This is the time for recitation; this, the time for questioning; this, the time for making an effort; this, the time for seclusion’—that he is said to be one with a sense of time. This is one with a sense of Dhamma, a sense of meaning, a sense of himself, a sense of moderation, & a sense of time.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of social gatherings? There is the case where a monk knows his social gathering: ‘This is a social gathering of noble warriors; this, a social gathering of brahmins; this, a social gathering of householders; this, a social gathering of contemplatives; here one should approach them in this way, stand in this way, act in this way, sit in this way, speak in this way, stay silent in this way.’ If he didn’t know his social gathering—‘This is a social gathering of noble warriors; this, a social gathering of brahmins; this, a social gathering of householders; this, a social gathering of contemplatives; here one should approach them in this way, stand in this way, act in this way, sit in this way, speak in this way, stay silent in this way’—he wouldn’t be said to be one with a sense of social gatherings. So it’s because he does know his social gathering—‘This is a social gathering of noble warriors; this, a social gathering of brahmins; this, a social gathering of householders; this, a social gathering of contemplatives; here one should approach them in this way, stand in this way, act in this way, sit in this way, speak in this way, stay silent in this way’—that he is said to be one with a sense of social gatherings. This is one with a sense of Dhamma, a sense of meaning, a sense of himself, a sense of moderation, a sense of time, & a sense of social gatherings.

“And how is a monk one with a sense of distinctions among individuals? There is the case where people are known to a monk in terms of two categories.

“Of two people—one who wants to see noble ones and one who doesn’t—the one who doesn’t want to see noble ones is to be criticized for that reason, the one who does want to see noble ones is, for that reason, to be praised.

“Of two people who want to see noble ones—one who wants to hear the true Dhamma and one who doesn’t—the one who doesn’t want to hear the true Dhamma is to be criticized for that reason, the one who does want to hear the true Dhamma is, for that reason, to be praised.

“Of two people who want to hear the true Dhamma—one who listens with an attentive ear and one who listens without an attentive ear—the one who listens without an attentive ear is to be criticized for that reason, the one who listens with an attentive ear is, for that reason, to be praised.

“Of two people who listen with an attentive ear—one who, having listened to the Dhamma, remembers it, and one who doesn’t—the one who, having listened to the Dhamma, doesn’t remember it is to be criticized for that reason, the one who, having listened to the Dhamma, does remember the Dhamma is, for that reason, to be praised.

“Of two people who, having listened to the Dhamma, remember it—one who explores the meaning of the Dhamma he has remembered and one who doesn’t—the one who doesn’t explore the meaning of the Dhamma he has remembered is to be criticized for that reason, the one who does explore the meaning of the Dhamma he has remembered is, for that reason, to be praised.

“Of two people who explore the meaning of the Dhamma they have remembered—one who practices the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, having a sense of Dhamma, having a sense of meaning, and one who doesn’t—the one who doesn’t practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, having a sense of Dhamma, having a sense of meaning, is to be criticized for that reason, the one who does practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, having a sense of Dhamma, having a sense of meaning is, for that reason, to be praised.

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

“This is how people are known to a monk in terms of two categories. And this is how a monk is one with a sense of distinctions among individuals.

“A monk endowed with these seven qualities is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, an unexcelled field of merit for the world.”

—AN 7:64

To practice the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma not only makes one worthy of respect, it also is a way of showing respect and gratitude to the Buddha for his admirable friendship in creating the opportunity for hearing the true Dhamma.

Then the Blessed One [on his death-bed] said to Ven. Ananda, “Ananda, the twin sal-trees are in full bloom, even though it’s not the flowering season. They shower, strew, & sprinkle on the Tathagata’s body in homage to him. Heavenly coral-tree blossoms are falling from the sky.... Heavenly sandalwood powder is falling from the sky.... Heavenly music is playing in the sky.... Heavenly songs are sung in the sky, in homage to the Tathagata. But it is not to this extent that a Tathagata is worshipped, honored, respected, venerated, or paid homage to. Rather, the monk, nun, male lay follower, or female lay follower who keeps practicing the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, who keeps practicing masterfully, who lives in accordance with the Dhamma: that is the person who worships, honors, respects, venerates, & pays homage to the Tathagata with the highest homage. So you should train yourselves: ‘We will keep practicing the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, we will keep practicing masterfully, we will live in accordance with the Dhamma.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.”

—DN 16

STREAM ENTRY & ITS RESULTS

When treating the experience of stream entry and its results, the Canon uses all three of its typical modes of discourse: the narrative mode—stories about people who have attained stream entry; the cosmological mode—descriptions of the after-death destinations awaiting those who have attained stream entry; and what might be called the “emptiness” mode, which describes mental states in and of themselves as they are directly experienced as absent or present, both during and after stream entry.

*The material in this part of the study guide is presented in five sections. The first section, **The Arising of the Dhamma Eye**, discusses the experience of stream entry, and concludes with a passage indicating why the experience is described in terms of the faculty of vision. The second section, **The Three Fetters**, discusses the three fetters of renewed existence that are cut with the arising of the Dhamma eye: self-identity views, uncertainty, and grasping at habits and practices. The third section, **The Character of the Stream-enterer**, discusses the personal characteristics of a stream-enterer that flow directly from the cutting of the first three fetters. This section focuses on three lists of the four factors of stream entry, which are not to be confused with the four factors for stream entry discussed in the first part of this study guide. The fourth section, **Rewards**, discusses the rewards of stream entry that are come both in this life and in future lives. The final section, **Advice**, echoes the Buddha’s last words to his disciples before entering total nibbana. The discourse reporting those words—DN 16—also reports that the most backward of the monks present at the Buddha’s passing away were stream-enterers. The fact that his last words to them stressed the need for heedfulness underlies the fact that even stream-enterers have to be wary of heedlessness. This is especially true in the present day, when many different meditation schools define the attainment of stream entry in such different terms, raising the question of whose certification of stream entry is valid and whose is not. The safest course of action for all meditators—whether certified as stream-enterers or not, and whether that certification is valid or not—is to maintain an attitude of heedfulness with regard to all mental qualities.*

* * *

The term “stream” in “stream entry” refers to the point where all eight factors of the noble eightfold path come together.

“Sariputta, ‘The stream, the stream’: thus it is said. And what, Sariputta, is the stream?”

“This noble eightfold path, lord, is the stream: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”

“Very good, Sariputta! Very good! This noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is the stream.”

—SN 55:5

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

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

“And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, & from idle chatter: This is called right speech.

“And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, from stealing, & from sexual intercourse: This is called right action.

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

“And what is right effort? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This is called right effort.

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

“And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains

in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration.”

—SN 45:8

The coming-together of these factors is called the stream because it leads inevitably to two things, just as the current of a tributary will lead inevitably to a major river and then to the sea. In the immediate present, the stream leads directly to the arising of the Dhamma eye, the vision that actually constitutes this first awakening. Over time, the stream ensures that—in no more than seven lifetimes—one will be totally unbound.

The Arising of the Dhamma Eye

What does the Dhamma eye see when it arises?

Then Ven. Assaji gave this Dhamma exposition to Sariputta the wanderer:

“Whatever phenomena arise from a cause:

 Their cause

 & their cessation.

Such is the teaching of the Tathagata,

 the Great Contemplative.”

Then to Sariputta the wanderer, as he heard this exposition of Dhamma, there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: *Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.*

—Mv I.23.5

This standard formula—it is repeated throughout the Canon—may not seem that remarkable an insight. However, the texts make clear that this

insight is not a matter of belief or contemplation, but of direct seeing. As the following passages show, belief and contemplation may be conducive to the seeing—and an undefined level of belief and discernment may actually guarantee that someday in this lifetime the seeing will occur—but only with the actual seeing does there come a dramatic shift in the course of one's life and one's relationship to the Dhamma.

“Monks, the eye is inconstant, changeable, alterable. The ear... The nose... The tongue... The body... The mind is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

Forms.... Sounds Aromas.... Flavors.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas are inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Eye-consciousness.... Ear-consciousness.... Nose-consciousness.... Tongue-consciousness.... Body-consciousness.... Intellect-consciousness is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Eye-contact...Ear-contact...Nose-contact...Tongue-contact...Body-contact... Intellect-contact is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Feeling born of eye-contact.... Feeling born of ear-contact... Feeling born of nose-contact.... Feeling born of tongue-contact.... Feeling born of body-contact... Feeling born of intellect-contact is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Perception of forms.... Perception of sounds.... Perception of smells.... Perception of tastes.... Perception of tactile sensations.... Perception of ideas is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Intention for forms.... Intention for sounds.... Intention for smells.... Intention for tastes.... Intention for tactile sensations.... Intention for ideas is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Craving for forms.... Craving for sounds.... Craving for smells.... Craving for tastes.... Craving for tactile sensations.... Craving for ideas is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“The earth property.... The liquid property.... The fire property.... The wind property... The space property... The consciousness property is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“Form.... Feeling.... Perception.... Fabrications.... Consciousness is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

“One who has conviction & belief that these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower: one who has entered the orderliness of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill. He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry ghosts. He is incapable of

passing away until he has realized the fruit of stream entry.

“One who, after pondering with a modicum of discernment, has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower: one who has entered the orderliness of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill. He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry ghosts. He is incapable of passing away until he has realized the fruit of stream entry.

“One who knows and sees that these phenomena are this way is called a stream-enterer, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening.”

—SN 25:1-10

To Upali the householder, as he was sitting right there, there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: *Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.* Then—having seen the Dhamma, having reached the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, gained a footing in the Dhamma, having crossed over & beyond doubt, having had no more questioning—Upali the householder gained fearlessness and was independent of others with regard to the Teacher’s message.

—MN 56

Part of what makes the arising of the Dhamma eye such a powerful experience is that the realization that “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation” must follow on a glimpse of what stands in opposition to “all that is subject to origination,” i.e., a glimpse of the Unconditioned—deathlessness.

[Immediately after attaining the stream] Sariputta the wanderer went to Moggallana the wanderer. Moggallana the wanderer saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, said, “Your faculties are bright, my friend; your complexion pure & clear. Could it be that you have attained the Deathless?”

“Yes, my friend, I have....”

—Mv I.23.5

The connection between Ven. Assaji’s verse above, discussing causation, and the arising of the Dhamma eye in Sariputta suggests that realization conveyed by the Dhamma eye is not just an insight into the fleeting, impermanent nature of ordinary experience. Instead, it extends also to a realization of the

conditioned, dependent nature of that experience. Other passages describing in more detail the knowledge of a stream-enterer—one who has entered the stream—show that this is in fact the case. The Dhamma eye sees that things arise and pass away in line with a particular type of causality, in which the effects of causes are felt immediately or over the course of time.

“And which is the noble method that he has rightly seen & rightly ferreted out through discernment?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones notices:

“When this is, that is.

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

“When this isn’t, that isn’t.

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

“In other words:

“From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

“From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.

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

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

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

“From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.

“From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

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

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

“From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.

“From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

“Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the

cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

“This is the noble method that he has rightly seen & rightly ferreted out through discernment.”

—AN 10:92

“When a disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising & these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present, it is not possible that he would run after the past, thinking, ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?’ or that he would run after the future, thinking, ‘Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ or that he would be inwardly perplexed about the immediate present, thinking, ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’ Such a thing is not possible. Why is that? Because the disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising & these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present.”

—SN 12:20

The insight of a stream-enterer into the truths of causality on the one hand, and of the Deathless on the other, is accurate as far as it goes, but it does not equal the intensity of the insight of the arahant—one who has reached the final level of awakening. The differences between the two are suggested in the following simile.

[Ven. Narada:] “My friend, although I have seen properly with right discernment, as it actually is present, that ‘The cessation of becoming is Unbinding,’ still I am not an arahant whose effluents are ended. It’s as if there were a well along a road in a desert, with neither rope nor water bucket. A man would come along overcome by heat, oppressed by the heat, exhausted, dehydrated, & thirsty. He would look into the well and would have knowledge of ‘water,’ but he would not dwell touching it with his body. In the same way, although I have seen properly with right discernment, as it actually is present, that ‘The cessation of becoming is Unbinding,’ still I am not an arahant whose effluents are ended.”

—SN 12:68

The Three Fetters

The four levels of Awakening are defined by the extent to which they cut the ten fetters by which the mind binds itself to conditioned experience.

“And which are the five lower fetters? Self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices, sensual desire, & ill will. These are the five lower fetters. And which are the five higher fetters? Passion for form, passion for what is formless, conceit, restlessness, & ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.”

—AN 10:13

“In this community of monks there are monks who are arahants, whose effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis....

“In this community of monks there are monks who, with the total ending of the five lower fetters, are due to be reappear [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world....

“In this community of monks there are monks who, with the total ending of [the first] three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, are once-returners, who—on returning only one more time to this world—will make an ending to stress....

“In this community of monks there are monks who, with the total ending of [the first] three fetters, are stream-winners, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening.”

—MN 118

For the stream-enterer, the arising of the Dhamma eye—with its insight into the causal principles underlying the origination and cessation of stress—is what cuts through the first three fetters.

“He attends appropriately, *This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.* As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: self-identity view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices.”

—MN 2

The Canon contains passages that amplify what it means to cut the first

three of these fetters. First, self-identity views:

[Visakha:] “But, lady, how does self-identity come about?”

[Sister Dhammadinna:] “There is the case, friend Visakha, where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—assumes form (the body) to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

“He assumes feeling to be the self....

“He assumes perception to be the self....

“He assumes fabrications to be the self....

“He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. This is how self-identity comes about.”

[Visakha:] “But, lady, how does self-identity not come about?”

[Sister Dhammadinna:] “There is the case where a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—does not assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

“He does not assume feeling to be the self....

“He does not assume perception to be the self....

“He does not assume fabrications to be the self....

“He does not assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. This is how self-identity does not come about.”

—MN 44

[Visakha:] “‘The origination of self-identity, the origination of self-identity,’ it is said, lady. Which origination of self-identity is described by the Blessed One?”

[Sister Dhammadinna:] “The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming: This, friend Visakha, is the origination of self-identity described by the Blessed One.”

[Visakha:] “The cessation of self-identity, the cessation of self-identity,’ it is said, lady. Which cessation of self-identity is described by the Blessed One?”

[Sister Dhammadinna:] “The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving: This, friend Visakha, is the cessation of self-identity described by the Blessed One.”

[Visakha:] “The way of practice leading to the cessation of self-identity, the way of practice leading to the cessation of self-identity,’ it is said, lady. Which way of practice leading to the cessation of self-identity is described by the Blessed One?”

[Sister Dhammadinna:] “Precisely this noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration: This, friend Visakha, is the way of practice leading to the cessation of self-identity described by the Blessed One.”

—MN 44

[Ven. Ananda:] “What is the noble liberation?”

[The Buddha:] “There is the case, Ananda, where a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘Sensuality here & now; sensuality in lives to come; sensual perceptions here & now; sensual perceptions in lives to come; forms here & now; forms in lives to come; form-perceptions here & now; form-perceptions in lives to come; perceptions of the imperturbable; perceptions of the dimension of nothingness; perceptions of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception: that is an identity, to the extent that there is an identity. This is deathless: the liberation of the mind through lack of clinging/sustenance.’”

—MN 106

“Magandiya, it is just as if there were a blind man who couldn’t see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... the sun or the moon. Now suppose that a certain man were to take a grimy, oil-stained rag and fool him, saying, ‘Here, my good man, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean.’ The blind man would take it and wear it.

“Then suppose his friends, companions, & relatives took him to a doctor, and the doctor treated him with medicine: purges from above & purges from below, ointments & counter-ointments, and treatments through the nose. And thanks to the medicine his eyesight would appear & grow clear. Then together with the arising of his eyesight, he would abandon whatever passion & delight he felt for that grimy, oil-stained rag. And he would regard that man as an enemy & no friend at all, and think that he deserved to be killed. ‘My gosh, how long have I been fooled, cheated, & deceived by that man & his grimy, oil-

stained rag!—"Here, my good man, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean."

"In the same way, Magandiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma—this freedom from Disease, this Unbinding—and you on your part were to understand that freedom from Disease and see that Unbinding, then together with the arising of your eyesight, you would abandon whatever passion & delight you felt with regard for the five aggregates for sustenance. And it would occur to you, 'My gosh, how long have I been fooled, cheated, & deceived by this mind! For in clinging, it was just form that I was clinging to...it was just feeling... just perception... just fabrications... just consciousness that I was clinging to. With my clinging as condition, there is becoming... birth... aging & death... sorrow, lamentation, pains, distresses, & despairs all come into play. And thus is the origination of this entire mass of stress.'"

—MN 75

In the following passage, Ven. Khemaka—a monk who has attained the level of non-returner, and so has cut the first five fetters—indicates how self-identity views may be cut even though the mind has yet to cut the conceit, "I am," which ends only at the level of full awakening.

[Ven. Khemaka:] "Friends, it's not that I say 'I am form,' nor do I say 'I am something other than form.' It's not that I say, 'I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,' nor do I say, 'I am something other than consciousness.' With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, 'I am' has not been overcome, although I don't assume that 'I am this.'

"It's just like the scent of a blue, red, or white lotus: If someone were to call it the scent of a petal or the scent of the color or the scent of a filament, would he be speaking correctly?"

"No, friend."

"Then how would he describe it if he were describing it correctly?"

"As the scent of the flower: That's how he would describe it if he were describing it correctly."

"In the same way, friends, it's not that I say 'I am form,' nor do I say 'I am other than form.' It's not that I say, 'I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,' nor do I say, 'I am something other than consciousness.' With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, 'I am' has not been overcome, although I don't assume that 'I am this.'"

—SN 22:89

The fetter of uncertainty is defined as doubt in the Awakening of the Buddha, the truth of his Dhamma, and the practice of his noble disciples. What this uncertainty boils down to is doubt as to whether there is a Deathless dimension, and whether one can realize it through one's own efforts. The experience of the Deathless—following on the practice of the Dhamma to the point of entering the stream—cuts this fetter by confirming the possibility of a human being's awakening to the Deathless, the correctness of the Buddha's teaching as a guide to entering the stream, and the worthiness of those who have reached the stream.

“There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One: ‘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.’

“He is endowed with verified confidence in 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 wise for themselves.’

“He is endowed with verified confidence in the Sangha: ‘The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straightforwardly... 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 types¹—they are the Sangha 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.’”

NOTE

1. The four pairs are (1) the person on the path to stream entry, the person experiencing the fruit of stream entry; (2) the person on the path to once-returning, the person experiencing the fruit of once-returning; (3) the person on the path to non-returning, the person experiencing the fruit of non-returning; (4) the person on the path to arahantship, the person experiencing the fruit of arahantship. The eight individuals are the eight types forming these four pairs.

—AN 10:92

The fetter of grasping at habits and practices is often described in the Pali Canon with reference to the view that one becomes pure simply through performing rituals or patterns of behavior. This view in turn is related to the notion that one's being is defined by one's actions: If one acts in accordance with clearly defined habits and practices, one is ipso facto pure. Although the

Canon recognizes the importance of habits and practices in the attaining the stream, the experience of the Deathless shows the person who has attained the stream that one cannot define oneself in terms of those habits and practices. Thus one continues to follow virtuous practices, but without defining oneself in terms of them.

“Now where do skillful habits cease without trace? Their cessation, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk is virtuous, but not fashioned of (or: defined by his) virtue. He discerns, as it actually is, the awareness-release & discernment-release where his skillful habits cease without trace.”

—MN 78

[The enlightened person] doesn't speak of purity
in terms of view,
learning,
knowledge,
habit or practice.

Nor is it found by a person
through lack of view,
of learning,
of knowledge,
of habit or practice.

Letting these go, without grasping,
one is independent,
at peace.

—Sn 4:9

The Character of a Stream-winner

A standard formula in the Canon describes a stream-enterer in terms of four factors. The first three of these four factors of stream entry are directly related to the cutting of the fetter of uncertainty. The fourth is related to the cutting of the fetter of grasping at habits and practices.

“There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One... verified confidence in the Dhamma... verified confidence in the Sangha.... He/she is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to

concentration.”

—AN 10:92

Although this is the standard list of the four factors of stream entry, there are other lists that replace the fourth factor with other factors.

SN 55:32 defines the fourth factor as follows: “Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones lives at home with an awareness cleansed of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms.

SN 55:33 defines it as follows: “Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.”

When these lists are collated, we arrive at four qualities that describe a stream-enterer: conviction, virtue, generosity, and discernment. AN 8:54 describes these as “four qualities that lead to a lay person’s happiness and well-being in lives to come.” Other passages in the Canon explore the implications of each of these four as embodied in a stream-enterer’s behavior.

***Conviction** in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha is not simply a matter of belief or devotion. It forces one to place trust in the principle of kamma—the principle of action and result in line with which one first gained entry to the stream.*

“Endowed with these five qualities, a lay follower is a jewel of a lay follower, a lotus of a lay follower, a fine flower of a lay follower. Which five? He/she has conviction; is virtuous; is not eager for protective charms & ceremonies; trusts kamma, not protective charms & ceremonies; does not search for recipients of his/her offerings outside [of the Sangha], and gives offerings here first.”

—AN 5:175

***Virtue**, as practiced by the stream-enterer, is also a function of a deep trust in the principle of kamma, and of a sympathy for others that arises from that trust. Although stream-enterers may still break the minor rules of training, the depth of insight that informs their virtue ensures that their adherence to the basic principles of morality is unshakable.*

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones reflects thus: ‘I love life and don’t love death. I love happiness and abhor pain. Now if I—loving life and not loving death, loving happiness and abhorring pain—were to be killed,

that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me. And if I were to kill another who loves life and doesn't love death, who loves happiness and abhors pain, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to the other. What is displeasing & disagreeable to me is displeasing & disagreeable to others. How can I inflict on others what is displeasing & disagreeable to me?' Reflecting in this way, he refrains from taking life, gets others to refrain from taking life, and speaks in praise of refraining from taking life. In this way his bodily behavior is pure in three ways.

"Furthermore, he reflects thus: 'If someone, by way of theft, were to take from me what I haven't given, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.... If someone were to commit adultery with my wives, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.... If someone were to damage my well-being with a lie, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.... If someone were to divide me from my friends with divisive speech, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.... If someone were to address me with harsh speech, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me.... If someone were to address me with idle chatter, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to me. And if I were to address another with idle chatter, that would be displeasing & disagreeable to the other. What is displeasing & disagreeable to me is displeasing & disagreeable to others. How can I inflict on others what is displeasing & disagreeable to me?' Reflecting in this way, he refrains from idle chatter, gets others to refrain from idle chatter, and speaks in praise of refraining from idle chatter. In this way his verbal behavior is pure in three ways."

—SN 55:7

"Monks, this recitation of more than 150 training rules comes every fortnight, in reference to which sons of good families desiring the goal train themselves. There are these three trainings under which all that is gathered. Which three? The training in heightened virtue, the training in heightened mind, the training in heightened discernment. These are the three trainings under which all that is gathered.

"There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the wasting away of [the first] three fetters, he is a stream-winner, never again destined for states of woe, certain, headed

for self-awakening.”

—AN 3:87

Generosity is actually a characteristic that must precede stream entry. However, the attainment of stream entry gives generosity a distinctive integrity.

“Monks, there are these five forms of stinginess. Which five? Stinginess as to one’s monastery [lodgings], stinginess as to one’s family [of supporters], stinginess as to one’s gains, stinginess as to one’s status, and stinginess as to the Dhamma. These are the five forms of stinginess. And the meanest of these five is this: stinginess as to the Dhamma....

“Without abandoning these five things, one is incapable of realizing the fruit of stream entry.”

—AN 5:254, —AN 5:257

“Without abandoning these five things, one is incapable of realizing the fruit of stream entry. Which five? Stinginess as to one’s monastery [lodgings], stinginess as to one’s family [of supporters], stinginess as to one’s gains, stinginess as to one’s status, and ingratitude.”

—AN 5:259

“These five are a person of integrity’s gifts. Which five? A person of integrity gives a gift with a sense of conviction. A person of integrity gives a gift attentively. A person of integrity gives a gift in season. A person of integrity gives a gift with an empathetic heart. A person of integrity gives a gift without adversely affecting himself or others.”

—AN 5:148

Discernment is the character trait of the stream-enterer that is most directly related to the cutting of the fetter of self-identity views. However, its implications spread to other facets of right view as well. In fact, “consummate in view” is one of the epithets for a stream-enterer. The impact of being consummate in view extends, not only to one’s intellectual life, but also to one’s emotional life as well.

“There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, considers thus: ‘Is there any internal enthrallment unabandoned in me that, enthralled with which, my enthralled mind would not know or see things as they actually are?’ If a monk is enthralled with sensual passion, then his mind is enthralled. If he is enthralled

with ill will, then his mind is enthralled. If he is enthralled with sloth and torpor, then his mind is enthralled. If he is enthralled with restlessness and anxiety, then his mind is enthralled. If he is enthralled with uncertainty, then his mind is enthralled. If a monk is absorbed in speculation about this world, then his mind is enthralled. If a monk is absorbed in speculation about the other world, then his mind is enthralled. If a monk is given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing others with weapons of the mouth, then his mind is enthralled.

“He discerns that, ‘There is no enthrallment unabandoned in me that, enthralled with which, my enthralled mind would not know and see things as they actually are. My mind is well directed for awakening to the truths.’ This is the first knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘When I cultivate, develop, and pursue this view, do I personally obtain tranquility, do I personally obtain Unbinding?’

“He discerns that, ‘When I cultivate, develop, and pursue this view, I personally obtain tranquility, I personally obtain Unbinding.’ This is the second knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Is there, outside of this [Dhamma & Vinaya], any other contemplative or brahman endowed with the sort of view with which I am endowed?’

“He discerns that, ‘There is no other contemplative or brahman outside [the Dhamma & Vinaya] endowed with the sort of view with which I am endowed.’ This is the third knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Am I endowed with the character of a person consummate in view?’ What is the character of a person consummate in view? This is the character of a person consummate in view: Although he may commit some kind of offence for which a means of rehabilitation has been laid down, still he immediately confesses, reveals, and discloses it to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life; having done that, he undertakes restraint for the future. Just as a young, tender infant lying on his back, when he has hit a live ember with his hand or his foot, immediately draws back; in the same way, this is the character of a person consummate in view: although he may commit some kind of offence for which a means of rehabilitation has been laid down, still he immediately confesses, reveals, and discloses it to the Teacher or to wise companions in the

holy life; having done that, he undertakes restraint for the future.

“He discerns that, ‘I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view.’ This is the fourth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Am I endowed with the character of a person consummate in view?’ What is the character of a person consummate in view? This is the character of a person consummate in view: although he may be active in the various affairs of his companions in the holy life, he still has a keen regard for training in heightened virtue, training in heightened mind, & training in heightened discernment. Just as a cow with a new calf watches after her calf all the while she is grazing on grass, in the same way, this is the character of a person consummate in view: Although he may be active in the various affairs of his companions in the holy life, he still has a keen regard for training in heightened virtue, training in heightened mind, & training in heightened discernment.

“He discerns that, ‘I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view.’ This is the fifth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Am I endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view?’ What is the strength of a person consummate in view? This is the strength of a person consummate in view: When the Dhamma & Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathagata is being taught, he heeds it, gives it attention, engages it with all his mind, hears the Dhamma with eager ears.

“He discerns that, ‘I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view.’ This is the sixth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Am I endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view?’ What is the strength of a person consummate in view? This is the strength of a person consummate in view: When the Dhamma & Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathagata is being taught, he gains understanding in the meaning, gains understanding in the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma.

“He discerns that, ‘I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view.’ This is the seventh knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“A disciple of the noble ones thus possessed of seven factors has well examined the character for the realization of the fruit of stream entry. A

disciple of the noble ones thus possessed of seven factors is endowed with the fruit of stream entry."

—MN 48

"There is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner,' and whereby a monk who is an adept [i.e., an arahant], standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner'? There is the case where a monk is a learner. He discerns, as it actually is, that '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 a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"Furthermore, the monk who is a learner reflects, 'Is there outside of this [Dhamma & Vinaya] any contemplative or brahman who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One?' And he discerns, 'No, there is no contemplative or brahman outside of this Dhamma & Vinaya who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"Furthermore, the monk who is a learner discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He sees clear through with discernment their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation, but he does not touch them with his body. This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept'? There is the case where a monk who is an adept discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He touches with his body and sees clear through with discernment what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are. This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"Furthermore, the monk who is an adept discerns the six sense faculties: the faculty of the eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... intellect. He discerns, 'These six sense faculties will disband entirely, everywhere, & in every way

without remainder, and no other set of six sense faculties will arise anywhere or in any way.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'"

—SN 48:53

Then Anathapindika the householder went to where the wanderers of other persuasions were staying. On arrival he greeted them courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the wanderers said to him, "Tell us, householder, what views the contemplative Gotama has."

"Venerable sirs, I don't know entirely what views the Blessed One has."

"Well, well. So you don't know entirely what views the contemplative Gotama has. Then tell us what views the monks have."

"I don't even know entirely what views the monks have."

"So you don't know entirely what views the contemplative Gotama has or even that the monks have. Then tell us what views you have."

"It wouldn't be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have. But please let the venerable ones expound each in line with his position, and then it won't be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have."

When this had been said, one of the wanderers said to Anathapindika the householder, "*The cosmos is eternal*. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have."

Another wanderer said to Anathapindika, "*The cosmos is not eternal*. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have."

Another wanderer said, "*The cosmos is finite...*" ... "*The cosmos is infinite...*" ... "*The soul & the body are the same...*" ... "*The soul is one thing and the body another...*" ... "*After death a Tathagata exists...*" ... "*After death a Tathagata does not exist...*" ... "*After death a Tathagata both does & does not exist...*" ... "*After death a Tathagata neither does nor does not exist*. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have."

When this had been said, Anathapindika the householder said to the wanderers, "As for the venerable one who says, "*The cosmos is eternal*. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have," his view arises from his own inappropriate attention or in dependence on the words of another. Now this view has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated. Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. This venerable one thus adheres to that very stress, submits

himself to that very stress." [Similarly with the other positions.]

When this had been said, the wanderers said to Anathapindika the householder, "We have each & every one expounded to you in line with our own positions. Now tell us what views you have."

"Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. This is the sort of view I have."

"So, householder, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. You thus adhere to that very stress, submit yourself to that very stress."

"Venerable sirs, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it actually is present, I also discern the higher escape from it as it actually is present."

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words. Anathapindika the householder, perceiving that the wanderers were silent, abashed...at a loss for words, got up & went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entirety of his conversation with the wanderers.

[The Blessed One said:] "Well done, householder. Well done. That is how you should periodically & righteously refute those foolish men." Then he instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged Anathapindika the householder with a talk on Dhamma. When Anathapindika the householder had been instructed, urged, roused and encouraged by the Blessed One with a talk on Dhamma, he got up from his seat and, having bowed down to the Blessed One, left, keeping the Blessed One on his right side. Not long afterward, the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks, even a monk who has long penetrated the Dhamma in this Dhamma & Vinaya would do well, periodically & righteously, to refute the wanderers of other persuasions in just the way Anathapindika the householder has done."

—AN 10:93

Rewards

Many of the passages describing the rewards of stream entry focus on the

stream-enterer's fate after death: He/she will never be reborn on a plane lower than the human, and will tend to experience exceptional happiness wherever reborn. As for the number of rebirths remaining for the stream-enterer before total Unbinding, the texts distinguish three levels of attainment.

"[Some,] with the wasting away of the three fetters, are 'one-seed-ers' (*ekabijin*): After taking rebirth only one more time on the human plane, they will put an end to stress.

"Or, not breaking through to that, not penetrating that, with the wasting away of the three fetters they are 'family-to-family-ers' (*kolankola*): After transmigrating & wandering on through two or three more families [according to the Commentary, this phrase should be interpreted as 'through two to six more states of becoming'], they will put an end to stress.

"Or, not breaking through to that, not penetrating that, with the wasting away of the three fetters they are 'seven-times-at-most-ers' (*sattakkhattuparama*): After transmigrating & wandering on among devas & human beings, they will put an end to stress."

—AN 3:89

[The Buddha is speaking to Nandaka, the chief minister of the Licchavis, concerning the factors of stream entry:] "A disciple of the noble ones endowed with these four qualities is a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening.

"Furthermore, a disciple of the noble ones endowed with these four qualities is linked with long life, human or divine; is linked with beauty, human or divine; is linked with happiness, human or divine; is linked with status, human or divine; is linked with influence, human or divine.

"I tell you this, Nandaka, not having heard it from any other contemplative or brahman. Instead, I tell you this having known, seen, and realized it for myself."

When this was said, a certain man said to Nandaka, the chief minister of the Licchavis, "It is now time for your bath, sir."

[Nandaka responded,] "Enough, I say, with this external bath. I am satisfied with this internal bath: confidence in the Blessed One."

—SN 55:30

The Canon often places great importance on the power of the last mental state before death in determining one's future plane of existence. However, the power of stream entry is so great that it can overcome even a muddled state of

mind at death, ensuring that the next rebirth will be a good one.

As he was sitting there, Mahanama the Sakyan said to the Blessed One, “Lord, this Kapilavatthu is rich & prosperous, populous & crowded, its alleys congested. Sometimes, when I enter Kapilavatthu in the evening after visiting with the Blessed One or with the monks who inspire the mind, I meet up with a runaway elephant, a runaway horse, a runaway chariot, a runaway cart, or a runaway person. At times like that, my mindfulness with regard to the Blessed One gets muddled, my mindfulness with regard to the Dhamma... the Sangha gets muddled. The thought occurs to me, ‘If I were to die at this moment, what would be my destination? What would be my future course?’”

“Have no fear, Mahanama. Have no fear. Your death will not be a bad one, your demise will not be bad. If one’s mind has long been nurtured with conviction, nurtured with virtue, nurtured with learning, nurtured with generosity, nurtured with discernment, then when the body—endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother & father, nourished with rice & porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, & dispersion—is eaten by crows, vultures, hawks, dogs, hyenas, or all sorts of creatures, nevertheless the mind—long nurtured with conviction, nurtured with virtue, learning, generosity, & discernment—rises upward and separates out.

“Suppose a man were to throw a jar of ghee or a jar of oil into a deep lake of water, where it would break. There the shards & jar-fragments would go down, while the ghee or oil would rise upward and separate out. In the same way, if one’s mind has long been nurtured with conviction, nurtured with virtue, nurtured with learning, nurtured with generosity, nurtured with discernment, then when the body... is eaten by crows, vultures, hawks, dogs, hyenas, or all sorts of creatures, nevertheless the mind... rises upward and separates out.”

—SN 55:21

[Ven. Ananda is speaking to Anathapindika:] “A well-instructed disciple of the noble ones, when endowed with these four qualities [the factors of stream entry], has no terror, no trepidation, no fear at death with regard to the next life.”

—SN 55:27

“Then there is the case of the person who has no doubt or perplexity, who has arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma. Then he comes down with a serious disease. As he comes down with a serious disease, the thought

occurs to him, 'I have no doubt or perplexity. I have arrived at certainty with regard to the True Dhamma.' He doesn't grieve, isn't tormented; doesn't weep, beat his breast, or grow delirious. This, too, is a person who, subject to death, is not afraid or in terror of death."

—AN 4:184

"Just as it's not easy to take the measure of the water in the great ocean as 'just this many pails of water or hundreds of pails of water or thousands of pails of water or hundreds of thousands of pails of water.' It's reckoned simply as a great mass of water that is unreckonable, immeasurable. In the same way, when a disciple of the noble ones is endowed with these four bonanzas of merit, bonanzas of skillfulness [the factors of stream entry], it's not easy to take the measure of the merit as 'just this much bonanza of merit, bonanza of skillfulness, nourishment of bliss, heavenly, ripening in bliss leading to heaven, leading to what is agreeable, pleasing, charming, happy, & beneficial.' It's reckoned simply as a great mass of merit that is unreckonable, immeasurable."

—SN 55:41

"Monks, even though a wheel-turning emperor, having exercised sovereign lordship over the four continents, on the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in the good destination, the heavenly world, in the company of the devas of the Thirty-three, and enjoys himself there in the Nandana grove, surrounded by a consort of nymphs, supplied and endowed with the five strings of heavenly sensual pleasure, still—because he is not endowed with four qualities—he is not freed from [the possibility of going to] hell, not freed from the animal womb, not freed from the realm of hungry ghosts, not freed from the plane of deprivation, the bad destinations, the lower realms.

"And even though a disciple of the noble ones lives off lumps of almsfood and wears rag-robles, still—because he is endowed with four qualities—he is freed from hell, freed from the animal womb, freed from the realm of hungry ghosts, freed from the plane of deprivation, the bad destinations, the lower realms.

"And what are the four? There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One... verified confidence in the Dhamma... verified confidence in the Sangha.... He/she is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones.... He/she is endowed with these four qualities.

"And between the gaining of the four continents and the gaining of these four qualities, the gaining of the four continents is not equal to one sixteenth

of the gaining of these four qualities.”

—SN 55:1

Sole dominion over the earth,
going to heaven,
lordship over all worlds:
The fruit of Stream entry
excels them.

—Dhp 178

Then the Blessed One, picking up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, said to the monks, “What do you think, monks? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the great earth?”

“The great earth is far greater, lord. The little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail is next to nothing. It’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth—this little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail—when compared with the great earth.”

“In the same way, monks, for a disciple of the noble ones who is consummate in view, an individual who has broken through [to stream entry], the suffering & stress totally ended & extinguished is far greater. That which remains in the state of having at most seven remaining lifetimes is next to nothing: it’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth, when compared with the previous mass of suffering. That’s how great the benefit is of breaking through to the Dhamma, monks. That’s how great the benefit is of obtaining the Dhamma eye.”

—SN 13:1

“Suppose, monks, that there were a pond fifty leagues wide, fifty leagues long, & fifty leagues deep, filled to overflowing with water so that a crow could drink from it, and a man would draw some water out of it with the tip of a blade of grass. What do you think? Which would be greater: the water drawn out with the tip of the blade of grass or the water in the pond?”

“The water in the pond would be far greater, lord. The water drawn out with the tip of the blade of grass would be next to nothing. It wouldn’t be a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth—the water drawn out with the tip of the blade of grass—when compared with the water in the pond.”

—SN 13:2

“Suppose, monks, that the great ocean were to go to extinction, to its total end, except for two or three drops of water. What do you think? Which would be greater: the water in the great ocean that had gone to extinction, to its total end, or the two or three remaining drops of water?”

“Lord, the water in the great ocean that had gone to extinction, to its total end, would be far greater. The two or three remaining drops of water would be next to nothing. They wouldn’t be a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth—the two or three remaining drops of water—when compared with the water in the great ocean that had gone to extinction, to its total end.”

“In the same way, monks, for a disciple of the noble ones who is consummate in view, an individual who has broken through [to stream entry], the suffering & stress totally ended & extinguished is far greater. That which remains in the state of having at most seven remaining lifetimes is next to nothing: it’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth, when compared with the previous mass of suffering. That’s how great the benefit is of breaking through to the Dhamma, monks. That’s how great the benefit is of obtaining the Dhamma eye.”

—SN 13:8

Not all of the rewards of stream entry concern one’s fate at death. Many of them pertain also to the here-and-now.

Then Anathapindika the householder went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “When, for a disciple of the noble ones, five forms of fear & animosity are stilled; when he is endowed with the four factors of stream entry; and when, through discernment, he has rightly seen & rightly ferreted out the noble method, then if he wants he may state about himself: ‘Hell is ended; animal wombs are ended; the state of the hungry ghosts is ended; states of deprivation, destitution, the bad bourns are ended! I am a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening!’

“Now, which five forms of danger & animosity are stilled?”

“When a person takes life, then with the taking of life as a requisite condition, he produces fear & animosity in the here & now, produces fear & animosity in future lives, experiences mental concomitants of pain & despair; but when he refrains from taking life, he neither produces fear & animosity in the here & now nor does he produce fear & animosity in future lives, nor does he experience mental concomitants of pain & despair: for one who refrains

from taking life, that fear & animosity is thus stilled.

“When a person steals... engages in illicit sex... tells lies...

“When a person drinks distilled & fermented drinks that cause heedlessness, then with the drinking of distilled & fermented drinks that cause heedlessness as a requisite condition, he produces fear & animosity in the here & now, produces fear & animosity in future lives, experiences mental concomitants of pain & despair; but when he refrains from drinking distilled & fermented drinks that cause heedlessness, he neither produces fear & animosity in the here & now nor does he produce fear & animosity in future lives, nor does he experience mental concomitants of pain & despair: for one who refrains from drinking distilled & fermented drinks that cause heedlessness, that fear & animosity is thus stilled.

“These are the five forms of fear & animosity that are stilled.”

—AN 10:92

“These are the five rewards of conviction in a lay person. Which five?

“When the truly good people in the world show compassion, they will first show compassion to people of conviction, and not to people without conviction. When visiting, they first visit people of conviction, and not people without conviction. When accepting gifts, they will first accept those from people with conviction, and not from people without conviction. When teaching the Dhamma, they will first teach those with conviction, and not those without conviction. A person of conviction, on the break-up of the body, after death, will arise in a good destination, the heavenly world. These are the five rewards of conviction in a lay person.

“Just as a large banyan tree, on level ground where four roads meet, is a haven for the birds all around, even so a lay person of conviction is a haven for many people: monks, nuns, male lay followers, & female lay followers.”

A massive tree
whose branches carry fruits & leaves,
with trunks & roots
& an abundance of fruits:
 There the birds find rest.

In that delightful sphere
they make their home.
Those seeking shade
 come to the shade,
those seeking fruit

find fruit to eat.

So with the person consummate
in virtue & conviction,
humble, sensitive, gentle,
delightful, & mild:
To him come those without effluent—
free from passion,
free from aversion,
free from delusion—
the field of merit for the world.

They teach him the Dhamma
that dispels all stress.
And when he understands,
he is freed from effluents,
totally unbound.

—AN 5:38

Advice

Although it would be pleasant to conclude this study guide with the above passages of encouragement, we would probably do better to follow the example of the Buddha, who directed his last words to his stream-enterer disciples, encouraging them not to rest content with the rewards awaiting them, but to maintain instead an attitude of heedfulness.

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

—DN 16

“And what is heedfulness? There is the case where a monk guards his mind with regard to effluents and qualities accompanied by effluents. When his mind is guarded with regard to effluents and qualities accompanied by effluents, the faculty of conviction goes to the culmination of its development. The faculty of persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment goes to the culmination of its development.

—SN 58:56

“And how, Nandiya, does a disciple of the noble ones live heedlessly? There

is the case where a disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One.... Content with that verified confidence in the Awakened One, he does not exert himself further in solitude by day or seclusion by night. For him, living thus heedlessly, there is no joy. There being no joy, there is no rapture. There being no rapture, there is no calm. There being no calm, he dwells in pain. When pained, the mind does not become concentrated. When the mind is unconcentrated, phenomena do not become manifest. When phenomena are not manifest, he is reckoned simply as one who dwells heedlessly.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma.... verified confidence in the Sangha... virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration. Content with those virtues pleasing to the noble ones, he does not exert himself further in solitude by day or seclusion by night. For him, living thus heedlessly, there is no joy. There being no joy, there is no rapture. There being no rapture, there is no calm. There being no calm, he dwells in pain. When pained, the mind does not become concentrated. When the mind is unconcentrated, phenomena do not become manifest. When phenomena are not manifest, he is reckoned simply as one who dwells heedlessly....

“And how, Nandiya, does a disciple of the noble ones live heedfully? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One.... Not content with that verified confidence in the Awakened One, he exerts himself further in solitude by day or seclusion by night. For him, living thus heedfully, joy arises. In one who has joy, rapture arises. In one who has rapture, the body becomes calm. When the body is calm, one feels pleasure. Feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated, phenomena become manifest. When phenomena are manifest, he is reckoned as one who dwells heedfully.

“Furthermore, the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma.... verified confidence in the Sangha... virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration. Not content with those virtues pleasing to the noble ones, he exerts himself further in solitude by day or seclusion by night. For him, living thus heedfully, joy arises. In one who has joy, rapture arises. In one who has rapture, the body becomes calm. When the body is calm, one feels pleasure. Feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated, phenomena become manifest. When phenomena are manifest, he is reckoned as one who dwells heedfully.”

—SN 55:40

“And what is the individual attained to view? There is the case where a certain individual does not remain touching with his body those peaceful liberations that transcend form, that are formless, but—having seen with discernment—some of his fermentations are ended, and he has reviewed & examined with discernment the qualities [or: teachings] proclaimed by the Tathagata. This is called an individual who is attained to view. Regarding this monk, I say that he has a task to do with heedfulness. Why is that? [I think:] ‘Perhaps this venerable one, when making use of suitable resting places, associating with admirable friends, balancing his [mental] faculties, will reach & remain in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now.’ Envisioning this fruit of heedfulness for this monk, I say that he has a task to do with heedfulness.”

—MN 70

“Mahanama, a discerning lay follower who is diseased, in pain, severely ill should be reassured by another discerning lay follower with four reassurances: ‘Be reassured, friend, that you are endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One... verified confidence in the Dhamma... verified confidence in the Sangha... virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration.’

“Mahanama, when a discerning lay follower who is diseased, in pain, severely ill has been reassured by another discerning lay follower with these four reassurances, he should be asked: ‘Friend, are you concerned for your mother & father?’ If he should say, ‘I am...,’ he should be told, ‘You, my dear friend, are subject to death. If you feel concern for your mother & father, you’re still going to die. If you don’t feel concern for your mother & father, you’re still going to die. It would be good if you abandoned concern for your mother & father.’

“If he should say, ‘My concern for my mother & father has been abandoned,’ he should be asked, ‘Friend, are you concerned for your wife & children?’ If he should say, ‘I am...,’ he should be told, ‘You, my dear friend, are subject to death. If you feel concern for your wife & children, you’re still going to die. If you don’t feel concern for your wife & children, you’re still going to die. It would be good if you abandoned concern for your wife & children.’

“If he should say, ‘My concern for my wife & children has been

abandoned,' he should be asked, 'Friend, are you concerned for the five strings of human sensuality?' If he should say, 'I am...,' he should be told, 'Friend, divine sensual pleasures are more splendid & more refined than human sensual pleasures. It would be good if, having raised your mind above human sensual pleasures, you set it on the Devas of the Four Great Kings.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above human sensual pleasures and is set on the Devas of the Four Great Kings,' he should be told, 'Friend, the Devas of the Thirty-three are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Four Great Kings. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Devas of the Four Great Kings, you set it on the Devas of the Thirty-three.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Devas of the Four Great Kings and is set on the Devas of the Thirty-three,' he should be told, 'Friend, the Devas of the Hours are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Thirty-three... the Contented Devas are more splendid & more refined than the Devas of the Hours... the Devas Delighting in Creation are more splendid & more refined than the Contented Devas... the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others are more splendid & more refined than the Devas Delighting in Creation... the Brahma world is more splendid and more refined than the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others, you set it on the Brahma world.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others and is set on the Brahma world,' he should be told, 'Friend, even the Brahma world is inconstant, impermanent, included in self-identity. It would be good if, having raised your mind above the Brahma world, you brought it to the cessation of identity.'

"If he should say, 'My mind is raised above the Brahma worlds and is brought to the cessation of identity,' then, I tell you, Mahanama, there is no difference—in terms of release—between the release of that lay follower whose mind is released and the release of a monk whose mind is released."

—SN 55:54

"Therefore, Dighavu, when you are established in these four factors of stream entry, you should further develop six qualities conducive to clear knowing. Remain focused on inconstancy in all fabrications, percipient of stress in what is inconstant, percipient of not-self in what is stressful, percipient of abandoning, percipient of dispassion, percipient of cessation. That's how you should train yourself."

—SN 55:3

Glossary

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

Asava: 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.

Deva (*devata*): Literally, “shining one.” An inhabitant of the heavenly realms.

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

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

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

Nibbana: 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 nibbana” in some contexts denotes the experience of Awakening; in others, the final passing away of an arahant. Sanskrit form: *Nirvana*.

Sangha: Community. On the conventional (*sammati*) 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.

Tathagata: Literally, “one who has become authentic (*tatha-agata*)” or “one who is truly gone (*tatha-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.

Vinaya: The monastic discipline. The Buddha’s own term for the religion he founded was “this Dhamma-Vinaya.”

Abbreviations

<i>AN</i>	<i>Anguttara Nikaya</i>
<i>Dhp</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
<i>DN</i>	<i>Digha Nikaya</i>
<i>Iti</i>	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
<i>MN</i>	<i>Majjhima Nikaya</i>
<i>Mv</i>	<i>Mahavagga</i>
<i>SN</i>	<i>Samyutta Nikaya</i>
<i>Sn</i>	<i>Sutta Nipata</i>
<i>Thag</i>	<i>Theragatha</i>

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