

Skill in Questions

HOW THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

Thānissaro Bhikkhu

(Geoffrey DeGraff)

“That’s the purpose of discussion, that’s the purpose of counsel, that’s the purpose of drawing near, that’s the purpose of lending ear: i.e., the liberation of the mind through no clinging.” — AN 3:68

“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.’” — AN 4:192

Contents

CHAPTER ONE: THE KAMMA OF TEACHING

READINGS

Skill in Questions
Skill in Answers
The Buddha's Rhetoric

CHAPTER TWO: THE BODHISATTA'S QUEST

READINGS

CHAPTER THREE: CATEGORICAL ANSWERS

READINGS

Categorical Teachings
Appropriate Attention
Skillful & Unskillful Actions
The Four Noble Truths
Dependent Co-arising
Recommended Questions
Views & Awakening
Papañca

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYTICAL ANSWERS

READINGS

On Judging People
Judging Ways of Life
Judging Practices
Kamma & Feeling
On the Buddha as Teacher

CHAPTER FIVE: CROSS-QUESTIONING – I

READINGS

Establishing Orthodoxy
Cross-questioning in the Process of Learning
The Buddha Questions Other Sectarrians
Clarifying the Question
Extracting Definitions
Hypotheticals: On the Buddha as Teacher
Hypotheticals: Kings, Princes, & Generals
Hypotheticals: Brahmans
Hypotheticals: Kamma
Hypotheticals: Understanding Pleasure & Pain
People Worth Talking to (& Not)
Debates

CHAPTER SIX: CROSS-QUESTIONING - II

READINGS

CHAPTER SEVEN: QUESTIONS PUT ASIDE - I

READINGS

Livelihood
Other Teachers

CHAPTER EIGHT: QUESTIONS PUT ASIDE - II
READINGS

Agnosticism
Inconceivables: Kamma & the World
The Buddha's Silence
Questions of Inappropriate Attention
Dependent Co-arising: Extremes Avoided
Dependent Co-arising: Invalid Questions
The Ten Undeclared Issues
Viewpoints from DN 1
The Tetralemma
The Tetralemma Declared Meaningless
Different Responses to Similar Questions

GLOSSARY

§ 3. Then Ven. Assaji, having gone for alms in Rājagaha, left, taking his alms. Then Sāriputta the wanderer approached him and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he stood to one side. As he was standing there he said, “Bright are your faculties, my friend, pure your complexion, and clear. On whose account have you gone forth? Or who is your teacher? Or in whose Dhamma do you delight?”

“There is, my friend, the Great Contemplative, a son of the Sakyans, gone forth from a Sakyan family. I have gone forth on account of that Blessed One. That Blessed One is my teacher. And it is in that Blessed One’s Dhamma that I delight.”

“But what is your teacher’s teaching? What does he proclaim?”

“I am new, my friend, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dhamma & Vinaya. I cannot explain the Dhamma in detail, but I will tell you the gist in brief.”

Then Sāriputta the wanderer spoke thus to the Ven. Assaji:

“Speak a little or a lot,
but tell me just the gist.
The gist is what I want.
What use is a lot of verbosity?”

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

“Whatever phenomena arise from cause,
their cause,
& their cessation:
Such is the teaching of the Tathāgata,
the Great Contemplative.”

Then to Sāriputta the wanderer, as he heard this Dhamma exposition, there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.” — *Mv.I.23.5*

§ 4. [Sakka the deva-king:] “But what, dear sir, is the cause of desire, what is its origination, what gives it birth, what is its source? When what exists does it come into being? When what doesn’t exist does it not?”

“Desire has thinking as its cause, has thinking as its origination, has thinking as what gives it birth, has thinking as its source. When thinking exists, desire comes into being. When thinking is not, it doesn’t.”

“But what, dear sir, is the cause of thinking, what is its origination, what gives it birth, what is its source? When what exists does it come into being? When what doesn’t exist does it not?”

“Thinking has the perceptions & categories of objectification as its cause, has the perceptions & categories of objectification as its origination, has the perceptions & categories of objectification as what gives it birth, has the perceptions & categories of objectification as its source. When the perceptions & categories of objectification exist, thinking comes into being. When the perceptions & categories of objectification are not, it doesn’t.”

“And how has he practiced, dear sir: the monk who has practiced the practice leading to the right cessation of the perceptions & categories of objectification?”

“Joy is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued. Grief is of two sorts: to be pursued & not to be pursued. Equanimity is of two sorts: to be pursued & not to be pursued.

“Joy is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.’

Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? When one knows of a feeling of joy, 'As I pursue this joy, unskillful qualities increase, and skillful qualities decline,' that sort of joy is not to be pursued. When one knows of a feeling of joy, 'As I pursue this joy, unskillful (mental) qualities decline, and skillful qualities increase,' that sort of joy is to be pursued. And this sort of joy may be accompanied by directed thought & evaluation or free of directed thought & evaluation. Of the two, the latter is the more refined. 'Joy is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with grief and equanimity.]

"This is how he has practiced, deva-king: the monk who has practiced the practice leading to the right cessation of the perceptions & categories of objectification."

Thus the Blessed One answered, having been asked by Sakka the deva-king. Gratified, Sakka was delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One's words: "So it is, O Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone. Hearing the Blessed One's answer to my question, my doubt is now cut off, my perplexity overcome."

Then Sakka the deva-king, having delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One's words, asked him a further question: "But how has he practiced, dear sir: the monk who has practiced for restraint in the Pāṭimokkha?"

"Bodily conduct is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued. Verbal conduct is of two sorts: to be pursued & not to be pursued. Searching is of two sorts: to be pursued & not to be pursued."

"Bodily conduct is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to what was it said? When one knows of bodily conduct, 'As I pursue this bodily conduct, unskillful qualities increase, and skillful qualities decline,' that sort of bodily conduct is not to be pursued. When one knows of bodily conduct, 'As I pursue this bodily conduct, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities increase,' that sort of bodily conduct is to be pursued. 'Bodily conduct is of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with verbal conduct and searching.]

"This is how he has practiced, deva-king: the monk who has practiced the practice for restraint in the Pāṭimokkha."

Thus the Blessed One answered, having been asked by Sakka the deva-king. Gratified, Sakka was delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One's words: "So it is, O Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone. Hearing the Blessed One's answer to my question, my doubt is now cut off, my perplexity overcome."

Then Sakka, having delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One's words, asked him a further question: "But how has he practiced, dear sir: the monk who has practiced for restraint with regard to the sense faculties?"

"Forms cognizable by the eye are of two sorts, I tell you, deva-king: to be pursued & not to be pursued. Sounds cognizable by the ear.... Aromas cognizable by the nose.... Flavors cognizable by the tongue.... Tactile sensations cognizable by the body.... Ideas cognizable by the intellect are of two sorts: to be pursued & not to be pursued."

When this was said, Sakka the deva-king said to the Blessed One, "Dear sir, I understand the detailed meaning of the Blessed One's brief statement. If, as one pursues a certain type of form cognizable by the eye, unskillful qualities increase, and skillful qualities decline, that sort of form cognizable by the eye is not to be pursued. But if, as one pursues a certain type of form cognizable by the eye,

unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities increase, that sort of form cognizable by the eye is to be pursued.

“If, as one pursues a certain type of sound cognizable by the ear....

“If, as one pursues a certain type of aroma cognizable by the nose....

“If, as one pursues a certain type of flavor cognizable by the tongue....

“If, as one pursues a certain type of tactile sensation cognizable by the body....

“If, as one pursues a certain type of idea cognizable by the intellect, unskillful qualities increase, and skillful qualities decline, that sort of idea cognizable by the intellect is not to be pursued. But if, as one pursues a certain type of idea cognizable by the intellect, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities increase, that sort of idea cognizable by the intellect is to be pursued.

“This is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement. Hearing the Blessed One’s answer to my question, my doubt is now cut off, my perplexity overcome.”

Then Sakka, having delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One’s words, asked him a further question: “Dear sir, do all contemplatives & brahmans teach the same doctrine, adhere to the same precepts, desire the same thing, aim at the same goal?”

“No, deva-king, not all contemplatives & brahmans teach the same doctrine, adhere to the same precepts, desire the same thing, aim at the same goal.”

“Why, dear sir, don’t all contemplatives & brahmans teach the same doctrine, adhere to the same precepts, desire the same thing, aim at the same goal?”

“The world is made up of many properties, various properties. Because of the many & various properties in the world, then whichever property living beings get fixated on, they become entrenched & latch onto it, saying, ‘Only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ [S48] This is why not all contemplatives & brahmans teach the same doctrine, adhere to the same precepts, desire the same thing, aim at the same goal.”

“But, dear sir, are all contemplatives & brahmans utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, followers of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate?”

“No, deva-king, not all contemplatives & brahmans are utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, followers of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate.”

“But why, dear sir, are not all contemplatives & brahmans utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, followers of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate?”

“Those monks who are released through the total ending of craving are the ones who are utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, followers of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate. This is why not all contemplatives & brahmans are utterly complete, utterly free from bonds, followers of the utterly holy life, utterly consummate.”

Thus the Blessed One answered, having been asked by Sakka the deva-king. Gratified, Sakka was delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One’s words: “So it is, O Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone. Hearing the Blessed One’s answer to my question, my doubt is now cut off, my perplexity overcome.”

Then Sakka, having delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One’s words, said to him, “Yearning is a disease, yearning is a boil, yearning is an arrow. It seduces one, drawing one into this or that state of becoming, which is why one is reborn in high states & low. Whereas other outside contemplatives & brahmans gave me no chance to ask them these questions, the Blessed One has answered at length, so that he has removed the arrow of my uncertainty & perplexity.”

“Deva-king, do you recall having asked other contemplatives & brahmans these questions?”

“Yes, lord, I recall having asked other contemplatives & brahmins these questions.”

“If it’s no inconvenience, could you tell me how they answered?”

“It’s no inconvenience when sitting with the Blessed One or one who is like him.”

“Then tell me, deva-king.”

“Having gone to those whom I considered to be contemplatives & brahmins living in isolated dwellings in the wilderness, I asked them these questions. But when asked by me, they were at a loss. Being at a loss, they asked *me* in return, ‘What is your name?’

“Being asked, I responded, ‘I, dear sir, am Sakka, the deva-king.’

“So they questioned me further, ‘But what kamma did you do to attain to this state?’

“So I taught them the Dhamma as far as I had heard & mastered it. And just this much was enough to gratify them: ‘We have seen Sakka, the deva-king, and he has answered our questions!’ So, instead of my becoming their disciple, they simply became mine. But I, lord, am [now] the Blessed One’s disciple, a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening.”

“Deva-king, do you recall ever having previously experienced such happiness & joy?”

“Yes, lord, I do.”

“And how do you recall ever having previously experienced such happiness & joy?”

“Once, lord, the devas & asuras were arrayed in battle. And in that battle the devas won, while the asuras lost. Having won the battle, as the victor in the battle, this thought occurred to me, ‘Whatever has been the divine nourishment of the asuras, whatever has been the divine nourishment of the devas, the devas will now enjoy both of them.’ But my attainment of happiness & joy was in the sphere of violence & weapons. It didn’t lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. But my attainment of happiness & joy on hearing the Blessed One’s Dhamma is in the sphere of no violence, the sphere of no weapons. It leads to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.” — DN 21

§ 5. [King Ajātasattu:] “Once, venerable sir, I approached Pūraṇa Kassapa and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, I sat to one side. As I was sitting there, I asked him, ‘Venerable Kassapa, there are these common craftsmen: elephant-trainers, horse-trainers, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, camp marshals, supply corps officers, high royal officers, commandos, military heroes, armor-clad warriors, leather-clad warriors, domestic slaves, confectioners, barbers, bath attendants, cooks, garland-makers, laundrymen, weavers, basket-makers, potters, calculators, accountants, and any other common craftsmen of a similar sort. They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here & now. They give pleasure & refreshment to themselves, to their parents, wives, & children, to their friends & colleagues. They put in place an excellent presentation of offerings to contemplatives & brahmins, leading to heaven, resulting in happiness, conducive to a heavenly rebirth. Is it possible, venerable Kassapa, to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?’

“When this was said, Pūraṇa Kassapa said to me, ‘Great king, in acting or getting others to act, in mutilating or getting others to mutilate, in torturing or

getting others to torture, in inflicting sorrow or in getting others to inflict sorrow, in tormenting or getting others to torment, in intimidating or getting others to intimidate, in taking life, taking what is not given, breaking into houses, plundering wealth, committing burglary, committing highway robbery, committing adultery, speaking falsehood—one does no evil. If with a razor-edged disk one were to turn all the living beings on this earth to a single heap of flesh, a single pile of flesh, there would be no evil from that cause, no coming of evil. Even if one were to go along the right bank of the Ganges, killing and getting others to kill, mutilating and getting others to mutilate, torturing and getting others to torture, there would be no evil from that cause, no coming of evil. Even if one were to go along the left bank of the Ganges, giving and getting others to give, making sacrifices and getting others to make sacrifices, there would be no merit from that cause, no coming of merit. Through generosity, self-control, restraint, & truthful speech there is no merit from that cause, no coming of merit.'

"Thus, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Pūraṇa Kassapa answered with non-action. Just as if a person, when asked about a mango, were to answer with a breadfruit; or, when asked about a breadfruit, were to answer with a mango: In the same way, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Pūraṇa Kassapa answered with non-action. The thought occurred to me, 'How can anyone like me think of disparaging a contemplative or brahman living in his realm?' Yet I neither delighted in Pūraṇa Kassapa's words nor did I protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, I was dissatisfied. Without expressing dissatisfaction, without accepting his teaching, without adopting it, I got up from my seat and left....

"Another time I approached Pakudha Kaccāyana and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, I sat to one side. As I was sitting there, I asked him, 'Venerable Kaccāyana, there are these common craftsmen.... They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here and now.... Is it possible, venerable Kaccāyana, to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?'

"When this was said, Pakudha Kaccāyana said to me, 'Great king, there are these seven substances—unmade, irreducible, uncreated, without a creator, barren, stable as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar—that do not alter, do not change, do not interfere with one another, are incapable of causing one another pleasure, pain, or both pleasure & pain. Which seven? The earth-substance, the liquid-substance, the fire-substance, the wind-substance, pleasure, pain, and the soul as the seventh. These are the seven substances—unmade, irreducible, uncreated, without a creator, barren, stable as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar—that do not alter, do not change, do not interfere with one another, and are incapable of causing one another pleasure, pain, or both pleasure & pain.

"And among them there is no killer nor one who causes killing, no hearer nor one who causes hearing, no cognizer nor one who causes cognition. When one cuts off [another person's] head, there is no one taking anyone's life. It is simply between the seven substances that the sword passes.'

"Thus, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Pakudha Kaccāyana answered with non-relatedness. Just as if a person, when asked about a mango, were to answer with a breadfruit; or, when asked about a breadfruit, were to answer with a mango. In the same way, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Pakudha Kaccāyana answered with non-relatedness. The thought occurred to me, 'How can anyone

like me think of disparaging a contemplative or brahman living in his realm?’ Yet I neither delighted in Pakudha Kaccāyana’s words nor did I protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, I was dissatisfied. Without expressing dissatisfaction, without accepting his teaching, without adopting it, I got up from my seat and left.

“Another time I approached Sañjaya Velatthaputta and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, I sat to one side. As I was sitting there, I asked him, ‘Venerable Sañjaya, there are these common craftsmen.... They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here and now.... Is it possible, venerable Sañjaya, to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here and now?’

“When this was said, Sañjaya Velatthaputta said to me, ‘If you ask me if there exists another world [after death], if I thought that there exists another world, would I declare that to you? I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not. If you asked me if there isn’t another world... both is and isn’t... neither is nor isn’t... if there are beings who transmigrate... if there aren’t... both are & aren’t... neither are nor aren’t ... if the Tathāgata exists after death... doesn’t... both... neither exists nor doesn’t exist after death, would I declare that to you? I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not.’

“Thus, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Sañjaya Velatthaputta answered with evasion. Just as if a person, when asked about a mango, were to answer with a breadfruit; or, when asked about a breadfruit, were to answer with a mango: In the same way, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Sañjaya Velatthaputta answered with evasion. The thought occurred to me, ‘This—among these contemplatives & brahmans—is the most foolish & confused of all. How can he, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, answer with evasion?’ Still the thought occurred to me, ‘How can anyone like me think of disparaging a contemplative or brahman living in his realm?’ Yet I neither delighted in Sañjaya Velatthaputta’s words nor did I protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, I was dissatisfied. Without expressing dissatisfaction, without accepting his teaching, without adopting it, I got up from my seat and left.” — DN 2 [See also Chapter Seven and Appendix Two for answers given by other teachers, and §99 for the answer given by the Buddha.]

THE BUDDHA’S RHETORIC

§ 6. “Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of wrong view. Which two? The voice of another and inappropriate attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of wrong view.” — AN 2:123

§ 7. “Monks, there are these two conditions for the arising of right view. Which two? The voice of another and appropriate attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of right view.” — AN 2:124

§ 8. “It’s not easy to teach the Dhamma to others, Ānanda. The Dhamma should be taught to others only when five qualities are established within the person teaching. Which five?

“[1] The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, ‘I will speak step-by-step.’

"[2] The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak explaining the sequence [of cause & effect].'

"[3] The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak out of kindness.'

"[4] The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak not for the purpose of material reward.'

"[5] The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak without hurting myself or others.'

"It's not easy to teach the Dhamma to others, Ānanda. The Dhamma should be taught to others only when these five qualities are established within the person teaching." — *AN 5:159*

§ 9. "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 serene.

"These are the five rewards in listening to the Dhamma." — *AN 5:202*

§ 10. "There is the case where a monk knows his social gathering: 'This is a social gathering of noble warriors; this, a social gathering of brahmans; 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.'" — *AN 7:64*

§ 11. Just like a blossom,
bright colored
but scentless:
a well-spoken word
is fruitless
when not carried out.
Just like a blossom,
bright colored
& full of scent:
a well-spoken word
is fruitful
when well carried out. — *Dhp 51-52*

§ 12. First
he'd settle himself
in what is correct,
only then
teach others.
He wouldn't stain his name
: he is wise. — *Dhp 158*

§ 13. A monk restrained in his speaking,
giving counsel unruffled,
declaring the message & meaning:
sweet is his speech. — *Dhp 363*

CHAPTER TWO

The Bodhisatta's Quest

READINGS

§ 14. "Before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened bodhisatta, being subject myself to birth, I sought what was likewise subject to birth. Being subject myself to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, I sought [happiness in] what was likewise subject to illness... death... sorrow... defilement. The thought occurred to me, 'Why do I, being subject myself to birth, seek what is likewise subject to birth? Being subject myself to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, why do I seek what is likewise subject to illness... death... sorrow... defilement? What if I, being subject myself to birth, seeing the drawbacks of birth, were to seek the unborn, unexcelled safety from the yoke: unbinding. What if I, being subject myself to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, seeing the drawbacks of aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, were to seek the aging-less, illness-less, deathless, sorrow-less, unexcelled safety from the yoke: unbinding.'

"So, at a later time, while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—and while my parents, unwilling, were crying with tears streaming down their faces—I shaved off my hair & beard, put on the ochre robe and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

"Having thus gone forth in search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I went to Ālāra Kālāma and, on arrival, said to him, 'Friend Kālāma, I want to practice in this Dhamma & Vinaya.'

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

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

"I thought, 'It isn't through mere conviction alone that Ālāra Kālāma declares, 'I have entered & dwell in this Dhamma, having realized it for myself through direct knowledge.'" Certainly he dwells knowing & seeing this Dhamma.' So I went to him and said, 'To what extent do you declare that you have entered & dwell in this Dhamma?' When this was said, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

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

"'Yes, my friend...'

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

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

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

“In search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I went to Uddaka Rāmaputta and, on arrival, said to him, ‘Friend Uddaka, I want to practice in this Dhamma & Vinaya.’ [The story here follows a pattern similar to that of the bodhisatta’s encounter with Ālāra Kālāma, except that Uddaka teaches the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, which he himself has not attained, but which had been attained by his teacher, Rama. When the bodhisatta reaches that attainment, Uddaka offers to set him up as the sole leader of the community.]

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

“In search of what might be skillful, seeking the unexcelled state of sublime peace, I wandered by stages in the Magadhan country and came to the military town of Uruvelā. There I saw some delightful countryside, with an inspiring forest grove, a clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. The thought occurred to me, ‘How delightful is this countryside, with its inspiring forest grove, clear-flowing river with fine, delightful banks, and villages for alms-going on all sides. This is just right for the exertion of a clansman intent on exertion.’ So I sat down right there, thinking, ‘This is just right for exertion.’” — MN 26

§ 15. “Monks, I have known two qualities through experience: discontent with regard to skillful qualities & unrelenting exertion. Relentlessly I exerted myself, (thinking,) ‘Gladly would I let the flesh & blood in my body dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if I have not attained what can be reached through human firmness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing my persistence.’ From this heedfulness of mine was attained awakening. From this heedfulness of mine was attained the unexcelled safety from bondage.

“You too monks, should relentlessly exert yourselves, (thinking,) ‘Gladly would we let the flesh & blood in our bodies dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if we have not attained what can be reached through human firmness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing our persistence.’ You too in no long time 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 yourselves in the here & now.

“Thus you should train yourselves: ‘We will relentlessly exert ourselves, (thinking,) “Gladly would we let the flesh & blood in our bodies dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if we have not attained what can be reached through human firmness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing our persistence.”’ That’s how you should train yourselves.” — AN 2:5

§ 16. “The thought occurred to me, ‘What if—on recognized, designated nights such as the eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight—I were to stay in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines? Perhaps I would get to see that fear & terror.’ So at a later time—on recognized, designated nights such as the eighth, fourteenth, & fifteenth of the lunar fortnight—I stayed in the sort of places that are awe-inspiring and make your hair stand on end, such as park-shrines, forest-shrines, & tree-shrines. And while I was staying there a wild animal would come, or a bird would drop a twig, or wind would rustle the fallen leaves. The thought would occur to me: ‘Is this that fear & terror coming?’ Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Why do I just keep waiting for fear? What if I were to subdue fear & terror in whatever state they come?’ So when fear & terror came while I was walking back & forth, I would not stand or sit or lie down. I would keep walking back & forth until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was standing, I would not walk or sit or lie down. I would keep standing until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was sitting, I would not lie down or stand up or walk. I would keep sitting until I had subdued that fear & terror. When fear & terror came while I was lying down, I would not sit up or stand or walk. I would keep lying down until I had subdued that fear & terror.” — MN 4

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

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

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

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

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

“So it is with any contemplative or brahman who lives secluded from

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

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

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

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

“I thought, ‘What if I, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, were to beat down, constrain, & crush my mind with my awareness?’ So, clenching my teeth and pressing my tongue against the roof of my mouth, I beat down, constrained, & crushed by mind with my awareness. Just as a strong man, seizing a weaker man by the head or the throat or the shoulders, would beat him down, constrain, & crush him, in the same way I beat down, constrained, & crushed my mind with my awareness. As I did so, sweat poured from my armpits. And although tireless persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established, my body was aroused & uncalm because of the painful exertion. But the painful feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.” — MN 36

§ 18. “Monks, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened bodhisatta, the thought occurred to me, ‘What if I were to keep dividing my thinking into two sorts?’ So I made thinking imbued with sensuality, thinking imbued with ill will, & thinking imbued with harmfulness one sort, and thinking imbued with renunciation, thinking imbued with non-ill will, & thinking imbued with harmlessness another sort.

“And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with sensuality arose. I discerned that ‘Thinking imbued with sensuality has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.’

“As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with sensuality had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

“And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with ill will arose. I discerned that ‘Thinking imbued with ill will has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.’

“As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with ill will had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

“And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with harmfulness arose. I discerned that ‘Thinking imbued with harmfulness has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding.’

“As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, & does not lead to unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with harmfulness had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

“Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking & pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with sensuality, abandoning thinking imbued with renunciation, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with sensuality. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with non-ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmfulness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmlessness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmfulness.

“Just as in the last month of the Rains, in the autumn season when the crops are ripening, a cowherd would look after his cows: He would tap & poke & check & curb them with a stick on this side & that. Why is that? Because he foresees flogging or imprisonment or a fine or public censure arising from that [if he were to let his cows wander into the crops]. In the same way I foresaw in unskillful qualities drawbacks, degradation, & defilement, and I foresaw in skillful qualities rewards related to renunciation & promoting cleansing.

“And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with renunciation arose. I discerned that ‘Thinking imbued with renunciation has

arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with non-ill will arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with non-ill will has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, thinking imbued with harmlessness arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with harmlessness has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, & leads to unbinding. If I were to think & ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day & night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking & pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, & concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking & pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with renunciation, abandoning thinking imbued with sensuality, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with renunciation. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with non-ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with non-ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmlessness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmfulness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmlessness.

"Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all the crops have been gathered into the village, a cowherd would look after his cows: While resting under the shade of a tree or out in the open, he simply keeps himself mindful of 'those cows.' In the same way, I simply kept myself mindful of 'those qualities.'

"Unflagging persistence was aroused in me, and unmuddled mindfulness established. My body was calm & unaroused, my mind concentrated & single. Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.¹ With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, I remained equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—I entered & remained in the

fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

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

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

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

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

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

“This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose—as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.” — MN 19

NOTE: 1. AN 9:41 describes the question that led the bodhisatta from right resolve to the first jhāna:

“Even I myself—before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened

bodhisatta—thought, ‘Renunciation is good; seclusion is good,’ but my heart didn’t leap up at renunciation, didn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, ‘That is peace.’ The thought occurred to me, ‘What is the cause, what is the reason, why my heart doesn’t leap up at renunciation, doesn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, “That is peace?”’ Then the thought occurred to me, ‘I haven’t seen the drawback of sensuality; I haven’t pursued [that theme]. I haven’t understood the reward of renunciation; I haven’t familiarized myself with it. That’s why my heart doesn’t leap up at renunciation, doesn’t grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing, “That is peace.”’

“Then the thought occurred to me, ‘If, having seen the drawback of sensuality, I were to pursue that theme; and if, having understood the reward of renunciation, I were to familiarize myself with it, there’s the possibility that my heart would leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing, “That is peace.”’

“So at a later time, having seen the drawback of sensuality, I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of renunciation, I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at renunciation, grew confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing, ‘That is peace.’ Then, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhāna.”

Similar questions and reflections then led him to the remaining jhānas and levels of formlessness [§150.]

§ 19. “Monks, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened bodhisatta, the realization came to me: ‘How this world has fallen on difficulty! It is born, it ages, it dies, it falls away & rearises, but it doesn’t discern the escape from this stress, from this aging-&-death. O when will it discern the escape from this stress, from this aging-&-death?’

“Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Aging-&-death exists when what exists? From what as a requisite condition comes aging-&-death?’ From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: ‘Aging-&-death exists when birth exists.¹ From birth as a requisite condition comes aging-&-death.’

Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Birth exists when what exists? From what as a requisite condition comes birth?’ From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: ‘Birth exists when becoming exists. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.’....

“‘Becoming exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Becoming exists when clinging exists....

“‘Clinging exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Clinging exists when craving exists....

“‘Craving exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Craving exists when feeling exists....

“‘Feeling exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Feeling exists when contact exists....

“‘Contact exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Contact exists when the six sense media exist....

“‘The six sense media exist when what exists?’ ... ‘The six sense media exist when name-&-form exists....

“‘Name-&-form exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Name-&-form exists when consciousness exists....

“‘Consciousness exists when what exists?’ ... ‘Consciousness exists when fabrications exist....

Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Fabrications exist when what exists? From what as a requisite condition come fabrications?’ From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: ‘Fabrications exist when ignorance exists. From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

“Thus:

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. Origination, origination.' Vision arose, clear knowing arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never before heard.

"Then the thought occurred to me, 'Aging-&-death doesn't exist when what doesn't exist? From the cessation of what comes the cessation of aging-&-death?' From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: 'Aging-&-death doesn't exist when birth doesn't exist. From the cessation of birth comes the cessation of aging-&-death.'

"Then the thought occurred to me, 'Birth doesn't exist when what doesn't exist? From the cessation of what comes the cessation of birth?' From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: 'Birth doesn't exist when becoming doesn't exist. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth.'

"'Becoming doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Becoming doesn't exist when clinging doesn't exist....

"'Clinging doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Clinging doesn't exist when craving doesn't exist....

"'Craving doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Craving doesn't exist when feeling doesn't exist....

"'Feeling doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Feeling doesn't exist when contact doesn't exist....

"'Contact doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Contact doesn't exist when the six sense media don't exist....

"'The six sense media don't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'The six sense media don't exist when name-&-form doesn't exist....

"'Name-&-form doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Name-&-form doesn't exist when consciousness doesn't exist....

"'Consciousness doesn't exist when what doesn't exist?' ... 'Consciousness doesn't exist when fabrications don't exist....

Then the thought occurred to me, 'Fabrications don't exist when what doesn't exist? From the cessation of what comes the cessation of fabrications?' From my appropriate attention there came the breakthrough of discernment: 'Fabrications don't exist when ignorance doesn't exist. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications.

"Thus:

From the cessation of 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. Cessation, cessation.’ Vision arose, clear knowing arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never before heard.” — SN 12:10

NOTE: 1. The statements, “X exists when Y exists” and “X doesn’t exist when Y doesn’t exist” appear as part of the general causal principle—*idappaccayatā*, this/that conditionality—underlying dependent co-arising as a whole [§42]. In that principle, these statements are paired with two other statements: “From the arising of X comes the arising of Y” and “From the cessation of X comes the cessation of Y.”

The first pair of statements can be read in two ways: loosely and precisely. Read loosely, they can mean that the existence of X creates the conditions for Y eventually to exist; when X goes out of existence, that creates the conditions for Y eventually to go out of existence. Read in this way, the statements are equivalent with the second pair of statements. The resulting interpretation of this/that conditionality, however, has very little explanatory power, for it cannot account for the Buddha’s rejection of determinism [§§83-84], nor can it account for the complexity of feedback loops in the Buddha’s detailed descriptions of causality.

Read as precise statements, however, these statements can mean that Y will come into existence simultaneously with X’s coming into existence and that Y will go out of existence simultaneously with X’s going out of existence. Read in this way, this/that conditionality contains the interplay of two fairly different causal principles—causes that bring effects in the immediate present, and causes that can give effects over time—which goes a great way toward explaining both the complexity and the non-deterministic nature of the causal relationships described in the Buddha’s teachings. (See the Introduction to *The Wings to Awakening* for a discussion of this point.)

However, it has been argued that this second reading is invalid because it obviously does not apply to the statement that aging-&-death exist when birth exists, for the aging and death of a being can obviously occur many years after its birth. This argument, however, ignores the possibility that the Buddha in this passage is referring to the arising, decay, and passing away of momentary mind-states, which can occur so quickly that the process of aging-&-death on this level would occur simultaneously with the process of birth.

This interpretation is supported by two considerations. The first is that the Buddha terms this insight a “breakthrough of discernment,” which would hardly apply to the general observation that aging-&-death follows on birth. The second consideration is that in SN 23:2 [§199], the Buddha states that one becomes a “being” whenever one gets caught up in desire for any of the aggregates. Because this is a purely mental process, and because individual aggregates and their attendant desires can arise and pass away very quickly—SN 22:95 compares the arising and passing away of feelings with the evanescent appearance and disappearance of bubbles caused by rain falling on a body of water—the aging-&-death of a “being” on this level could very easily occur simultaneously with its birth.

CHAPTER THREE

Categorical Answers

READINGS

CATEGORICAL TEACHINGS

§ 20. When this was said, one of the wanderers said to Vajjiya Māhita the householder, “Now wait a minute, householder. This contemplative Gotama whom you praise is a nihilist, one who doesn’t declare anything.”

“I tell you, venerable sirs, that the Blessed One righteously declares that ‘This is skillful.’ He declares that ‘This is unskillful.’ Declaring that ‘This is skillful’ and ‘This is unskillful,’ he is one who has declared [a teaching]. He is not a nihilist, one who doesn’t declare anything.”

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words. Vajjiya Māhita 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 discussion with the wanderers.

[The Blessed One said,] “Well done, householder. Well done. That is how you should periodically & righteously refute those foolish men.” — *AN 10:94* [*See also* §26; §80]

§ 21. As Ven. Ānanda was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “I say categorically, Ānanda, that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct should not be done.”

“Given that the Blessed One has declared, lord, that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, & mental misconduct should not be done, what drawbacks can one expect when doing what should not be done?”

“... One can fault oneself; observant people, on close examination, criticize one; one’s bad reputation gets spread about; one dies confused; and—on the breakup of the body, after death—one reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell....

“I say categorically, Ānanda, that good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct should be done.”

“Given that the Blessed One has declared, lord, that good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, & good mental conduct should be done, what rewards can one expect when doing what should be done?”

“... One doesn’t fault oneself; observant people, on close examination, praise one; one’s good reputation gets spread about; one dies unconfused; and—on the breakup of the body, after death—one reappears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.” — *AN 2:18*

§ 22. Then two or three days later, Citta the elephant trainer’s son and Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer went to the Blessed One. On their arrival, Citta bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side, while Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer greeted the Blessed One courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings &

courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "The other day, not long after the Blessed One had left, the wanderers, with sneering words, jeered at me from all sides: 'So, whatever Gotama the contemplative says, Sir Poṭṭhapāda rejoices in his every word: "So it is, Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone." But we don't understand Gotama the contemplative as having taught any categorical teaching that "*The cosmos is eternal,*" or "*The cosmos is not eternal,*" or "*The cosmos is finite,*" or "*The cosmos is infinite,*" or "*The soul is the same thing as the body,*" or "*The soul is one thing and the body another,*" or "*After death a Tathāgata exists,*" or "*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*" or "*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*" or "*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*"'"

"When this was said, I replied to the wanderers, 'I too don't understand Gotama the contemplative as having taught any categorical teaching that "*The cosmos is eternal,*" or "*The cosmos is not eternal,*" ... or "*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*" But the contemplative Gotama describes a genuine, authentic, and accurate practice, grounded in the Dhamma and consonant with the Dhamma. And when a genuine, authentic, & accurate practice, grounded in the Dhamma and consonant with the Dhamma is being explained, why shouldn't a knowledgeable person such as myself rejoice in the well-spokenness of Gotama the contemplative's well-spoken words?"

[The Buddha:] "Poṭṭhapāda, all those wanderers are blind and have no eyes. You alone among them have eyes. I have taught and declared some teachings to be categorical, and some teachings to be non-categorical. And which are the teachings that I have taught and declared to be non-categorical? '*The cosmos is eternal*' I have taught and declared to be a non-categorical teaching. '*The cosmos is not eternal*' ... '*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 Tathāgata exists*' ... '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*' ... '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*' ... '*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*' I have taught and declared to be a non-categorical teaching. And why have I taught and declared these teachings to be non-categorical? Because they are not conducive to the goal, are not conducive to the Dhamma, are not basic to the holy life. They don't lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. That's why I have taught and declared them to be non-categorical.

"And which have I taught and declared to be categorical teachings? '*This is stress*' I have taught and declared to be a categorical teaching. '*This is the origination of stress*' ... '*This is the cessation of stress*' ... '*This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress*' I have taught and declared to be a categorical teaching. And why have I taught and declared these teachings to be categorical? Because they are conducive to the goal, conducive to the Dhamma, and basic to the holy life. They lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding. That's why I have taught and declared them to be categorical." — DN 9

APPROPRIATE ATTENTION

§ 23. "There are qualities that act as a foothold for uncertainty. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen....

"There are qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen investigation of

qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of investigation of qualities as a factor for awakening once it has arisen...

“To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen....

“Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen investigation of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.” — SN 46:51

§ 24. [Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Sāriputta my friend, which things should a virtuous monk attend to in an appropriate way?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “A virtuous monk, Koṭṭhita 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. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Then which things should a monk who has attained stream-entry attend to in an appropriate way?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “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. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Then which things should a monk who has attained once-returning attend to in an appropriate way?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “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. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Then which things should a monk who has attained non-returning attend to in an appropriate way?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “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. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Then which things should an arahant attend to in an appropriate way?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “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

§ 25. “There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person... doesn’t discern which ideas are fit for attention, or which ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he doesn’t attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas unfit for attention. And which are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? Whichever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen fermentation of sensuality arises, and the arisen fermentation of sensuality increases; the unarisen fermentation of becoming... the unarisen fermentation of ignorance arises, and the arisen fermentation 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*² 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 disciple of the noble ones... discerns which ideas are fit for attention, and which ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he doesn’t attend to ideas unfit for attention, and attends [instead] to ideas fit for attention.... And which are the ideas fit for attention that he attends to? Whichever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen fermentation of sensuality doesn’t arise, and the arisen fermentation of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen fermentation of becoming... the unarisen fermentation of ignorance doesn’t arise, and the arisen fermentation 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: self-identity-view, uncertainty, and grasping at habits & practices.” — MN 2

NOTES

1. The Pali for these first two views is *Atthi me attā* and *N’atthi me attā*. Some translators have rendered these sentences as, “Self exists for me,” and, “No self exists for me.” These renderings, however, are unidiomatic and would not naturally come from trying to answer the questions, “Am I?” and “Am I not?” Thus it seems preferable to render them in line with the fact that Pali uses the grammatical construction of the verb “to be” (*atthi*) plus the genitive of I/me/mine (*me*) to say, “I have.”

2. Examples of these views can be found in Western philosophy. For example, the view that *self can be perceived by means of self* can be illustrated with the views of Leibniz, that the self has an inherent knowledge of itself as part of its nature; or of Fichte, that the self has an immediate intuition of itself in the freedom of its actions. The view that *self is perceived by means of not-self* can be illustrated by Kant’s view that the self cannot be directly perceived but can be known indirectly as a formal necessity for the coherence of experience. The view

that *not-self is perceived by means of self* can be illustrated by Leibniz's view that all the self's ideas of an external world are caused, not by an external world, but by the self's own activities.

SKILLFUL & UNSKILLFUL ACTIONS

§ 26. "Abandon what is unskillful, monks. It is possible to abandon what is unskillful. If it were not possible to abandon what is unskillful, I would not say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' But because it is possible to abandon what is unskillful, I say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' If this abandoning of what is unskillful were conducive to harm & pain, I would not say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.' But because this abandoning of what is unskillful is conducive to benefit & happiness, I say to you, 'Abandon what is unskillful.'

"Develop what is skillful, monks. It is possible to develop what is skillful. If it were not possible to develop what is skillful, I would not say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' But because it is possible to develop what is skillful, I say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' If this development of what is skillful were conducive to harm & pain, I would not say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.' But because this development of what is skillful is conducive to benefit & happiness, I say to you, 'Develop what is skillful.'" — AN 2:19

§ 27. "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns what is unskillful, discerns the root of what is unskillful, discerns what is skillful, and discerns the root of what is skillful, it is to that extent that he is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And which is unskillful? Taking life is unskillful, taking what is not given... sexual misconduct... lying... abusive speech... divisive tale-bearing¹... idle chatter is unskillful. Covetousness... ill will... wrong views are unskillful. These things are called unskillful.

"And which are the roots of what is unskillful? Greed is a root of what is unskillful, aversion is a root of what is unskillful, delusion is a root of what is unskillful. These are called the roots of what is unskillful.

"And which is skillful? Abstaining from taking life is skillful, abstaining from taking what is not given... from sexual misconduct... from lying... from abusive speech... from divisive tale-bearing... abstaining from idle chatter is skillful. Lack of covetousness... lack of ill will... right views are skillful. These things are called skillful.

"And which are the roots of what is skillful? Lack of greed is a root of what is skillful, lack of aversion... lack of delusion is a root of what is skillful. These are called the roots of what is skillful." — MN 9

NOTE: 1. This term is sometimes wrongly translated as "slander." However, slander usually entails falsehood, whereas examples given both in the discourses and the Vinaya show that this term denotes true statements meant to discredit one person in the eyes of another.

§ 28. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Pāvā in Cunda the silversmith's mango grove. Then Cunda the silversmith went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Cunda, of whose rites of purification do you approve?"

"The brahmans of the Western lands, lord—those who carry water pots,

wear garlands of water plants, worship fire, & purify with water: they have declared purification rites of which I approve.”

“And which kind of purification rites have they declared, those brahmans of the Western lands who carry water pots, wear garlands of water plants, worship fire, & purify with water?”

“There is the case where the brahmans of the Western lands... get their disciples to undertake their practice thus: ‘Come, now, my good man: Get up at the proper time from your bed and touch the earth. If you don’t touch the earth, touch wet cow dung. If you don’t touch wet cow dung, touch green grass. If you don’t touch green grass, worship a fire. If you don’t worship a fire, pay homage to the sun with clasped hands. If you don’t pay homage to the sun with clasped hands, go down into the water three times by nightfall.’ These are the purification rites declared by the brahmans of the Western lands... of which I approve.”

“Cunda, the purification rites declared by the brahmans of the Western lands... are one thing; the purification in the Vinaya of the noble ones is something else entirely.”

“But how is there purification in the Vinaya of the noble ones, venerable sir? It would be good if the Blessed One would teach me how there is purification in the Vinaya of the noble ones.”

“Very well then, Cunda, listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” Cunda the silversmith responded.

The Blessed One said, “There are three ways in which one is made impure by bodily action, four ways in which one is made impure by verbal action, and three ways in which one is made impure by mental action.

UNSKILLFUL BODILY ACTION

“And how is one made impure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person takes life, is brutal, bloody-handed, devoted to killing & slaying, showing no mercy to living beings. He takes what is not given. He takes, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. He engages in sexual misconduct. He gets 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 impure in three ways by bodily action.

UNSKILLFUL VERBAL ACTION

“And how is one made impure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person engages in 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 [i.e., a royal court proceeding], if he is asked as a witness, ‘Come & tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ Thus he consciously tells lies for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of a certain reward. He engages in divisive speech. What he has heard here he tells there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he tells here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus breaking apart those who are united and stirring up strife between those who have broken apart, he loves factionalism, delights in factionalism, enjoys factionalism, speaks things that create factionalism. He engages in abusive speech. He speaks words that are harsh, cutting, bitter to others, abusive of others, provoking anger and destroying concentration. He engages in idle chatter. He speaks out of season, speaks what

isn't factual, what isn't in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya, words that are not worth treasuring. This is how one is made impure in four ways by verbal action.

UNSKILLFUL MENTAL ACTION

"And how is one made impure in three ways by mental action? There is the case where a certain person is covetous. He covets the belongings of others, thinking, 'O, that what belongs to others would be mine!' He bears ill will, corrupt in the resolves of his heart: 'May these beings be killed or cut apart or crushed or destroyed, or may they not exist at all!' He has wrong view, is warped in the way he sees things: 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or 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 impure in three ways by mental action.

"These, Cunda, are the ten courses of unskillful action. When a person is endowed with these ten courses of unskillful action, then even if he gets up at the proper time from his bed and touches the earth, he is still impure. If he doesn't touch the earth, he is still impure. If he touches wet cow dung, he is still impure. If he doesn't touch wet cow dung, he is still impure. If he touches green grass... If he doesn't touch green grass... If he worships a fire... If he doesn't worship a fire... If he pays homage to the sun with clasped hands... If he doesn't pay homage to the sun with clasped hands... If he goes down into the water three times by nightfall... If he doesn't go down into the water three times by nightfall, he is still impure. Why is that? Because these ten courses of unskillful action are impure and cause impurity. Furthermore, as a result of being endowed with these ten courses of unskillful action, [rebirth in] hell is declared, [rebirth in] an animal womb is declared, [rebirth in] the realm of hungry shades is declared—that or any other bad destination.

"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.

SKILLFUL BODILY 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 sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual 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.

SKILLFUL VERBAL 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 does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not 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.

SKILLFUL MENTAL 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. When a person is endowed with these ten courses of skillful action, then even if he gets up at the proper time from his bed and touches the earth, he is still pure. If he doesn't touch the earth, he is still pure. If he touches wet cow dung, he is still pure. If he doesn't touch wet cow dung, he is still pure. If he touches green grass... If he doesn't touch green grass... If he worships a fire... If he doesn't worship a fire... If he pays homage to the sun with clasped hands... If he doesn't pay homage to the sun with clasped hands... If he goes down into the water three times by nightfall... If he doesn't go down into the water three times by nightfall, he is still pure. Why is that? Because these ten courses of skillful action are pure and cause purity. Furthermore, as a result of being endowed with these ten courses of skillful action, [rebirth among] the devas is declared, [rebirth among] human beings is declared—that or any other good destination."

When this was said, Cunda the silversmith said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, venerable sir! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life." — *AN 10:165*

§ 29. “Now which are unskillful habits? Unskillful bodily actions, unskillful verbal actions, evil means of livelihood. These are called unskillful habits. Which is the cause of unskillful habits? Their cause is stated, and they are said to be mind-caused. Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations. Any mind with passion, aversion or delusion: That is the cause of unskillful habits. Now where do unskillful habits cease without trace? Their cessation has been stated: There is the case where a monk abandons wrong bodily conduct & develops right bodily conduct, abandons wrong verbal conduct & develops right verbal conduct, abandons wrong livelihood & maintains his life with right livelihood. This is where unskillful habits cease without trace. And which sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits? 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 sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits.

“And which are skillful habits? Skillful bodily actions, skillful verbal actions, purity of livelihood. These are called skillful habits. Which is the cause of skillful habits? Their cause too has been stated, and they are said to be mind-caused. Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations. Any mind without passion, without aversion, without delusion: That is the cause of skillful habits. 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 virtue. He discerns, as it actually is, the release of awareness & release of discernment where his skillful habits cease without trace. And which sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire... 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... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits.

“And which are unskillful resolves? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. These are called unskillful resolves. Which is the cause of unskillful resolves? Their cause too has been stated, and they are said to be perception-caused. Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations. Any sensuality-perception, ill will-perception, or harmfulness-perception: That is the cause of unskillful resolves. Now where do unskillful resolves cease without trace? Their cessation too has been stated: There is the case where a monk, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is where unskillful resolves cease without trace. And which sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire... 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... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves.

“And which are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation (freedom from sensuality), on non-ill will, on harmlessness. These are called skillful resolves. Which is the cause of skillful resolves? Their cause too has been stated,

and they are said to be perception-caused. Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations. Any renunciation-perception, non-ill will-perception, or harmlessness-perception: That is the cause of skillful resolves. Now where do skillful resolves cease without trace? Their cessation too has been stated: There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace. And which sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire...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... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves.” — *MN 78*

§ 30. “Now, what is old kamma? The eye is to be seen as old kamma, fabricated & willed, capable of being felt. The ear... The nose... The tongue... The body... The intellect is to be seen as old kamma, fabricated & willed, capable of being felt. This is called old kamma.

“And what is new kamma? Whatever kamma one does now with the body, with speech, or with the intellect: This is called new kamma.” — *SN 35:145*

§ 31. “Monks, these four types of kamma have been directly known, verified, & announced by me. Which four? There is kamma that is dark with dark result. There is kamma that is bright with bright result. There is kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result. There is kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma.

“And which kamma is dark with dark result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates an injurious bodily fabrication, fabricates an injurious verbal fabrication, fabricates an injurious mental fabrication. Having fabricated an injurious bodily fabrication, having fabricated an injurious verbal fabrication, having fabricated an injurious mental fabrication, he rearises in an injurious world. On rearising in an injurious world, he is there touched by injurious contacts. Touched by injurious contacts, he experiences feelings that are exclusively painful, like those of the beings in hell. This is called kamma that is dark with dark result.

“And which kamma is bright with bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a non-injurious bodily fabrication... a non-injurious verbal fabrication .. a non-injurious mental fabrication.... He rearises in a non-injurious world.... There he is touched by non-injurious contacts.... He experiences feelings that are exclusively pleasant, like those of the Beautiful Black Devas. This is called kamma that is bright with bright result.

“And which kamma is dark & bright with dark & bright result? There is the case where a certain person fabricates a bodily fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious... a verbal fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious... a mental fabrication that is injurious & non-injurious.... He rearises in an injurious & non-injurious world.... There he is touched by injurious & non-injurious contacts.... He experiences injurious & non-injurious feelings, pleasure mingled with pain, like those of human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms. This is called kamma that is dark & bright with dark & bright result.

“And which kamma is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright

result, leading to the ending of kamma? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called kamma that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark nor bright result, leading to the ending of kamma.

“These, monks, are the four types of kamma directly known, verified, & announced by me.” — AN 4:237

§ 32. “‘Kamma should be known. The cause by which kamma comes into play should be known. The diversity in kamma should be known. The result of kamma should be known. The cessation of kamma should be known. The path of practice for the cessation of kamma should be known.’ Thus it has been said. In reference to what was it said?

“Intention, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, & intellect.

“And which is the cause by which kamma comes into play? Contact is the cause by which kamma comes into play.

“And which is the diversity in kamma? There is kamma to be experienced in hell, kamma to be experienced in the realm of common animals, kamma to be experienced in the realm of the hungry shades, kamma to be experienced in the human world, kamma to be experienced in the world of the devas. This is called the diversity in kamma.

“And which is the result of kamma? The result of kamma is of three sorts, I tell you: that which arises right here & now, that which arises later [in this lifetime], and that which arises following that. This is called the result of kamma.

“And which is the cessation of kamma? From the cessation of contact is the cessation of kamma; and precisely this noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is the way leading to the cessation of kamma.

“Now when a disciple of the noble ones discerns kamma in this way, the cause by which kamma comes into play in this way, the diversity of kamma in this way, the result of kamma in this way, the cessation of kamma in this way, & the path of practice leading to the cessation of kamma in this way, then he discerns this penetrative holy life as the cessation of kamma.” — AN 6:63

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

§ 33. “[1] Now which is the noble truth of stress? Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful; separation from the loved is stressful; not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

“And which is *birth*? Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of [sense] spheres of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.

“And which is aging? Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging.

“And which is death? Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death.

“And which is sorrow? Whatever sorrow, sorrowing, sadness, inward

sorrow, inward sadness of anyone suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called sorrow.

“And which is lamentation? Whatever crying, grieving, lamenting, weeping, wailing, lamentation of anyone suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called lamentation.

“And which is pain? Whatever is experienced as bodily pain, bodily discomfort, pain or discomfort born of bodily contact, that is called pain.

“And which is distress? Whatever is experienced as mental pain, mental discomfort, pain or discomfort born of mental contact, that is called distress.

“And which is despair? Whatever despair, despondency, desperation of anyone suffering from misfortune, touched by a painful thing, that is called despair.

“And which is the stress of association with the unbeloved? There is the case where undesirable, unpleasing, unattractive sights, sounds, aromas, flavors, or tactile sensations occur to one; or one has connection, contact, relationship, interaction with those who wish one ill, who wish for one’s harm, who wish for one’s discomfort, who wish one no security from the yoke. This is called the stress of association with the unbeloved.

“And which is the stress of separation from the loved? There is the case where desirable, pleasing, attractive sights, sounds, aromas, flavors, or tactile sensations do not occur to one; or one has no connection, no contact, no relationship, no interaction with those who wish one well, who wish for one’s benefit, who wish for one’s comfort, who wish one security from the yoke, nor with one’s mother, father, brother, sister, friends, companions, or relatives. This is called the stress of separation from the loved.

“And which is the stress of not getting what is wanted? In beings subject to birth, the wish arises, ‘O, may we not be subject to birth, and may birth not come to us.’ But this is not to be achieved by wishing. This is the stress of not getting what is wanted. In beings subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, the wish arises, ‘O, may we not be subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair, and may aging... illness... death... sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair not come to us.’ But this is not to be achieved by wishing. This is the stress of not getting what is wanted.

“And which are the five clinging-aggregates that, in short, are stressful? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate: These are called the five clinging-aggregates that, in short, are stressful.

“This is called the noble truth of stress.

“[2] And which is the noble truth of the origination of stress? The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., sensuality-craving, becoming-craving, and non-becoming-craving.

“And where does this craving, when arising, arise? And where, when dwelling, does it dwell? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“And which is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

“The ear.... The nose.... The tongue.... The body.... The intellect....

“Forms.... Sounds.... Aromas.... Tastes.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas....

"Eye-consciousness.... Ear-consciousness.... Nose-consciousness.... Tongue-consciousness.... Body-consciousness.... Intellect-consciousness....

"Eye-contact.... Ear-contact.... Nose-contact.... Tongue-contact.... Body-contact.... Intellect-contact....

"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....

"Perception of forms.... Perception of sounds.... Perception of aromas.... Perception of tastes.... Perception of tactile sensations.... Perception of ideas....

"Intention for forms.... Intention for sounds.... Intention for aromas.... Intention for tastes.... Intention for tactile sensations.... Intention for ideas....

"Craving for forms.... Craving for sounds.... Craving for aromas.... Craving for tastes.... Craving for tactile sensations.... Craving for ideas....

"Thought directed at forms.... Thought directed at sounds.... Thought directed at aromas.... Thought directed at tastes.... Thought directed at tactile sensations.... Thought directed at ideas....

"Evaluation of forms.... Evaluation of sounds.... Evaluation of aromas.... Evaluation of tastes.... Evaluation of tactile sensations.... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where this craving, when arising, arises. That is where, when dwelling, it dwells.

"This is called the noble truth of the origination of stress.

"[3] And which is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

"And where, when being abandoned, is this craving abandoned? And where, when ceasing, does it cease? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"And which is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"The ear.... The nose.... The tongue.... The body.... The intellect....

"Forms.... Sounds.... Aromas.... Tastes.... Tactile sensations.... Ideas....

"Eye-consciousness.... Ear-consciousness.... Nose-consciousness.... Tongue-consciousness.... Body-consciousness.... Intellect-consciousness....

"Eye-contact.... Ear-contact.... Nose-contact.... Tongue-contact.... Body-contact.... Intellect-contact....

"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....

"Perception of forms.... Perception of sounds.... Perception of aromas.... Perception of tastes.... Perception of tactile sensations.... Perception of ideas....

"Intention for forms.... Intention for sounds.... Intention for aromas.... Intention for tastes.... Intention for tactile sensations.... Intention for ideas....

"Craving for forms.... Craving for sounds.... Craving for aromas.... Craving for tastes.... Craving for tactile sensations.... Craving for ideas....

"Thought directed at forms.... Thought directed at sounds.... Thought directed at aromas.... Thought directed at tastes.... Thought directed at tactile sensations.... Thought directed at ideas....

"Evaluation of forms.... Evaluation of sounds.... Evaluation of aromas.... Evaluation of tastes.... Evaluation of tactile sensations.... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

“This is called the noble truth of the cessation of stress.

“[4] And which is the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress? Precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“And which is right view? Knowledge with reference to stress, knowledge with reference to the origination of stress, knowledge with reference to the cessation of stress, knowledge with reference to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called right view.

And which is right resolve? Resolve for renunciation, for freedom from ill will, for harmlessness: This is called right resolve.

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

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

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

“And which is right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration.

“This is called the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.” — *DN 22*

§ 34. “Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This noble truth of stress is to be comprehended’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origination of stress is to be abandoned’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress is to be directly experienced’ ... ‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress is to be developed.’” — *SN 56:11*

§ 35. “And which qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge? ‘The five clinging-aggregates,’ should be the reply. Which five? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate. These are the qualities that are to be comprehended through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge? Ignorance & craving for becoming: these are the qualities that are to be abandoned through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge? Tranquility & insight: these are the qualities that are to be developed through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge? Clear knowing & release: these are the qualities that are to be realized through direct knowledge.” — MN 149

§ 36. “And which is comprehension? Any ending of passion, ending of aversion, ending of delusion. This is called comprehension.” — SN 22:23

§ 37. “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 released from form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness. He is released from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is released, I tell you, from suffering & stress.” — SN 22:39

§ 38. “And why do you call it ‘form’ (*rūpa*)? Because it is afflicted (*ruppati*), thus it is called ‘form.’ Afflicted with what? With cold & heat & hunger & thirst, with the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles. Because it is afflicted, it is called form.

“And why do you call it ‘feeling’? Because it feels, thus it is called ‘feeling.’ What does it feel? It feels pleasure, it feels pain, it feels neither-pleasure-nor-pain. Because it feels, it is called feeling.

“And why do you call it ‘perception’? Because it perceives, thus it is called ‘perception.’ What does it perceive? It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, it perceives white. Because it perceives, it is called perception.

“And why do you call them ‘fabrications’? Because they fabricate fabricated things, thus they are called ‘fabrications.’ What do they fabricate as fabricated things? For the sake of form-ness, they fabricate form as a fabricated thing. For the sake of feeling-ness, they fabricate feeling as a fabricated thing. For the sake of perception-hood... For the sake of fabrication-hood... For the sake of consciousness-hood, they fabricate consciousness as a fabricated thing. Because they fabricate fabricated things, they are called fabrications.¹

“And why do you call it ‘consciousness’? Because it cognizes, thus it is called consciousness. What does it cognize? It cognizes what is sour, bitter, pungent,

sweet, alkaline, non-alkaline, salty, & unsalty.² Because it cognizes, it is called consciousness.” — SN 22:79

NOTES

1. In other words, the intentional activity of fabrication is what turns the kammic potential for any of the aggregates into the actual experience of the aggregates. This is what allows for the fact that, with the ending of present intention in the moment of awakening, all experience of the aggregates falls away. With the resumption of intention, the awakened person relates to the aggregates in full knowledge. If the awakening is full—i.e., that of an arahant—this knowledge is totally free from clinging and craving.

2. Notice that the example for perception uses the more active sensory process of sight, whereas the example for consciousness uses the more passive sensory process of taste.

§ 39. “Now which, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness—is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions.

“[1] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong view as wrong view, and right view as right view. This is one’s right view. And which is wrong view? ‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is wrong view.

“And which is right view? Right view, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right view with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right view, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And which is the right view that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? ‘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 the right view that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And which is the right view that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of discernment, analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, the path factor of right view¹ in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is free from fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one’s right mindfulness.² Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right view.

“[2] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And which is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on harmfulness. This is wrong resolve.

“And which is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions

[of becoming]; and there is noble right resolve, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And which is the right resolve that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Resolve for renunciation, resolve for freedom from ill will, resolve for harmlessness. This is the right resolve that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And which is the right resolve that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, mental fixity, mental transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.”

“One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right resolve.

“[3] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong speech as wrong speech, and right speech as right speech. And which is wrong speech? Lying, divisive tale-bearing, abusive speech, & idle chatter. This is wrong speech.

“And which is right speech? Right speech, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right speech with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right speech, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And which is the right speech that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from lying, from divisive tale-bearing, from abusive speech, & from idle chatter. This is the right speech that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And which is the right speech that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the four forms of verbal misconduct in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right speech that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong speech & to enter into right speech: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong speech & to enter & remain in right speech: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right speech.

“[4] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong action as wrong action, and right action as right action. And which is wrong action? Killing, taking what is not given, illicit sex. This is wrong action.

“And which is right action? Right action, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right action with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right action, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And which is the right action that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from killing, from taking what is not given, & from illicit sex. This is the right action that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And which is the right action that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the three forms of bodily misconduct in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble

path. This is the right action that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong action & to enter into right action: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong action & to enter & remain in right action: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right action.

“[5] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood, and right livelihood as right livelihood. And which is wrong livelihood? Scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, & pursuing gain with gain. This is wrong livelihood.

“And which is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right livelihood with fermentations, siding with merit, resulting in the acquisitions [of becoming]; and there is noble right livelihood, without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And which is the right livelihood that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abandons wrong livelihood and maintains his life with right livelihood. This is the right livelihood that has fermentations, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

“And which is the right livelihood that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of wrong livelihood in one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without fermentations, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right livelihood that is without fermentations, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter into right livelihood: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter & remain in right livelihood: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right livelihood.

“Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, right resolve comes into being. In one of right resolve, right speech comes into being. In one of right speech, right action.... In one of right action, right livelihood.... In one of right livelihood, right effort.... In one of right effort, right mindfulness.... In one of right mindfulness, right concentration.... In one of right concentration, right knowledge.... In one of right knowledge, right release comes into being. Thus the learner is endowed with eight factors, and the arahant with ten.

“Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, wrong view is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong view as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right view as their condition go to the culmination of their development. In one of right resolve, wrong resolve is abolished.... In one of right speech, wrong speech is abolished.... In one of right action, wrong action is abolished.... In one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is abolished.... In one of right effort, wrong effort is abolished.... In one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is abolished.... In one of right concentration, wrong concentration is abolished.... In one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is abolished.... In one of right release, wrong release is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong release as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right release as their condition go to the culmination of their development.

“Thus, monks, there are twenty factors siding with skillfulness, and twenty with unskillfulness.” — MN 117

NOTES

1. These various factors are all equivalent to knowledge in terms of the four noble truths. The relationship between these four truths and the issue of skillful and unskillful action is shown in the fact that SN 46:51 [§23] notes that analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening is fed by paying appropriate attention to qualities as to whether they are skillful or unskillful.

2. Notice that mindfulness plays an active role here and with all the path factors. It is not simply a receptive acceptance of wrong and right views. Instead—in its canonical sense of keeping something in mind—it keeps remembering to abandon the factors of the wrong path, and to enter and remain in the factors of the right path.

DEPENDENT CO-ARISING

§ 40. “And which is the noble method that he/she [a stream-winner] 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.”¹

“In other words:

“From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications...

“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 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/she has rightly seen & rightly ferreted out through discernment.” — AN 10:92

NOTE

1. This set of principles is called *idappaccayatā*, this/that conditionality. See §19, note 1.

§ 41. Staying at Sāvattḥi.... “Monks, I will describe & analyze dependent co-arising for you.

“Which dependent co-arising?

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.

From clinging 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, which *aging-&-death*? Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death.

“And which *birth*? Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of sense media of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.

“And which *becoming*? These three becomings: sensuality-becoming, form-becoming, & formless-becoming. This is called becoming.

“And which *clinging*? These four clingings: sensuality-clinging, view-clinging, habit-&-practice-clinging, and self-doctrine-clinging. This is called clinging.

“And which *craving*? These six cravings: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for tactile sensations, craving for ideas. This is called craving.

“And which *feeling*? These six feelings: feeling born from eye-contact, feeling born from ear-contact, feeling born from nose-contact, feeling born from tongue-contact, feeling born from body-contact, feeling born from intellect-contact. This is called feeling.

“And which *contact*? These six contacts: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, intellect-contact. This is called contact.

“And which *six sense media*? These six sense media: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium. These are called the six sense media.

“And which *name-&-form*? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.

“And which *consciousness*? These six consciousnesses: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness.

“And which *fabrications*? These three fabrications: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, mental fabrications. These are called fabrications.

“And which *ignorance*? Not knowing in terms of stress, not knowing in terms of the origination of stress, not knowing in terms of the cessation of stress, not knowing in terms of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.

“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. From the cessation of clinging 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.” — SN 12:2

§ 42. “Now, which is ignorance? Which is the origination of ignorance? Which is the cessation of ignorance? Which is the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance?”

“Any lack of knowledge with reference to stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the origination of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the cessation of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.

“From the origination of fermentation comes the origination of ignorance. From the cessation of fermentation comes the cessation of ignorance. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance is precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration....

“And which is fermentation? Which is the origination of fermentation? Which is the cessation of fermentation? Which is the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation?”

“There are these three fermentations: the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. This is called fermentation.

“From the origination of ignorance comes the origination of fermentation. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fermentation. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation is precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.” — *MN 9*

RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS

§ 43. “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*

§ 44. “The individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, should approach an individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and ask him, ‘How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?’ The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: ‘Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.’ Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

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

way.’ Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.” — *AN 4:94*

VIEWS & AWAKENING

§ 45. Simply talking a lot
doesn’t maintain the Dhamma.
Whoever
—although he’s heard next to nothing—
sees Dhamma through his body,
is not heedless of Dhamma:
he’s one who maintains the Dhamma. — Dhṛ 259

§ 46. The Blessed One said, “Monks, whatever in the cosmos—with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people—is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That do I know. Whatever in the cosmos—with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people—is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That I directly know. That has been realized by the Tathāgata, but in the Tathāgata¹ it has not been established.

“If I were to say, ‘I don’t know whatever in the cosmos... is seen, heard, sensed, cognized... pondered by the intellect,’ that would be a falsehood in me. If I were to say, ‘I both know and don’t know whatever in the cosmos... is seen, heard, sensed, cognized... pondered by the intellect,’ that would be just the same. If I were to say, ‘I neither know nor don’t know whatever in the cosmos... is seen, heard, sensed, cognized... pondered by the intellect,’ that would be a fault in me.

“Thus the Tathāgata, when seeing what is to be seen, doesn’t construe an [object as] seen, doesn’t construe an unseen, doesn’t construe an [object] to-be-seen, doesn’t construe a seer.

“When hearing.... When sensing....

“When cognizing what is to be cognized, he doesn’t construe an [object as] cognized, doesn’t construe an uncognized, doesn’t construe an [object] to-be-cognized, doesn’t construe a cognizer.

Thus the Tathāgata—being the same with regard to all phenomena that can be seen, heard, sensed, & cognized—is ‘Such.’ And I tell you: There’s no other Such higher or more sublime.

“Whatever is seen or heard or sensed
and fastened onto as true by others,
One who is Such—among the self-fettered—
wouldn’t further claim to be true or even false.
“Having seen well in advance that arrow
where generations are fastened & hung
—‘I know, I see, that’s just how it is!’—
there’s nothing of the Tathāgata fastened.” — *AN 4:24*

NOTE: 1. Reading *tathāgate* with the Thai edition. See MN 58 [§93], note 1. See also §196.

§ 47. *Māgandiya*:

Sage, you speak
 without grasping
 at any preconceived judgments.
 This 'inner peace':
 What does it mean?
 How is it,
 by an enlightened person,
 proclaimed?

The Buddha:

He doesn't speak of purity
 in connection with 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,
 at peace,
 independent,
 one wouldn't long for becoming.

Māgandiya:

If he doesn't speak of purity
 in connection with view,
 learning,
 knowledge,
 habit or practice;
 and it isn't found by a person
 through lack of view,
 of learning,
 of knowledge,
 of habit or practice,
 it seems to me that this teaching's
 confused,
 for some assume a purity
 in terms of
 —by means of—
 a view.

The Buddha:

Asking questions
 dependent on view,
 you're confused
 by what you have grasped.
 And so you don't glimpse
 even
 the slightest
 notion
 [of what I am saying].

That's why you think
 it's confused.
 Whoever construes
 'equal,'
 'superior,' or
 'inferior,'
 by that he'd dispute;
 whereas to one unaffected
 by these three,
 'equal,'
 'superior,'
 do not occur.
 Of what would the brahman say 'true'
 or 'false,'
 disputing with whom:
 he in whom 'equal,' 'unequal' are not. — *Sn 4:9*

§ 48. "What some say is true
 —'That's how it is'—
 others say is 'falsehood, a lie.'
 Thus quarreling, they dispute.
 Why can't contemplatives
 say one thing & the same?"

"The truth is one,
 there is no second
 about which a person who knows it
 would argue with one who knows.
 Contemplatives promote
 their various personal truths,
 that's why they don't say
 one thing & the same."

"But why do they say
 various truths,
 those who say they are skilled?
 Have they learned many various truths
 or do they follow conjecture?"

"Apart from their perception
 there are no
 many
 various
 constant truths
 in the world." — *Sn 4:12*

§ 49. "His release, being founded on truth, doesn't fluctuate, for whatever is
 deceptive is false; unbinding—the undeceptive—is true. Thus a monk so
 endowed is endowed with the highest determination for truth, for this—
 unbinding, the undeceptive—is the highest noble truth." — *MN 140*

PAPAÑCA

§ 50. Ven. MahāKaccāyana said this: “Concerning the brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he went into his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning—i.e., ‘If, with regard to the cause whereby the perceptions & categories of objectification assail a person, there is nothing there to relish, welcome, or remain fastened to, then that is the end of the obsessions of passion, the obsessions of resistance, the obsessions of views, the obsessions of uncertainty, the obsessions of conceit, the obsessions of passion for becoming, & the obsessions of ignorance. That is the end of taking up rods & bladed weapons, of arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive tale-bearing, & false speech. That is where these evil, unskillful things cease without remainder’—I understand the detailed meaning to be this:

“Dependent on eye & forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one perceives [labels, assigns a meaning in the mind]. What one perceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one objectifies. Based on what a person objectifies, the perceptions & categories of objectification assail him/her with regard to past, present, & future forms cognizable via the eye.

“Dependent on ear & sounds, ear-consciousness arises....

“Dependent on nose & aromas, nose-consciousness arises....

“Dependent on tongue & flavors, tongue-consciousness arises....

“Dependent on body & tactile sensations, body-consciousness arises....

“Dependent on intellect & ideas, intellect-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one perceives. What one perceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one objectifies. Based on what a person objectifies, the perceptions & categories of objectification assail him/her with regard to past, present, & future ideas cognizable via the intellect.

“Now, when there is the eye, when there are forms, when there is eye-consciousness, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of contact. When there is a delineation of contact, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of feeling. When there is a delineation of feeling, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of perception. When there is a delineation of perception, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of thinking. When there is a delineation of thinking, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of being assailed by the perceptions & categories of objectification.

“When there is the ear....

“When there is the nose....

“When there is the tongue....

“When there is the body....

“When there is the intellect, when there are ideas, when there is intellect-consciousness, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of contact. When there is a delineation of contact, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of feeling. When there is a delineation of feeling, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of perception. When there is a delineation of perception, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of thinking. When there is a delineation of thinking, it is possible that one will delineate a delineation of being assailed by the perceptions & categories of objectification.

“Now, when there is no eye, when there are no forms, when there is no eye-consciousness, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of contact. When there is no delineation of contact, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of feeling. When there is no delineation of feeling, it is impossible that

one will delineate a delineation of perception. When there is no delineation of perception, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of thinking. When there is no delineation of thinking, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of being assailed by the perceptions & categories of objectification.

“When there is no ear....

“When there is no nose....

“When there is no tongue....

“When there is no body....

“When there is no intellect, when there are no ideas, when there is no intellect-consciousness, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of contact. When there is no delineation of contact, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of feeling. When there is no delineation of feeling, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of perception. When there is no delineation of perception, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of thinking. When there is no delineation of thinking, it is impossible that one will delineate a delineation of being assailed by the perceptions & categories of objectification.” — *MN 18*

§ 51. “For one arriving at what
does form disappear?

How do pleasure & pain disappear?

Tell me this.

My heart is set
on knowing how
they disappear.”

“One not percipient of perceptions
not percipient of special perceptions,
not unpercipient,
nor percipient of what’s disappeared:

for one arriving at this,

form disappears—

for objectification-classifications

have their cause in perception.” — *Sn 4:11*

§ 52. “I ask the kinsman of the Sun, the great seer,
about seclusion & the state of peace.

Seeing in what way is a monk unbound,
clinging to nothing in the world?”

“He should put an entire stop
to the root of objectification-classifications:

‘I am the thinker.’

He should train, always mindful,
to subdue any craving inside him.

Whatever truth he may know,
within or without,

he shouldn’t get entrenched
in connection with it,

for that isn’t called

unbinding by the good.

He shouldn’t, because of it, think himself

CHAPTER FOUR

Analytical Answers

READINGS

ON JUDGING PEOPLE

§ 54. “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.” — AN 7:64

§ 55. “[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.' ...

"[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.' ...

"[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, doesn't reflect: 'That's how it is when living together in the world. That's how it is when gaining a personal identity [*atta-bhāva*, 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 doesn't sorrow, grieve, or lament, doesn't beat his breast or become distraught....

"[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 doesn't 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.'" — AN 4:192

§ 56. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatti in the Eastern Monastery, the palace of Migāra's mother. And on that occasion—the uposatha of the fifteenth, the night of a very full moon—he was sitting out in the open with the community of monks. Then, having surveyed the silent community of monks, he addressed them: "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.'

"A person of no integrity is endowed with qualities of no integrity; he is a person of no 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 no integrity endowed with qualities of no integrity? There is the case where a person of no integrity is lacking in conviction, lacking in shame, lacking in compunction; he is unlearned, lazy, of muddled mindfulness, & poor discernment. This is how a person of no integrity is endowed with qualities of no integrity."

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in his friendship? There is the case where a person of no integrity has, as his friends & companions, those contemplatives & brahmans who are lacking in conviction, lacking in shame, lacking in compunction, unlearned, lazy, of muddled mindfulness, & poor discernment. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in his friendship.

"And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he wills? There is the case where a person of no integrity wills for his own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he wills.

“And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he gives advice? There is the case where a person of no integrity gives advice for his own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he gives advice.

“And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he speaks? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who tells lies, engages in divisive tale-bearing, engages in harsh speech, engages in idle chatter. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he speaks.

“And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he acts? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who takes life, steals, engages in illicit sex. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he acts.

“And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the views he holds? There is the case where a person of no integrity is one who holds a view like this: ‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or 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 no integrity is a person of no integrity in the views he holds.

“And how is a person of no integrity a person of no integrity in the way he gives a gift? There is the case where a person of no integrity gives a gift inattentively, not with his own hand, disrespectfully, as if throwing it away, with the view that nothing will come of it. This is how a person of no integrity is a person of no integrity in the way he gives a gift.

“This person of no integrity—thus endowed with qualities of no integrity; a person of no 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 breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the destination of people of no integrity. And what is the destination of people of no integrity? Hell or the animal womb.

“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, shame, compunction; 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 & brahmans 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 breakup 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.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words. — *MN 110*

§ 57. “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*

§ 58. “Monks, a person endowed with these four qualities can be known as ‘a person of no integrity.’ Which four?

“There is the case where a person of no integrity, when unmasked, reveals

another person's bad points, to say nothing of when asked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person's bad points in full & in detail, without omission, without holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of no integrity.'

"Then again, a person of no integrity, when asked, doesn't reveal another person's good points, to say nothing of when unasked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person's good points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of no integrity.'

"Then again, a person of no integrity, when asked, doesn't reveal his own bad points, to say nothing of when unasked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own bad points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of no integrity.'

"Then again, a person of no integrity, when unasked, reveals his own good points, to say nothing of when asked. Furthermore, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own good points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of no integrity.'

"Monks, a person endowed with these four qualities can be known as 'a person of no integrity.'

"Now, 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. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"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. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"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. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"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. Of this person you may know, 'This venerable one is a person of integrity.'

"Monks, a person endowed with these four qualities can be known as 'a person of integrity.'" — AN 4:73

§ 59. "And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a layperson, 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 admirable friendship....

“And what does it mean to be consummate in conviction? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata’s awakening: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is pure and 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 divine and 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 disciple of the noble ones 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 disciple of the noble ones, 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 disciple of the noble ones 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*

JUDGING WAYS OF LIFE

§ 60. As he was sitting to one side, Subha the brahman student, Todeyya’s son, said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, the brahmins say this: ‘The householder is accomplishing the Dhamma of the true way, skillful. The one gone forth is not accomplishing the Dhamma of the true way, skillful.’ What does Master Gotama have to say with regard to this?”

“Here, student, I am one who speaks analytically, not one who speaks categorically. I don’t praise the wrong practice of a householder or of one gone forth. For when a householder or one gone forth practices wrongly, then by reason of that wrong practice he is not accomplishing the Dhamma of the true way, skillful. I do praise the right practice of a householder or of one gone forth. For when a householder or one gone forth practices rightly, then by reason of that right practice he is accomplishing the Dhamma of the true way, skillful.”

“Master Gotama, the brahmins say this: ‘This householder-occupation— involving great needs, great duties, great issues, great arrangements—is of great fruit. This going-forth-occupation— involving meager needs, meager duties, meager issues, meager arrangements—is of meager fruit. What does Master Gotama have to say with regard to this?’”

“Here too student, I am one who speaks analytically, not one who speaks categorically. There is the occupation involving great needs, great duties, great issues, great arrangements, that—when failing—is of meager fruit. There is the occupation involving great needs, great duties, great issues, great arrangements, that—when succeeding—is of great fruit. There is the occupation involving meager needs, meager duties, meager issues, meager arrangements, that—when failing—is of meager fruit. There is the occupation involving meager needs, meager duties, meager issues, meager arrangements, that—when succeeding—is of great fruit.

“And which is an occupation involving great needs... great arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit? Agriculture.... And which is an occupation involving great needs... great arrangements that—when

succeeding—is of great fruit? Agriculture again.... And which is an occupation involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit? Trade.... And which is an occupation involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when succeeding—is of great fruit? Trade again....

“Just as the agriculture-occupation is one involving great needs... great arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit, in the same way, the householder-occupation is one involving great needs... great arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit. Just as the agriculture-occupation is one involving great needs... great arrangements that—when succeeding—is of great fruit, in the same way, the householder-occupation is one involving great needs... great arrangements that—when succeeding—is of great fruit. Just as the trade-occupation is one involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit, in the same way, the going-forth-occupation is one involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when failing—is of meager fruit. Just as the trade-occupation is one involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when succeeding—is of great fruit, in the same way, the going-forth-occupation is one involving meager needs... meager arrangements that—when succeeding—is of great fruit.” — MN 99

§ 61. Then Rāsiya the headman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “I have heard that, ‘Gotama the contemplative criticizes all asceticism, that he categorically denounces & disparages all ascetics who live the rough life.’ I trust that those who say that, ‘Gotama the contemplative criticizes all asceticism, that he categorically denounces & disparages all ascetics who live the rough life’ do not slander the Blessed One with what is unfactual, that they declare the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, and that the legitimate implications of what they say give no grounds for criticism.”

“Headman, those who say, ‘Gotama the contemplative criticizes all asceticism, that he categorically denounces & disparages all ascetics who live the rough life,’ are not saying what I have said, and they slander me with what is unfactual & untrue.

“Headman, there are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensuality with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathāgata—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

“And which is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding? Precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

[The Buddha then lists ten types of individuals who enjoy sensual pleasures:

1. One who seeks wealth unlawfully, by violence; doesn’t make himself happy with it, doesn’t share it with others, and doesn’t make merit.

2. One who seeks wealth unlawfully, by violence; makes himself happy with it, but doesn’t share it with others, and doesn’t make merit.

3. One who seeks wealth unlawfully, by violence; makes himself happy with it, shares it with others, and makes merit.

4. One who seeks wealth lawfully and unlawfully, by violence and without violence; doesn't make himself happy with it, doesn't share it with others, and doesn't make merit.

5. One who seeks wealth lawfully and unlawfully, by violence and without violence; makes himself happy with it, but doesn't share it with others, and doesn't make merit.

6. One who seeks wealth lawfully and unlawfully, by violence and without violence; makes himself happy with it, shares it with others, and makes merit.

7. One who seeks wealth lawfully, without violence; doesn't make himself happy with it, doesn't share it with others, and doesn't make merit.

8. One who seeks wealth lawfully, without violence; makes himself happy with it, but doesn't share it with others, and doesn't make merit.

9. One who seeks wealth lawfully, without violence; makes himself happy with it, shares it with others, and makes merit; he uses his wealth tied to it, infatuated with it, guilty, not seeing the drawbacks, and not discerning the escape (from those drawbacks)].

10. One who seeks wealth lawfully, without violence; makes himself happy with it, shares it with others, and makes merit; he uses his wealth not tied to it, not infatuated with it, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks, and discerning the escape (from those drawbacks).

The Buddha then says that these individuals are to be variously criticized to the extent that they

seek wealth unlawfully, by violence
do not make themselves happy with it
do not share it with others or make merit
use their wealth tied to it, infatuated with it, guilty, not seeing the drawbacks, and not discerning the escape.

They are to be variously praised to the extent that they

seek wealth lawfully, without violence
make themselves happy with it
share it with others or make merit
use their wealth not tied to it, uninfatuated with it, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks, and discerning the escape.

The Buddha then describes three types of ascetics living the rough life:]

"Which three? There is the case, headman, where an ascetic who lives the rough life, having—through conviction—gone forth from the home life into homelessness, (with the thought,) 'Perhaps I will attain a skilled state. Perhaps I will realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.' He afflicts & torments himself. He doesn't attain a skilled state. He doesn't realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.

"Furthermore, there is the case where an ascetic who lives the rough life, having—through conviction—gone forth from the holy life into homelessness, (with the thought,) 'Perhaps I will attain a skilled state. Perhaps I will realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.' He afflicts & torments himself. He attains a skilled state. He doesn't realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.

"Furthermore, there is the case where an ascetic who lives the rough life, having—through conviction—gone forth from the holy life into homelessness,

(with the thought,) ‘Perhaps I will attain a skilled state. Perhaps I will realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.’ He afflicts & torments himself. He attains a skilled state. He realizes a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision.

“As for the ascetic living the rough life who afflicts & torments himself, who doesn’t attain a skilled state, and doesn’t realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision: This ascetic living the rough life can be criticized on three grounds. On which three grounds can he be criticized? ‘He afflicts & torments himself’: This is the first ground on which he can be criticized. ‘He doesn’t attain a skilled state’: This is the second ground on which he can be criticized. ‘He doesn’t realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision’: This is the third ground on which he can be criticized....

“As for the ascetic living the rough life who afflicts & torments himself, who attains a skilled state, but doesn’t realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision: This ascetic living the rough life can be criticized on two grounds and praised on one. On which two grounds can he be criticized? ‘He afflicts & torments himself’: This is the first ground on which he can be criticized. ‘He doesn’t realize a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision’: This is the second ground on which he can be criticized.... On which one ground can he be praised? ‘He attains a skilled state’: This is the one ground on which he can be praised....

“As for the ascetic living the rough life who afflicts & torments himself, who attains a skilled state, and who realizes a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision: This ascetic living the rough life can be criticized on one ground and praised on two. On which one ground can he be criticized? ‘He afflicts & torments himself’: This is the one ground on which he can be criticized.... On which two grounds can he be praised? ‘He attains a skilled state’: This is the first ground on which he can be praised. ‘He realizes a superior human state, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision’: This is the second ground on which he can be praised.” — *SN 42:12*

§ 62. Then Ven. Ānanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Ānanda, every habit & practice, every life, every holy life that is followed as of essential worth: Is every one of them fruitful?”

“Lord, that is not [to be answered] with a categorical answer.”

“Very well then, Ānanda, give an analytical answer.”

“When—by following a life of habit & practice, a life, a holy life that is followed as of essential worth—one’s unskillful qualities increase while one’s skillful qualities decline: that sort of habit & practice, life, holy life that is followed as of essential worth is fruitless. But when—by following a life of habit & practice, a life, a holy life that is followed as of essential worth—one’s unskillful qualities decline while one’s skillful qualities increase: that sort of habit & practice, life, holy life that is followed as of essential worth is fruitful.”

That is what Ven. Ānanda said, and the Teacher approved. Then Ven. Ānanda, (realizing,) “The Teacher approves of me,” got up from his seat and, having bowed down to the Blessed One and circumambulating him, left.

Then not long after Ven. Ānanda had left, the Blessed One said to the monks, “Monks, Ānanda is still in training, but it would not be easy to find his equal in discernment.” — *AN 3:79*

§ 63. Then Vajjiya Māhita the householder went to where the wanderers of other sects 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, “Is it true, householder, that Gotama the contemplative criticizes all asceticism, that he categorically denounces & disparages all ascetics who live the rough life?”

“No, venerable sirs, the Blessed One doesn’t criticize all asceticism, nor does he categorically denounce or disparage all ascetics who live the rough life. The Blessed One criticizes what should be criticized, and praises what should be praised. Criticizing what should be criticized, praising what should be praised, the Blessed One is one who speaks analytically, not one who speaks categorically on this matter.”

When this was said, one of the wanderers said to Vajjiya Māhita the householder, “Now wait a minute, householder. This contemplative Gotama whom you praise is a nihilist, one who doesn’t declare anything.”

“I tell you, venerable sirs, that the Blessed One righteously declares that ‘This is skillful.’ He declares that ‘This is unskillful.’ Declaring that ‘This is skillful’ and ‘This is unskillful,’ he is one who has declared [a teaching]. He is not a nihilist, one who doesn’t declare anything.”

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Vajjiya Māhita 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 discussion with the wanderers.

[The Blessed One said,] “Well done, householder. Well done. That is how you should periodically & righteously refute those foolish men. I don’t say that all asceticism is to be pursued, nor do I say that all asceticism is not to be pursued. I don’t say that all observances should be observed, nor do I say that all observances should not be observed. I don’t say that all exertions are to be pursued, nor do I say that all exertions are not to be pursued. I don’t say that all forfeiture should be forfeited, nor do I say that all forfeiture should not be forfeited. I don’t say that all release is to be used for release, nor do I say that all release is not to be used for release.

“If, when an asceticism is pursued, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities wane, then I tell you that that sort of asceticism is not to be pursued. But if, when an asceticism is pursued, unskillful qualities wane and skillful qualities grow, then I tell you that that sort of asceticism is to be pursued.

“If, when an observance is observed, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities wane, then I tell you that that sort of observance is not to be observed. But if, when an observance is observed, unskillful qualities wane and skillful qualities grow, then I tell you that that sort of observance is to be observed.

“If, when an exertion is pursued....

“If, when a forfeiture is forfeited....

“If, when a release is used for release, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities wane, then I tell you that that sort of release is not to be used for release. But if, when a release is used for release, unskillful qualities wane and skillful qualities grow, then I tell you that that sort of release is to be used for release.”

When Vajjiya Māhita the householder had been instructed, urged, roused & 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 sects in just the way Vajjiya Māhita the householder has done.” — AN 10:94

JUDGING PRACTICES

§ 64. [Vassakāra the brahman:] “Once, Ven. Ānanda, Master Gotama was staying near Vesālī in the Peaked Roofed Pavilion in the Great Wood. I went to him at the Peaked Roofed Pavilion in the Great Wood, and there he spoke in a variety of ways on mental absorption (*jhāna*). Master Gotama was both endowed with mental absorption & made mental absorption his habit. In fact, he praised mental absorption of every sort.”

[Ven. Ānanda:] “It wasn’t the case, brahman, that the Blessed One praised mental absorption of every sort, nor did he criticize mental absorption of every sort. And what sort of mental absorption did he not praise? There is the case where a certain person dwells with his awareness overcome by sensual passion, seized with sensual passion. He doesn’t discern the escape, as it actually is present, from sensual passion once it has arisen. Making that sensual passion the focal point, he absorbs himself with it, besorbs, resorbs, & supersorbs¹ himself with it.

“He dwells with his awareness overcome by ill will....

“He dwells with his awareness overcome by sloth & drowsiness....

“He dwells with his awareness overcome by restlessness & anxiety....

“He dwells with his awareness overcome by uncertainty, seized with uncertainty. He doesn’t discern the escape, as it actually is present, from uncertainty once it has arisen. Making that uncertainty the focal point, he absorbs himself with it, besorbs, resorbs, & supersorbs himself with it. This is the sort of mental absorption that the Blessed One did not praise.

“And what sort of mental absorption did he praise? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third *jhāna*, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth *jhāna*: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is the sort of mental absorption that the Blessed One praised.

“It would seem, Ven. Ānanda, that Master Gotama criticized the mental absorption that deserves criticism, and praised that which deserves praise.” —
MN 108

NOTE: 1. These neologisms are an attempt to render the wordplay of the Pali into English. The sense is that there is a type of strong concentration involved when one is obsessed with unskillful thoughts, but that it is carried to ludicrous and unhealthy degrees.

§ 65. Then Ven. Savittha and Ven. MahāKotthita went to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta said to Ven. Savittha, “Friend, there are these three individuals found existing in the world. Which three? The bodily witness, the one attained to view, and the one released through conviction.... Of these three, which pleases you as the most splendid & most sublime?”

“... The one released through conviction, friend. Why is that? In this individual the faculty of conviction is dominant.”

Then Ven. Sāriputta said to Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita, “...Of these three, which pleases you as the most splendid & most sublime?”

“... The bodily witness, friend. Why is that? In this individual the faculty of concentration is dominant.”

Then Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita said to Ven. Sāriputta, “...Of these three, which pleases you as the most splendid & most sublime?”

“... The one attained to view, friend. Why is that? In this individual the faculty of discernment is dominant.”

Then Ven. Sāriputta said to Ven. Savittha and Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita, “Friends, we have each answered in line with our own understanding. Come, friends, let’s go to the Blessed One and tell him about this matter. However he answers, that’s how we’ll remember it.”

“As you say, friend,” Ven. Savittha and Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita responded to Ven. Sāriputta.

Then Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Savittha, and Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta told the Blessed One everything covered in his discussion with Ven. Savittha and Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita.

[The Blessed One said,] “It’s not easy, Sāriputta, to give a categorical answer as to which of these three is the most splendid & most sublime. There’s the possibility that the individual who is released through conviction is practicing the way to arahantship, while the individual who is a bodily witness is a once-returned or a non-returned, and the individual who is attained to view is a once-returned or a non-returned.”

“It’s not easy, Sāriputta, to give a categorical answer as to which of these three is the most splendid & most sublime. There’s the possibility that the individual who is a bodily witness is practicing the way to arahantship, while the individual who is released through conviction is a once-returned or a non-returned, and the individual who is attained to view is a once-returned or a non-returned.”

“It’s not easy, Sāriputta, to give a categorical answer as to which of these three is the most splendid & most sublime. There’s the possibility that the individual who is attained to view is practicing the way to arahantship, while the individual who is a bodily witness is a once-returned or a non-returned, and the individual who is released through conviction is a once-returned or a non-returned.”

“It’s not easy, Sāriputta, to give a categorical answer as to which of these three is the most splendid & most sublime.” — AN 3:21

KAMMA & FEELING

§ 66. As he was sitting to one side, Potaliputta the wanderer said to Ven. Samiddhi, “Face to face with Gotama the contemplative have I heard this, face to face have I learned this: ‘Bodily action is barren, verbal action is barren, only mental action is true. And there is an attainment in which, on being attained, one doesn’t feel anything.’”

“Don’t say that, friend. Don’t misrepresent the Blessed One. For it’s not good to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One would not say that: ‘Bodily action is barren, verbal action is barren, only mental action is true.’ But there is, friend, an attainment in which, on being attained, one doesn’t feel anything.”

“How long has it been, friend Samiddhi, since you went forth (into

homelessness)?”

“Not long, friend. Three years.”

“Then what now should I say about the elder monks, when a junior monk would suppose that his Teacher is to be defended in this way? Having intentionally done an action with body, with speech, or with mind, what does one experience?”

“Having intentionally done an action with body, with speech, or with mind, one experiences stress.”

Then Potaliputta the wanderer neither delighted in nor scorned Ven. Samiddhi’s words. Neither delighting nor scorning, he got up from his seat and left.

[Ven. Samiddhi then went to Ven. Ānanda to report this discussion. Ven. Ānanda then went, together with Ven. Samiddhi, to see the Blessed One and told him what had happened.]

When this was said, the Blessed One said, “I do not recall even having seen Potaliputta the wanderer, much less having that sort of discussion. And his question, which deserved an analytical answer, has been given a categorical answer by this worthless man, Samiddhi.”

When this was said, Ven. Udāyin said to the Blessed One, “But what if Ven. Samiddhi was speaking in reference to this: ‘Whatever is felt comes under stress’?”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Ven. Ānanda, “Look, Ānanda, at how this worthless Udāyin interrupts. I knew just now that he would interrupt in an inappropriate way. From the very beginning, Potaliputta the wanderer was asking about the three kinds of feeling. When this worthless Samiddhi was asked by him in this way, he should have answered, ‘Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be experienced as pleasure, one experiences pleasure. Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be experienced as pain, one experiences pain. Having intentionally done—with body, with speech, or with mind—an action that is to be experienced as neither-pleasure-nor-pain, one experiences neither-pleasure-nor-pain. Answering this way, this worthless Samiddhi would have rightly answered Potaliputta the wanderer.’”

[The Buddha then analyses four cases, one in which a person performs an unskillful action and after death is reborn in a bad destination, one in which a person performs an unskillful action and after death is reborn in a good destination, one in which a person abstains from unskillful action and after death is reborn in a good destination, and one in which a person abstains from unskillful action and after death is reborn in a bad destination. In each case, a contemplative develops the clairvoyant ability to see this happening, and from the individual case announces that what he saw happens in all cases, and that anyone who claims otherwise is wrong. Thus in the first and third case, the contemplatives announce categorically that good and bad actions do bear results and always lead to immediate reward or retribution in the next life; in the second and fourth cases, they announce categorically that good and bad actions are barren and lead to no reward or retribution at all. The Buddha then gives an analytical explanation to cover all the four cases:]

“There are four kinds of person to be found in the world. Which four? There is the case where a certain person takes life, takes what is not given (steals), engages in illicit sex, lies, speaks divisively, speaks abusively, engages in idle chatter; is covetous, malevolent, & holds wrong views. On the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination,

the lower realms, in hell.

“But there is also the case where a certain person takes life... holds wrong views, [yet] on the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.

“And there is the case where a certain person abstains from taking life, abstains from taking what is not given... is not covetous, not malevolent, & holds right views. On the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.

“But there is also the case where a certain person abstains from taking life, abstains from taking what is not given... is not covetous, not malevolent, & holds right views, [yet] on the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell....

“In the case of the person who takes life... [yet] on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world: either earlier he performed fine kamma that is to be felt as pleasant, or later he performed fine kamma that is to be felt as pleasant, or at the time of death he adopted & carried out right views. Because of that, on the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world. But as for the results of taking life... holding wrong views, he will feel them either right here & now, or later [in this lifetime], or following that....

“In the case of the person who abstains from taking life... [yet] on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell: either earlier he performed evil kamma that is to be felt as painful, or later he performed evil kamma that is to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he adopted & carried out wrong views. Because of that, on the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But as for the results of abstaining from taking life... holding right views, he will feel them either right here & now, or later [in this lifetime], or following that.” — *MN 136*

§ 67. Then, early in the morning, Ven. Bhūmija put on his robes and, carrying his bowl & outer robe, went to the residence of Prince Jayasena [his nephew]. On arrival, he sat down on a seat made ready. Prince Jayasena went to Ven. Bhūmija and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Bhūmija, “Master Bhūmija, there are some contemplatives & brahmins who espouse this teaching, espouse this view: ‘If one follows the holy life, even when having made a wish [for results], one is incapable of obtaining results. If one follows the holy life even when having made no wish, one is incapable of obtaining results. If one follows the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, one is incapable of obtaining results. If one follows the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, one is incapable of obtaining results.’ With regard to that, what does Master Bhūmija’s teacher say, what is his view, what does he declare?”

“I haven’t heard this face to face with the Blessed One, prince, I haven’t received this face to face with the Blessed One, but there is the possibility that the Blessed One would answer in this way: ‘If one follows the holy life inappropriately, even when having made a wish [for results], one is incapable of obtaining results. If one follows the holy life inappropriately, even when having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, one is incapable of obtaining results. [But] if one follows the holy life appropriately, even when having made a wish, one is capable of obtaining results. If one follows the holy life

appropriately, even when having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, one is capable of obtaining results.' I haven't heard this face to face with the Blessed One, I haven't received this face to face with the Blessed One, but there is the possibility that the Blessed One would answer in this way."

"If that is what Master Bhūmija's teacher says, if that is his view, if that is what he declares, then yes, Master Bhūmija's teacher stands, as it were, having struck all of those many contemplatives & brahmans down by the head."

Prince Jayasena then served Ven. Bhūmija from his own dish of milk rice.

Then Ven. Bhūmija, after his meal, returning from his alms round, went to the Blessed One [and reported the entirety of his discussion with Prince Jayasena]. "Answering in this way when thus asked, lord, I trust that I am speaking in line with what the Blessed One has said, that I am not misrepresenting the Blessed One with what is unfactual, that I am answering in line with the Dhamma, and that the legitimate implications of what I say give no grounds for criticism."

"Certainly, Bhūmija, in answering in this way when thus asked, you are speaking in line with what I have said, you are not misrepresenting me with what is unfactual, and you are answering in line with the Dhamma and that the legitimate implications of what you say give no grounds for criticism. For any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, & wrong concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results], they are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

"Suppose a man in need of oil, looking for oil, wandering in search of oil, would pile gravel in a tub and press it, sprinkling it again & again with water. If he were to pile gravel in a tub and press it, sprinkling it again & again with water even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results....

"Suppose a man in need of milk, looking for milk, wandering in search of milk, would twist the horn of a newly-calved cow. If he were to twist the horn of a newly-calved cow even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results....

"Suppose a man in need of butter, looking for butter, wandering in search of butter, would sprinkle water on water in a crock and twirl it with a churn-stick. If he were to sprinkle water on water in a crock and twirl it with a churn-stick even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results....

"Suppose a man in need of fire, looking for fire, wandering in search of fire, would take a fire stick and rub it into a wet, sappy piece of wood. If he were to take a fire stick and rub it into a wet, sappy piece of wood even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish

and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

"In the same way, any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, & wrong concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

"But as for any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

"Suppose a man in need of oil, looking for oil, wandering in search of oil, would pile sesame seeds in a tub and press them, sprinkling them again & again with water. If he were to pile sesame seeds in a tub and press them, sprinkling them again & again with water, even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results....

"Suppose a man in need of milk, looking for milk, wandering in search of milk, would pull the teat of a newly-calved cow. If he were to pull the teat of a newly-calved cow even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results....

"Suppose a man in need of butter, looking for butter, wandering in search of butter, would sprinkle water on curds in a crock and twirl them with a churn-stick. If he were to sprinkle water on curds in a crock and twirl them with a churn-stick even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

"Suppose a man in need of fire, looking for fire, wandering in search of fire, would take a fire stick and rub it into a dry, sapless piece of wood. If he were to take a fire stick and rub it into a dry, sapless piece of wood even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

"In the same way, any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results], they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having

made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.

“Bhūmija, if these four similes had occurred to you in the presence of Prince Jayasena, he would have naturally felt confidence in you and—feeling confidence—would have shown his confidence in you.”

“But, lord, how could these four similes have occurred to me in the presence of Prince Jayasena, as they are natural to the Blessed One and have never before been heard from him?”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Bhūmija delighted in the Blessed One’s words. — *MN 126*

ON THE BUDDHA AS TEACHER

§ 68. Then the Blessed One went to the brahman Lohicca’s home. On arrival, he sat down on a seat made ready. The brahman Lohicca, with his own hand, served & satisfied the Blessed One & the community of monks with choice staple & non-staple foods. Then, when the Blessed One had eaten and had removed his hand from his bowl, the brahman Lohicca took a lower seat and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Is it true, Lohicca, that an evil viewpoint to this effect has arisen in you: ‘Suppose that a contemplative or brahman were to arrive at a skillful doctrine. Having arrived at a skillful doctrine, he should not declare it to anyone else, for what can one person do for another? It would be just the same as if, having cut through an old bond, one were to make another new bond. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’”

“Yes, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Lohicca? Don’t you reign over Sālavatikā?”

“Yes, Master Gotama.”

“Now, suppose someone were to say, ‘The brahman Lohicca reigns over Sālavatikā. He alone should consume the fruits & revenues of Sālavatikā, and not share them with others.’ Would someone speaking in this way be a creator of obstacles for your subjects, or would he not?”

“He would be a creator of obstacles, Master Gotama.”

“And, being a creator of obstacles, would he be sympathetic for their benefit or not?”

“He would not be sympathetic for their benefit, Master Gotama.”

“And in one not sympathetic for their benefit, would his mind be established in good will for them, or in animosity?”

“In animosity, Master Gotama.”

“When the mind is established in animosity, is there wrong view or right view?”

“Wrong view, Master Gotama.”

“Now, for one of wrong view, Lohicca, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb.

“What do you think, Lohicca? Doesn’t King Pasenadi Kosala reign over Kasi & Kosala?”

“Yes, Master Gotama.”

“Now, suppose someone were to say, ‘King Pasenadi Kosala reigns over Kasi & Kosala. He alone should consume the fruits & revenues of Kasi & Kosala, and not share them with others.’ Would someone speaking in this way be a creator of obstacles for King Pasenadi’s subjects—you & others—or would he not?”

“He would be a creator of obstacles, Master Gotama.”

“And, being a creator of obstacles, would he be sympathetic for their benefit or not?”

“He would not be sympathetic for their benefit, Master Gotama.”

“And in one not sympathetic for their benefit, would his mind be established in good will for them, or in animosity?”

“In animosity, Master Gotama.”

“When the mind is established in animosity, is there wrong view or right view?”

“Wrong view, Master Gotama.”

“Now, for one of wrong view, Lohicca, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb.

“So then, Lohicca, if anyone were to say, ‘The brahman Lohicca reigns over Sālavatikā. He alone should consume the fruits & revenues of Sālavatikā, and not share them with others,’ he, speaking in this way, would be a creator of obstacles for your subjects. Being a creator of obstacles, he would not be sympathetic for their benefit. In one not sympathetic for their benefit, the mind would be established in animosity for them. When the mind is established in animosity, there is wrong view. For one of wrong view, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb. In the same way, if anyone were to say, ‘Suppose that a contemplative or brahman were to arrive at a skillful doctrine. Having arrived at a skillful doctrine, he should not declare it to anyone else, for what can one person do for another? It would be just the same as if, having cut through an old bond, one were to make another new bond. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’—he, speaking in this way, would be a creator of obstacles for those children of good family who, coming to the Dhamma & Vinaya revealed by the Tathāgata, attain the sort of grand distinction where they attain the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-returning, the fruit of arahantship; and for those who ripen deva wombs for the sake of bringing about the deva state. Being a creator of obstacles, he would not be sympathetic for their benefit. In one not sympathetic for their benefit, the mind would be established in animosity for them. When the mind is established in animosity, there is wrong view. For one of wrong view, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb.

“And if anyone were to say, ‘King Pasenadi Kosala reigns over Kasi & Kosala. He alone should consume the fruits & revenues of Kasi & Kosala, and not share them with others,’ he, speaking in this way, would be a creator of obstacles for King Pasenadi’s subjects—you & others. Being a creator of obstacles, he would not be sympathetic for their benefit. In one not sympathetic for their benefit, the mind would be established in animosity for them. When the mind is established in animosity, there is wrong view. For one of wrong view, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb. In the same way, if anyone were to say, ‘Suppose that a contemplative or brahman were to arrive at a skillful doctrine. Having arrived at a skillful doctrine, he should not declare it to anyone else, for what can one person do for another? It would be just the same as if, having cut through an old bond, one were to make another new bond. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’—he, speaking in this way, would be a creator of obstacles for those children of good family who, coming to the Dhamma & Vinaya revealed by the Tathāgata, attain the sort of grand distinction where they attain the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-returning, the fruit of arahantship; and also for those who ripen deva wombs for the sake of bringing about the deva state. Being a creator of obstacles, he would

not be sympathetic for their benefit. In one not sympathetic for their benefit, the mind would be established in animosity for them. When the mind is established in animosity, there is wrong view. For one of wrong view, I tell you, there is one of two destinations: either hell or the animal womb.

“Lohicca, there are these three sorts of teachers who are worthy of criticism in the world, and when anyone criticizes these sorts of teachers, the criticism is true, factual, righteous, & unblameworthy. Which three?

“There is the case where a certain teacher has not attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. He, not having attained that goal of the contemplative life, teaches his disciples, ‘This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness.’ His disciples don’t listen, don’t lend ear, don’t put forth an intent for gnosis [*añña*]. They practice in a way deviating from the teacher’s instructions. He should be criticized, saying, ‘You, venerable sir, have not attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Not having attained that goal of the contemplative life, you teach your disciples, “This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness.” Your disciples don’t listen, don’t lend ear, don’t put forth an intent for gnosis, and practice in a way deviating from the teacher’s instructions. It’s just as if a man were to pursue [a woman] who pulls away, or to embrace one who turns her back. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’ This is the first teacher who is worthy of criticism in the world, and when anyone criticizes this sort of teacher, the criticism is true, factual, righteous, & unblameworthy.

“Then there is the case where a certain teacher has not attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. He, not having attained that goal of the contemplative life, teaches his disciples, ‘This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness.’ His disciples listen, lend ear, put forth an intent for gnosis, and practice in a way not deviating from the teacher’s instructions. He should be criticized, saying, ‘You, venerable sir, have not attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Not having attained that goal of the contemplative life, you teach your disciples, “This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness.” Your disciples listen, lend ear, put forth an intent for gnosis, and practice in a way not deviating from the teacher’s instructions. It’s just as if a man, neglecting his own field, were to imagine that another’s field should be weeded. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’ This is the second teacher who is worthy of criticism in the world, and when anyone criticizes this sort of teacher, the criticism is true, factual, righteous, & unblameworthy.

“Then there is the case where a certain teacher has attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. He, having attained that goal of the contemplative life, teaches his disciples, ‘This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness.’ His disciples don’t listen, don’t lend ear, don’t put forth an intent for gnosis. They practice in a way deviating from the teacher’s instructions. He should be criticized, saying, ‘You, venerable sir, have attained the goal of the contemplative life for which one goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Having attained that goal of the contemplative life, you teach your disciples, “This is for your benefit. This is for your happiness,” but your disciples don’t listen, don’t lend ear, don’t put forth an intent for gnosis, and practice in a way deviating from the teacher’s instructions. It’s just as if, having cut through an old bond, one were to make another new bond. I say that such a thing is an evil, greedy deed, for what can one person do for another?’ This is the third teacher who is worthy of criticism in the world, and

when anyone criticizes this sort of teacher, the criticism is true, factual, righteous, & unblameworthy.”

When this was said, the brahman Lohicca said to the Blessed One, “But is there, Master Gotama, any teacher who is not worthy of criticism in the world?”

“There is, Lohicca, a teacher who is not worthy of criticism in the world.”

“But which teacher, Master Gotama, is not worthy of criticism in the world?”

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

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

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

“When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code, seeing danger in the slightest faults. Consummate in his virtue, he guards the doors of his senses, is possessed of mindfulness & alertness, and is content....

“Endowed with this noble aggregate of virtue, this noble restraint over the sense faculties, this noble mindfulness & alertness, and this noble contentment, he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a wilderness, the shade of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a heap of straw. After his meal, returning from his alms round, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore.

“Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with an awareness devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness. Abandoning ill will & anger, he dwells with an awareness devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the benefit of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will & anger. Abandoning sloth & drowsiness, he dwells with an awareness devoid of sloth & drowsiness, mindful, alert, percipient of light. He cleanses his mind of sloth & drowsiness. Abandoning restlessness & anxiety, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness & anxiety. Abandoning uncertainty, he dwells having crossed over uncertainty, with no perplexity with regard to skillful qualities. He cleanses his mind of uncertainty...

“When these five hindrances are abandoned in himself, he regards it as unindebtedness, good health, release from prison, freedom, a place of security. Seeing that they have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. Glad, he becomes enraptured. Enraptured, his body grows tranquil. His body tranquil, he is sensitive to pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated.

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, he enters and remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. Just as if a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without—would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. When a disciple of a teacher attains this sort of grand distinction, Lohicca, that is a teacher not worthy

of criticism in the world, and if anyone were to criticize this sort of teacher, the criticism would be false, unfactual, unrighteous, & blameworthy.

“Then, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna.... the third jhāna.... the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. Just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. When a disciple of a teacher attains this sort of grand distinction, Lohicca, that is a teacher not worthy of criticism in the world, and if anyone were to criticize this sort of teacher, the criticism would be false, unfactual, unrighteous, & blameworthy.

“With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to knowledge & vision... to creating a mind-made body... to the modes of supranormal powers... to the divine ear-property... to knowledge of the awareness of other beings... to knowledge of the recollection of past lives... to knowledge of the passing away & re-appearance of beings... to the knowledge of the ending of fermentations. He discerns, as it has come to be, that *‘This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are fermentations... This is the origination of fermentations... This is the cessation of fermentations... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations.’* His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.... When a disciple of a teacher attains this sort of grand distinction, Lohicca, that is a teacher not worthy of criticism in the world, and if anyone were to criticize this sort of teacher, the criticism would be false, unfactual, unrighteous, & blameworthy.” — DN 12

§ 69. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels’ Sanctuary.

Then Prince Abhaya went to [the Jain teacher] Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta said to him, “Come, now, prince. Refute the words of Gotama the contemplative, and this admirable report about you will spread afar: ‘The words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful—were refuted by Prince Abhaya!’”

“But how, venerable sir, will I refute the words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful?”

“Come now, prince. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: ‘Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others?’ If Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, ‘The Tathāgata would say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others,’ then you should say, ‘Then how is there any difference between you, venerable sir, and run-of-the-mill people? For even run-of-the-mill people say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others.’ But if Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, ‘The Tathāgata would not say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others,’ then you should say, ‘Then how, venerable sir, did you say of Devadatta that “Devadatta is headed for destitution, Devadatta is headed for hell, Devadatta will boil for an eon, Devadatta is incurable”?’ For Devadatta

was upset & disgruntled at those words of yours.' When Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up. Just as if a two-horned chestnut were stuck in a man's throat: he would not be able to swallow it down or spit it up. In the same way, when Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up."

Responding, "As you say, venerable sir," Prince Abhaya got up from his seat, bowed down to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, circumambulated him, and then went to the Blessed One. On arrival, he bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he glanced up at the sun and thought, "Today is not the time to refute the Blessed One's words. Tomorrow in my own home I will overturn the Blessed One's words." So he said to the Blessed One, "May the Blessed One, together with three others, acquiesce to my offer of tomorrow's meal."

The Blessed One acquiesced with silence.

Then Prince Abhaya, understanding the Blessed One's acquiescence, got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and left.

Then, after the night had passed, the Blessed One early in the morning put on his robes and, carrying his bowl and outer robe, went to Prince Abhaya's home. On arrival, he sat down on a seat made ready. Prince Abhaya, with his own hand, served & satisfied the Blessed One with fine staple & non-staple foods. Then, when the Blessed One had eaten and had removed his hand from his bowl, Prince Abhaya took a lower seat and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others?"

"Prince, there is no categorical answer to that."

"Then right here, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas are destroyed."

"But prince, why do you say, 'Then right here, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas are destroyed?'"

"Just yesterday, venerable sir, I went to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and... he said to me... 'Come now, prince. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: "Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata say words that are unendearing & displeasing to others?" ... Just as if a two-horned chestnut were stuck in a man's throat: he would not be able to swallow it down or spit it up. In the same way, when Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up.'"

Now at that time a baby boy was lying face-up on the prince's lap. So the Blessed One said to the prince, "What do you think, prince: If this young boy, through your own negligence or that of the nurse, were to take a stick or a piece of gravel into its mouth, what would you do?"

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

"In the same way, prince:

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

[2] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, unendearing & displeasing to others, he doesn't say them.

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

[4] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be unfactual, untrue,

unbeneficial, but endearing & pleasing to others, he doesn't say them.

[5] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, unbeneficial, but endearing & pleasing to others, he doesn't say them.

[6] In the case of words that the Tathāgata knows to be factual, true, beneficial, and endearing & pleasing to others, he has a sense of the proper time for saying them. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has sympathy for living beings." — MN 58 [§79]

§ 70. On one occasion the Blessed One, while wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large community of monks, arrived at Nālandā. There he stayed at Nālandā in Pāvārika's Mango Grove.

Now at that time Nālandā was in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, the crops white with blight and turned to straw. And at that time Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta was staying in Nālandā together with a large following of Nigaṇṭhas. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, went to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta said to him, "Come, now, headman. Refute the words of Gotama the contemplative, and this admirable report about you will spread afar: 'The words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful—were refuted by Asibandhakaputta the headman!'"

"But how, venerable sir, will I refute the words of Gotama the contemplative—so mighty, so powerful?"

"Come now, headman. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: 'Venerable sir, doesn't the Blessed One in many ways praise kindness, protection, & sympathy for families?' If Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, 'Yes, headman, the Tathāgata in many ways praises kindness, protection, & sympathy for families,' then you should say, 'Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One, together with a large community of monks, wandering on tour around Nālandā in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, when the crops are white with blight and turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families.' When Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up."

Responding, "As you say, venerable sir," Asibandhakaputta the headman got up from his seat, bowed down to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, circumambulated him, and then went to the Blessed One. On arrival, he bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, doesn't the Blessed One in many ways praise kindness, protection, & sympathy for families?"

"Yes, headman, the Tathāgata in many ways praises kindness, protection, & sympathy for families."

"Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One, together with a large community of monks, wandering on tour around Nālandā in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, when the crops are white with blight and turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families."

"Headman, recollecting back over 91 eons, I do not know any family to have been brought to downfall through the giving of cooked alms. On the contrary: Whatever families are rich, with much wealth, with many possessions, with a great deal of money, a great many accoutrements of wealth, a great many commodities, all have become so from giving, from truth, from restraint.

“Headman, there are eight causes, eight reasons for the downfall of families. Families go to their downfall because of kings, or families go to their downfall because of thieves, or families go to their downfall because of fire, or families go to their downfall because of floods, or their stored-up treasure disappears, or their mismanaged undertakings go wrong, or in the family a wastrel is born who squanders, scatters, & shatters its wealth, and inconstancy itself is the eighth. These are the eight causes, the eight reasons for the downfall of families. Now, when these eight causes, these eight reasons are to be found, if anyone should say of me, ‘The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families’—without abandoning that statement, without abandoning that intent, without relinquishing that view—then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell.”

When this was said, Asibandhakaputta the headman said to the Blessed One: “Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life.” — *SN 42:9*

CHAPTER FIVE

Cross-questioning: I

READINGS

ESTABLISHING ORTHODOXY

§ 71. Then the monk Aritṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Is it true, Aritṭha, that this pernicious viewpoint has arisen in you—‘As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those acts the Blessed One says are obstructive, when indulged in, are not genuine obstructions?’”¹

“Exactly so, lord. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those acts the Blessed One says are obstructive, when indulged in, are not genuine obstructions.”

“Worthless man, from whom have you understood that Dhamma taught by me in such a way? Worthless man, haven’t I in many ways described obstructive acts? And when indulged in, they are genuine obstructions. I have said that sensual pleasures are of little satisfaction, much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. I have compared sensual pleasures to a chain of bones: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. I have compared sensual pleasures to a lump of flesh... a grass torch... a pit of glowing embers... a dream... borrowed goods... the fruits of a tree... a butcher’s ax and chopping block... swords and spears... a snake’s head: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. But you, worthless man, through your own poor grasp [of the Dhamma], not only misrepresent us but also dig yourself up [by the root] and produce much demerit for yourself. That will lead to your long-term harm & suffering.”

Then the Blessed One said to the monks, “What do you think, monks? Is this monk Aritṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers even warm in this Dhamma & Vinaya?”

“How could he be, lord? No, lord.”

When this was said, the monk Aritṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers sat silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Then the Blessed One, seeing that the monk Aritṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers was sitting silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words, said to him, “Worthless man, you will be recognized for your own pernicious viewpoint. I will cross-question the monks on this matter.”

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, “Monks, do you too understand the Dhamma as taught by me in the same way that the monk Aritṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers does when, through his own poor grasp, he not only misrepresents us but also digs himself up [by the root] and produces much demerit for himself?”

“No, lord, for in many ways the Blessed One has described obstructive acts to us, and when indulged in they are genuine obstructions. The Blessed One has said that sensual pleasures are of little satisfaction, much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. The Blessed One has compared sensual pleasures to a chain of bones: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. The Blessed One has

compared sensual pleasures to a lump of flesh... a grass torch... a pit of glowing embers... a dream... borrowed goods... the fruits of a tree... a butcher's ax and chopping block... swords and spears... a snake's head: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks."

"It's good, monks, that you understand the Dhamma taught by me in this way, for in many ways I have described obstructive acts to you, and when indulged in they are genuine obstructions. I have said that sensual pleasures are of little satisfaction, much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. I have compared sensual pleasures to a chain of bones: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. I have compared sensual pleasures to a lump of flesh... a grass torch... a pit of glowing embers... a dream... borrowed goods... the fruits of a tree... a butcher's ax and chopping block... swords and spears... a snake's head: of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks. But this monk Ariṭṭha Formerly-of-the-Vulture-Killers, through his own poor grasp [of the Dhamma], has both misrepresented us as well as injuring himself and accumulating much demerit for himself, and that will lead to this worthless man's long-term harm & suffering. For a person to indulge in sensual pleasures without sensual passion, without sensual perception, without sensual thinking: That isn't possible." — MN 22

NOTE: 1. The Commentary notes that Ariṭṭha here is referring to sexual intercourse and other related acts.

§ 72. Then the monk Sāti, the Fisherman's Son, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Is it true, Sāti, that this pernicious view has arisen in you—'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, it is just this consciousness that runs and wanders on [from birth to birth], not another'?"

"Exactly so, lord. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, it is just this consciousness that runs and wanders on, not another."

"Which consciousness, Sāti, is that?"¹

"This speaker, this knower, lord, that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & evil actions."

"And to whom, worthless man, do you understand me to have taught the Dhamma like that? Haven't I, in many ways, said of dependently co-arisen consciousness, 'Apart from a requisite condition, there is no coming-into-play of consciousness'?² But you, through your own poor grasp, not only misrepresent us but also dig yourself up [by the root] and produce much demerit for yourself. That will lead to your long-term harm & suffering."

Then the Blessed One said to the monks, "What do you think, monks? Is this monk Sāti, the Fisherman's Son, even warm in this Dhamma & Vinaya?"

"How could he be, lord? No, lord."

When this was said, the monk Sāti, the Fisherman's Son, sat silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Then the Blessed One, seeing that the monk Sāti, the Fisherman's Son, was sitting silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words, said to him, "Worthless man, you will be recognized for your own pernicious viewpoint. I will cross-question the monks on this matter."

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Monks, do you too understand the Dhamma as taught by me in the same way that the monk Sāti, the Fisherman's Son, does when, through his own poor grasp [of the Dhamma], he not only misrepresents us but also digs himself up [by the root] and produces much demerit for himself?"

"No, lord, for in many ways the Blessed One has said of dependently co-arisen

consciousness, ‘Apart from a requisite condition, there is no coming-into-play of consciousness.’”

“It’s good, monks, that you understand the Dhamma taught by me in this way, for in many ways I have said of dependently co-arisen consciousness, ‘Apart from a requisite condition, there is no coming-into-play of consciousness.’ But this monk Sāti, the Fisherman’s Son, through his own poor grasp [of the Dhamma], has not only misrepresented us but has also dug himself up [by the root], producing much demerit for himself. That will lead to this worthless man’s long-term harm & suffering.” — MN 38

NOTES

1. The Buddha, knowing that there are two types of consciousness—the consciousness aggregate (*viññāṇakkhandha*) and consciousness without surface (*viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ*—see §205, note 4)—is here giving Sāti the chance to identify which of the two types he has interpreted as running and wandering on. Sāti’s answer shows that he is talking about the first type. It would have been interesting to see how the Buddha would have attacked Sāti’s misunderstanding if Sāti had identified the second.

2. The Pali here is, *Nanu mayā moghapurisa anekapariyāyena paticcasamuppannaṃ viññāṇaṃ vuttaṃ, ‘Aññatra paccayā n’atthi viññāṇassa sambhavoti?’* Literally: “Worthless man, hasn’t dependently-coarisen consciousness been described by me in many ways that, ‘Apart from a requisite condition, there is no coming-into-play of consciousness?’”

Some translators, thinking that all consciousness must be dependently co-arisen, have translated this sentence as, “Misguided man, have I not stated in many ways consciousness to be dependently arisen since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness?” They then use this translation to assert that the two passages in the Canon referring to consciousness without surface [§161, §205] are not in keeping with the principle, expressed here, that all consciousness is dependently co-arisen. Thus, they say, those two passages cannot be accepted as coming genuinely from the Buddha, whereas this passage in MN 38 definitely can. Their translation, however, is grammatically incorrect, as it inserts a “since” where there is none in the Pali, and ignores the quotation marks (*ti*) around the sentence in which dependently co-arisen consciousness is described. Thus it is a case of an interpretation forced on a passage that is then supposed to act as evidence confirming the interpretation—a form of circular reasoning.

When this passage is correctly translated, however, there is no conflict between this passage and those. The Buddha here is discussing dependently-coarisen consciousness in a way that does not conflict with the possibility that there is also a consciousness without surface that lies beyond the six sense-spheres and is not dependently-coarisen. In fact, because he modifies the consciousness discussed here with the adjective “dependently-co-arisen,” that suggests that he is keeping in mind the fact that there is another type of consciousness to which that modification does not apply.

CROSS-QUESTIONING IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

§ 73. “Monks, there are these two assemblies. Which two? The assembly trained in bombast and not in cross-questioning, and the assembly trained in cross-questioning and not in bombast.

“And which is the assembly trained in bombast and not in cross-questioning?

There is the case where in any assembly when the discourses of the Tathāgata—deep, deep in their meaning, transcendent, connected with emptiness—are recited, the monks don’t listen, don’t lend ear, don’t set their hearts on knowing them; don’t regard them as worth grasping or mastering. But when discourses that are literary works—the works of poets, artful in sound, artful in expression, the work of outsiders, words of disciples—are recited, they listen, they lend ear, they set their hearts on knowing them; they regard them as worth grasping & mastering. Yet when they have mastered that Dhamma, they

don't cross-question one another about it, don't dissect: 'How is this? What is the meaning of this?' They don't make open what isn't open, don't make plain what isn't plain, don't dispel doubt on its various doubtful points. This is called an assembly trained in bombast, not in cross-questioning.

"And which is the assembly trained in cross-questioning and not in bombast?

There is the case where in any assembly when discourses that are literary works—the works of poets, artful in sound, artful in rhetoric, the work of outsiders, words of disciples—are recited, the monks don't listen, don't lend ear, don't set their hearts on knowing them; don't regard them as worth grasping or mastering. But when the discourses of the Tathāgata—deep, deep in their meaning, transcendent, connected with emptiness—are recited, they listen, they lend ear, they set their hearts on knowing them; they regard them as worth grasping & mastering. And when they have mastered that Dhamma, they cross-question one another about it and dissect it: 'How is this? What is the meaning of this?' They make open what isn't open, make plain what isn't plain, dispel doubt on its various doubtful points. This is called an assembly trained in cross-questioning and not in bombast." — *AN 2:46*

§ 74. Ven. Ānanda said, "There is the case, friend Sāriputta, where a monk masters the Dhamma: dialogues, narratives of mixed prose & verse, explanations, verses, spontaneous exclamations, quotations, birth stories, amazing events, question & answer sessions. He teaches the Dhamma in detail—as he has heard it, as he has remembered it—to others. He gets others to recite the Dhamma in detail—as they have heard it, as they have remembered it. He holds a group chanting of the Dhamma in detail—as he has heard it, as he has remembered it. He thinks about & evaluates the Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has remembered it; he contemplates it with his intellect. He enters the Rains in monasteries in which there are senior monks who are learned, who know the tradition, who are holders of the Dhamma, the Vinaya, & the Mātika [the lists of topics that later formed the basis for the Abhidhamma]. Having approached them periodically, he questions them & quizzes them: 'How is this, venerable sirs? What is the meaning of this?' They make open for him what wasn't open, make plain what wasn't plain, dispel doubt on various doubtful points.

"It's to this extent, friend Sāriputta, that a monk hears Dhamma he has not heard, that the Dhammas he has heard do not get confused, that the Dhammas he has touched with his awareness stay current, and that he understands what (previously) was not understood." — *AN 6:51*

Invitations to cross-questioning:

§ 75. "Therefore, monks, when you understand the meaning of any statement of mine, that is how you should remember it. But when you don't understand the meaning of any statement of mine, then right then & there you should cross-question me or the experienced monks." — *MN 22*

§ 76. Then Ghoṭamukha the brahman, taking a low seat, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Udena, "My good contemplative, there is no righteous wanderer's life: That is [the opinion] that occurs to me here, but that may be from not seeing either someone like your venerable self or the Dhamma here."

"Brahman, if you will allow of me what should be allowed, protest what should be protested, and further cross-question me right then & there on the

meaning of any statement of mine that you don't understand—'How is this, Master Udena? What is the meaning of this?'—then we could have a discussion here." — MN 94 [See also §109]

§ 77. As the nuns were sitting there, Ven. Nandaka said to them, "This will be a cross-questioning talk, sisters. Where you understand, you should say, 'We understand.' Where you don't, you should say, 'We don't understand.' Where you feel doubt or indecision, you should cross-question me right then & there: 'How is this, venerable sir? What is the meaning of this?'"

"Venerable sir, we are gratified & delighted that you invite us [in this way]."

"So then, sisters, what do you think? Is the eye constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." "And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir." "And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"... Is the ear constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is the nose constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is the tongue constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is the body constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"What do you think, sisters? Is the intellect constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because we have already seen it well as it has come to be, with right discernment, that these six internal media are inconstant."

"Good, good, sisters. That's how it is for a disciple of the noble ones who has seen it as it has come to be with right discernment.

"Now, what do you think, sisters? Are forms constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." "And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir." "And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"... Are sounds constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Are aromas constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Are flavors constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Are tactile sensations constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"What do you think, sisters? Are ideas constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because we have already seen it well as it has

come to be, with right discernment, that these six external media too are inconstant."

"Good, good, sisters. That's how it is for a disciple of the noble ones who has seen it as it has come to be with right discernment.

"Now, what do you think, sisters? Is eye-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"... Is ear-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is nose-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is tongue-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"... Is body-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir." ...

"What do you think, sisters? Is intellect-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, venerable sir."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, venerable sir."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because we have already seen it well as it has come to be, with right discernment, that these six consciousness-groups too are inconstant."

"Good, good, sisters. That's how it is for a disciple of the noble ones who has seen it as it has come to be with right discernment.

"Just as when the oil in a burning oil lamp is inconstant & subject to change, its wick is inconstant & subject to change, its flame is inconstant & subject to change, its light is inconstant & subject to change. If someone were to say, 'The oil in that burning oil lamp is inconstant & subject to change, its wick is inconstant & subject to change, its flame is inconstant & subject to change, but as for its light, that is constant, everlasting, eternal, & not subject to change,' would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because the oil in that burning oil lamp is inconstant & subject to change, its wick is inconstant & subject to change, its flame is inconstant & subject to change, so how much more should its light be inconstant & subject to change."

"In the same way, sisters, if someone were to say, 'My six internal media are inconstant, but what I experience based on the six internal media—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that is constant, everlasting, eternal, & not subject to change,' would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because each feeling arises dependent on its corresponding condition. With the cessation of its corresponding condition, it ceases."

"Good, good, sisters. That's how it is for a disciple of the noble ones who has seen it as it has come to be with right discernment.

"Just as when the root of a great, standing tree—possessed of heartwood—is inconstant & subject to change, its trunk is inconstant & subject to change, its

branches & foliage are inconstant & subject to change, its shadow is inconstant & subject to change. If someone were to say, 'The root of that great, standing tree—possessed of heartwood—is inconstant & subject to change, its trunk is inconstant & subject to change, its branches & foliage are inconstant & subject to change, but as for its shadow, that is constant, everlasting, eternal, & not subject to change,' would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because the root of that great, standing tree—possessed of heartwood—is inconstant & subject to change, its trunk is inconstant & subject to change, its branches & foliage are inconstant & subject to change, so how much more should its shadow be inconstant & subject to change."

"In the same way, sisters, if someone were to say, 'My six external media are inconstant, but what I experience based on the six internal media—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that is constant, everlasting, eternal, & not subject to change,' would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because each feeling arises dependent on its corresponding condition. With the cessation of its corresponding condition, it ceases."

"Good, good, sisters. That's how it is for a disciple of the noble ones who has seen it as it has come to be with right discernment.

"Just as if a skilled butcher or butcher's apprentice, having killed a cow, were to carve it up with a sharp carving knife so that—without damaging the substance of the inner flesh, without damaging the substance of the outer hide—he would cut, sever, & detach only the skin muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between. Having cut, severed, & detached the outer skin, and then covering the cow again with that very skin, if he were to say that the cow was joined to the skin just as it had been, would he be speaking rightly?"¹

"No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because if the skilled butcher or butcher's apprentice, having killed a cow, were to... cut, sever, & detach only the skin muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between; and... having covered the cow again with that very skin, then no matter how much he might say that the cow was joined to the skin just as it had been, the cow would still be disjoined from the skin."

"This simile, sisters, I have given to convey a message. The message is this: The substance of the inner flesh stands for the six internal media; the substance of the outer hide, for the six external media. The skin muscles, connective tissues, & attachments in between stand for passion & delight. And the sharp knife stands for noble discernment—the noble discernment that cuts, severs, & detaches the defilements, fetters, & bonds in between.

"Sisters, there are these seven factors for awakening through whose development & pursuit a monk enters & remains in the fermentation-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here & now. Which seven? There is the case where a monk develops *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on 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... *serenity* as a factor for awakening... *concentration* as a factor for awakening... *equanimity* as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment. These are the seven factors for awakening through whose development & pursuit a monk enters & remains in the fermentation-free release of awareness & release of discernment, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here & now."

Then, having exhorted the nuns with this exhortation, Ven. Nandaka

dismissed them, saying, “Go, sisters. The time has come.” The nuns, delighting in and approving of Ven. Nandaka’s exhortation, got up from their seats, bowed down to him, circumambulated him—keeping him to the right—and went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, they stood to one side. As they were standing there, the Blessed One said to them, “Go, nuns. The time has come.” So the nuns, having bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him—keeping him to the right—and departed.

Then, not long after the nuns’ departure, the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Monks, just as on the uposatha day of the fifteenth, people at large feel no doubt or indecision as to whether the moon is lacking or full, for it is clearly full; in the same way, the nuns are gratified with Nandaka’s Dhamma-teaching, and their resolves have been fulfilled. Of these 500 nuns, the most backward is a stream-winner, not destined for the planes of deprivation, headed to self-awakening for sure.” — *MN 146*

NOTE: 1. The act of covering the cow with skin refers to the arahant’s return to the world of the six senses after emerging from the experience of awakening.

The Buddha anticipates cross-questioning of his teaching by faultfinders:

§ 78. “Now it’s possible, Ānanda, that some wanderers of other sects might say, ‘Gotama the contemplative speaks of the cessation of perception & feeling, and yet describes it as pleasure. What is this? How is this?’ When they say that, they are to be told, ‘It’s not the case, friends, that the Blessed One describes only pleasant feeling as included under pleasure. Wherever pleasure is found, in whatever terms,¹ the Blessed One describes it as pleasure.’” — *MN 59 [See also §116]*

NOTE: 1. This passage indicates that the aggregates do not cover all possible experience. See also §205, note 4.

§ 79. “Now it’s possible, Cunda, that some wanderers of other sects might say, ‘Gotama the contemplative describes unlimited knowledge & vision with regard to the past, but doesn’t describe unlimited knowledge & vision with regard to the future. What is this? How is this?’ Those wanderers of other sects construe the sort of knowing that is not knowledge & vision to be the sort of knowing that is knowledge & vision, just like those who are foolish & inexperienced. The Tathāgata’s memory-&-recollection knowledge with regard to the past is such that he recollects whatever he wants. The Tathāgata’s knowledge with regard to the future arises born from his awakening: ‘This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.’

“With regard to what is past: If it is unfactual, untrue, & unbeneficial, the Tathāgata does not declare it. If it is factual, true, but unbeneficial, the Tathāgata does not declare it. If it is factual, true, & beneficial, the Tathāgata has a sense of the proper time for giving the answer to that question.

“With regard to what is future...

“With regard to what is present: If it is unfactual, untrue, & unbeneficial, the Tathāgata does not declare it. If it is factual, true, but unbeneficial, the Tathāgata does not declare it. If it is factual, true, & beneficial, the Tathāgata has a sense of the proper time for giving the answer to that question.” — *DN 29 [§69, §156]*

Ven. Sāriputta anticipates cross-questioning of the teaching by sincere, intelligent people:

§ 80. Ven. Sāriputta said, “Friends, in foreign lands there are wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives—for the people there are wise & discriminating—who will question a monk: ‘What is your teacher’s doctrine? What does he teach?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire.’

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives... who will question you further, ‘And your teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for what?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications. Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’ [§38]

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives... who will question you further, ‘And seeing what danger does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for form... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications? Seeing what danger does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘When one is not free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for form, then from any change & alteration in that form, there arises sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair. When one is not free from passion... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications... When one is not free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for consciousness, then from any change & alteration in that consciousness, there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair. Seeing this danger, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications. Seeing this danger our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives... who will question you further, ‘And seeing what benefit does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for form... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications? Seeing what benefit does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘When one is free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for form, then with any change & alteration in that form, there does not arise any sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, or despair. When one is free from passion... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications... When one is free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for consciousness, then with any change & alteration in that consciousness, there does not arise any sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, or despair. Seeing this benefit, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form... for feeling... for perception... for fabrications. Seeing this benefit our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’

“Friends, if one who entered & remained in unskillful qualities were to have a pleasant abiding in the here & now—unthreatened, undespairing, unfeverish—and on the breakup of the body, after death, could expect a good destination, then the Blessed One would not advocate the abandoning of unskillful qualities. But because one who enters & remains in unskillful qualities has a stressful abiding in the here & now—threatened, despairing, & feverish—and on the breakup of the body, after death, can expect a bad destination, that is why the

Blessed One advocates the abandoning of unskillful qualities.

“If one who entered & remained in skillful qualities were to have a stressful abiding in the here & now—threatened, despairing, & feverish—and on the breakup of the body, after death, could expect a bad destination, then the Blessed One would not advocate entering into skillful qualities. But because one who enters & remains in skillful qualities has a pleasant abiding in the here & now—unthreatened, undespairing, unfeverish—and on the breakup of the body, after death, can expect a good destination, that is why the Blessed One advocates entering into skillful qualities.” — SN 22:2 [See also §20; §26]

Awakening through cross-questioning the speaker:

§ 81. On one occasion many elder monks were staying at Kosambi in Ghosita’s park. And at that time Ven. Khemaka was staying at the Jujube Tree park, diseased, in pain, severely ill. Then in the late afternoon the elder monks left their seclusion and addressed Ven. Dāsaka, (saying,) “Come, friend Dāsaka. Go to the monk Khemaka and on arrival say to him, ‘The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, “We hope you are getting better, friend. We hope you are comfortable. We hope that your pains are lessening and not increasing. We hope that there are signs of their lessening, and not of their increasing.”’”

Replying, “As you say, friends,” to the elder monks, Ven. Dāsaka went to Ven. Khemaka and on arrival said to him, “The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, ‘We hope you are getting better, friend. We hope you are comfortable. We hope that your pains are lessening and not increasing. We hope that there are signs of their lessening, and not of their increasing.’”

“I am not getting better, my friend. I am not comfortable. My extreme pains are increasing, not lessening. There are signs of their increasing, and not of their lessening.”

Then Ven. Dāsaka went to the elder monks and, on arrival, said to them, “The monk Khemaka has said to me, ‘I am not getting better, my friend. I am not comfortable. My extreme pains are increasing, not lessening. There are signs of their increasing, and not of their lessening.’”

“Come, friend Dāsaka. Go to the monk Khemaka and on arrival say to him, ‘The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, “Concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate: Do you assume anything with regard to these five clinging-aggregates to be self or belonging to self?”’”

Replying, “As you say, friends,” to the elder monks, Ven. Dāsaka went to Ven. Khemaka and on arrival said to him, “The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, ‘Concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate: Do you assume anything with regard to these five clinging-aggregates to be self or belonging to self?’”

“Friend, concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, there is nothing I assume to be self or belonging to self.”

Then Ven. Dāsaka went to the elder monks and on arrival said to them, “The monk Khemaka has said to me, ‘Friend, concerning these five clinging-

aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, there is nothing I assume to be self or belonging to self.”

“Come, friend Dāsaka. Go to the monk Khemaka and on arrival say to him, ‘The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, “Concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: If, with regard to these five clinging-aggregates, Ven. Khemaka assumes nothing to be self or belonging to self, then Ven. Khemaka is an arahant, devoid of fermentations.”’”

Replying, “As you say, friends,” to the elder monks, Ven. Dāsaka went to Ven. Khemaka and on arrival said to him, “The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, ‘Concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: If, with regard to these five clinging-aggregates, Ven. Khemaka assumes nothing to be self or belonging to self, then Ven. Khemaka is an arahant, devoid of fermentations.”’”

“Friend, concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, there is nothing I assume to be self or belonging to self, and yet I am not an arahant. With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, ‘I am’ has not been overcome, although I don’t assume that ‘I am this.’”

Then Ven. Dāsaka went to the elder monks and on arrival said to them, “The monk Khemaka has said to me, ‘Friend, concerning these five clinging-aggregates described by the Blessed One—i.e., the form clinging-aggregate... the feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness clinging-aggregate: With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, there is nothing I assume to be self or belonging to self, and yet I am not an arahant. With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, “I am” has not been overcome, although I don’t assume that “I am this.”’”

“Come, friend Dāsaka. Go to the monk Khemaka and on arrival say to him, ‘The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, “Friend Khemaka, this ‘I am’ of which you speak: What do you say ‘I am’? Do you say, ‘I am form,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than form’? Do you say, ‘I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than consciousness’? This ‘I am’ of which you speak: What do you say ‘I am’?”’”

Replying, “As you say, friends,” to the elder monks, Ven. Dāsaka went to Ven. Khemaka and on arrival said to him, “The elders, friend Khemaka, say to you, ‘Friend Khemaka, this “I am” of which you speak: What do you say “I am”? Do you say, “I am form,” or do you say, “I am something other than form”? Do you say, “I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,” or do you say, “I am something other than consciousness”? This “I am” of which you speak: What do you say “I am”?’”

“Enough, friend Dāsaka. What is accomplished by this running back & forth? Fetch me my staff. I will go to the elder monks myself.”

Then Ven. Khemaka, leaning on his staff, went to the elder monks and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with them. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the elder monks said to him, “Friend Khemaka, this ‘I am’ of which you speak: What do you say ‘I am’? Do you say, ‘I am form,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than form’? Do you say, ‘I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than consciousness’? This ‘I

am' of which you speak: What do you say 'I am'?"

"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.'

"Friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, he still has with regard to the five clinging-aggregates a lingering residual 'I am' conceit, an 'I am' desire, an 'I am' obsession. But at a later time he keeps focusing on the phenomena of arising & passing away with regard to the five clinging-aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling.... Such is perception.... Such are fabrications.... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' As he keeps focusing on the arising & passing away of these five clinging-aggregates, the lingering residual 'I am' conceit, 'I am' desire, 'I am' obsession is fully obliterated.

"Just like a cloth, dirty & stained: Its owners give it over to a washerman, who scrubs it with salt earth or lye or cow-dung and then rinses it in clear water. Now even though the cloth is clean & spotless, it still has a lingering residual scent of salt earth or lye or cow-dung. The washerman gives it to the owners, the owners put it away in a scent-infused wicker hamper, and its lingering residual scent of salt earth, lye, or cow-dung is fully obliterated.

"In the same way, friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, he still has with regard to the five clinging-aggregates a lingering residual 'I am' conceit, an 'I am' desire, an 'I am' obsession. But at a later time he keeps focusing on the phenomena of arising & passing away with regard to the five clinging-aggregates: 'Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling.... Such is perception.... Such are fabrications.... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.' As he keeps focusing on the arising & passing away of these five clinging-aggregates, the lingering residual 'I am' conceit, 'I am' desire, 'I am' obsession is fully obliterated."

When this was said, the elder monks said to Ven. Khemaka, "We didn't cross-examine Ven. Khemaka with the purpose of troubling him, just that [we thought] Ven. Khemaka is capable of declaring the Blessed One's message, teaching it, describing it, setting it forth, revealing it, explaining it, making it plain—just as he has in fact declared it, taught it, described it, set it forth, revealed it, explained it, made it plain."

That is what Ven. Khemaka said. Gratified, the elder monks delighted in his words. And while this explanation was being given, the minds of sixty-some monks, through no clinging, were released from fermentations—as was Ven. Khemaka's. — SN 22:89

The Buddha's final invitation to cross-question him:

§ 82. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "If even a single monk has any doubt or indecision concerning the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, the path or the practice, ask. Don't later regret that 'The Teacher was face-to-face with us, but we didn't bring ourselves to cross-question him in his presence.'"

When this was said, the monks were silent.

A second time, the Blessed One said, "If even a single monk has any doubt or indecision concerning the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, the path or the practice, ask. Don't later regret that 'The Teacher was face-to-face with us, but we didn't bring ourselves to cross-question him in his presence.'"

A second time, the monks were silent.

A third time, the Blessed One said, "If even a single monk has any doubt or indecision concerning the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, the path or the practice, ask. Don't later regret that 'The Teacher was face-to-face with us, but we didn't bring ourselves to cross-question him in his presence.'"

A third time, the monks were silent.

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Now, if it's out of respect for the Teacher that you don't ask, let a friend inform a friend."

When this was said, the monks were silent.

Then Ven. Ananda said to the Blessed One, "It's amazing, lord. It's astounding. I'm confident that in this community of monks there isn't even a single monk who has any doubt or indecision concerning the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, the path or the practice."

"You, Ananda, speak out of confidence, while there is knowledge in the Tathāgata that in this community of monks there isn't even a single monk who has any doubt or indecision concerning the Buddha, Dhamma, or Saṅgha, the path or the practice. Of these 500 monks, the most backward is a stream-winner, not destined for the planes of deprivation, headed to self-awakening for sure."

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Now then, monks, I exhort you: All fabrications are subject to decay. Bring about completion by being heedful."

Those were the Tathāgata's last words. — *DN 16*

THE BUDDHA QUESTIONS OTHER SECTARIANS

§ 83. "Monks, there are these three sectarian guilds that—when interrogated, pressed, & rebuked by wise people—even though they may explain otherwise, remain stuck in [a doctrine of] inaction. Which three?"

"There are contemplatives & brahmans who hold this teaching, hold this view: 'Whatever a person experiences—pleasant, painful, or neither pleasant nor painful—is all caused by what was done in the past.' There are contemplatives & brahmans who hold this teaching, hold this view: 'Whatever a person experiences—pleasant, painful, or neither pleasant nor painful—is all caused by a supreme being's act of creation.' There are contemplatives & brahmans who hold this teaching, hold this view: 'Whatever a person experiences—pleasant, painful, or neither pleasant nor painful—is all without cause & without condition.'

"Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that... 'Whatever a person experiences... is all caused by what was done in the past,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that... whatever a person experiences... is all caused by what was done in the past?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings

because of what was done in the past. A person is a thief... unchaste... a liar... a divisive speaker... a coarse speaker... an idle chatterer... covetous... one bearing thoughts of ill will... a holder of wrong views because of what was done in the past.' When one falls back on what was done in the past as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], 'This should be done. This shouldn't be done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative. This was my first righteous refutation of those contemplatives & brahmans who hold to such teachings, such views.

"Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that... 'Whatever a person experiences... is all caused by a supreme being's act of creation,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that... whatever a person experiences... is all caused by a supreme being's act of creation?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings because of a supreme being's act of creation. A person is a thief... unchaste... a liar... a divisive speaker... a coarse speaker... an idle chatterer... covetous... one bearing thoughts of ill will... a holder of wrong views because of a supreme being's act of creation.' When one falls back on a supreme being's act of creation as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], 'This should be done. This shouldn't be done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative. This was my second righteous refutation of those contemplatives & brahmans who hold to such teachings, such views.

"Having approached the contemplatives & brahmans who hold that... 'Whatever a person experiences... is all without cause, without condition,' I said to them: 'Is it true that you hold that... whatever a person experiences... is all without cause, without condition?' Thus asked by me, they admitted, 'Yes.' Then I said to them, 'Then in that case, a person is a killer of living beings without cause, without condition. A person is a thief... unchaste... a liar... a divisive speaker... a coarse speaker... an idle chatterer... covetous... one bearing thoughts of ill will... a holder of wrong views without cause, without condition.' When one falls back on lack of cause and lack of condition as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], 'This should be done. This shouldn't be done.' When one can't pin down as a truth or reality what should & shouldn't be done, one dwells bewildered & unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative. This was my third righteous refutation of those contemplatives & brahmans who hold to such teachings, such views.

"These are the three sectarian guilds that—when interrogated, pressed, & rebuked by wise people—even though they may explain otherwise, remain stuck in inaction." — *AN* 3:62

§ 84. The Blessed One said, "Monks, there are some contemplatives & brahmans who teach in this way, who have this view: 'Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted.' Such is the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas.

“Going to Nigaṇṭhas who teach in this way, I have asked them, ‘Is it true, friend Nigaṇṭhas, that you teach in this way, that you have this view: “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted”?’”

“Having been asked this by me, the Nigaṇṭhas admitted it, ‘Yes.’”

“So I said to them, ‘But, friends, do you know that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist?’”

“No, friend.’”

“And do you know that you did evil actions in the past, and that you did not not do them?’”

“No, friend.’”

“And do you know that you did such-and-such evil actions in the past?’”

“No, friend.’”

“And do you know that so-and-so much stress has been exhausted, or that so-and-so much stress remains to be exhausted, or that with the exhaustion of so-and-so much stress all stress will be exhausted?’”

“No, friend.’”

“But do you know what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now?’”

“No, friend.’”

“So, friends, it seems that you don’t know that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist... you don’t know what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now. That being the case, it is not proper for you to assert that, “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted.”

“If, however, you knew that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist; if you knew that you did evil actions in the past, and that you did not not do them; if you knew that you did such-and-such evil actions in the past; you don’t know that so-and-so much stress has been exhausted, or that so-and-so much stress remains to be exhausted, or that with the exhaustion of so-and-so much stress all stress will be exhausted; if you knew what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now, then—that being the case—it would be proper for you to assert that, “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted.”

“Friend Nigaṇṭhas, it’s as if a man were shot with an arrow thickly smeared with poison. As a result of being shot with the arrow, he would feel fierce, sharp, racking pains. His friends & companions, kinsmen & relatives would provide him with a surgeon. The surgeon would cut around the opening of the wound with a knife. As a result of the surgeon’s cutting around the opening of the wound with a knife, the man would feel fierce, sharp, racking pains. The surgeon

would probe for the arrow with a probe. As a result of the surgeon's probing for the arrow with a probe, the man would feel fierce, sharp, racking pains. The surgeon would then pull out the arrow. As a result of the surgeon's pulling out the arrow, the man would feel fierce, sharp, racking pains. The surgeon would then apply a burning medicine to the mouth of the wound. As a result of the surgeon's applying a burning medicine to the mouth of the wound, the man would feel fierce, sharp, racking pains. But then at a later time, when the wound had healed and was covered with skin, he would be well & happy, free, master of himself, able to go wherever he liked. The thought would occur to him, "Before, I was shot with an arrow thickly smeared with poison. As a result of being shot with the arrow, I felt fierce, sharp, racking pains. My friends & companions, kinsmen & relatives provided me with a surgeon.... The surgeon cut around the opening of the wound with a knife... probed for the arrow with a probe... pulled out the arrow... applied a burning medicine to the mouth of the wound. As a result of his applying a burning medicine to the mouth of the wound, I felt fierce, sharp, racking pains. But now that the wound is healed and covered with skin, I am well & happy, free, master of myself, able to go wherever I like."

"In the same way, friend Nigaṇṭhas, if you knew that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist... if you knew what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now, then—that being the case—it would be proper for you to assert that, "Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted." But because you do not know that you existed in the past... you do not know what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now, then—that being the case—it is not proper for you to assert that, "Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted."

"When this was said, the Nigaṇṭhas said to me, 'Friend, the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta [the leader of the Nigaṇṭhas] is all-knowing, all-seeing, and claims total knowledge & vision thus: "Whether I am walking or standing, sleeping or awake, knowledge & vision are continuously & continually established in me." He has told us, "Nigaṇṭhas, there are evil actions that you have done in the past. Exhaust them with these painful austerities. When in the present you are restrained in body, restrained in speech, and restrained in mind, that is the non-doing of evil action for the future. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted." We approve of that [teaching], prefer it, and are gratified by it.'

"When this was said, I said to the Nigaṇṭhas, 'Friend Nigaṇṭhas, 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. That being the case, what kind of conviction do you have for your teacher with regard to the past? What kind of liking? What kind of unbroken tradition? What kind of reasoning by analogy? What kind of agreement through pondering views?' But when I said this, I did not see that the Nigaṇṭhas had any legitimate defense of their teaching.

"So I asked them further, 'Friend Nigaṇṭhas, what do you think? When there is fierce striving, fierce exertion, do you feel fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment? And when there is no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, do you feel no fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment?'

"Yes, friend....'

"... Then it's not proper for you to assert that, "Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted."

"If it were the case that when there was fierce striving, fierce exertion, you felt fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment; and when there was no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, you still felt fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment, then—that being the case—it would be proper for you to assert that, "Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted." But because when there is fierce striving, fierce exertion, you feel fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment; and when there was no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, you feel no fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment, then—that being the case—it is not proper for you to assert that, "Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—all is caused by what was done in the past. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted.'" But when I said this, I did not see that the Nigaṇṭhas had any legitimate defense of their teaching.

"So I asked them further, 'Friend Nigaṇṭhas, what do you think? Can an action to be experienced in the here-&-now be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced in the future life?'

"No, friend.'

"Can an action to be experienced in the future life be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced in the here-&-now?'

"No, friend.'

"What do you think? Can an action to be experienced as pleasure be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced as pain?'

"No, friend.'

"Can an action to be experienced as pain be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced as pleasure?'

"No, friend.'

"What do you think? Can an action ripe to be experienced be turned, through

striving & exertion, into an action not ripe to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“Can an action not ripe to be experienced be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action ripe to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“What do you think? Can an action greatly to be experienced be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action barely to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“Can an action barely to be experienced be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action greatly to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“What do you think? Can an action to be experienced be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action not to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“Can an action not to be experienced be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced?’

“No, friend.’

“So, friends, it seems that an action to be experienced in the here-&-now cannot be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced in the future life. An action to be experienced in the future life cannot be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced in the here-&-now.... An action to be experienced cannot be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action not to be experienced. An action not to be experienced cannot be turned, through striving & exertion, into an action to be experienced. That being the case, the striving of the Nigaṇṭhas is fruitless, their exertion is fruitless.’

“Such is the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas. And, such being the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, ten legitimate deductions can be drawn that give grounds for censuring them.

“[1] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on what was done in the past, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have done bad things in the past, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[2] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on the creative act of a supreme god, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have been created by an evil supreme god, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[3] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on sheer luck, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have evil luck, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[4] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on birth, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have had an evil birth, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[5] If beings experience pleasure & pain based efforts in the here-&-now, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have evil efforts in the here-&-now, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[6] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on what was done in the past, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[7] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on the creative act of a supreme god, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[8] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on sheer luck, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[9] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on birth, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[10] If beings experience pleasure & pain based efforts in the here-&-now, the

Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“Such is the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, monks. And, such being the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, these ten legitimate deductions can be drawn that give grounds for censuring them.” — *MN 101*

§ 85. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Headman, how does Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teach the Dhamma to his disciples?”

“Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples in this way, lord: ‘All those who take life are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell. All those who steal.... All those who indulge in sexual misconduct.... All those who tell lies are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell. Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth].’ That’s how Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples.”

“If it’s true that ‘Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],’ then no one is destined for a state of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta’s words. What do you think, headman? If a man is one who takes life, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, which time is more: the time he spends taking life or the time he spends not taking life?”

“If a man is one who takes life, lord, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, the time he spends taking life is less, and the time he spends not taking life is certainly more. If it’s true that ‘Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],’ then no one is destined for a state of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta’s words.”

“What do you think, headman? If a man is one who steals... engages in sexual misconduct... tells lies, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, which time is more: the time he spends telling lies or the time he spends not telling lies?”

“If a man is one who tells lies, lord, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, the time he spends telling lies is less, and the time he spends not telling lies is certainly more. If it’s true that ‘Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led [to a state of rebirth],’ then no one is destined for a state of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta’s words.”

“There’s the case, headman, where a certain teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: ‘All those who take life are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell. All those who steal.... All those who engage in sexual misconduct.... All those who tell lies are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell.’ A disciple has faith in that teacher, and the thought occurs to him, ‘Our teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: “All those who take life are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell.” There are living beings that I have killed. I too am destined for a state of deprivation, am destined for hell.’ He fastens onto that view. If he doesn’t abandon that doctrine, doesn’t abandon that state of mind, doesn’t relinquish that view, then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell.

“[The thought occurs to him,] ‘Our teacher holds this doctrine, holds this view: ‘All those who steal.... All those who engage in sexual misconduct.... All those who tell lies are destined for a state of deprivation, are destined for hell.’ There are lies that I have told. I too am destined for a state of deprivation, am destined for hell.’ He fastens onto that view. If he doesn’t abandon that doctrine, doesn’t

abandon that state of mind, doesn't relinquish that view, then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell.

"There is the case, headman, where a Tathāgata appears in the world, worthy and rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear knowing & conduct, well-gone, a knower of the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of those to be tamed, teacher of human & divine beings, awakened, blessed. He, in various ways, criticizes & censures the taking of life, and says, 'Abstain from taking life.' He criticizes & censures stealing, and says, 'Abstain from stealing.' He criticizes & censures engaging in sexual misconduct, and says, 'Abstain from engaging in sexual misconduct.' He criticizes & censures the telling of lies, and says, 'Abstain from the telling of lies.'

"A disciple has faith in that teacher and reflects: 'The Blessed One in a variety of ways criticizes & censures the taking of life, and says, "Abstain from taking life." There are living beings that I have killed, to a greater or lesser extent. That was not right. That was not good. But if I become remorseful for that reason, that evil deed of mine will not be undone.' So, reflecting thus, he abandons right then the taking of life, and in the future refrains from taking life. This is how there comes to be the abandoning of that evil deed. This is how there comes to be the transcending of that evil deed.

"[He reflects:] 'The Blessed One in a variety of ways criticizes & censures stealing... engaging in sexual misconduct... the telling of lies, and says, "Abstain from the telling of lies." There are lies that I have told, to a greater or lesser extent. That was not right. That was not good. But if I become remorseful for that reason, that evil deed of mine will not be undone.' So, reflecting thus, he abandons right then the telling of lies, and in the future refrains from telling lies. This is how there comes to be the abandoning of that evil deed. This is how there comes to be the transcending of that evil deed.

"Having abandoned the taking of life, he refrains from taking life. Having abandoned stealing, he refrains from stealing. Having abandoned sexual misconduct, he refrains from sexual misconduct. Having abandoned lies, he refrains from lies. Having abandoned divisive speech, he refrains from divisive speech. Having abandoned coarse speech, he refrains from coarse speech. Having abandoned idle chatter, he refrains from idle chatter. Having abandoned covetousness, he becomes uncovetous. Having abandoned ill will & anger, he becomes one with a mind of no ill will. Having abandoned wrong views, he becomes one who has right views.

"That disciple of the noble ones, headman—thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful—keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with good will, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with good will—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. Just as a strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way, when the awareness-release through good will is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there.

"That disciple of the noble ones—thus devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unbewildered, alert, mindful—keeps pervading the first direction with an awareness imbued with compassion... empathetic joy... equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with equanimity—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. Just as a strong conch-trumpet blower can notify the four directions without any difficulty, in the same way,

when the awareness-release through equanimity is thus developed, thus pursued, any deed done to a limited extent no longer remains there, no longer stays there.” — *SN 42:8*

CLARIFYING THE QUESTION

§ 86. [King Pasenadi:] “But, lord, are there devas?”
 [The Buddha:] “But why do you ask, great king, ‘But, lord, are there devas?’”
 “Whether the devas come back to this life, lord, or whether they don’t.”
 “Those devas who are afflicted come back to this life, whereas those devas who are unafflicted don’t come back to this life.” — *MN 90*

§ 87. [Saṅgārava Bhāradvāja:] “Well, Master Gotama, are there devas?”
 “It’s immediately known to me, Bhāradvāja, that there are devas.”
 “Why, when asked if there are devas, did Master Gotama say, ‘It’s immediately known to me, Bhāradvāja, that there are devas.’ When that’s the case, isn’t that empty and false?”
 “When, on being asked if there are devas, one would say, ‘There are devas’ or one would say, ‘They are immediately known, they are known to me,’ then a knowledgeable person would come to the categorical conclusion that there are devas.”
 “But why didn’t Master Gotama answer me the first way?”
 “It’s assumed as something high in the world that there are devas.” — *MN 100*

§ 88. “Now, lord, is perception a person’s self, or is perception one thing and self another?”
 “What self do you posit, Poṭṭhapāda?”
 “I posit a gross self, possessed of form, made up of the four great existents [earth, water, fire, and wind], feeding on physical food.”
 “Then, Poṭṭhapāda, your self would be gross, possessed of form, made up of the four great existents, feeding on physical food. That being the case, then for you perception would be one thing and self another. And it’s through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another: even as there remains this gross self—possessed of form, made up of the four great existents, and feeding on food—one perception arises for that person as another perception passes away. It’s through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another.”
 “Then, lord, I posit a mind-made self complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.”
 “Then, Poṭṭhapāda, your self would be mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties. That being the case, then for you perception would be one thing and self another. And it’s through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another: even as there remains this mind-made self—complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties—one perception arises for that person as another perception passes away. It’s through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another.”
 “Then, lord, I posit a formless self made of perception.”
 “Then, Poṭṭhapāda, your self would be formless and made of perception. That being the case, then for you perception would be one thing and self

another. And it's through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another: even as there remains this formless self made of perception, one perception arises for that person as another perception passes away. It's through this line of reasoning that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another."

"Is it possible for me to know, lord, whether perception is a person's self or if perception is one thing and self another?"

"Potthapāda —having other views, other practices, other satisfactions, other aims, other teachers—it's hard for you to know whether perception is a person's self or if perception is one thing and self another." — DN 9

EXTRACTING DEFINITIONS

§ 89. Then Moliya Sivaka the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "'The Dhamma is visible here-&-now. The Dhamma is visible here-&-now.' Thus it is said. To what extent, lord, is the Dhamma visible here-&-now, timeless, inviting all to come & see, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves?"

"Very well then, Sivaka, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? There being greed present within you, do you discern, 'There is greed present within me'? And there being no greed present within you, do you discern, 'There is no greed present within me'?"

"Yes, lord."

"Sivaka, the fact that, there being greed present within you, you discern, 'There is greed present within me'; and, there being no greed present within you, you discern, 'There is no greed present within me': It is in this way that the Dhamma is visible here-&-now, timeless, inviting all to come & see, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves.

"What do you think? There being aversion present within you, do you discern, 'There is aversion present within me'? And there being no aversion present within you, do you discern, 'There is no aversion present within me'?"

"Yes, lord."

"Sivaka, the fact that, there being aversion present within you, you discern, 'There is aversion present within me'; and, there being no aversion present within you, you discern, 'There is no aversion present within me': It is in this way that the Dhamma is visible here-&-now, timeless, inviting all to come & see, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves.

"What do you think? There being delusion present within you, do you discern, 'There is delusion present within me'? And there being no delusion present within you, do you discern, 'There is no delusion present within me'?"

"Yes, lord."

"Sivaka, the fact that, there being delusion present within you, you discern, 'There is delusion present within me'; and, there being no delusion present within you, you discern, 'There is no delusion present within me': It is in this way that the Dhamma is visible here-&-now, timeless, inviting all to come & see, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves." — AN 6:47

[In AN 6:48, a certain brahman asks the Buddha the same question, and he responds in a similar manner, although instead of using the examples of greed, aversion, and delusion, he uses the examples of passion, aversion, delusion, bodily corrupt behavior, verbal corrupt behavior, and mental corrupt behavior.]

§ 90. [Ven. Ānanda:] “This word, ‘becoming, becoming’—to what extent is there becoming?”

[The Buddha:] “If there were no kamma ripening in the sensuality-property, would sensuality-becoming be discerned?”

[Ven. Ānanda:] “No, lord.”

The Buddha: “Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a lower property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

“If there were no kamma ripening in the form-property, would form-becoming be discerned?”

[Ven. Ānanda:] “No, lord.”

[The Buddha:] “Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a middling property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

“If there were no kamma ripening in the formless-property, would formless-becoming be discerned?”

[Ven. Ānanda:] “No, lord.”

[The Buddha:] “Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a refined property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. This is how there is becoming.” — AN 3:77

§ 91. I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Ānanda was staying in Kosambi at Ghosita’s park. Then a certain householder, a disciple of the Fatalists (Ajivakas), went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to Ven. Ānanda, “Among us, sir, whose Dhamma is well-taught? Who has practiced well in this world? Who in the world is well-gone?”

“Very well then, householder, I will cross-question you on this matter.

Answer as you see fit. Now, what do you think? Those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—is their Dhamma well-taught or not? Or how does this strike you?”

“Sir, those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—their Dhamma is well-taught. That’s how it strikes me.”

“And what do you think, householder? Those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—have they practiced well in this world or not? Or how does this strike you?”

“Sir, those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—they have practiced well in this world. That’s how it strikes me.”

“And what do you think, householder? Those whose passion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising; those whose aversion is abandoned... whose delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: are they, in this world, well-gone or not? Or how does this strike you?”

“Sir, those whose passion... aversion... delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: they, in this world, are well-gone. That’s how it strikes me.”

“In this way, householder, you have answered yourself: ‘Those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—their Dhamma is well-taught. Those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion—they have practiced well in this world. Those whose passion... aversion... delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: they, in this world, are well-gone.’”

“How amazing, sir! How astounding! There is neither extolling of one’s own Dhamma nor deprecation of another’s, but just the teaching of the Dhamma in its proper sphere, speaking to the point without mentioning oneself.” — *AN 3:73*

HYPOTHETICALS: ON THE BUDDHA AS TEACHER

§ 92. Then Pāṭaliya the headman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “I have heard that, ‘Gotama the contemplative knows magic.’ I trust that those who say that, ‘Gotama the contemplative knows magic’ do not slander the Blessed One with what is unfactual, that they declare the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, and that the legitimate implications of what they say give no grounds for criticism. For I would not want to slander the Blessed One.”

“Headman, those who say that, ‘Gotama the contemplative knows magic’ do not slander me with what is unfactual, they declare the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, and the legitimate implications of what they say give no grounds for criticism.”

“Then, good sir, we did not believe the plain truth from those contemplatives & brahmans who said, ‘Gotama the contemplative knows magic.’ Then the Blessed One is actually a magician!”

“But, headman, is one who says that ‘I know magic’ also saying that ‘I am a magician’?”

“That’s just how it is, Blessed One! That’s just how it is, One Well-gone!”

“Very well then, headman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Do you know the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down?”

“Yes, lord...”

“What do you think? What is the job of the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down?”

“They arrest any thieves among the Koliyans, and they carry messages for the Koliyans. That is the job of the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down.”

“What do you think? Do you know whether the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down are virtuous or unvirtuous?”

“I know that the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down are unvirtuous and of evil character. They are among those in the world who are unvirtuous and of evil character.”

“If someone were to say, ‘Pāṭaliya the headman knows that the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down are unvirtuous and of evil character; and Pāṭaliya the headman too is unvirtuous and of evil character,’

would someone speaking thus be speaking rightly?"

"No, lord. The Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down are one thing, and I am something else. Their character is one thing, and mine is something else."

"Then, headman, if you get (to say) that Pāṭaliya the headman knows that the Koliyan hirelings who wear their top-knots hanging down are unvirtuous and of evil character, yet he is not unvirtuous and of evil character, then why can't the Tathāgata get (to say) that the Tathāgata knows magic, yet the Tathāgata is not a magician?"

"I know magic, headman. I know the (kammic) result of magic, and I know how a magician practices so that—at the breakup of the body, after death—he appears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell." — SN 42:13

§ 93. "Venerable sir, when wise nobles or brahmans, householders or contemplatives, having formulated questions, come to the Tathāgata and ask him, does this line of reasoning appear to his awareness beforehand—'If those who approach me ask this, I—thus asked—will answer in this way'—or does the Tathāgata come up with the answer on the spot?"

"Very well then, prince, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Are you skilled in the parts of a chariot?"

"Yes, venerable sir. I am skilled in the parts of a chariot."

"And what do you think? When people come & ask you, 'What is the name of this part of the chariot?' does this line of reasoning appear to your awareness beforehand—'If those who approach me ask this, I—thus asked—will answer in this way'—or do you come up with the answer on the spot?"

"Venerable sir, I am renowned for being skilled in the parts of a chariot. All the parts of a chariot are well-known to me. I come up with the answer on the spot."

"In the same way, prince, when wise nobles or brahmans, householders or contemplatives, having formulated questions, come to the Tathāgata and ask him, he comes up with the answer on the spot. Why is that? Because the property of the Dhamma is thoroughly penetrated by the Tathāgata. From his thorough penetration of the property of the Dhamma, he comes up with the answer on the spot."¹ — MN 58

NOTE: 1. This statement is apparently related to the more abstract statement in AN 4:24 [§46], that what the Tathāgata knows is not "established" in him. In other words, he does not define himself or the awakened mind in terms of knowledge or views [§47], even concerning the Dhamma, although the knowledge that led to his awakening and that is born from his awakening [§79] is fully available for him to draw on at any time.

§ 94. When this was said, Gaṇaka Moggallāna the brahman said to the Blessed One, "When Master Gotama's disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by him, do they all attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, or do some of them not?"

"Brahman, when my disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by me, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don't."

"What is the reason, what is the cause—when unbinding is there, and the path leading to unbinding is there, and Master Gotama is there as the guide—that when Master Gotama's disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by him, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don't?"

"Very well then, brahman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Are you skilled in the road leading to Rājagaha?"

“Yes, sir, I am skilled in the road leading to Rājagaha.”

“Now, what do you think? There’s the case where a man would come, wanting to go to Rājagaha. Having come to you, he would say, ‘I want to go to Rājagaha. Tell me the way to Rājagaha.’ You would tell him, ‘Well, my good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Go along it for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a village named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a town named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, lovely forests, lovely meadows, lovely ponds.’ Having been thus exhorted & instructed by you, he would take a wrong road and arrive out west.

“Then a second man would come, wanting to go to Rājagaha. Having come to you, he would say, ‘I want to go to Rājagaha. Tell me the way to Rājagaha.’ You would tell him, ‘Well, my good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Go along it for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a village named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see a town named such-&-such. Go along for a while. Having gone along for a while, you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, lovely forests, lovely meadows, lovely ponds. Having been thus exhorted & instructed by you, he would arrive safely at Rājagaha. Now, what is the reason, what is the cause—when Rājagaha is there, and the road leading to Rājagaha is there, and you are there as the guide—that when they are thus exhorted & instructed by you, the first man takes the wrong road and arrives out west, while the second man arrives safely at Rājagaha?”

“What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I’m the one who shows the way.”

“In the same way, brahman—when unbinding is there, and the path leading to unbinding is there, and I am there as the guide—when my disciples are thus exhorted & instructed by me, some attain unbinding, the absolute conclusion, and some don’t. What can I do about that, brahman? The Tathāgata is the one who shows the way.” — MN 107

§ 95. As he was sitting there, Asibandhakaputta the headman said to the Blessed One, “Lord, doesn’t the Blessed One dwell with sympathy for the benefit of all beings?”

“Yes, headman, the Tathāgata dwells with sympathy for the benefit of all beings.”

“Then why is it that the Blessed One teaches the Dhamma with full attentiveness to some, and not with full attentiveness to others?”

“Very well then, headman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? There is the case where a farming householder has three fields: one excellent field, one middling, and one poor—sandy, salty, with bad soil. What do you think? If that farming householder wanted to sow seed, where would he sow the seed first: in the excellent field, in the middling field, or in the poor field—sandy, salty, with bad soil?”

“If that farming householder wanted to sow seed, he would sow the seed first in the excellent field. Having sown it there, he would sow it in the middling field. Having sown it there, he might not sow it in the poor field—sandy, salty, with bad soil—or he might. Why is that? It would at least go toward cattle fodder.”

“In the same way, headman, like the excellent field are the monks & nuns to me. I teach them the Dhamma that is admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end. I expound to them the holy life both in its particulars & in its meaning, entirely complete, surpassingly pure. Why is that? Because they live with me as their island, with me as their cave, with me as their

shelter, with me as their refuge.

“Like the middling field are the male & female lay followers to me. I teach them the Dhamma that is admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end. I expound to them the holy life both in its particulars & in its meaning, entirely complete, surpassingly pure. Why is that? Because they live with me as their island, with me as their cave, with me as their shelter, with me as their refuge.

“Like the poor field—sandy, salty, with bad soil—are the followers of other sects to me: contemplatives, brahmans, & wanderers. I teach them the Dhamma that is admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end. I expound to them the holy life both in its particulars & in its meaning, entirely complete, surpassingly pure. Why is that? (I think,) ‘Perhaps they might understand even one sentence. That will be for their long-term benefit & happiness.’

“Suppose, headman, that a man had three waterpots: one uncracked that doesn’t let water seep out, one uncracked that lets water seep out, and one cracked that lets water seep out. What do you think? If that man wanted to store water, in which pot would he store it first...?”

“... He would store it first in the uncracked waterpot that doesn’t let water seep out. Having stored it there, he would store it in the uncracked waterpot that lets water seep out. Having stored it there, he would store it in the cracked waterpot that lets water seep out. Why is that? At least it could go toward washing dishes.”

“In the same way, headman, like the uncracked waterpot that doesn’t let water seep out are the monks & nuns to me.... Like the uncracked waterpot that lets water seep out are the male & female lay followers to me.... Like the cracked waterpot that lets water seep out are the followers of other sects to me: contemplatives, brahmans, & wanderers. I teach them the Dhamma that is admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end. I expound to them the holy life both in its particulars & in its meaning, entirely complete, surpassingly pure. Why is that? (I think,) ‘Perhaps they might understand even one sentence. That will be for their long-term benefit & happiness.’” — SN 42:7

§ 96. When this was said, Prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One, “Lord, when a monk gains a Tathāgata to discipline him, how long does it take for him to 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?”

“Very well then, prince, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Are you skilled in the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad?”

“Yes, lord, I am skilled in the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad.”

“And what do you think? There is the case where a man comes, (thinking,) ‘Prince Bodhi knows the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad. I will study the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under him.’ But if he were without conviction, he would not achieve what could be achieved by one with conviction. If he had many illnesses, he would not achieve what could be achieved by one of few illnesses. If he were full of guile & deceitful, he would not achieve what could be achieved by one without guile or deceit. If he were lazy, he would not achieve what could be achieved by one with aroused persistence. If he were undiscerning, he would not achieve what could be achieved by one who was discerning. What do you think, prince? Would that man be able to train in

the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under you?"

"Even a man with only one of those qualities, lord, would not be able to train in the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under me—to say nothing of one with all five."

"What do you think, prince? There is the case where a man comes, (thinking,) 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad. I will study the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under him.' And if he were to have conviction, he would achieve what could be achieved by one with conviction. If he had few illnesses, he would achieve what could be achieved by one of few illnesses. If he were without guile or deceit, he would achieve what could be achieved by one without guile or deceit. If he had aroused persistence, he would achieve what could be achieved by one with aroused persistence. If he were discerning, he would achieve what could be achieved by one who was discerning. What do you think, prince? Would that man be able to train in the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under you?"

"Even a man with only one of those qualities, lord, would be able to train in the art of riding an elephant & wielding a goad under me—to say nothing of one with all five."

"In the same way, prince, there are these five factors for exertion. Which five?"

"There is the case where a monk has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's awakening: '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 divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.'

"He is free from illness & discomfort, endowed with good digestion—not too cold, not too hot, of moderate strength—fit for exertion.

"He is free from guile & deceit. He declares himself to the Teacher or to his wise friends in the holy life in line with what he actually is.

"He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful qualities and taking on skillful qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities.

"He is discerning, endowed with discernment leading to the arising of the goal—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

"These are the five factors for exertion.

"When a monk endowed with these five qualities gains a Tathāgata to discipline him, he would 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 in seven years.

"Let alone seven years. When a monk endowed with these five qualities gains a Tathāgata to discipline him, he would 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 in six years... five years... four years... three years... two years... one year... seven months... six months... five months... four months... three months... two months... one month... half a month... seven days... six days... five days... four days... three days... two days... one day.

"Let alone one day. When a monk endowed with these five qualities gains a Tathāgata to discipline him and is instructed in the evening, he will attain distinction by morning; instructed in the morning, he will attain distinction by evening." — MN 85

§ 97. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Nālandā in Pāvārika's Mango Grove. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman went to the Blessed One

and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “The brahmans of the Western lands, lord—those who carry water pots, wear garlands of water plants, purify with water, & worship fire—can take [the spirit of] a dead person, lift it out, instruct it, & send it to heaven. But the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, can arrange it so that all the world, at the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world.”

“Very well then, headman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? There is the case where a man is one who takes life, steals, engages in sexual misconduct; is a liar, one who speaks divisive speech, coarse speech, & idle chatter; is covetous, bears thoughts of ill will, & holds to wrong views. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘May this man, at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world!’ What do you think? Would that man—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world?”

“No, lord.”

“Suppose a man were to throw a large boulder into a deep lake of water, and a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘Rise up, O boulder! Come floating up, O boulder! Come float to the shore, O boulder!’ What do you think? Would that boulder—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—rise up, come floating up, or come float to the shore?”

“No, lord.”

“So it is with any man who takes life, steals, indulges in sexual misconduct; is a liar, one who speaks divisive speech, coarse speech, & idle chatter; is covetous, bears thoughts of ill will, & holds to wrong views. Even though a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart—(saying,) ‘May this man, at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world!’—still, at the breakup of the body, after death, he would reappear in destitution, a bad destination, the lower realms, hell.

“Now, what do you think? There is the case where a man is one who refrains from taking life, from stealing, & from indulging in sexual misconduct; he refrains from lying, from divisive speech, from coarse speech, & from idle chatter; he is not covetous, bears no thoughts of ill will, & holds to right view. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘May this man, at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in destitution, a bad destination, the lower realms, hell!’ What do you think? Would that man—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in destitution, a bad destination, the lower realms, hell?”

“No, lord.”

“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 come up. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘Sink, O ghee/oil! Submerge, O ghee/oil! Go down, O ghee/oil!’ What do you think? Would that ghee/oil, because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people sink, submerge, or go

down?"

"No, lord."

"So it is with any man who refrains from taking life, from stealing, & from indulging in sexual misconduct; refrains from lying, from divisive speech, from coarse speech, & from idle chatter; is not covetous, bears no thoughts of ill will, & holds to right view. Even though a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart—(saying,) 'May this man, at the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in a destitution, a bad destination, the lower realms, hell!'—still, at the breakup of the body, after death, he would reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world."

When this was said, Asibandhakaputta the headman said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the Community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life." — *SN 42:6*

§ 98. Then Kesin the horse trainer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "You, Kesin, are a trained man, a trainer of tamable horses. How do you train a tamable horse?"

"Lord, I train a tamable horse (sometimes) with gentleness, (sometimes) with harshness, (sometimes) with both gentleness & harshness."

"And if a tamable horse doesn't submit either to a gentle training or to a harsh training or to a gentle & harsh training, Kesin, what do you do?"

"If a tamable horse doesn't submit either to a gentle training or to a harsh training or to a gentle and harsh training, lord, then I kill it. Why is that? (I think,) 'Don't let this be a disgrace to my lineage of teachers.' But the Blessed One, lord, is the unexcelled trainer of tamable people. How do you train a tamable person?"

"Kessin, I train a tamable person (sometimes) with gentleness, (sometimes) with harshness, (sometimes) with both gentleness & harshness."

"In using gentleness, (I teach,) 'Such is good bodily conduct. Such is the result of good bodily conduct. Such is good verbal conduct. Such is the result of good verbal conduct. Such is good mental conduct. Such is the result of good mental conduct. Such are the devas. Such are human beings.'

"In using harshness, (I teach,) 'Such is bodily misconduct. Such is the result of bodily misconduct. Such is verbal misconduct. Such is the result of verbal misconduct. Such is mental misconduct. Such is the result of mental misconduct. Such is hell. Such is the animal womb. Such the realm of the hungry shades.'

"In using gentleness & harshness, (I teach,) 'Such is good bodily conduct. Such is the result of good bodily conduct. Such is bodily misconduct. Such is the result of bodily misconduct. Such is good verbal conduct. Such is the result of good verbal conduct. Such is verbal misconduct. Such is the result of verbal misconduct. Such is good mental conduct. Such is the result of good mental conduct. Such is mental misconduct. Such is the result of mental misconduct. Such are the devas. Such are human beings. Such is hell. Such is the animal womb. Such the realm of the hungry shades.'"

"And if a tamable person doesn't submit either to a gentle training or to a harsh training or to a gentle & harsh training, what do you do?"

“If a tamable person doesn’t submit either to a gentle training or to a harsh training or to a gentle & harsh training, then I kill him, Kesin.”

“But it’s not proper for our Blessed One to take life! And yet the Blessed One just said, ‘I kill him, Kesin.’”

“It is true, Kesin, that it’s not proper for a Tathāgata to take life. But if a tamable person doesn’t submit either to a gentle training or to a harsh training or to a gentle & harsh training, then the Tathāgata doesn’t regard him as being worth speaking to or admonishing. His knowledgeable fellows in the celibate life don’t regard him as being worth speaking to or admonishing. This is what it means to be totally destroyed in the Dhamma & Vinaya: when the Tathāgata doesn’t regard one as being worth speaking to or admonishing, and one’s knowledgeable fellows in the celibate life don’t regard one as being worth speaking to or admonishing.”

“Yes, lord, wouldn’t one be totally destroyed if the Tathāgata doesn’t regard one as being worth speaking to or admonishing, and one’s knowledgeable fellows in the celibate life don’t regard one as being worth speaking to or admonishing.” — AN 4:111

HYPOTHETICALS: KINGS, PRINCES, & GENERALS

§ 99. [King Ajātasattu:] “So, venerable sir, I ask the Blessed One as well: There are these common craftsmen: elephant-trainers, horse-trainers, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, camp marshals, supply corps officers, high royal officers, commandos, military heroes, armor-clad warriors, leather-clad warriors, domestic slaves, confectioners, barbers, bath attendants, cooks, garland-makers, laundry men, weavers, basket-makers, potters, calculators, accountants, & any other craftsmen of a similar sort. They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here & now. They give happiness & pleasure to themselves, to their parents, wives, & children, to their friends & colleagues. They put in place an excellent presentation of offerings to contemplatives & brahmans, leading to heaven, resulting in happiness, conducive to a heavenly rebirth. Is it possible, venerable sir, to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?”

“Yes, it is, great king. But first, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. Suppose there were a man of yours: your slave, your workman, rising in the morning before you, going to bed in the evening only after you, doing whatever you order, always acting to please you, speaking politely to you, always watching for the look on your face. The thought would occur to him, ‘Isn’t it amazing? Isn’t it astounding?—the destination, the results, of meritorious deeds. For this King Ajātasattu is a human being, and I too am a human being, yet King Ajātasattu enjoys himself supplied & replete with the five strings of sensuality—like a deity, as it were—while I am his slave, his workman... always watching for the look on his face. I too should do meritorious deeds. What if I were to shave off my hair & beard, put on the ochre robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

“So after some time he shaves off his hair & beard, puts on the ochre robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having thus gone forth he lives restrained in body, speech, & mind, content with the simplest food & shelter, delighting in solitude. Then suppose one of your men were to inform you: ‘You should know, your majesty, that that man of yours—your slave, your workman... always watching for the look on your face... has gone forth from the household life into homelessness... content with the simplest food & shelter, delighting in solitude.’ Would you, thus informed, say, ‘Bring that man back to

me. Make him again be my slave, my workman... always watching for the look on my face!?"

"Not at all, venerable sir. Rather, I am the one who should bow down to him, rise up out of respect for him, invite him to a seat, invite him to accept gifts of robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick. And I would provide him with righteous safety, defense, & protection."

"So what do you think, great king? With that being the case, is there a visible fruit of the contemplative life, or is there not?"

"Yes, venerable sir. With that being the case, there certainly is a visible fruit of the contemplative life."

"This, great king, is the first fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now, that I point out to you."

"But is it possible, venerable sir, to point out yet another fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?"

"Yes, it is, great king. But first, with regard to that, I will ask you a counter-question. Answer however you please. Suppose there were a man of yours: a farmer, a householder, a taxpayer swelling the royal treasury. The thought would occur to him, 'Isn't it amazing? Isn't it astounding?—the destination, the results, of meritorious deeds! For this King Ajātasattu is a human being, and I too am a human being, yet King Ajātasattu enjoys himself supplied & replete with the five strings of sensuality—like a deity, as it were—while I am a farmer, a householder, a taxpayer swelling the royal treasury. I too should do meritorious deeds. What if I were to shave off my hair & beard, put on the ochre robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?"

"So after some time he abandons his mass of wealth, large or small; leaves his circle of relatives, large or small; shaves off his hair & beard, puts on the ochre robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having thus gone forth he lives restrained in body, speech, & mind, content with the simplest food & shelter, delighting in solitude. Then suppose one of your men were to inform you: 'You should know, your majesty, that that man of yours—the farmer, the householder, the taxpayer swelling the royal treasury... has gone forth from the household life into homelessness... content with the simplest food & shelter, delighting in solitude.' Would you, thus informed, say, 'Bring that man back to me. Make him again be a farmer, a householder, a taxpayer swelling the royal treasury!'"

"Not at all, venerable sir. Rather, I am the one who should bow down to him, rise up out of respect for him, invite him to a seat, invite him to accept gifts of robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for the sick. And I would provide him with righteous safety, defense, & protection."

"So what do you think, great king? With that being the case, is there a visible fruit of the contemplative life, or is there not?"

"Yes, venerable sir. With that being the case, there certainly is a visible fruit of the contemplative life."

"This, great king, is the second fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now, that I point out to you."

"But is it possible, venerable sir, to point out yet another fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?"

"Yes, it is, great king. [And here the Buddha gives his full answer to the king's question, describing the path of practice in great detail, telling the fruit of jhāna practice, the knowledges based on jhāna, and culminating in the fruit of total release.] — DN 2

§ 100. [Ven. Raṭṭhapāla is speaking to King Koravya:] "Great king, there are

four Dhamma summaries stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard them, I went forth from the home life into homelessness. Which four?

“The world is swept away. It does not endure’: This is the first Dhamma summary stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard it, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.

“The world is without shelter, without protector’: This is the second Dhamma summary....

“The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind’: This is the third Dhamma summary....

“The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving’: This is the fourth Dhamma summary....

“These, great king, are the four Dhamma summaries stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard them, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“Master Raṭṭhapāla, you say, ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ Now how is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? When you were twenty or twenty-five years old—an expert elephant rider, an expert horseman, an expert charioteer, an expert archer, an expert swordsman—were you strong in arm & strong in thigh, fit, & seasoned in warfare?”

“Yes, Master Raṭṭhapāla, when I was twenty or twenty-five years old... I was strong in arm & strong in thigh, fit, & seasoned in warfare. It was as if I had supernormal power. I do not see anyone who was my equal in strength.”

“And what do you think, great king? Are you even now as strong in arm & strong in thigh, as fit, & as seasoned in warfare?”

“Not at all, Master Raṭṭhapāla. I’m now a feeble old man, aged, advanced in years, having come to the last stage of life, 80 years old. Sometimes, thinking, ‘I will place my foot here,’ I place it somewhere else.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said, ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“It’s amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ For the world really is swept away, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It does not endure.

“Now, in this royal court there are elephant troops & cavalry & chariot troops & infantry that will serve to defend us from dangers. And yet you say, ‘The world is without shelter, without protector.’ How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? Do you have any recurring illness?”

“Yes, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I have a recurring wind-illness. Sometimes my friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, stand around me saying, ‘This time King Koravya will die. This time King Koravya will die.’”

“And what do you think, great king? Can you say to your friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, ‘My friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen are commanded: all of you who are present, share out this pain so that I may feel less pain’? Or do you have to feel that pain all alone?”

“Oh, no, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I can’t say to my friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, ‘All of you who are present, share out this pain so that I may feel less pain.’ I have to feel that pain all alone.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows &

sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said, 'The world is without shelter, without protector.' Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness."

"It's amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It's astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: 'The world is without shelter, without protector.' For the world really is without shelter, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It is without protector.

"Now, in this royal court there is a great deal of gold & silver stashed away underground & in attic vaults. And yet you say, 'The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.' How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?"

"What do you think, great king? As you now enjoy yourself endowed & replete with the five strings of sensuality, can you say, 'Even in the afterlife I will enjoy myself in the same way, endowed & replete with the very same five strings of sensuality'? Or will this wealth fall to others, while you pass on in accordance with your kamma?"

"Oh, no, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I can't say, 'Even in the afterlife I will enjoy myself in the same way, endowed & replete with the very same five strings of sensuality.' This wealth will fall to others, while I pass on in accordance with my kamma."

"It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said, 'The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.' Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness."

"It's amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It's astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: 'The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.' For the world really is without ownership, Master Raṭṭhapāla. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.

"Now, Master Raṭṭhapāla, you say, 'The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.' How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?"

"What do you think, great king? Do you now rule over the prosperous country of Kuru?"

"That is so, Master Raṭṭhapāla. I rule over the prosperous country of Kuru."

"What do you think, great king? Suppose a trustworthy, reliable man of yours were to come to you from the east. On arrival he would say to you, 'May it please your majesty to know, I have come from the east. There I saw a great country, powerful & prosperous, populous & crowded with people. Plenty are the elephant troops there, plenty the cavalry troops, chariot troops, & infantry troops. Plenty is the ivory-work there, plenty the gold & silver, both worked & unworked. Plenty are the women for the taking. It is possible, with the forces you now have, to conquer it. Conquer it, great king!' What would you do?"

"Having conquered it, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I would rule over it."

"Now, what do you think, great king? Suppose a trustworthy, reliable man of yours were to come to you from the west... the north... the south... the other side of the ocean. On arrival he would say to you, 'May it please your majesty to know, I have come from the other side of the ocean. There I saw a great country, powerful & prosperous, populous & crowded with people. Plenty are the elephant troops there, plenty the cavalry troops, chariot troops, & infantry troops. Plenty is the ivory-work there, plenty the gold & silver, both worked & unworked. Plenty are the women for the taking. It is possible, with the forces you now have, to conquer it. Conquer it, great king!' What would you do?"

"Having conquered it, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I would rule over it too."

"It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows &

sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said, 'The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.' Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness."

"It's amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It's astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: 'The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.' For the world really is insufficient, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It's insatiable, a slave to craving." — MN 84

§ 101. Then King Pasenadi Kosala addressed Queen Mallikā, "Mallikā, your contemplative, Gotama, has said this: 'Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.'"

"If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that's the way it is."

"No matter what Gotama the contemplative says, Mallikā endorses it: 'If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that's the way it is.' Just as, no matter what his teacher says, a pupil endorses it: 'That's the way it is, teacher. That's the way it is.' In the same way, no matter what Gotama the contemplative says, Mallikā endorses it: 'If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that's the way it is.' Go away, Mallikā! Out of my sight!"

Then Queen Mallikā called for the brahman Nālijaṅgha: "Come, brahman. Go to the Blessed One and, on arrival, showing reverence with your head to his feet in my name, ask whether he is free from illness & affliction, is carefree, strong, & living in comfort, saying: 'Queen Mallikā, lord, shows reverence with her head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.' And then say: 'Lord, did the Blessed One say that sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear?' Whatever the Blessed One says, remember it well and tell it to me. For Tathāgatas do not speak what is untrue."

"Yes, madam," the brahman Nālijaṅgha responded to Queen Mallikā. Going to the Blessed One, on arrival he exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, Queen Mallikā shows reverence with her head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort. And she says further: 'Lord, did the Blessed One say that sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear?'"

"That's the way it is, brahman. That's the way it is. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear. And it's through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear: Once in this same Sāvattī there was a woman whose mother died. Owing to her mother's death she went mad, out of her mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, 'Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?' It's through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.

"Once in this same Sāvattī there was a woman whose father died... whose brother died... whose sister died... whose son died... whose daughter died... whose husband died. Owing to his death she went mad, out of her mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, 'Have you seen my husband? Have you seen my husband?' It's through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.

“Once in this same Sāvatti there was a man whose mother died. Owing to her death he went mad, out of his mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, ‘Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?’ It’s through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.

“Once in this same Sāvatti there was a man whose father died... whose brother died... whose sister died... whose son died... whose daughter died... whose wife died. Owing to her death he went mad, out of his mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, ‘Have you seen my wife? Have you seen my wife?’ It’s through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.

“Once in this same Sāvatti there was a wife who went to her relatives’ home. Her relatives, having separated her from her husband, wanted to give her to another against her will. So she said to her husband, ‘These relatives of mine, having separated us, want to give me to another against my will,’ whereupon he cut her in two and slashed himself open, thinking, ‘Dead we will be together.’ It’s through this line of reasoning that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.”

Then the brahman Nālijaṅgha, delighting in & approving of the Blessed One’s words, got up from his seat and went to Queen Mallikā. On arrival, he told her all that had been said in his discussion with the Blessed One.

Then Queen Mallikā went to King Pasenadi Kosala and on arrival said to him, “What do you think, great king? Is Princess Vajirī dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, Princess Vajirī is dear to me.”

“And what do you think? Would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair arise in you from any change & aberration in Princess Vajirī?”

“Mallikā, any change & aberration in Princess Vajirī would mean an aberration of my very life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair not arise in me?”

“Great king, it was in connection with this that the Blessed One—the One who knows, the One who sees, worthy, & rightly self-awakened—said, ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.’”

“Now, what do you think, great king? Is the noble Queen Vāsabhā dear to you?... Is [your son] General Viḍūḍabha dear to you?... Am I dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, you are dear to me.”

“And what do you think? Would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair arise in you from any change & aberration in me?”

“Mallikā, any change & aberration in you would mean an aberration of my very life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair not arise in me?”

“Great king, it was in connection with this that the Blessed One—the One who knows, the One who sees, worthy, & rightly self-awakened—said, ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.’”

“Now, what do you think, great king? Are [your subjects] the Kāsis & Kosalans dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, the Kāsis & Kosalans are dear to me. It is through the might of the Kāsis & Kosalans that we use Kāsi sandalwood and wear garlands, scents, & ointments.”

“And what do you think? Would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, &

despair arise in you from any change & aberration in the Kāsis & Kosalans?"

"Mallikā, any change & aberration in the Kāsis & Kosalans would mean an aberration of my very life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair not arise in me?"

"Great king, it was in connection with this that the Blessed One—the One who knows, the One who sees, worthy, & rightly self-awakened—said, 'Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are born from one who is dear, come springing from one who is dear.'"

"It's amazing, Mallikā. It's astounding: how deeply the Blessed One sees, having pierced through, as it were, with discernment. Come Mallikā: Give me the ablution water." Then King Pasenadi Kosala, rising from his seat and arranging his upper robe over one shoulder, paid homage in the direction of the Blessed One with his hands palm-to-palm in front of his heart, and exclaimed three times:

"Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened!" — MN 87

§ 102. [King Pasenadi:] "Where, lord, should a gift be given?"

[The Buddha:] "Wherever the mind feels confidence, great king."

"But a gift given where, lord, bears great fruit?"

"This [question] is one thing, great king—'Where should a gift be given?'—while this—'A gift given where bears great fruit?'—is something else entirely. What is given to a virtuous person—rather than to an unvirtuous one—bears great fruit.

"Very well then, great king, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit.

"What do you think, great king? There is the case where you have a war at hand, a battle imminent. A noble-warrior youth would come along—untrained, unpracticed, undisciplined, undrilled, fearful, terrified, cowardly, quick to flee. Would you take him on? Would you have any use for a man like that?"

"No, lord, I wouldn't take him on. I wouldn't have any use for a man like that."

"Then a brahman youth... a merchant youth... a worker youth would come along—untrained, unpracticed, undisciplined, undrilled, fearful, terrified, cowardly, quick to flee. Would you take him on? Would you have any use for a man like that?"

"No, lord, I wouldn't take him on. I wouldn't have any use for a man like that."

"Now, what do you think, great king? There is the case where you have a war at hand, a battle imminent. A noble-warrior youth would come along—trained, practiced, disciplined, drilled, fearless, unterrified, not cowardly, not quick to flee. Would you take him on? Would you have any use for a man like that?"

"Yes, lord, I would take him on. I would have use for a man like that."

"Then a brahman youth... a merchant youth... a worker youth would come along—trained, practiced, disciplined, drilled, fearless, unterrified, not cowardly, not quick to flee. Would take you him on? Would you have any use for a man like that?"

"Yes, lord, I would take him on. I would have use for a man like that."

"In the same way, great king. When someone has gone forth from the home life into homelessness—no matter from what clan—and he has abandoned five factors and is endowed with five, what is given to him bears great fruit.

“And which five factors has he abandoned? He has abandoned sensual desire... ill will... sloth & drowsiness... restlessness & anxiety... uncertainty. These are the five factors he has abandoned. And with which five factors is he endowed? He is endowed with the aggregate of virtue of one beyond training... the aggregate of concentration of one beyond training... the aggregate of discernment of one beyond training... the aggregate of release of one beyond training... the aggregate of knowledge & vision of release of one beyond training. These are the five factors with which he is endowed.

“What is given to one who has abandoned five factors and is endowed with five factors in this way bears great fruit.” — *SN 3:24*

§ 103. [King Pasenadi:] “Lord, there are these four castes: noble warriors, brahmans, merchants, & workers. Is there any distinction or difference among them?”

[The Buddha:] “Great king, of these four castes, two—noble warriors & brahmans—are held to be foremost in terms of receiving homage, hospitality, salutation, & polite services.”

“I’m not asking about the present life, lord. I’m asking about the future life. Is there any distinction or difference among these four castes?”

“Great king, there are these five factors for exertion. Which five?”

“There is the case where a monk has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata’s awakening: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is pure 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 divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.’

“He is free from illness & discomfort, endowed with good digestion—not too cold, not too hot, of moderate strength—fit for exertion.

“He is neither fraudulent nor deceitful. He declares himself to the Teacher or to his wise friends in the holy life in line with what he actually is.

“He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful qualities and taking on skillful qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities.

“He is discerning, endowed with discernment leading to the arising of the goal—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

“These are the five factors for exertion.

“As for the four castes, great king: If they were endowed with these five factors for exertion, that would be for their long-term benefit & happiness.”

“Lord, if these four castes were endowed with these five factors for exertion, would there be any distinction or difference among them in that respect?”

“I tell you, great king: the difference among them would lie in the diversity of their exertion. Suppose that there were two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were well-tamed & well-trained; and two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were untamed & untrained. What do you think? Would the two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were well-tamed & well-trained acquire the habits of the tamed and reach the status of the tamed?”

“Yes, lord.”

“And would the two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were untamed & untrained acquire the habits of the tamed and reach the status of the tamed?”

“No, lord.”

“In the same way, great king, it is impossible that what could be attained by one who has confidence, who is free from illness, who is neither fraudulent nor

deceitful, whose persistence is aroused, and who is discerning could also be attained by one who is without conviction, who is sickly, fraudulent & deceitful, lazy, and dull.”

“What the Blessed One says, lord, seems reasonable. What the Blessed One says seems logical. But with regard to these four castes: if they were endowed with these five factors for exertion, and they had right exertion, would there be any distinction or difference among them in that respect?”

“I tell you, great king, that there would be no difference among them with regard to the release of one and the release of another. Suppose that a man, taking dry sala wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry saka [teak?] wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry mango wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry fig wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. Now, what do you think, great king? Among those fires generated from different kinds of wood, would there be any difference between the glow of one and the glow of another, the color of one and the color of another, the radiance of one and the radiance of another?”

“No, lord.”

“In the same way, great king, in the power that is kindled by persistence and generated by exertion, I say that there is no difference with regard to the release of one and the release of another.”

“What the Blessed One says, lord, seems reasonable. What the Blessed One says seems logical. But, lord, are there devas?”

“But why do you ask, great king, ‘But, lord, are there devas’?”

“Whether the devas come back to this life, lord, or whether they don’t.”

“Those devas who are afflicted come back to this life, whereas those devas who are unafflicted don’t come back to this life.”

When this was said, General Viḍūḍabha said to the Blessed One, “Lord, can the afflicted devas oust or expel the unafflicted devas from that place?”

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Ānanda, “This General Viḍūḍabha is the son of King Pasenadi Kosala, and I am the son of the Blessed One. Now is the time for the son to confer with the son.” So Ven. Ānanda turned to General Viḍūḍabha and said, “Very well then, general, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. Through the extent of land conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he exercises sovereign & independent kingship—is he able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not?”

“Sir, through the extent of land conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he exercises sovereign & independent kingship—he is able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not.”

“And what do you think, general? Through the extent of land not conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he does not exercise sovereign & independent kingship—is he able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not?”

“Sir, through the extent of land not conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he does not exercise sovereign & independent kingship—he is not able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not.”

“And what do you think, general? Have you heard of the Devas of the Thirty-three?”

“Yes, sir, I have heard of the Devas of the Thirty-three, as has King Pasenadi

Kosala.”

“And what do you think, general? Could King Pasenadi Kosala oust or expel the Devas of the Thirty-three from that place?”

“Sir, King Pasenadi Kosala can’t even see the Devas of the Thirty-three. How could he oust or expel them from that place?”

“In the same way, general, afflicted devas, who will come back to this life, can’t even see the unafflicted devas who don’t come back to this life. How could they oust or expel them from that place?”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One, “Lord, what is the name of this monk?”

“His name is Ānanda [Joy], great king.”

“What a joy he is! What a true joy! But, lord, are there Brahmās?”

“But why do you ask, ‘But, lord, are there Brahmās’?”

“Whether the Brahmās come back to this life, lord, or whether they don’t.”

“Those Brahmās who are afflicted come back to this life, great king, whereas those Brahmās who are unafflicted don’t come back to this life.” — *MN 90*

§ 104. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesālī, in the Great Forest, at the Gabled Pavilion. Then General Siha went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “Is it possible, lord, to point out a fruit of giving visible in the here & now?”

“It is possible, Siha. One who gives, who is a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large. And the fact that one who gives, who is a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large: this is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, good people, people of integrity, admire one who gives, who is a master of giving. And the fact that good people, people of integrity, admire one who gives, who is a master of giving: This too is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, the fine reputation of one who gives, who is a master of giving, is spread far & wide. And the fact that the fine reputation of one who gives, who is a master of giving, is spread far & wide: This too is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, when one who gives, who is a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives—he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment. And the fact that when one who gives, who is a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives—he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment: This too is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“Furthermore, at the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world. And the fact that at the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world: This is a fruit of giving in the next life.”

When this was said, General Siha said to the Blessed One: “As for the four fruits of giving visible in the here & now that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, it’s not the case that I go by conviction in the Blessed One with regard to them. I know them too. I am one who gives, a master of giving, dear & charming to people at large. I am one who gives, a master of giving; good people, people of integrity, admire me. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and my fine reputation is spread far & wide: ‘Siha is one who gives, a doer, a

supporter of the Saṅgha.’ I am one who gives, a master of giving, and when I approach any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmins, householders, or contemplatives—I do so confidently & without embarrassment.

“But when the Blessed One says to me, ‘At the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world,’ that I do not know. That is where I go by conviction in the Blessed One.”

“So it is, Siha. So it is. At the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world.”
— AN 5:34

§ 105. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesālī, in the Great Forest, at the Gabled Pavilion. Then General Siha went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “Is it possible, lord, to point out a fruit of giving visible in the here & now?”

“Very well then, Siha, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. There is the case where there are two men: one without conviction, stingy, miserly, abusive; and one of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support. What do you think? To which of the two would arahants, on feeling sympathy, first show sympathy: the man without conviction, stingy, miserly, abusive; or the man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support?”

“Why, lord, would arahants, when feeling sympathy, first show sympathy to the man without conviction, stingy, miserly, abusive? The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support: He’s the one who arahants, on feeling sympathy, would first show sympathy.”

“What do you think? Whom would arahants, when visiting, first visit?”

“...The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support...”

“What do you think? From whom would arahants, when receiving (gifts), first receive (gifts)?”

“...The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support...”

“What do you think? Whom would arahants, when teaching, first teach?”

“...The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support...”

“What do you think? Of whom would a fine reputation spread abroad?”

“...The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support...”

“What do you think? Who would approach any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmins, householders, or contemplatives—confidently & without embarrassment?”

“...The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support...”

“What do you think? Which of the two would—on the breakup of the body, after death—appear in a good destination, the heavenly world: the man without conviction, stingy, miserly, abusive; or the man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support?”

“Lord, why would the man the man without conviction, stingy, miserly, abusive—on the breakup of the body, after death—reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world? The man of conviction, a master of giving, one who delights in providing support: He’s the one who would—on the breakup of

the body, after death—appear in a good destination, the heavenly world.

“Lord, as for the six fruits of giving visible in the here & now that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, it’s not the case that I go by conviction in the Blessed One with regard to them. I know them too. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and arahants, when feeling sympathy, show sympathy to me first. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and arahants, when visiting, visit me first. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and arahants when receiving (gifts), receive (gifts) from me first. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and arahants when teaching, teach me first. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and my fine reputation is spread far & wide: ‘Siha is one who gives, a doer, a supporter of the Saṅgha.’ I am one who gives, a master of giving, and when I approach any assembly of people—noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives—I do so confidently & without embarrassment.

“But when the Blessed One says to me, ‘At the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world,’ that I do not know. That is where I go by conviction in the Blessed One.”

“So it is, Siha. So it is. At the breakup of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world.”
— AN 7:54

HYPOTHETICALS: BRAHMANS

§ 106. Then the thought occurred to Kāpadika, “When Gotama the contemplative meets my gaze with his, I will ask him a question.”

And so the Blessed One, encompassing Kāpadika’s awareness with his awareness, met his gaze. Kāpadika thought, “Gotama the contemplative has turned to me. Suppose I ask him a question.” So he said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, with regard to the ancient hymns of the brahmans—passed down through oral transmission & included in their canon—the brahmans have come to the categorical conclusion that ‘Only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ What does Master Gotama have to say with regard to this?”

“Tell me, Bhāradvāja, is there among the brahmans even one brahman who says, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And has there been among the brahmans even one teacher or teacher’s teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And among the brahman seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns—those ancient hymns, sung, repeated, & collected, which brahmans at present still sing, still chant, repeating what was said, repeating what was spoken—i.e., Atthaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Angīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāsettha, Kassapa & Bhagu: Was there even one of these who said, ‘This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“So then, Bhāradvāja, it seems that there isn’t among the brahmans even one brahman who says, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahmans even one teacher or teacher’s teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahman seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the

hymns... even one who said, ‘This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.’ Suppose there were a row of blind men, each holding on to the one in front of him: The first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. In the same way, the statement of the brahmins turns out to be a row of blind men, as it were: The first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. So what do you think, Bhāradvāja? This being the case, doesn’t the conviction of the brahmins turn out to be groundless?”

“It’s not only out of conviction, Master Gotama, that the brahmins honor this. They also honor it as unbroken tradition.”

“Bhāradvāja, first you went with conviction. Now you speak of unbroken tradition....” — MN 95

§ 107. Then the brahmin Saṅgārava went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “I say, Master Gotama. We brahmins perform sacrifices and get others to perform sacrifices. And whoever performs a sacrifice, whoever gets others to perform a sacrifice, they have all practiced a practice of merit—the business of a sacrifice—[that benefits] countless beings. But whoever, leaving his family, has gone forth from the home life into homelessness, and tames his single self, brings his single self into tune, brings his single self to unbinding: His practice of merit—this business of going forth—is one [that benefits] only one being.”

“Very well then, brahmin, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? There is the case where a Tathāgata appears in the world, an arahant, rightly-self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, one who has gone the good way, knower of the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of those who can be taught, teacher of human & divine beings, awakened, blessed. He says: ‘Here! This is the path, this is the practice that, having practiced, I make known the unexcelled coming ashore in the holy life, having directly known & realized it for myself. Come! You too practice in such a way that you will remain in the unexcelled coming ashore in the holy life, having directly known & realized it for yourselves.’ Thus the Teacher teaches the Dhamma, and others practice, for authenticity [*tathattā*]. And there are countless hundreds of them, countless thousands of them, countless hundreds of thousands of them. This being the case, is this practice of merit—this business of going-forth—one that benefits countless beings, or only one being?”

“This being the case, Master Gotama, this practice of merit—this business of going-forth—is one that benefits countless beings.” — AN 3:61

§ 108. As he was sitting to one side, Esukārin the brahmin said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, brahmins prescribe four levels of service: They prescribe the level of service to a brahmin; they prescribe the level of service to a noble warrior; they prescribe the level of service to a merchant; they prescribe the level of service to a worker. Now the level of service to a brahmin that the brahmins prescribe is this: A brahmin may serve a brahmin, or a noble warrior may serve a brahmin, or a merchant may serve a brahmin, or a worker may serve a brahmin. This, Master Gotama, is the level of service to a brahmin that the brahmins prescribe. Now the level of service to a noble warrior that the brahmins prescribe is this: A noble warrior may serve a noble warrior, or a merchant may serve a noble warrior, or a worker may serve a noble warrior. This, Master Gotama, is the level of service to a noble warrior that the brahmins prescribe. Now the level of service to a merchant that the brahmins prescribe is

this: A merchant may serve a merchant, or a worker may serve a merchant. This, Master Gotama, is the level of service to a merchant that the brahmins prescribe. Now the level of service to a worker that the brahmins prescribe is this: Only a worker may serve a worker, for who else would serve a worker? This, Master Gotama, is the level of service to a worker that the brahmins prescribe. These are the four levels of service that the brahmins prescribe. What does Master Gotama say to that?"

"But, brahman, has the entire world authorized the brahmins to prescribe these four levels of service?"

"No, Master Gotama."

"Brahman, it's as if a man were poor, penniless, & destitute, and people—against his will—were to tie a cut of meat on him, (saying,) 'You must eat this meat, my good man, and pay its price.' In the same way, brahmins—without the consent of those (other) contemplatives & brahmins—prescribe these four levels of service."

"I don't say, brahman, that all are fit to be served, but neither do I say that all are not fit to be served. For if, when serving someone, one were to become worse from that service, and not better, I say that that person is not fit to be served. But if when serving someone, one were to become better from that service, and not worse, I say that that person is fit to be served."

"If they were to ask a noble warrior, 'Which would you serve: one who, when serving him, you became worse from that service, and not better; or one who, when serving him, you became better from that service, and not worse?' The noble warrior, answering rightly, would say, 'I would not serve the one who, when serving him, I became worse from that service, and not better; but I would serve the one who, when serving him, I became better from that service, and not worse.'

"If they were to ask a brahman..."

"If they were to ask a merchant..."

"If they were to ask a worker, 'Which would you serve: one who, when serving him, you became worse from that service, and not better; or one who, when serving him, you became better from that service, and not worse?' The worker, answering rightly, would say, 'I would not serve the one who, when serving him, I became worse from that service, and not better; but I would serve the one who, when serving him, I became better from that service, and not worse.'

"I don't say that coming from a high-born family is better, but neither do I say that coming from a high-born family is worse. I don't say that having great beauty is better, but neither do I say that having great beauty is worse. I don't say that having great wealth is better, but neither do I say that having great wealth is worse. For there is the case where one from a high-born family is one who kills living beings, steals, engages in sexual misconduct, tells lies, speaks divisive speech, speaks coarse speech, engages in idle chatter, is covetous, bears thoughts of ill will, and has wrong views. Therefore I don't say that coming from a high-born family is better. And yet there is also the case where one from a high-born family is one who doesn't kill living beings, doesn't steal, doesn't engage in sexual misconduct, doesn't tell lies, doesn't speak divisive speech, doesn't speak coarse speech, doesn't engage in idle chatter, isn't covetous, doesn't bear thoughts of ill will, and doesn't have wrong views. Therefore I don't say that coming from a high-born family is worse.

[Similarly with people of great beauty or great wealth.]

"I don't say, brahman, that all are fit to be served, but neither do I say that all are not fit to be served. If when serving someone, one grows in conviction, grows in virtue, grows in learning, grows in generosity, grows in discernment, I

say that that person is fit to be served.

When this was said, Esukārin the brahman said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, the brahmins prescribe these four types of wealth: They prescribe the proper wealth of a brahman; they prescribe the proper wealth of a noble warrior; they prescribe the proper wealth of a merchant; and they prescribe the proper wealth of a worker. Now the proper wealth of a brahman that the brahmins prescribe is this: going for alms. And if a brahman despises his proper wealth—going for alms—he is one who neglects his duty, like a cowherd who steals. This, Master Gotama, is the proper wealth of a brahman that the brahmins prescribe. Now the proper wealth of a noble warrior that the brahmins prescribe is this: the bow & quiver. And if a noble warrior despises his proper wealth—the bow & quiver—he is one who neglects his duty, like a cowherd who steals. This, Master Gotama, is the proper wealth of a noble warrior that the brahmins prescribe. Now the proper wealth of a merchant that the brahmins prescribe is this: farming & keeping herds of cattle. And if a merchant despises his proper wealth—farming & keeping herds of cattle—he is one who neglects his duty, like a cowherd who steals. This, Master Gotama, is the proper wealth of a merchant that the brahmins prescribe. Now the proper wealth of a worker that the brahmins prescribe is this: the sickle & the carrying pole. And if a worker despises his proper wealth—the sickle & the carrying pole—he is one who neglects his duty, like a cowherd who steals. This, Master Gotama, is the proper wealth of a worker that the brahmins prescribe. These are the four types of wealth that the brahmins prescribe. What does Master Gotama say to that?”

“But, brahman, has the entire world authorized the brahmins to prescribe these four types of wealth?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Brahman, it’s as if a man were poor, penniless, & destitute, and people—against his will—were to tie a cut of meat on him, (saying,) ‘You must eat this meat, my good man, and pay its price.’ In the same way, brahmins—without the consent of those (other) contemplatives & brahmins—prescribe these four types of wealth.

“Brahman, I prescribe the noble, transcendent Dhamma as a person’s proper wealth.” — *MN 96*

HYPOTHETICALS: KAMMA

§ 109. Then the Blessed One said to Ven. MahāMoggallāna, “For what discussion are you now sitting here together? Or what was your discussion that was interrupted in mid-course?”

“Just now, lord, I said to Vappa the Sakyan, the disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, ‘In case there were a person who—from the fading of ignorance, and from the arising of clear knowing—were restrained in body, restrained in speech, & restrained in mind, do you see the possibility that, from any cause, fermentations to be experienced as pain would flow toward that person in a future life?’ When this was said, Vappa the Sakyan said to me, ‘I do see the possibility where there would be a case where—from the cause of a previously done evil action whose results have yet to ripen—fermentations to be experienced as pain would flow toward that person in a future life.’ This was my discussion with Vappa the Sakyan that was interrupted when the Blessed One appeared.”

Then the Blessed One said to Vappa the Sakyan, “Vappa, if you will allow of me what should be allowed, protest what should be protested, and further cross-

question me directly then & there on the meaning of any statement of mine that you don't understand—'How is this, lord? What is the meaning of this?'—then we could have a discussion here."

"Lord, I will admit what should be admitted, reject what should be rejected, and further cross-question the Blessed One directly on the meaning of any statement of his that I don't understand—'How is this, lord? What is the meaning of this?': Let us have a discussion here."

"Vappa, as for any fermentations causing trouble & vexation that arise in dependence on bodily activity: When one has abandoned bodily activity, those fermentations causing trouble & vexation do not exist for him. He does no new action [*kamma*], and as for old action, he destroys it with each contact: a wasting away that is visible here & now, timeless, inviting inspection, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves. Do you see the possibility that, from any cause, fermentations to be experienced as pain would flow toward that person in a future life?"

"No, lord."

"Vappa, as for any fermentations causing trouble & vexation that arise in dependence on verbal activity... any fermentations causing trouble & vexation that arise in dependence on mental activity... any fermentations causing trouble & vexation that arise in dependence on ignorance: From the fading of ignorance, and from the arising of clear knowing, those fermentations causing trouble & vexation do not exist for him. He does no new action, and as for old action, he destroys it with each contact: a wasting away that is visible here & now, timeless, inviting inspection, pertinent, to be known by the observant for themselves. Do you see the possibility that, from any cause, fermentations to be experienced as pain would flow toward that person in a future life?"

"No, lord."

"For a monk whose mind is thus rightly released, Vappa, six continual dwellings have been attained. When seeing a form via the eye, he is neither glad nor sad, but dwells equanimous, mindful, & alert.

"When hearing a sound via the ear....

"When smelling an aroma via the nose....

"When tasting a flavor via the tongue....

"When feeling a tactile sensation via the body....

"When cognizing an idea via the mind, he is neither glad nor sad, but dwells equanimous, mindful, & alert.

"When sensing a feeling limited to the body, he discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.' When sensing a feeling limited to life, he discerns that 'I am sensing a feeling limited to life.' He discerns that 'With the breakup of the body, after the termination of life, all that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here.'

"Vappa, suppose a shadow were to be discernable in dependence on a stump. A man would come along carrying a shovel. He would cut the stump at the base. Having cut it at the base, he would dig it out. Having dug it out, he would pull out the roots, down to the rootlets. Then he would cut the stump into pieces. Having cut it into pieces, he would split the pieces. Having split the pieces, he would make them into splinters. Having made them into splinters, he would dry them in the wind & sunlight. Having dried them in the wind & sunlight, he would burn them with fire. Having burned them with fire, he would make them into ashes. Having made them into ashes, he would winnow them before a high wind or dump them into a swift-flowing stream. Thus the shadow dependent on the stump would be destroyed at the root, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.

"In the same way, Vappa, for a monk whose mind is thus rightly released, six

continual dwellings have been attained. When seeing a form via the eye.... When hearing a sound via the ear.... When smelling an aroma via the nose.... When tasting a flavor via the tongue.... When feeling a tactile sensation via the body.... When cognizing an idea via the mind, he is neither glad nor sad, but dwells equanimous, mindful, & alert.

“When sensing a feeling limited to the body, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.’ When sensing a feeling limited to life, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to life.’ He discerns that ‘With the breakup of the body, after the termination of life, all that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here.’”

When this was said, Vappa the Sakyan, the disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, said to the Blessed One, “Lord, suppose that there were a man desiring profit who raised horses for sale but he didn’t gain any profit, and furthermore had his share of trouble & torment. In the same way, I—desiring profit—have attended to the foolish Nigaṇṭhas but I haven’t gained any profit, and furthermore have had my share of trouble & torment. From this day forward, lord, I take my faith in the foolish Nigaṇṭhas and winnow it before a high wind or dump it into a swift-flowing stream.” — *AN 4:195*

§ 110. “Monks, for anyone who says, ‘In whatever way a person makes kamma, that is how it is experienced,’ there is no living of the celibate life, there is no opportunity for the right ending of stress. But for anyone who says, ‘When a person makes kamma to be felt in such & such a way, that is how its result is experienced,’ there is the living of the celibate life, there is the opportunity for the right ending of stress.

“There is the case where a trifling evil act done by a certain individual takes him to hell. There is the case where the very same sort of trifling act done by another individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.

“Now, a trifling evil act done by what sort of individual takes him to hell? There is the case where a certain individual is undeveloped in the body [i.e., pleasant feelings can invade the mind and stay there—see MN 36], undeveloped in virtue, undeveloped in mind [i.e., painful feelings can invade the mind and stay there], undeveloped in discernment: restricted, small-hearted, dwelling with suffering. A trifling evil act done by this sort of individual takes him to hell.

“Now, a trifling evil act done by what sort of individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment? There is the case where a certain individual is developed in the body [i.e., pleasant feelings cannot invade the mind and stay there], developed in virtue, developed in mind [i.e., painful feelings cannot invade the mind and stay there], developed in discernment: unrestricted, large-hearted, dwelling with the unlimited. A trifling evil act done by this sort of individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.

“Suppose that a man were to drop a lump of salt into a small amount of water in a cup. What do you think? Would the water in the cup become salty because of the lump of salt, and unfit to drink?”

“Yes, lord....”

“Now suppose that a man were to drop a lump of salt into the River Ganges. What do you think? Would the water in the River Ganges become salty because of the lump of salt, and unfit to drink?”

“No, lord....”

“In the same way, there is the case where a trifling evil act done by one individual [the first] takes him to hell; and there is the case where the very same

sort of trifling act done by the other individual is experienced in the here & now, and for the most part barely appears for a moment.” — AN 3:101

§ 111. Now, on that occasion Ven. Sāriputta was wandering in the Southern Mountains with a large community of monks. Then a certain monk who had spent the Rains in Rājagaha went to the Southern Mountains, to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with Ven. Sāriputta and—after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies—sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta said to him, “I trust, friend, that the Blessed One is strong & free from illness?”

“The Blessed One, friend, is strong & free from illness.”

“I trust that the community of monks is strong & free from illness?”

“The community of monks is also strong & free from illness.”

“At the Taṇḍulapāla Gate is a brahman named Dhanañjāni. I trust that he is strong & free from illness?”

“Dhanañjāni the brahman is also strong & free from illness.”

“And I trust that Dhanañjāni the brahman is heedful?”

“From where would our Dhanañjāni the brahman get any heedfulness, friend? Relying on the king, he plunders brahmins & householders. Relying on the brahmins & householders, he plunders the king. His wife—a woman of faith, fetched from a family with faith—has died. He has fetched another wife—a woman of no faith—from a family with no faith.”

“What a bad thing to hear, my friend—when we hear that Dhanañjāni the brahman is heedless. Perhaps sooner or later we might meet with Dhanañjāni the brahman. Perhaps there might be some discussion.”

Then Ven. Sāriputta, having stayed in the Southern Mountains as long as he liked, wandered in the direction of Rājagaha. After wandering by stages, he arrived at Rājagaha. There he stayed near Rājagaha in the Squirrels’ Sanctuary.

Then early in the morning, Ven. Sāriputta put on his robes and, carrying his bowl & outer robe, went into Rājagaha for alms. And on that occasion Dhanañjāni the brahman was milking cows in a cow pen outside the city. Then Ven. Sāriputta, having gone for alms in Rājagaha, after his meal, on his way back from his almsround, went to Dhanañjāni the brahman. Dhanañjāni the brahman saw Ven. Sāriputta coming from afar. On seeing him, he went to him and said, “Drink some of this fresh milk, Master Sāriputta. It must be time for your meal.”

“That’s all right, brahman. I have finished my meal for today. My day’s abiding will be under that tree over there. You may come there.”

“As you say, master,” Dhanañjāni responded to Ven. Sāriputta. Then after he had finished his morning meal, he went to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with Ven. Sāriputta and—after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies—sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Sāriputta said to him, “I trust, Dhanañjāni, that you are heedful?”

“From where would we get any heedfulness, master?—when parents are to be supported, wife & children are to be supported, slaves & workers are to be supported, friend-&-companion duties are to be done for friends & companions, kinsmen-&-relative duties for kinsmen & relatives, guest duties for guests, departed-ancestor duties for departed ancestors, devatā duties for devatās, king duties for the king, and this body also has to be refreshed & nourished.”

“What do you think, Dhanañjāni? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of his mother & father, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, ‘I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of my mother & father. Don’t

[throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would his mother & father gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for our sake. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'"

"No, Master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"What do you think, Dhanañjāni? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of his wife & children.... his slaves & workers.... his friends & companions.... his kinsmen & relatives.... his guests.... his departed ancestors.... the devatās.... the king, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, 'I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of the king. Don't [throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would the king gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for our sake. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'"

"No, Master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"What do you think, Dhanañjāni? There is the case where a certain person, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, does what is unrighteous, does what is discordant. Then, because of his unrighteous, discordant behavior, hell-wardens drag him off to hell. Would he gain anything by saying, 'I did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing my body. Don't [throw] me into hell, hell-wardens!' Or would others gain anything for him by saying, 'He did what is unrighteous, what is discordant, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body. Don't [throw] him into hell, hell-wardens!'"

"No, Master Sāriputta. Even right while he was wailing, they'd cast him into hell."

"Now, what do you think, Dhanañjāni? Which is the better: one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant; or one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is righteous, what is concordant?"

"Master Sāriputta, the one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant, is not the better one. The one who, for the sake of his mother & father, would do what is righteous, what is concordant would be the better one there. Righteous behavior, concordant behavior, is better than unrighteous behavior, discordant behavior."

"Dhanañjāni, there are other activities—reasonable, righteous—by which one can support one's mother & father, and at the same time both not do evil and practice the practice of merit.

"What do you think, Dhanañjāni? Which is the better: one who, for the sake of his wife & children.... his slaves & workers.... his friends & companions.... his kinsmen & relatives.... his guests.... his departed ancestors.... the devatās.... the king... refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant; or one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is righteous, what is concordant?"

"Master Sāriputta, the one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is unrighteous, what is discordant, is not the better one. The one who, for the sake of refreshing & nourishing his body, would do what is righteous, what is concordant would be the better one there. Righteous behavior, concordant behavior, is better than unrighteous behavior, discordant behavior."

"Dhanañjāni, there are other activities—reasonable, righteous—by which one can refresh & nourish one's body, and at the same time both not do evil and practice the practice of merit."

Then Dhanañjāni the brahman, delighting & rejoicing in Ven. Sāriputta's words, got up from his seat and left. — *MN 97*

§ 112. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha, on Vulture Peak Mountain. And on that occasion Ven. Soṇa was staying near Rājagaha in the Cool Wood. Then, as Ven. Soṇa was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split & bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: "Of the Blessed One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be possible to enjoy wealth & make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?"

Then the Blessed One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Soṇa's awareness, disappeared from Vulture Peak Mountain—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—appeared in the Cool Wood right in front of Ven. Soṇa, and sat down on a prepared seat. Ven. Soṇa, after bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn't this train of thought appear to your awareness: 'Of the Blessed One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from fermentations.... What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, enjoy wealth, & make merit?'"

"Yes, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Soṇa? Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the vīna?"

"Yes, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your vīna were too taut, was your vīna in tune & playable?"

"No, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your vīna were too loose, was your vīna in tune & playable?"

"No, lord."

"And what do you think? When the strings of your vīna were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned to be right on pitch, was your vīna in tune & playable?"

"Yes, lord."

"In the same way, Soṇa, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the (five) faculties¹ (to that), and there pick up your theme."

"Yes, lord," Ven. Soṇa answered the Blessed One. Then, having given this exhortation to Ven. Soṇa, the Blessed One—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Vulture Peak Mountain.

So after that, Ven. Soṇa determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained 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. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And thus Ven. Soṇa became another one of the arahants. — *AN 6:55*

NOTE: 1. The five faculties are conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. These are explained in detail in SN 48:10. The Buddha's explanation here parallels the way a multi-stringed instrument is tuned. First one string is tuned, and then the others are tuned to it. The point is that the level of one's energy/persistence has to be the determining factor in how intense one's conviction, etc., can skillfully be developed at any particular time.

HYPOTHETICALS: UNDERSTANDING PLEASURE & PAIN

§ 113. Then Gandhabhaka the headman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "It would be good, lord, if the Blessed One would teach me the origination & ending of stress."

"Headman, if I were to teach you the origination & ending of stress with reference to the past, saying, 'Thus it was in the past,' you would be doubtful & confused. If I were to teach you the origination & ending of stress with reference to the future, saying, 'Thus it will be in the future,' you would be doubtful & confused. So instead, I—sitting right here—will teach you sitting right there the origination & ending of stress. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," Gandhabhaka the headman replied.

The Blessed One said, "Now, what do you think, headman? Are there any people in Uruvelakappa who, if they were murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would cause sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair to arise in you?"

"Yes, lord, there are people in Uruvelakappa who, if they were murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would cause sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair to arise in me."

"And are there any people in Uruvelakappa who, if they were murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would cause no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair to arise in you?"

"Yes, lord, there are people in Uruvelakappa who, if they were murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would cause no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair to arise in me."

"Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why the murder, imprisonment, fining, or censure of some of the people in Uruvelakappa would cause you sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair, whereas the murder, imprisonment, fining, or censure of others would cause you no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair?"

"Those people in Uruvelakappa whose murder, imprisonment, fining, or censure would cause me sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair are those for whom I feel desire & passion. Those people in Uruvelakappa whose murder, imprisonment, fining, or censure would cause me no sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair are those for whom I feel no desire or passion."

"Now, headman, from what you have realized, fathomed, attained right now in the present, without regard to time, you may draw an inference with regard to the past and future: 'Whatever stress, in arising, arose for me in the past, all of it had desire as its root, had desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress. And whatever stress, in arising, will arise for me in the future, all of it will have desire as the root, will have desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress.'"

"How amazing, lord! How astounding! How well the Blessed One has put it: 'Whatever stress, in arising, arose for me in the past, all of it had desire as its root, had desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress. And whatever stress, in arising, will arise for me in the future, all of it will have desire as the

root, will have desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress.’ I have a son, lord, named Cīravāsin, who lives far away from here. When I get up in the morning, I send a man, saying, ‘Go, learn how Cīravāsin is doing.’ And as long as that man has not returned, I am simply beside myself, (thinking), ‘Don’t let Cīravāsin be sick!’”

“Now, what do you think, headman? If Cīravāsin were to be murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would you feel sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair?”

“Lord, if my son Cīravāsin were to be murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, my very life would be altered. So how could I not feel sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair?”

“Thus, headman, by this line of reasoning it may be realized how stress, when arising, arises: All of it has desire as its root, has desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress.

“Now, what do you think, headman? Before you had seen or heard of Cīravāsin’s mother, did you feel desire, passion, or love for her?”

“No, lord.”

“And after you had seen or heard of Cīravāsin’s mother, did you feel desire, passion, or love for her?”

“Yes, lord.”

“What do you think? If Cīravāsin’s mother were to be murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, would you feel sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair?”

“Lord, if Cīravāsin’s mother were to be murdered or imprisoned or fined or censured, my very life would be altered. So how could I not feel sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair?”

“Thus, headman, by this line of reasoning it may be realized how stress, when arising, arises: All of it has desire as its root, has desire as its cause—for desire is the cause of stress.” — SN 42:11

§ 114. “Māgaṇḍiya, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, and thanks to the medicine he would be cured of his leprosy: well & happy, free, master of himself, going wherever he liked. Then suppose two strong men, having seized hold of him by both arms, were to drag him to a pit of glowing embers. What do you think? Wouldn’t he twist his body this way & that?”

“Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? The fire is painful to the touch, very hot & scorching.”

“Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Is the fire painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, only now, or was it also that way before?”

“Both now & before is it painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, Master Gotama. It’s just that when the man was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, his faculties were impaired, which was why, even though the fire was actually painful to the touch, he had the skewed perception of ‘pleasant.’”

“In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, sensual pleasures in the past were painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures in the future will be painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures at present are painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; but when beings are not free from passion for sensual pleasures—devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever—

their faculties are impaired, which is why, even though sensual pleasures are actually painful to the touch, they have the skewed perception of ‘pleasant.’

“Now suppose that there was a leper covered with sores & infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. The more he cauterized his body over the pit of glowing embers, the more disgusting, foul-smelling, & putrid the openings of his wounds would become, and yet he would feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction because of the itchiness of his wounds. In the same way, beings not free from passion for sensual pleasures—devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever—indulge in sensual pleasures. The more they indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their sensual craving increases and the more they burn with sensual fever, and yet they feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction dependent on the five strings of sensuality.

“Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Have you ever seen or heard of a king or king’s minister—enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever—who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Very good, Māgaṇḍiya. Neither have I ever seen or heard of a king or king’s minister—enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever—who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace. But whatever contemplatives or brahmans who have dwelt or will dwell or are dwelling free from thirst, their minds inwardly at peace, all have done so having realized—as it has come to be—the origination & disappearance, the allure, the danger, & the escape from sensual pleasures, having abandoned sensual craving and removed sensual fever.”

Then at that moment the Blessed One exclaimed,

“Freedom from disease:	the foremost good fortune.
Unbinding:	the foremost ease.
The eightfold:	the foremost of paths
	going to the
	deathless,
	safe.”

When this was said, Māgaṇḍiya the wanderer said to the Blessed One, “How amazing, Master Gotama! How astounding!—how this too is well-stated by Master Gotama: ‘Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease.’ We have also heard this said by earlier wanderers in the lineage of our teachers: ‘Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease.’ This agrees with that.”

“But as for what you have heard said by earlier wanderers in the lineage of your teachers, Māgaṇḍiya—‘Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease’—which freedom from disease is that, which unbinding?”

When this was said, Māgaṇḍiya the wanderer rubbed his own limbs with his hand. “This is that freedom from disease, Master Gotama,” he said. “This is that unbinding. For I am now free from disease, at ease, and nothing afflicts me.”

“Māgaṇḍiya, it’s just as if there were a man blind from birth who couldn’t see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... or pink objects; who couldn’t see even or uneven places, the stars, the sun, or the moon. He would hear a man with good eyesight saying, ‘How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean.’ He would go in search of something white. Then

another man would fool him with a grimy, oil-stained rag: 'Here, my good man, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean.' The blind man would take it and put it on. Having put it on, gratified, he would exclaim words of gratification, 'How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean.' Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? When that man blind from birth took the grimy, oil-stained rag and put it on; and, having put it on, gratified, exclaimed words of gratification, 'How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth—beautiful, spotless, & clean': Did he do so knowing & seeing, or out of faith in the man with good eyesight?"

"Of course he did it not knowing & not seeing, Master Gotama, but out of faith in the man with good eyesight."

"In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, the wanderers of other sects are blind & eyeless. Without knowing freedom from disease, without seeing unbinding, they still speak this verse:

Freedom from disease:	the foremost good fortune.
Unbinding:	the foremost ease.'

This verse was stated by earlier arahants, fully self-awakened:

Freedom from disease:	the foremost good fortune.
Unbinding:	the foremost ease.
The eightfold:	the foremost of paths going to the deathless, safe.'

"But now it has gradually become a verse of run-of-the-mill people.

"This body, Māgaṇḍiya, is a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction. And yet you say, with reference to this body, which is a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction: 'This is that freedom from disease, Master Gotama. This is that unbinding,' for you don't have the noble vision with which you would know freedom from disease and see unbinding."

"I'm convinced, Master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I would know freedom from disease, that I would see unbinding."

"Māgaṇḍiya, it's just as if there were a man blind from birth who couldn't see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... the sun or the moon. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, but in spite of the medicine his eyesight would not appear or grow clear. What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Would that doctor have nothing but his share of weariness & disappointment?"

"Yes, Master Gotama."

"In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma—'This is that freedom from disease; this is that unbinding'—and you on your part did not know freedom from disease or see unbinding, that would be wearisome for me; that would be troublesome for me."

"I'm convinced, Master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I would know freedom from disease, that I would see unbinding."

"Māgaṇḍiya, it's just as if there were a man blind from birth 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 put it on.

"Then his friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him: 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, Māgaṇḍiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma—‘This is that freedom from Disease; this is that unbinding’—and you on your part were to know 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 clinging-aggregates. 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 a requisite condition, there arises becoming... birth... aging-&-death... sorrow, lamentation, pains, distresses, & despairs. And thus is the origin of this entire mass of stress.’”

“I’m convinced, Master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I might rise up from this seat cured of my blindness.”

“In that case, Māgaṇḍiya, associate with men of integrity. When you associate with men of integrity, you will hear the true Dhamma. When you hear the true Dhamma, you will practice the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma. When you practice the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, you will know & see for yourself: ‘These things are diseases, cancers, arrows. And here is where diseases, cancers, & arrows cease without trace. With the cessation of my clinging comes the cessation of becoming. With the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. With the cessation of birth then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering & stress.’ — MN 75

§ 115. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Ālavī on a spread of leaves by a cattle track in a siṃsapā forest. Then Hatthaka of Ālavī, out roaming & rambling for exercise, saw the Blessed One sitting on a spread of leaves by the cattle track in the siṃsapā forest. On seeing him, he went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Lord, I hope the Blessed One has slept in ease.”

“Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one.”

“But cold, lord, is the winter night. The ‘Between-the-Eights’ [the coldest part of winter, between the eighth night of the waxing moon and the eighth night of the waning moon in February] is a time of snowfall. Hard is the ground trampled by cattle hooves. Thin is the spread of leaves. Sparse are the leaves in the trees. Thin are your ochre robes. And cold blows the Veramba wind. Yet still the Blessed One says, ‘Yes, young man. I have slept in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, I am one.’”

“Very well then, young man, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. Now, what do you think? Suppose a householder or householder’s son has a house with a gabled roof, plastered inside & out, draft-free, with close-fitting doors & windows shut against the wind. Inside he has a couch spread with a long-fleeced coverlet, a white wool coverlet, an embroidered coverlet, a rug of kadali-deer hide, with a canopy above, & red cushions on either side. And there a lamp would be burning, and his four wives,

with their many charms, would be attending to him. Would he sleep in ease, or not? Or how does this strike you?"

"Yes, lord, he would sleep in ease. Of those in the world who sleep in ease, he would be one."

"But what do you think, young man? Might there arise in that householder or householder's son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of passion so that—burned with those passion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?"

"Yes, lord."

"As for those passion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that passion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

"Now, what do you think, young man? Might there arise in that householder or householder's son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of aversion so that—burned with those aversion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?"

"Yes, lord."

"As for those aversion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that aversion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease.

"Now, what do you think, young man? Might there arise in that householder or householder's son any bodily fevers or fevers of mind born of delusion so that—burned with those delusion-born fevers—he would sleep miserably?"

"Yes, lord."

"As for those delusion-born fevers—burned with which the householder or householder's son would sleep miserably—that delusion has been abandoned by the Tathāgata, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Therefore he sleeps in ease." — AN 3:35

§ 116. [Some Nigaṇṭhas:] "'But, friend Gotama, it's not the case that pleasure is to be attained through pleasure. Pleasure is to be attained through pain. For if pleasure were to be attained through pleasure, then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha would attain pleasure, for he lives in greater pleasure than you, friend Gotama.'

"'Surely the venerable Nigaṇṭhas said that rashly and without reflecting... for instead, I should be asked, "Who lives in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or venerable Gotama?"'

"'Yes, friend Gotama, we said that rashly and without reflecting... but let that be. We now ask you, venerable Gotama: Who lives in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or venerable Gotama?'

"'Very well then, Nigaṇṭhas, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Can King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha—without moving his body, without uttering a word—dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for seven days & nights?'

"'No, friend.'

"'... for six days & nights... for five days & nights... for a day & a night?'

"'No, friend.'

"'Now, I—without moving my body, without uttering a word—can dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for a day and a night... for two days & nights... for three... four... five... six... seven days & nights. So what do you think? That

being the case, who dwells in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or me?"

"That being the case, venerable Gotama dwells in greater pleasure than King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha." — MN 14 [See also §78]

PEOPLE WORTH TALKING TO (& NOT)

§ 117. "Let an observant person come, one without guile or deceit, one of straightforward nature. I instruct him, I teach him the Dhamma. Practicing as instructed, he in no long time rightly knows, rightly sees, 'So this, it appears, is liberation from the bond, i.e., the bond of ignorance.'" — MN 80

§ 118. "Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, doesn't give a categorical answer to a question deserving a categorical answer, doesn't give an analytical answer to a question deserving an analytical answer, doesn't cross-question a question deserving cross-questioning, doesn't put aside a question deserving to be put aside, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, gives a categorical answer to a question deserving a categorical answer, gives an analytical answer to a question deserving an analytical answer, cross-questions a question deserving cross-questioning, and puts aside a question deserving to be put aside, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, doesn't stand by what is possible and impossible, doesn't stand by agreed-upon assumptions, doesn't stand by teachings known to be true,¹ doesn't stand by standard procedure, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, stands by what is possible and impossible, stands by agreed-upon assumptions, stands by teachings known to be true, stands by standard procedure, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, wanders from one thing to another, pulls the discussion off the topic, shows anger & aversion and sulks, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, doesn't wander from one thing to another, doesn't pull the discussion off the topic, doesn't show anger or aversion or sulk, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, puts down [the questioner], crushes him, ridicules him, grasps at his little mistakes, then—that being the case—he is a person unfit to talk with. But if a person, when asked a question, doesn't put down [the questioner], doesn't crush him, doesn't ridicule him, doesn't grasp at his little mistakes, then—that being the case—he is a person fit to talk with.

"Monks, it's through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as drawing near or not drawing near. One who lends ear draws near; one who doesn't lend ear doesn't draw near. Drawing near, one clearly knows one quality, comprehends one quality, abandons one quality, and realizes one quality.² Clearly knowing one quality, comprehending one quality, abandoning

one quality, and realizing one quality, one touches right release. For that's the purpose of discussion, that's the purpose of counsel, that's the purpose of drawing near, that's the purpose of lending ear: i.e., the liberation of the mind through no clinging.

Those who discuss
when angered, dogmatic, arrogant,
following what's not the noble ones' way,
seeking to expose each other's faults,
delight in each other's misspoken word,
slip, stumble, defeat.

Noble ones
don't speak in that way.

If wise people, knowing the right time,
want to speak,
then, words connected with justice,
following the ways of the noble ones:
That's what the enlightened ones speak,
without anger or arrogance,
with a mind not boiling over,
without vehemence, without spite.

Without envy,
they speak from right knowledge.
They would delight in what's well-said
and not disparage what's not.
They don't study to find fault,
don't grasp at little mistakes,
don't put down, don't crush,
don't speak random words.

For the purpose of knowledge,
for the purpose of [inspiring] clear confidence,
counsel that's true:

That's how noble ones give counsel,
That's the noble ones' counsel.

Knowing this, the wise
should give counsel without arrogance. — AN 3:68

NOTES

1. Reading *aññātavāda* with the Burmese edition. An alternate translation would be, "the teachings of those who know."

2. According to the Commentary, these qualities are, respectively, the noble truth of the path, the noble truth of stress, the noble truth of the origination of stress, and the noble truth of the cessation of stress.

§ 119. There are some who dispute
corrupted at heart,
and those who dispute
their hearts set on truth,
but a sage doesn't enter
a dispute that's arisen,
which is why he is
nowhere constrained.

Now, how would one

led on by desire,
 entrenched in his likes,
 forming his own conclusions,
 overcome his own views?
 He'd dispute in line
 with the way that he knows...

Because entrenchments in views
 aren't easily overcome
 when considering what's grasped
 among doctrines,
 that's why
 a person embraces or rejects a doctrine—
 in light of these very
 entrenchments.

Now, one who is cleansed
 has no preconceived view
 about states of becoming
 or not-
 anywhere in the world.
 Having abandoned conceit & illusion,
 by what means would he go?
 He isn't involved.

For one who's involved
 gets into disputes
 over doctrines,
 but how—in connection with what—
 would you argue
 with one uninvolved?
 He has nothing
 embraced or rejected,
 has sloughed off every view
 right here—every one. — *Sn 4:3*

§ 120. "Only here is there purity"
 —that's what they say—
 "No other doctrines are pure"
 —so they say.

Insisting that what they depend on is good,
 they are deeply entrenched in their personal truths.
 Seeking controversy, they plunge into an assembly,
 regarding one another as fools.
 Relying on others' authority,
 they speak in debate.
 Desiring praise, they claim to be skilled.
 Engaged in disputes in the midst of the assembly,
 —anxious, desiring praise—
 the one defeated is
 chagrined.
 Shaken with criticism, he seeks for an opening.
 He whose doctrine is [judged as] demolished,
 defeated, by those judging the issue:
 He laments, he grieves—the inferior exponent.

one's a fool, a beast of inferior discernment,
 then *all* are fools
 of inferior discernment—
 all of these
 who dwell on their views.
 But if, in siding with a view,
 one's cleansed,
 with discernment made pure,
 intelligent, skilled,
 then none of them
 are of inferior discernment,
 for all of them
 have their own views.

I don't say, 'That's how it is,'
 the way fools say to one another.
 They each make out their views to be true
 and so regard their opponents as fools."

"What some say is true
 —'That's how it is'—
 others say is 'falsehood, a lie.'
 Thus quarreling, they dispute.
 Why can't contemplatives
 say one thing & the same?"

"The truth is one,
 there is no second
 about which a person who knows it
 would argue with one who knows.
 Contemplatives promote
 their various personal truths,
 that's why they don't say
 one thing & the same."

"But why do they say
 various truths,
 those who say they are skilled?
 Have they learned many various truths
 or do they follow conjecture?"

"Apart from their perception
 there are no
 many
 various
 constant truths
 in the world.
 Preconceiving conjecture
 with regard to views,
 they speak of a pair: true
 & false.
 Dependent on what's seen,
 heard,
 & sensed,

dependent on habits & practices,
 one shows disdain [for others].
 Taking a stance on his decisions,
 praising himself, he says,
 'My opponent's a fool & unskilled.'

That by which
 he regards his opponents as fools
 is that by which
 he says he is skilled.

Calling himself skilled
 he despises another
 who speaks the same way.

Agreeing on a view gone out of bounds,
 drunk with conceit, thinking himself perfect,
 he has consecrated, with his own mind,
 himself
 as well as his view.

 If, by an opponent's word,
 one's inferior,
 the opponent's
 of inferior discernment as well.
 But if, by one's own word
 one's an attainer-of-wisdom, enlightened,
 no one
 among contemplatives
 is a fool.

'Those who teach a doctrine other than this
 are lacking in purity,
 imperfect.'

That's what the many sectarians say,
 for they're smitten with passion
 for their own views.

 'Only here is there purity,'
 that's what they say.

 'In no other doctrine
 is purity,' they say.

That's how the many sectarians
 are entrenched,
 speaking firmly there
 concerning their own path.
 Speaking firmly concerning your own path,
 what opponent here would you take as a fool?
 You'd simply bring quarrels on yourself
 if you said your opponent's a fool
 with an impure doctrine.

Taking a stance on your decisions,
 & yourself as your measure,
 you dispute further down
 into the world.

But one who's abandoned
 all decisions

creates in the world
quarrels no more.” — *Sn 4:12*

§ 122. “Those who, dwelling on views,
dispute, saying, ‘Only this is true’:
do they all incur blame,
or also earn praise there?”

“[The praise:] It’s such a little thing,
not at all appeasing.
I speak of two fruits of dispute;
and seeing this, you shouldn’t dispute—
seeing the state
where there’s no dispute
as safe.
One who knows
doesn’t get involved
in whatever are
commonplace
conventional
views.
One who is uninvolved:
When he’s forming no preference
for what’s seen, for what’s heard,
why would he get
involved?” — *Sn 4:13*

§ 123. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was living among the Sakyans near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Then in the early morning, having put on his robes and carrying his bowl & outer robe, he went into Kapilavatthu for alms. Having gone for alms in Kapilavatthu, after the meal, returning from his alms round, he went to the Great Wood for the day’s abiding. Plunging into the Great Wood, he sat down at the root of a bilva sapling for the day’s abiding.

Daṇḍapāṇin [“Stick-in-hand”] the Sakyan, out roaming & rambling for exercise, also went to the Great Wood. Plunging into the Great Wood, he went to where the Blessed One was under the bilva sapling. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One, “What is the contemplative’s doctrine? What does he proclaim?”

“The sort of doctrine, friend, where one does not keep quarreling with anyone in the cosmos with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, with its contemplatives & brahmins, its royalty & commonfolk; the sort [of doctrine] where perceptions no longer obsess the brahmin who remains dissociated from sensual pleasures, free from perplexity, his uncertainty cut away, devoid of craving for becoming & non-becoming. Such is my doctrine, such is what I proclaim.”

When this was said, Daṇḍapāṇin the Sakyan—shaking his head, wagging his tongue, raising his eyebrows so that his forehead was wrinkled in three furrows—left, leaning on his stick. — *MN 18*

§ 124. As he was sitting to one side, Upāli the householder said to the Blessed One, “Lord, did Dīgha Tapassin the Nigaṇṭha come here?”

“Yes, householder, Dīgha Tapassin the Nigaṇṭha came here.”

“And did you have any discussion with him?”

“I had some discussion with him.”

“What sort of discussion did you have with him?”

Then the Blessed One related the entire extent of his discussion with Dīgha Tapassin the Nigaṇṭha [in which Dīgha Tapassin had asserted that the bodily “rod,” i.e., bodily action, was more reprehensible for the doing of evil action than the mental “rod”].

When this was said, Upāli the householder said to the Blessed One, “That was good, very good of Tapassin. The way an instructed disciple would rightly understand the message of the Teacher is how Dīgha Tapassin the Nigaṇṭha answered the Blessed One. For what does the trivial mental rod count for in comparison with the gross bodily rod? On the contrary, the bodily rod is more greatly reprehensible for the doing of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, not so much the verbal rod, not so much the mental rod.”

“If, householder, you will confer taking a stand on the truth, we might have some discussion here.”

“Lord, I will confer taking a stand on the truth; let us have some discussion here.”

“What do you think, householder? There might be the case where a Nigaṇṭha is diseased, pained, severely ill, refusing cold water and taking warm water. He, not getting cold water, would die. Where would Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta describe his reappearance?”

“Lord, there are the devas called Attached-in-Mind. He reappears there. Why is that? He is bound in mind when he dies.”

“Householder, householder, pay attention, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after. And yet you made this statement: ‘Lord, I will confer taking a stand on the truth; let us have some discussion here.’”

“Lord, even though the Blessed One says that, still the bodily rod is more greatly reprehensible for the doing of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, not so much the verbal rod, not so much the mental rod.”

“What do you think, householder? There might be the case where a Nigaṇṭha is restrained with the fourfold restraint: constrained by all constraints, yoked to all constraints, cleansed by all constraints, attained to all constraints. As he goes back and forth, he brings many small beings to destruction. What (kammic) result would Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta describe for him?”

“What is unintended, lord, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta does not describe as greatly reprehensible.”

“But if he intends it?”

“Greatly reprehensible, lord.”

“And under what does Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta classify intention?”

“Under the mental rod, lord.”

“Householder, householder, pay attention, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after. And yet you made this statement: ‘Lord, I will confer taking a stand on the truth; let us have some discussion here.’”

“Lord, even though the Blessed One says that, still the bodily rod is more greatly reprehensible for the doing of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, not so much the verbal rod, not so much the mental rod.”

“What do you think, householder? Is this Nālandā powerful & rich, populous & crowded with people?”

“Yes, lord.”

“What do you think? There is the case where a man might come with uplifted sword. He would say, ‘In a single moment, in a single instant, I will turn whatever beings there are in this Nālandā into a single pile of flesh, a single heap of flesh.’ What do you think? Would that man be able—in a single moment, in a single instant—to turn whatever beings there are in this Nālandā into a single pile of flesh, a single heap of flesh?”

“Lord, not even ten men, twenty men, thirty men, forty men, fifty men would be able—in a single moment, in a single instant—to turn whatever beings there are in this Nālandā into a single pile of flesh, a single heap of flesh. So what would one trivial man count for?”

“What do you think, householder? There is the case where a contemplative or brahman with supernormal power, attained to mastery of mind, might come. He would say, ‘With a single mental act of hatred, I will turn this Nālandā to ash.’ What do you think? Would that contemplative or brahman with supernormal power, attained to mastery of mind, be able—with a single mental act of hatred—to turn this Nālandā to ash?”

“Lord, with a single mental act of hatred he would be able to turn even ten Nālandās, twenty Nālandās, thirty Nālandās, forty Nālandās, fifty Nālandās to ash. So what would one trivial Nālandā count for?”

“Householder, householder, pay attention, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after. And yet you made this statement: ‘Lord, I will confer taking a stand on the truth; let us have some discussion here.’”

“Lord, even though the Blessed One says that, still the bodily rod is more greatly reprehensible for the doing of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, not so much the verbal rod, not so much the mental rod.”

“What do you think, householder? Have you heard how the Daṇḍakī wilderness, the Kāliṅga wilderness, the Mejjha wilderness, and the Mātaṅga wilderness became wildernesses?”

“Yes, lord, I have....”

“What do you think, householder? From what you have heard, how did the Daṇḍakī wilderness, the Kāliṅga wilderness, the Mejjha wilderness, and the Mātaṅga wilderness become wildernesses?”

“Lord, I have heard that it was through a mental act of hatred on the part of seers that the Daṇḍakī wilderness, the Kāliṅga wilderness, the Mejjha wilderness, and the Mātaṅga wilderness became wildernesses.”

“Householder, householder, pay attention, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after. And yet you made this statement: ‘Lord, I will confer taking a stand on the truth; let us have some discussion here.’”

“Lord, I was gratified and won over by the Blessed One’s very first simile. But wanting to hear these very artful ways of handling questions from the Blessed One, I thought I should treat him as an opponent. Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge,

from this day forward, for life." — MN 56

§ 125. Now on that occasion 500 brahmans from various provinces were staying at Sāvattḥi on some business or other. The thought occurred to them, "This Gotama the contemplative prescribes purity for the four castes. Now who is capable of disputing with him on this statement?" And on that occasion the brahman student Assalāyana was staying at Sāvattḥi. Young, shaven-headed, 16 years old, he was a master of the Three Vedas with their vocabularies, liturgy, phonology, etymology, & histories as a fifth; skilled in philology & grammar, he was fully versed in cosmology and in the marks of a Great Man. The thought occurred to the brahmans, "This brahman student Assalāyana is staying in Sāvattḥi... He is capable of disputing with Gotama the contemplative on this statement."

So the brahmans went to the brahman student Assalāyana and said to him, "Master Assalāyana, this Gotama the contemplative prescribes purity for the four castes. Come and dispute with him on this statement."

When this was said, the brahman student Assalāyana said to the brahmans, "Sirs, Gotama the contemplative is one who speaks Dhamma. And those who speak Dhamma are hard to dispute with. I can't dispute with him on this statement."

A second time.... A third time, the brahmans said to the brahman student Assalāyana, "Master Assalāyana, this Gotama the contemplative prescribes purity for the four castes. Come and dispute with him on this statement, for you have lived the life of a wanderer. Don't be defeated without being defeated in battle."

When this was said, the brahman student Assalāyana said to the brahmans, "Apparently, sirs, I don't get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], 'Gotama the contemplative is one who speaks Dhamma. And those who speak Dhamma are hard to dispute with. I can't dispute with him on this statement.' But at your bidding I will go."

Then the brahman student Assalāyana went with a large group of brahmans to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, the brahmans say, 'Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior. Only brahmans are the fair caste; any other caste is dark. Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.' What does Master Gotama have to say with regard to that?"

"But, Assalāyana, the brahmans' brahman-women are plainly seen having their periods, becoming pregnant, giving birth, and nursing [their children]. And yet the brahmans, being born through the birth canal, say, 'Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior. Only brahmans are the fair caste; any other caste is dark. Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.'"

"Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmans think, 'Brahmans are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.'"

"What do you think, Assalāyana? Have you heard that in Yona & Kamboja and other outlying countries there are only two castes—masters & slaves—and that having been a master one (can) become a slave, and that having been a slave one (can) become a master?"

“Yes, Master Gotama....”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a noble warrior who—taking life, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, telling lies, speaking divisive speech, speaking coarse speech, engaging in idle chatter, covetous, bearing thoughts of ill will, & holding wrong views—on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell, and not a brahmin? Is it only a merchant...? Is it only a worker who—taking life, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, telling lies, speaking divisive speech, speaking coarse speech, engaging in idle chatter, covetous, bearing thoughts of ill will, and holding wrong views—on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell, and not a brahmin?”

“No, Master Gotama. Even a noble warrior.... Even a brahmin.... Even a merchant.... Even a worker.... (Members of) all four castes—if they take life, steal, engage in sexual misconduct, tell lies, speak divisive speech, speak coarse speech, engage in idle chatter, are covetous, bear thoughts of ill will, & hold wrong views—on the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahmin who—refraining from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies, from divisive speech, from coarse speech, & from idle chatter, not covetous, bearing no thoughts of ill will, & holding to right view—on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in the good destination, the heavenly world, and not a noble warrior, not a merchant, not a worker?”

“No, Master Gotama. Even a noble warrior.... Even a brahmin.... Even a merchant.... Even a worker.... (Members of) all four castes—if they refrain from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies, from divisive speech, from coarse speech, & from idle chatter, are not covetous, bear no thoughts of ill will, & hold to right view—on the breakup of the body, after death, reappear in the good destination, the heavenly world.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahmin who is capable of developing in any direction a heart of good will—free from animosity, free from ill will—and not a noble warrior, not a merchant, not a worker?”

“No, Master Gotama. Even a noble warrior.... Even a brahmin.... Even a merchant.... Even a worker.... (Members of) all four castes are capable of developing in any direction a heart of good will—free from animosity, free from

ill will.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahmin who is capable of taking a loofah & bath powder, going to a river, and scrubbing off dust & dirt, and not a noble warrior, not a merchant, not a worker?”

“No, Master Gotama. Even a noble warrior.... Even a brahmin.... Even a merchant.... Even a worker.... (Members of) all four castes are capable of taking a loofah & bath powder, going to a river, and scrubbing off dust & dirt.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... Only brahmins are pure, not non-brahmins. Only brahmins are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... Only brahmins are pure, not non-brahmins. Only brahmins are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where a consecrated noble warrior king might call together 100 men of different births (and say to them), ‘Come, masters. Those of you there born from a noble warrior clan, from a brahmin clan, or from a royal clan: taking an upper fire-stick of sāla wood, salala wood, sandalwood, or padumaka wood, produce fire & make heat appear. And come, masters. Those of you there born from an outcast clan, a trapper clan, a wicker workers’ clan, a cartwrights’ clan, or a scavengers’ clan: taking an upper fire-stick from a dog’s drinking trough, from a pig’s trough, from a dustbin, or of castor-oil wood, produce fire & make heat appear.’ What do you think, Assalāyana? Would the fire made by those born from a noble warrior clan, a brahmin clan, or a royal clan—who had produced fire & made heat appear by taking an upper fire-stick of sāla wood, salala wood, sandalwood, or padumaka wood—be the only one with flame, color, & radiance, able to do whatever a fire might be needed to do? And would the fire made by those born from an outcast clan, a trapper clan, a wicker workers’ clan, a cartwrights’ clan, or a scavengers’ clan—who had produced fire & made heat appear by taking an upper fire-stick from a dog’s drinking trough, from a pig’s trough, from a dustbin, or of castor-oil wood—be without flame, color, & radiance, unable to do what a fire might be needed to do?”

“No, Master Gotama. The fire made by those born from a noble warrior clan, a brahmin clan, or a royal clan... would have flame, color, & radiance, able to do whatever a fire might be needed to do. And the fire made by those born from an outcast clan, a trapper clan, a wicker workers’ clan, a cartwrights’ clan, or a scavengers’ clan... would have flame, color, & radiance, able to do whatever a fire might be needed to do. For all fire has flame, color, & radiance, and is able to do whatever a fire might be needed to do.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmins say, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... Only brahmins are pure, not non-brahmins. Only brahmins are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā?’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmins think, ‘Brahmins are the superior caste... Only brahmins are pure, not non-brahmins. Only brahmins are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of

Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where a noble warrior youth might cohabit with a brahman maiden, and from their cohabitation a son would be born. Would the son born from the noble warrior youth & brahman maiden be like the father and like the mother? Should he be called a noble warrior & a brahman?”

“Yes, Master Gotama....”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where a brahman youth might cohabit with a noble warrior maiden, and from their cohabitation a son would be born. Would the son born from the brahman youth & noble warrior maiden be like the father and like the mother? Should he be called a noble warrior & a brahman?”

“Yes, Master Gotama....”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where a mare might mate with a donkey, and from their mating a foal would be born. Would the foal born from the mare & the donkey be like the father and like the mother? Should it be called a horse & a donkey?”

“Master Gotama, from the mixed breeding it would be a mule. Here I see that it [the mixed breeding] makes a difference, but there [in the other two cases] I don’t see that it makes a difference.”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where there might be two brahman-student brothers, born of the same mother: one learned & initiated, the other not learned & uninitiated. Which of the two would the brahmans serve first at a funeral feast, a milk-rice offering, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?”

“The brahman student who was learned & initiated, Master Gotama.... For what great fruit would there be for what is given to one who is not learned & uninitiated?”

“What do you think, Assalāyana? There is the case where there might be two brahman-student brothers, born of the same mother: one learned & initiated (but) unvirtuous & of evil character, the other not learned & uninitiated, (but) virtuous & of fine character. Which of the two would the brahmans serve first at a funeral feast, a milk-rice offering, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?”

“The brahman student who was not learned & uninitiated, (but) virtuous & of fine character, Master Gotama.... For what great fruit would there be for what is given to one who is unvirtuous & of evil character?”

“First, Assalāyana, you went by birth. Then, having gone by birth, you went by mantras. Then, having gone by mantras, putting them both aside, you have come around to the purity of the four castes that I prescribe.”

When this was said, the brahman student Assalāyana sat silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Then the Blessed One—seeing that the brahman student Assalāyana was sitting silent, abashed, his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words—said to him, “Once, Assalāyana, this evil viewpoint arose in the seven brahman seers as they were consulting together in leaf huts in the wilderness: ‘Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior. Only brahmans are the fair caste; any other caste is dark. Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’ Then the seer Devala the Dark heard, ‘This evil viewpoint has arisen in the seven brahman seers as they are consulting together in leaf huts in the wilderness: “Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior.... Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.”’ So, arranging his hair & beard, putting on crimson garments, wearing multi-layered sandals, and carrying a staff made of gold, he appeared in

the courtyard of the seven brahman seers. Then he walked back & forth in the courtyard of the seven brahman seers saying, 'Well, now, where have these masters, the brahman seers, gone? Well, now, where have these masters, the brahman seers, gone?'

"Then the seven brahman seers said to the seer Devala the Dark, 'Now who is this, walking back & forth in the courtyard of the seven brahman seers like a village lout, saying, "Well, now, where have these masters, the brahman seers, gone? Well, now, where have these masters, the brahman seers, gone?" Let's curse him!' So the seven brahman seers cursed the seer Devala the Dark: 'Be ashes, dribble-spit (*capali*)! Be ashes, dribble-spit! Be ashes, dribble-spit!' But the more they cursed him, the more beautiful, good-looking, & inspiring he became. Then the thought occurred to the seven brahman seers, 'Our asceticism is in vain! Our holy-life is fruitless! For before, whenever we cursed anyone, "Be ashes, dribble-spit!" he would always become ashes. But the more we curse this one, the more beautiful, good-looking, & inspiring he becomes!'

"Masters, your asceticism is not in vain, and your holy-life not fruitless. Please, masters, abandon your hatred toward me.'

"We abandon our hatred toward you, master. Who are you?'

"Have you heard of the seer Devala the Dark?'

"Yes, master.'

"I am he.'

"Then the seven brahman seers approached him to bow down to him, and he said to them, 'I have heard that this evil viewpoint has arisen in the seven brahman seers as they are consulting together in leaf huts in the wilderness: "Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior.... Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā."'

"That is so, master.'

"But do you know, masters, if the mother who bore you went only with a brahman, and not with a non-brahman?'

"No, master.'

"And do you know if the mothers of the mother who bore you—back seven generations of mothers—went only with brahmans, and not with non-brahmans?'

"No, master.'

"And do you know if the father who sired you went only with a brahman woman, and not with a non-brahman woman?'

"No, master.'

"And do you know if the fathers of the father who bore you—back seven generations of fathers—went only with brahman women, and not with non-brahman women?'

"No, master.'

"Do you know how there is the descent of an embryo?'

"Yes, master, we know how there is the descent of an embryo. There is the case where the mother & father have come together, the mother is fertile, and a gandhabba [the being about to be reborn] is standing present. The coming together of these three is the descent of the embryo.'

"But do you know for sure whether the gandhabba is a noble warrior, a brahman, a merchant, or a worker?'

"No, master.'

"That being the case, do you know who you are?'

"That being the case, master, we don't know who we are.'

"Now, Assalāyana, when those seven brahman seers couldn't defend their own birth-statement when interrogated, pressed, & rebuked by the seer Devala

the Dark, how can you now defend your own birth-statement when interrogated, pressed, & rebuked by me—you, their lineage holder, but not [the equal of] Puṇṇa, their ladle holder?" — MN 93

§ 126. Then Saccaka the Nigantha-son together with a large group of Licchavis plunged into the Great Wood and went to the Blessed One [after announcing to the Licchavis that he would drag the Buddha back and forth in a debate]. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side.... As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "I would like to question Master Gotama on a certain point, if Master Gotama would grant me the favor of an answer to the question."

"Ask, Aggivessana, as you see fit."

"How does Master Gotama discipline his disciples? Or what part of his instruction is generally presented to his disciples?"

"Aggivessana, I discipline my disciples in this way; this part of my instruction is generally presented to my disciples: 'Form is inconstant. Feeling is inconstant. Perception is inconstant. Fabrications are inconstant. Consciousness is inconstant. Form is not-self. Feeling is not-self. Perception is not-self. Fabrications are not-self. Consciousness is not-self. All fabrications are inconstant. All phenomena are not-self....'"

"A simile occurs to me, Master Gotama."

"Let it occur to you, Aggivessana."

"Just as any seeds that exhibit growth, increase, & proliferation, all do so in dependence on the earth; or just as any activities requiring strength that are done, all are done in dependence on the earth; in the same way, Master Gotama, an individual with form as self, taking a stance on form, produces merit or demerit. An individual with feeling as self... with perception as self... with fabrications as self... with consciousness as self, taking a stance on consciousness, produces merit or demerit."

"Then, Aggivessana, are you saying, 'Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self'?"

"Yes, Master Gotama, I'm saying that 'Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self.' As does this great multitude."

"What does this great multitude have to do with you? Please focus just on your own assertion."

"Yes, Master Gotama, I'm saying that 'Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self.'"

"Very well then, Aggivessana, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Would a consecrated, noble-warrior king—such as King Pasenadi of Kosala or King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha—wield the power in his own domain to execute those who deserve execution, to fine those who deserve to be fined, and to banish those who deserve to be banished?"

"Yes, Master Gotama, he would... Even these oligarchic groups, such as the Vajjians & Mallans, wield the power in their own domains to execute those who deserve execution, to fine those who deserve to be fined, and to banish those who deserve to be banished, to say nothing of a consecrated, noble-warrior king such as King Pasenadi of Kosala, or King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha. He would wield it, and he would deserve to wield it."

"What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Form is my self,' do you wield power over that form: 'May my form be thus, may my form not be

thus’?”

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son was silent.

A second time, the Blessed One said to Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son: “What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Form is my self,’ do you wield power over that form: ‘May my form be thus, may my form not be thus’?”

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son was silent a second time.

Then the Blessed One said to him, “Answer now, Aggivessana. This is not the time to be silent. When anyone doesn’t answer when asked a legitimate question by the Tathāgata up to three times, his head splits into seven pieces right here.”

Now on that occasion the spirit (*yakkha*) Vajirapāṇin [Thunderbolt-in-Hand], carrying an iron thunderbolt, was poised in the air above Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son, (thinking,) “If Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son doesn’t answer when asked a legitimate question by the Blessed One up to three times, I will split his head into seven pieces right here.”

The Blessed One saw the spirit Vajirapāṇin, as did Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son. So Saccaka—afraid, terrified, his hair standing on end—seeking shelter in the Blessed One, seeking a cave/asylum in the Blessed One, seeking refuge in the Blessed One—said to the Blessed One, “Let Master Gotama ask me. I will answer.”

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Form is my self,’ do you wield power over that form: ‘May my form be thus, may my form not be thus’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Pay attention, Aggivessana, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after.

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Feeling is my self... Perception is my self... Fabrications are my self... Consciousness is my self,’ do you wield power over that consciousness: ‘May my consciousness be thus, may my consciousness not be thus’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Pay attention, Aggivessana, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after.

“What do you think, Aggivessana? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, Master Gotama.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“...Is feeling constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.” ...

“...Is perception constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.” ...

“...Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.” ...

“What do you think, Aggivessana? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, Master Gotama.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When one adheres to stress, holds to stress, is attached to stress, and envisions of stress that ‘This is mine; this is my self; this is what I am,’ would he comprehend stress or dwell having totally destroyed stress?”

“How could that be, Master Gotama? No, Master Gotama.”

“That being the case, Aggivessana, don’t you adhere to stress, hold to stress, aren’t you attached to stress, and don’t you envision of stress that ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“How could that not be the case, Master Gotama? Yes, Master Gotama.”

“Suppose a man—in need of heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood—were to enter a forest taking a sharp ax. There he would see a large plantain trunk: straight, young, immature. He would cut it at the root and, having cut it at the root, cut off the crown. Having cut off the crown, he would unfurl the leaf sheaths. Unfurling the leaf sheaths, he wouldn’t even find sapwood there, to say nothing of heartwood. In the same way, Aggivessana, when you are interrogated, rebuked, & pressed by me with regard to your own statement, you are empty, void, mistaken. But it was you who made this statement before the assembly in Vesāli: ‘I see no contemplative, the head of an order, the head of a group, or even one who claims to be an arahant, rightly self-awakened, who—engaged in debate with me—would not shiver, quiver, shake, & break out in sweat under the armpits. Even if I were to engage a senseless stump in debate, it—engaged with me in debate—would shiver, quiver, & shake, to say nothing of a human being.’ But now some drops of sweat coming out of your forehead, drenching your upper robe, are landing on the ground, whereas now I have no sweat on my body.” And the Blessed One uncovered his golden-colored body to the assembly. When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son fell silent, abashed, sitting with his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Then Dummukha [BadMouth] the Licchavi-son... said to the Blessed One, “Lord, a simile has occurred to me.”

“Let it occur to you, Dummukha,” the Blessed One said.

“Suppose, lord, that not far from a village or town was a pond. There in it was a crab. Then a number of boys & girls, leaving the village or town, would go to the pond and, on arrival, would go down to bathe in it. Taking the crab out of the water, they would place it on the ground. And whenever the crab extended a leg, the boys or girls would cut it off, break it, and smash it with sticks or stones right there, so that the crab—with all its legs cut off, broken, & smashed—would be unable to get back in the water as before. In the same way, whatever Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son’s writhings, capers, & contortions, the Blessed One has cut them off, broken them, and smashed them all, so that Saccaka is now unable to approach the Blessed One again for the purpose of debate.”

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son said to Dummukha the Licchavi-son, “Just you wait, Dummukha. Just you wait, Dummukha. You’re a big-mouth, Dummukha. We’re not taking counsel with you. We’re here taking counsel with Master Gotama.” [Then, turning to the Buddha,] “Let that be, Master Gotama, our words & those of other ordinary contemplatives & brahmins—prattled prattling, as it were....” — MN 35

§ 127. As he was sitting there, Uṇṇabhā the brahman said to Ven. Ānanda: “Master Ānanda, what is the aim of this holy life lived under Gotama the contemplative?”

“Brahman, the holy life is lived under the Blessed One with the aim of abandoning desire.”

"Is there a path, is there a practice, for the abandoning of that desire?"

"Yes, there is a path, there is a practice, for the abandoning of that desire."

"What is the path, the practice, for the abandoning of that desire?"

"Brahman, there is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence... concentration founded on intent... concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion. This, brahman, is the path, this is the practice for the abandoning of that desire."

"If that's so, Master Ānanda, then it's an endless path, and not one with an end, for it's impossible that one could abandon desire by means of desire."

"Very well then, brahman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Didn't you first have desire, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding desire allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have persistence, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding persistence allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have the intent, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding intent allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you first have (an act of) discrimination, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding (act of) discrimination allayed?"

"Yes, sir."

"So it is with an arahant whose fermentations are ended, who has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who is released through right gnosis. Whatever desire he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship the corresponding desire is allayed. Whatever persistence he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship the corresponding persistence is allayed. Whatever intent he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship the corresponding intent is allayed. Whatever discrimination he first had for the attainment of arahantship, on attaining arahantship the corresponding discrimination is allayed. So what do you think, brahman? Is this an endless path, or one with an end?"

"You're right, Master Ānanda. This is a path with an end, and not an endless one." — *SN 51:15*

CHAPTER SIX

Cross-questioning: II

READINGS

§ 128. [Kāpadika Bhāradvāja:] “But 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.”

“There is the case, Bhāradvāja, 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 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 & suffering?’ 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: ‘Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on aversion 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 & suffering?’ As he observes him, he comes to know, ‘There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on aversion.... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not aversive. 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 aversive.’

“When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on aversion, he next observes him with regard to qualities 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 & suffering?’ 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, Bhāradvāja, 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.”

“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 cultivation, development, & pursuit of those very same qualities: To this extent, Bhāradvāja, 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.”

“Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is the final attainment of the truth. To this extent one finally attains the truth. We regard this as the final attainment of the truth. But what quality is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for the final attainment of the truth.”

“Exertion is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth, Bhāradvāja. If one didn’t make an exertion, one wouldn’t finally attain the truth. Because one makes an exertion, one finally attains the truth. Therefore, exertion is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth.”

“But what quality is most helpful for exertion? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for exertion.”

“Contemplating is most helpful for exertion, Bhāradvāja. If one didn’t contemplate, one wouldn’t make an exertion. Because one contemplates, one makes an exertion. Therefore, contemplating is most helpful for exertion.”

“But what quality is most helpful for contemplating?...”

“Being willing.... If one weren’t willing, one wouldn’t contemplate....”

“But what quality is most helpful for being willing?...”

“Desire.... If desire didn’t arise, one wouldn’t be willing....”

“But what quality is most helpful for desire?...”

“Coming to an agreement through pondering dhammas.... If one didn’t come to an agreement through pondering dhammas, desire wouldn’t arise....”

“But what quality is most helpful for coming to an agreement through pondering dhammas?...”

“Penetrating the meaning.... If one didn’t penetrate the meaning, one wouldn’t come to an agreement through pondering dhammas....”

“But what quality is most helpful for penetrating the meaning?...”

“Remembering the Dhamma.... If one didn’t remember the Dhamma, one wouldn’t penetrate the meaning....”

“But what quality is most helpful for remembering the Dhamma?...”

“Hearing the Dhamma.... If one didn’t hear the Dhamma, one wouldn’t remember the Dhamma....”

“But what quality is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma?...”

“Lending ear.... If one didn’t lend ear, one wouldn’t hear the Dhamma....”

“But what quality is most helpful for lending ear?...”

“Growing close.... If one didn’t grow close, one wouldn’t lend ear....”

“But what quality is most helpful for growing close?...”

“Visiting.... If one didn’t visit, one wouldn’t grow close....”

“But what quality is most helpful for visiting? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for visiting.”

“Conviction is most helpful for visiting, Bhāradvāja. If conviction [in a

person] didn't arise, one wouldn't visit [that person]. Because conviction arises, one visits. Therefore, conviction is most helpful for visiting."

"We have asked Master Gotama about safeguarding the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about safeguarding the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about awakening to the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about awakening to the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about finally attaining the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about finally attaining the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for finally attaining the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about the quality most helpful for finally attaining the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. Whatever we have asked Master Gotama, Master Gotama has answered it. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified.

"We used to think, 'Who are these bald-headed "contemplatives," these menial, dark offspring of [Brahmā,] the Kinsman's feet? Who are they to know the Dhamma?' But now Master Gotama has inspired within us a contemplative-love for contemplatives, a contemplative-confidence in contemplatives, a contemplative-respect for contemplatives. Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life." — MN 95

§ 129. "Gotamī, the qualities of which you may know, 'These qualities lead to passion, not to dispassion; to being fettered, not to being unfettered; to accumulating, not to shedding; to self-aggrandizement, not to modesty; to discontent, not to contentment; to entanglement, not to seclusion; to laziness, not to aroused persistence; to being burdensome, not to being unburdensome': You may hold categorically, '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 hold categorically, 'This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction.'" — AN 8:53

§ 130. "Upāli, 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 hold categorically, '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 hold categorically, 'This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction.'" — AN 7:80

§ 131. “What do you think, Rāhula? What is a mirror for?”

“For reflection, sir.”

“In the same way, Rāhula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

“Whenever you want to perform a bodily action, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily action I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily action I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to affliction of others, or both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a bodily action, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily action I did—did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful qualities.

[Similarly with verbal actions.]

“Whenever you want to perform a mental action, you should reflect on it: ‘This mental action I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then any mental action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful mental action with happy consequences, happy results, then any mental action of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a mental action, you should reflect on it: ‘This mental action I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a mental action, you should reflect on it: ‘This mental action I did—did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling

distressed... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful mental action with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful qualities.

“Rāhula, all those contemplatives & brahmans in the course of the past who purified their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“All those contemplatives & brahmans in the course of the future who will purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, will do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“All those contemplatives & brahmans at present who purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“Thus, Rāhula, you should train yourself: ‘I will purify my bodily actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my verbal actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my mental actions through repeated reflection.’ That’s how you should train yourself.” — *MN 61 [See also §138]*

§ 132. “Just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant’s footprint is reckoned the foremost among them in terms of size; in the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, converge in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned the foremost among them.” — *AN 10:15*

§ 133. “Monks, mindfulness of death—when developed & pursued—is of great fruit & great benefit. It gains a footing in the deathless, has the deathless as its final end. And how is mindfulness of death developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end?

“There is the case where a monk, as day departs and night returns, reflects: ‘Many are the [possible] causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm... piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.’ Then the monk should investigate: ‘Are there any evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die in the night?’

“If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities.

“But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training

himself day & night in skillful qualities.

“Furthermore, there is the case where a monk, as night departs and day returns, reflects: ‘Many are the [possible] causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm... piercing wind forces [in the body] might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.’ Then the monk should investigate: ‘Are there any evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die during the day?’

“If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities.

“But if, on reflecting, he realizes that there are no evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die during the day, then for that very reason he should dwell in joy & rapture, training himself day & night in skillful qualities.

“This, monks, is how mindfulness of death is developed & pursued so that it is of great fruit & great benefit, gains a footing in the deathless, and has the deathless as its final end.” — *AN 6:20*

§ 134. “There are these ten things that a person gone-forth should reflect on often. Which ten?

“‘I have become casteless’: A person gone forth should often reflect on this.

“‘My life is dependent on others’....

“‘My behavior should be different [from that of householders]’....

“‘Can I fault myself with regard to my virtue?’...

“‘Can my knowledgeable fellows in the holy life, on close examination, fault me with regard to my virtue?’...

“‘I will grow different, separate from all that is dear & appealing to me’....

“‘I am the owner of actions (*kamma*), heir to actions, born of actions, related through actions, and have actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir’....

“‘What am I becoming as the days & nights fly past?’...

“‘Do I delight in an empty dwelling?’...

“‘Have I attained a superior human attainment, a truly noble distinction of knowledge & vision, such that—when my fellows in the holy life question me in the last days of my life—I won’t feel abashed?’: A person gone forth should often reflect on this.

“These are the ten things that a person gone-forth should reflect on often.” — *AN 10:48*

§ 135. “Even if a monk is not skilled in the ways of the minds of others [not skilled in reading the minds of others], he should train himself: ‘I will be skilled in reading my own mind.’

“And how is a monk skilled in reading his own mind? Imagine a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, examining the image of her own face in a bright, clean mirror or bowl of clear water: If she saw any dirt or blemish there, she would try to remove it. If she saw no dirt or blemish there, she would be pleased, her resolves fulfilled: ‘How fortunate I am! How clean I am!’ In the same way, a monk’s self-examination is very productive in terms of skillful qualities [if he conducts it in this way]: ‘Do I usually remain covetous or not? With thoughts of ill will or not? Overcome by sloth & drowsiness or not? Restless or not? Uncertain or gone beyond uncertainty? Angry or not? With soiled thoughts or unsoiled thoughts? With my body aroused or unaroused? Lazy or with persistence aroused? Unconcentrated or concentrated?’

“If, on examination, a monk knows, ‘I usually remain covetous, with thoughts of ill will, overcome by sloth & drowsiness, restless, uncertain, angry, with soiled thoughts, with my body aroused, lazy, or unconcentrated,’ then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head; in the same way, the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities.

“But if, on examination, a monk knows, ‘I usually remain uncovetous, without thoughts of ill will, free of sloth & drowsiness, not restless, gone beyond uncertainty, not angry, with unsoiled thoughts, with my body unaroused, with persistence aroused, & concentrated,’ then his duty is to make an effort in establishing [‘tuning’] those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of fermentations.” — *AN 10:51*

§ 136. “Suppose that a foolish, inexperienced, unskillful cook has presented a king or a king’s minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He doesn’t read [lit: “pick up the theme of”] his master, thinking, ‘Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry, or he praises that curry’.... As a result, he isn’t rewarded with clothing or wages or gifts. Why is that? Because the foolish, inexperienced, unskillful cook doesn’t read his own master.

“In the same way, there are cases where a foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind doesn’t become concentrated, his defilements [Comm: the five hindrances] aren’t abandoned. He doesn’t read that fact. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on qualities in & of themselves, his mind doesn’t become concentrated, his defilements aren’t abandoned. He doesn’t read that fact. As a result, he isn’t rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, nor with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk doesn’t read his own mind.

“Now suppose that a wise, experienced, skillful cook has presented a king or a king’s minister with various kinds of curry.... He reads his master, thinking, ‘Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry or he praises that curry’.... As a result, he is rewarded with

clothing, wages, & gifts. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful cook reads his own master.

“In the same way, there are cases where a wise, experienced, skillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself... feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on qualities in & of themselves, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He reads that fact. As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful monk reads his own mind.” — SN 47:8

§ 137. “Ānanda, if a monk or nun remains with mind well established in the four establishings of mindfulness, he/she may be expected to realize greater-than-ever distinction.

“There is the case of a monk who remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, a fever based on the body arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme [Comm: such as recollection of the Buddha]. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, delight arises within him. In one who feels delight, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows serene. His body serene, he feels pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, ‘I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw [my mind from the inspiring theme].’ He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, ‘I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.’

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

“This, Ānanda, is development based on directing. And what is development based on not directing? A monk, when not directing his mind to external things, discerns, ‘My mind is not directed to external things. It is not attentive to what is in front or behind. It is released & undirected. And furthermore, I remain focused on the body in & of itself. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.’

“When not directing his mind to external things, he discerns, ‘My mind is not directed to external things. It is not attentive to what is in front or behind. It is released & undirected. And furthermore, I remain focused on feelings... mind... qualities in & of themselves. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.’

“This, Ānanda, is development based on not directing.

“Now, Ānanda, I have taught you development based on directing and development based on not directing. What a teacher should do out of compassion for his disciples, seeking their benefit, that I have done for you. Over

there are [places to sit at] the roots of trees. Over there are empty dwellings. Do jhāna, Ānanda. Don't be heedless. Don't be remorseful in the future. That is our instruction to you all." — *SN 47:10*

§ 138. "Ānanda, just as this palace of Migāra's mother [in the monastery constructed by Lady Visākhā near Sāvattihī] is empty of elephants, cattle, & mares, empty of gold & silver, empty of assemblies of women & men, and there is only this non-emptiness—the singleness based on the community of monks; even so, Ānanda, a monk—not attending to the perception [mental label] of village, not attending to the perception of human being—attends to the singleness based on the perception of wilderness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of village... that would exist based on the perception of human being, are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of village. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of human being, not attending to the perception of wilderness—attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth. Just as a bull's hide is stretched free from wrinkles with a hundred stakes, even so—without attending to all the ridges & hollows, the river ravines, the tracts of stumps & thorns, the craggy irregularities of this earth—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind... settles & indulges in its perception of earth.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being... that would exist based on the perception of wilderness, are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being... empty of the perception of wilderness. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of wilderness, not attending to the perception of earth—attends to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space.... [and so on through the four formless attainments. Then:]

"Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its themeless concentration of awareness.

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of the dimension of nothingness... on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This

mode of perception is empty....[etc.]’

“Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its themeless concentration of awareness.

“He discerns that ‘This themeless concentration of awareness is fabricated & mentally fashioned.’ And he discerns that ‘Whatever is fabricated & mentally fashioned is inconstant & subject to cessation.’ For him—thus knowing, thus seeing—the mind is released from the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“He discerns that ‘Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the fermentation of sensuality... the fermentation of becoming... the fermentation of ignorance, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.’ He discerns that ‘This mode of perception is empty of the fermentation of sensuality... the fermentation of becoming... the fermentation of ignorance. And there is just this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.’ Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: ‘There is this.’ And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, pure—superior & unsurpassed.” — *MN 121*

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

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

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

“.... Suppose that an archer or archer’s apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those

phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the resolution of all fabrications; the relinquishment of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

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

[Similarly with the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness and the dimension of nothingness.]” — AN 9:36

§ 140. “What do you think, monks? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it valid to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?’”

“No, lord.”

“... Is feeling constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“... Is perception constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“... Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” ...

“What do you think, monks? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it valid to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?’”

“No, lord.”

“Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Any feeling whatsoever....

“Any perception whatsoever....

“Any fabrications whatsoever....

“Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every consciousness is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the group of five monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words. And while this explanation was being given, the minds of the group of five monks, through no clinging [not being sustained], were released from fermentations. — SN 22:59

§ 141. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Sāvattī, in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery. Then, as he was alone in seclusion, this line of thinking arose in the Blessed One's awareness: "The qualities that ripen in release have ripened in Rāhula. What if I were to lead Rāhula further to the ending of fermentations?"

Then the Blessed One, early in the morning, put on his robes and, carrying his bowl & outer robe, went into Sāvattī for alms. Having gone for alms in Sāvattī, after the meal, returning from his alms round, he said to Ven. Rāhula, "Fetch your sitting cloth, Rāhula. We will go to the Grove of the Blind to spend the day."

Responding, "As you say, lord," to the Blessed One, Ven. Rāhula, carrying his sitting cloth, followed behind the Blessed One. Now at that time, many thousands of devas were following behind the Blessed One, (thinking,) "Today the Blessed One will lead Ven. Rāhula further to the ending of fermentations."

Then the Blessed One, having plunged into the Grove of the Blind, sat down on a seat made ready at the foot of a tree. Ven. Rāhula, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Are forms constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Is eye-consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Is eye-contact constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Whatever there is that arises in dependence on eye-contact as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: Is it constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the ear constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” ...

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the nose constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” ...

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the tongue constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” ...

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the body constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” ...

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the intellect constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Are ideas constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Is intellect-consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Is intellect-contact constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Whatever there is that arises in dependence on intellect-contact as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: Is it constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as:

‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“Seeing thus, Rāhula, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with eye-consciousness, disenchanted with eye-contact. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on eye-contact as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: With that too he grows disenchanted.

“He grows disenchanted with the ear...

“He grows disenchanted with the nose...

“He grows disenchanted with the tongue...

“He grows disenchanted with the body...

“He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with intellect-consciousness, disenchanted with intellect-contact. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on intellect-contact as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: With that too he grows disenchanted. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rāhula delighted in the Blessed One’s words. And while this explanation was being given, Ven. Rāhula’s mind, through lack of clinging [not being sustained], was released from fermentations. And to those many thousands of devas there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.” — *MN 147*

§ 142. [A certain monk] asked the Blessed One a further question: “Knowing in what way, seeing in what way, is there—with regard to this body endowed with consciousness, and with regard to all external signs—no longer any I-making, or my-making, or obsession with conceit?”

“Monk, one sees any form whatsoever—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—every form, as it actually is with right discernment: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“One sees any feeling whatsoever... any perception whatsoever... any fabrications whatsoever...

“One sees any consciousness whatsoever—past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near—every consciousness—as it actually is with right discernment: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Monk, knowing in this way, seeing in this way, there is—with regard to this body endowed with consciousness, and with regard to all external signs—no longer any I-making, or my-making, or obsession with conceit.”

Now at that moment this line of thinking appeared in the awareness of a certain monk: “So—form is not-self, feeling is not-self, perception is not-self, fabrications are not-self, consciousness is not-self. Then what self will be touched by the actions done by what is not-self?”

Then the Blessed One, realizing with his awareness the line of thinking in that monk’s awareness, addressed the monks: “It’s possible that a senseless person—immersed in ignorance, overcome with craving—might think that he could outsmart the Teacher’s message in this way: ‘So—form is not-self, feeling is not-self, perception is not-self, fabrications are not-self, consciousness is not-self. Then what self will be touched by the actions done by what is not-self?’ Now, monks, haven’t I trained you in cross-questioning with regard to this & that topic here & there? What do you think? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

"... Is feeling constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."....

"... Is perception constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."....

"... Are fabrications constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."....

"What do you think, monks? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"Any feeling whatsoever....

"Any perception whatsoever....

"Any fabrications whatsoever....

"Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every consciousness is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'

"Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words. And while this explanation was being given, the minds of sixty monks, through no clinging [not being sustained], were released from fermentations. — *MN 109*

§ 143. "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 have come to be?' 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 have come to be. 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 serenity, do I personally obtain unbinding?"

"He discerns that, 'When I cultivate, develop, and pursue this view, I personally obtain serenity, 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 of this [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 Tathāgata 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 Tathāgata 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

§ 144. “There is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner [i.e., a stream-winner, once-returner, or non-returner], 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 has come to be, 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. Having penetrated them with discernment, he sees what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are, but he does not dwell touching 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. Having penetrated them with discernment, he sees what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are, and he dwells touching them with his body. 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 cease 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

CHAPTER SEVEN

Questions Put Aside: I

READINGS

LIVELIHOOD

§ 145. As he was sitting there, Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of actors that ‘When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.’ What does the Blessed One have to say about that?”

“Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.”

A second time... A third time Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe, said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of actors that ‘When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.’ What does the Blessed One have to say with regard to that?”

“Apparently, headman, I don’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’ So I will simply answer you. Any beings who are not devoid of passion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of passion, focus with even more passion on things inspiring passion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Any beings who are not devoid of aversion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of aversion, focus with even more aversion on things inspiring aversion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Any beings who are not devoid of delusion to begin with, who are bound by the bond of delusion, focus with even more delusion on things inspiring delusion presented by an actor on stage in the midst of a festival. Thus the actor—himself intoxicated & heedless, having made others intoxicated & heedless—with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in what is called the hell of laughter. But if he holds such a view as this: ‘When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas,’ that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb.”

When this was said, Tālapuṭa, the head of an acting troupe, sobbed & burst into tears. [The Blessed One said,] “That was what I didn’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’”

“I’m not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have been deceived, cheated, & fooled for a long time by that ancient teaching lineage of actors who said, ‘When an actor on the stage, in the midst of a festival, makes people laugh & gives them delight with his imitation of reality, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of the laughing devas.’” — SN 42:2

§ 146. As he was sitting there, Yodhājīva [Professional Warrior] the headman said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors that ‘When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.’ What does the Blessed One have to say with regard to that?”

“Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.”

A second time... A third time Yodhājīva the headman said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, I have heard that it has been passed down by the ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors that ‘When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.’ What does the Blessed One have to say about that?”

“Apparently, headman, I don’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’ So I will simply answer you. When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, his mind is already seized, debased, & misdirected by the thought, ‘May these beings be struck down or slaughtered or annihilated or destroyed. May they not exist.’ If others then strike him down & slay him while he is thus striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the hell called the realm of those slain in battle. But if he holds such a view as this: ‘When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle,’ that is his wrong view. Now, there are two destinations for a person with wrong view, I tell you: either hell or the animal womb.”

When this was said, Yodhājīva the headman sobbed & burst into tears. [The Blessed One said,] “That was what I didn’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, headman. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’”

“I’m not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have been deceived, cheated, & fooled for a long time by that ancient teaching lineage of professional warriors who said, ‘When a professional warrior strives & exerts himself in battle, if others then strike him down & slay him while he is striving & exerting himself in battle, then with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in the company of devas slain in battle.’” — SN 42:3 [*Similarly in SN 42:4 & SN 42:5, although the warriors there are an elephant warrior and a cavalry warrior*]

§ 147. Then Puṇṇa Koliyaputta, an ox-practice ascetic, and Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side, whereas Seniya, the naked dog-practice ascetic, exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One and, after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, sat down to one side, hunched up like a dog.

As they were sitting there, Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic said to the Blessed One, “This Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, does what is hard to do. He eats food thrown on the ground. He has for a long time undertaken and perfectly conformed to that dog-practice. What is his destination? What his future course?”

“Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.”

A second time... A third time Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic said to the Blessed One, “This Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, does what is hard to do. He eats food thrown on the ground. He has undertaken and perfectly conformed to that dog-practice. What is his destination? What his future course?”

“Apparently, Puṇṇa, I don’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’ So I will simply answer you. There is the case where a certain person develops the dog-practice fully and without lapse, develops the dog-habit fully and without lapse, develops the dog-mind fully and without lapse, develops dog-behavior fully and without lapse. Having developed the dog-practice fully and without lapse, the dog-habit fully and without lapse, the dog-mind fully and without lapse, dog-behavior fully and without lapse, he—on the breakup of the body, after death—reappears in the company of dogs. But if he is of a view such as this: ‘By this habit or practice or asceticism or holy life I will become one deva or another,’ that is his wrong view. For a person of wrong view, Puṇṇa, there is one of two destinations, I tell you: hell or the animal womb. Thus when succeeding, Puṇṇa, the dog-practice leads to the animal womb; when failing, to hell.”

When this was said, Seniya, the naked dog-practice ascetic, sobbed & burst into tears. So the Blessed One said to Puṇṇa Koliyaputta, the ox-practice ascetic, “That was what I didn’t get leave from you, Puṇṇa [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’”

“I’m not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have for a long time undertaken and perfectly conformed to this dog-practice.” — *MN 57*

§ 148. An ochre robe tied ’round their necks,
many with evil qualities
—unrestrained, evil—
rearise, because of their evil acts,
in hell.

Better to eat an iron ball
—glowing, aflame—
than that, unprincipled &
unrestrained,
you should eat the alms of the country. — *Dhp 307-308*

OTHER TEACHERS

§ 149. The Kālāmas of Kesaputta said to the Blessed One, “Lord, there are some contemplatives & brahmans who come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, disparage them, show contempt for them, & pull them to pieces. And then other contemplatives & brahmans come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, disparage them, show contempt for them, & pull them to pieces. They leave us absolutely uncertain & in doubt: Which of these venerable contemplatives & brahmans are speaking the truth, and which ones are lying?”

“Of course you are uncertain, Kālāmas. Of course you are in doubt. When there are reasons for doubt, uncertainty is born. So in this case, Kālāmas, don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical 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 adopted & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering'—then you should abandon them.

"What do you think, Kālāmas? When greed arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?"

"For harm, lord."

"And this greedy person, overcome by greed, his mind possessed by greed, kills living beings, takes what is not given, goes after another person's wife, tells lies, and induces others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term harm & suffering."

"Yes, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Kālāmas? When aversion arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?"

"For harm, lord."

"And this aversive person, overcome by aversion, his mind possessed by aversion, kills living beings, takes what is not given, goes after another person's wife, tells lies, and induces others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term harm & suffering."

"Yes, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Kālāmas? When delusion arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?"

"For harm, lord."

"And this deluded person, overcome by delusion, his mind possessed by delusion, kills living beings, takes what is not given, goes after another person's wife, tells lies, and induces others to do likewise, all of which is for long-term harm & suffering."

"Yes, lord."

"So what do you think, Kālāmas? 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 adopted & carried out, do they lead to harm & to suffering, or not?"

"When adopted & carried out, they lead to harm & to suffering. That is how it appears to us."

"So, as I said, Kālāmas: 'Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical 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 adopted & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering"—then you should abandon them.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

"Now, Kālāmas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical 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 adopted & carried out, lead to benefit & to happiness'—then you should enter & remain in them.

"What do you think, Kālāmas? When lack of greed arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?"

“For benefit, lord.”

“And this ungreedy person, not overcome by greed, his mind not possessed by greed, 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 benefit & happiness.”

“Yes, lord.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? When lack of aversion arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?”

“For benefit, lord.”

“And this unaversive person, not overcome by aversion, his mind not possessed by aversion, 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 benefit & happiness.”

“Yes, lord.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? When lack of delusion arises in a person, does it arise for benefit or for harm?”

“For benefit, lord.”

“And this undeluded person, not overcome by delusion, his mind not possessed by delusion, 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 benefit & happiness.”

“Yes, lord.”

“So what do you think, Kālāmas? 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 adopted & carried out, do they lead to benefit & to happiness, or not?”

“When adopted & carried out, they lead to benefit & to happiness. That is how it appears to us.”

“So, as I said, Kālāmas: ‘Don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical 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 adopted & carried out, lead to benefit & to happiness”—then you should enter & remain in them.’ Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

“Now, Kālāmas, one who is a disciple of the noble ones—thus devoid of greed, devoid of ill will, undeluded, alert, & resolute—keeps pervading the first direction [the east]—as well as the second direction, the third, & the fourth—with an awareness imbued with good will. Thus he keeps pervading above, below, & all around, everywhere & in every respect the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will: abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.

“He keeps pervading the first direction—as well as the second direction, the third, & the fourth—with an awareness imbued with compassion... empathetic joy... equanimity. Thus he keeps pervading above, below, & all around, everywhere & in every respect the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with equanimity: abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.

“Now, Kālāmas, one who is a disciple of the noble ones—his mind thus free

from hostility, free from ill will, undefiled, & pure—acquires four assurances in the here & now:

“If there is a world after death, if there is the fruit of actions rightly & wrongly done, then this is the basis by which, with the breakup of the body, after death, I will reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world.’ This is the first assurance he acquires.

“But if there is no world after death, if there is no fruit of actions rightly & wrongly done, then here in the present life I look after myself with ease—free from hostility, free from ill will, free from trouble.’ This is the second assurance he acquires.

“If evil is done through acting, still I have willed no evil for anyone. Having done no evil action, from where will suffering touch me?’ This is the third assurance he acquires.

“But if no evil is done through acting, then I can assume myself pure in both respects.’ This is the fourth assurance he acquires.

“One who is a disciple of the noble ones—his mind thus free from hostility, free from ill will, undefiled, & pure—acquires these four assurances in the here & now.”

“So it is, Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone. One who is a disciple of the noble ones—his mind thus free from hostility, free from ill will, undefiled, & pure—acquires [these] four assurances in the here & now...”

“Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. We go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. May the Blessed One remember us as lay followers who have gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life.” — AN 3:66

§ 150. As he was seated to one side, the brahman Piṅgalakoccha said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, these contemplatives & brahmans, each with his group, each with his community, each the teacher of his group, an honored leader, well-regarded by people at large—i.e., Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta, & the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta: Do they all have direct knowledge as they themselves claim, or do they all not have direct knowledge, or do some of them have direct knowledge and some of them not?”

“Enough, brahman. Put this question aside. I will teach you the Dhamma. Listen and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” the brahman Piṅgalakoccha responded to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One said, [here the Buddha gives the similes of the men seeking heartwood who come to a tree possessing heartwood. One of them goes home taking the branches & leaves, another the outer bark, another the inner bark, another the sapwood, and only one of them takes the heartwood. The Buddha then compares these people respectively, with those who, in search of the end of suffering, content themselves with gain, offerings, & fame; with consummation of virtue; with consummation of concentration; with consummation of knowledge & vision; and the person who rests content with none of those, but strives for qualities that are higher & more sublime.]

“And which, brahman, are the qualities that are higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision?”

“There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure

born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure & stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite space,’ he enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, (perceiving,) ‘Infinite consciousness,’ he enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) ‘There is nothing,’ he enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, he enters & remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And, having seen [that] with discernment, his fermentations are completely ended. This too is a quality higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“These are the qualities higher & more sublime than knowledge & vision.

“I tell you, brahman, that this person is like the man who, in need of heartwood, seeking heartwood, goes in search of heartwood and comes to a great tree standing possessed of heartwood, cuts away just the heartwood and returns taking it with him, knowing that it is heartwood. Whatever purpose he had for heartwood, that purpose will be served.

“Brahman, this holy life doesn’t have as its reward gain, offerings, & fame, doesn’t have as its reward consummation of virtue, doesn’t have as its reward consummation of concentration, doesn’t have as its reward consummation of knowledge & vision, but the unprovoked awareness-release: That is the purpose of this holy life, that is its heartwood, that its final end.” — MN 30

§ 151. Subhadda the wanderer went to Upavattana, the Mallans’ sal-grove, and on arrival said to Ven. Ānanda, “I have heard the elder wanderers, teachers of teachers, saying that only once in a long, long time do Tathāgatas—arahants, rightly self-awakened—appear in the world. Tonight, in the last watch of the night, the total unbinding of Gotama the contemplative will occur. Now there is

a doubt that has arisen in me, but I have faith that he could teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I might abandon that doubt. It would be good, Ven. Ānanda, if you would let me see him."

When this was said, Ven. Ānanda said to him, "Enough, friend Subhadda. Don't bother the Blessed One. The Blessed One is tired."

For a second time... For a third time, Subhadda the wanderer said to Ven. Ānanda, "...It would be good, Ven. Ānanda, if you would let me see him."

For a third time, Ven. Ānanda said to him, "Enough, friend Subhadda. Don't bother the Blessed One. The Blessed One is tired."

Now, the Blessed One heard the exchange between Ven. Ānanda & Subhadda the wanderer, and so he said to Ven. Ānanda, "Enough, Ānanda. Don't stand in his way. Let him see the Tathāgata. Whatever he asks me will all be for the sake of knowledge, and not to be bothersome. And whatever I answer when asked, he will quickly understand."

So Ven. Ānanda said to Subhadda the wanderer, "Go ahead, friend Subhadda. The Blessed One gives you his leave."

Then Subhadda went to the Blessed One and exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, these contemplatives & brahmans, each with his group, each with his community, each the teacher of his group, an honored leader, well-regarded by people at large— i.e., Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta, & the Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta: Do they all have direct knowledge as they themselves claim, or do they all not have direct knowledge, or do some of them have direct knowledge and some of them not?"

"Enough, Subhadda. Put this question aside. I will teach you the Dhamma. Listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

"Yes, lord," Subhadda responded to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One said, "In any Dhamma & Vinaya where the noble eightfold path is not found, no contemplative of the first... second... third... fourth order [stream-winner, once-returned, non-returned, or arahant] is found. But in any Dhamma & Vinaya where the noble eightfold path *is* found, contemplatives of the first... second... third... fourth order *are* found. The noble eightfold path is found in this Dhamma & Vinaya, and right here there are contemplatives of the first... second... third... fourth order. Other teachings are empty of knowledgeable contemplatives. And if the monks dwell rightly, this world will not be empty of arahants." — DN 16

CHAPTER EIGHT

Questions Put Aside: II

READINGS

AGNOSTICISM

§ 152. “Monks, there are some contemplatives & brahmans who, being asked questions regarding this or that, resort to verbal contortions, to eel-like wriggling, on four grounds.... There is the case of a certain contemplative or brahman who does not discern as it actually is that ‘This is skillful,’ or that ‘This is unskillful.’ The thought occurs to him, ‘I don’t discern as it actually is that “This is skillful,” or that “This is unskillful.” If I... were to declare that “This is skillful,” or that “This is unskillful,” desire, passion, aversion, or irritation would occur to me; that would be a falsehood for me. Whatever would be a falsehood for me would be a distress for me. Whatever would be a distress for me would be an obstacle for me.’ So, out of fear of falsehood, a loathing for falsehood, he does not declare that ‘This is skillful,’ or that ‘This is unskillful.’ Being asked questions regarding this or that, he resorts to verbal contortions, to eel-like wriggling: ‘I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not.’

[The second case is virtually identical with the first, substituting ‘clinging’ for ‘falsehood.’]

[The third case:] “There is the case of a certain contemplative or brahman who does not discern as it actually is that ‘This is skillful,’ or that ‘This is unskillful’.... ‘If I, not discerning as it actually is that “This is skillful,” or that “This is unskillful,” were to declare that “This is skillful,” or that “This is unskillful”—There are contemplatives & brahmans who are pundits, subtle, skilled in debate, who prowl about like hair-splitting marksmen, as it were, shooting (philosophical) view-standpoints to pieces with their dialectic. They might cross-question me, press me for reasons, rebuke me. I might not be able to stand my ground; that would be a distress for me... an obstacle for me.’ So, out of a fear for questioning, a loathing for questioning... he resorts to verbal contortions, to eel-like wriggling....

[The fourth case:] “There is the case of a certain contemplative or brahman who is dull & exceedingly stupid. Out of dullness & exceeding stupidity, he—being asked questions regarding this or that—resorts to verbal contortions, to eel-like wriggling: ‘If you ask me if there exists another world [after death], if I thought that there exists another world, would I declare that to you? I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not. If you asked me if there isn’t another world... both is & isn’t... neither is nor isn’t... if there are beings who transmigrate... if there aren’t... both are & aren’t... neither are nor aren’t... if the Tathāgata exists after death... doesn’t... both... neither... I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not.’” — *DN 1*

§ 153. “Well then—knowing in what way, seeing in what way, does one without delay put an end to fermentations? There is the case where an ordinary

uninstructed 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 to be the self. That assumption is a fabrication. Now, what is the cause, what is the origination, what is the birth, what is the coming-into-existence of that fabrication? To an ordinary uninstructed person, touched by that which is felt born of contact with ignorance, craving arises. That fabrication is born of that. And that fabrication is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. That craving.... That feeling.... That contact... That ignorance is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. It's by knowing & seeing in this way that one without delay puts an end to fermentations.

[The same analysis is then applied to a wide range of views about the existence & non-existence of the self, down to:]

“He doesn't assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form, or feeling to be the self, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling, or perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception, or fabrications to be the self, or the self as possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications, or consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness, nor does he have the [eternalist] view, 'This self is the same as the cosmos. This I will be after death, constant, lasting, eternal, not subject to change,' nor does he have the [annihilationist] view, 'I would not be, neither would there be what is mine. I will not be, neither will there be what is mine,' *but he is doubtful & uncertain, having come to no conclusion with regard to the true Dhamma. That doubt, uncertainty, & coming-to-no-conclusion is a fabrication.* [Italics added.]

“What is the cause, what is the origination, what is the birth, what is the coming-into-existence of that fabrication? To an ordinary uninstructed person, touched by that which is felt born of contact with ignorance, craving arises. That fabrication is born of that. And that fabrication is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. That craving.... That feeling.... That contact.... That ignorance is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. It's by knowing & seeing in this way that one without delay puts an end to fermentations.” — SN 22:81

INCONCEIVABLES: KAMMA & THE WORLD

§ 154. “There are these four inconceivables that are not to be conjectured about, that would bring madness & vexation to anyone who conjectured about them. Which four?

“The Buddha-range of the Buddhas [i.e., the range of powers a Buddha develops as a result of becoming a Buddha] is an inconceivable that is not to be conjectured about, that would bring madness & vexation to anyone who conjectured about it.

“The jhāna-range of a person in jhāna [i.e., the range of powers that one may obtain while absorbed in jhāna]....

“The [precise working out of the] results of kamma....

“Conjecture about [the origin, extent, etc., of] the cosmos is an inconceivable that is not to be conjectured about, that would bring madness & vexation to anyone who conjectured about it.

“These are the four inconceivables that are not to be conjectured about, that would bring madness & vexation to anyone who conjectured about them.” — AN 4:77

§ 155. “From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. What do you think, monks? Which is greater, the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—or the water in the four great oceans?”

“As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the tears we have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans.”

“Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me.

“This is the greater: the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans.

“Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

“Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father... the death of a brother... the death of a sister... the death of a son... the death of a daughter... loss with regard to relatives... loss with regard to wealth... loss with regard to disease. The tears you have shed over loss with regard to disease while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

“Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries—enough to become disenchanted with all fabricated things, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released.” — SN 15:3

§ 156. Then two brahman cosmologists went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, Pūraṇa Kassapa—all-knowing, all-seeing—claims exhaustive knowledge & vision: ‘Whether I am standing or walking, awake or asleep, continual, unflagging knowledge & vision is established within me.’ He says, ‘I dwell with infinite knowledge, knowing & seeing the finite cosmos.’ Yet Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta—all-knowing, all-seeing—also claims exhaustive knowledge & vision: ‘Whether I am standing or walking, awake or asleep, continual, unflagging knowledge & vision is established within me.’ He says, ‘I dwell with infinite knowledge, knowing & seeing the infinite cosmos.’ Of these two speakers of knowledge, these two who contradict each other, which is telling the truth, and which is lying?”

“Enough, brahmans. Put this question aside. I will teach you the Dhamma.

Listen and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” the brahmins responded to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One said, “Suppose that there were four men standing at the four directions, endowed with supreme speed & stride. Like that of a strong archer—well-trained, a practiced hand, a practiced sharp-shooter—shooting a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree: Such would be the speed with which they were endowed. As far as the east sea is from the west: Such would be the stride with which they were endowed. Then the man standing at the eastern direction would say, ‘I, by walking, will reach the end of the cosmos.’ He—with a one-hundred year life, a one-hundred year span—would spend one hundred years traveling—apart from the time spent on eating, drinking, chewing & tasting, urinating & defecating, and sleeping to fight off weariness—but without reaching the end of the cosmos he would die along the way. [Similarly with the men standing at the western, southern, & northern directions.] Why is that? I tell you, it isn’t through that sort of traveling that the end of the cosmos is known, seen, or reached. But at the same time, I tell you that there is no making an end of suffering & stress without reaching the end of the cosmos.

“These five strings of sensuality are, in the Vinaya of the noble ones, called the cosmos. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. These are the five strings of sensuality that, in the Vinaya of the noble ones, are called the cosmos.

“There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is called a monk who, coming to the end of the cosmos, remains at the end of the cosmos. Others say of him, ‘He is encompassed in the cosmos; he has not escaped from the cosmos.’ And I too say of him, ‘He is encompassed in the cosmos; he has not escaped from the cosmos.’

[Similarly with the second, third, & fourth jhānas, and with the attainment of the dimensions of the infinitude of space, the infinitude of consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception [§150].]

“Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he enters & remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. And, having seen [that] with discernment, his fermentations are completely ended. This is called a monk who, coming to the end of the cosmos, remains at the end of the cosmos, having crossed over attachment in the cosmos.” — AN 9:38 [See also §79]

§ 157. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī, in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then Rohitassa, the son of a deva, in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta’s Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he stood to one side. As he was standing there he said to the Blessed One: “Is it possible, lord, by traveling, to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away or reappear?”

“I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.”

“How amazing, lord! How astounding!—how well that has been said by the Blessed One: ‘I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or

reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn't take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.' Once I was a seer named Rohitassa, a student of Bhoja, a powerful sky-walker. My speed was as fast as that of a strong archer—well-trained, a practiced hand, a practiced sharp-shooter—shooting a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree. My stride stretched as far as the east sea is from the west. To me, endowed with such speed, such a stride, there came the desire: 'I will go traveling to the end of the cosmos.' I—with a one-hundred year life, a one-hundred year span—spent one hundred years traveling—apart from the time spent on eating, drinking, chewing & tasting, urinating & defecating, and sleeping to fight off weariness—but without reaching the end of the cosmos I died along the way. So it's amazing, lord; it's astounding—how well that has been said by the Blessed One: 'I tell you, friend, that it isn't possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn't take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.'"

[When this was said, the Blessed One responded:] "I tell you, friend, that it isn't possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn't take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear. But at the same time, I tell you that there is no making an end of suffering & stress without reaching the end of the cosmos. Yet it is just within this fathom-long body, with its perception & intellect, that I declare that there is the cosmos, the origination of the cosmos, the cessation of the cosmos, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of the cosmos." — AN 4:45

§ 158. [Ven. Ānanda:] "Concerning the brief statement made by the Blessed One, after which he entered his dwelling without expounding the detailed meaning—i.e., 'I don't say that the end of the cosmos is to be known, seen, & reached by traveling. But neither do I say that there is a making an end of stress without having reached the end of the cosmos'—I understand the detailed meaning of this statement to be this:

"That by means of which one has a perception of cosmos, a concept of cosmos with regard to the cosmos: That, in the Vinaya of a noble one, is called the 'cosmos.' Now, by means of what does one have a perception of cosmos, a concept of cosmos with regard to the cosmos? By means of the eye... the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the intellect one has a perception of cosmos, a concept of cosmos with regard to the cosmos." — SN 35:116

§ 159. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "'The cosmos, the cosmos [*loka*],' it is said. In what respect does the word 'cosmos' apply?

"Insofar as it disintegrates [*lujjati*], monk, it is called the 'cosmos.' Now, what disintegrates? The eye disintegrates. Forms disintegrate. Consciousness at the eye disintegrates. Contact at the eye disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too disintegrates.

"The ear disintegrates. Sounds disintegrate....

"The nose disintegrates. Aromas disintegrate....

"The tongue disintegrates. Tastes disintegrate....

"The body disintegrates. Tactile sensations disintegrate....

"The intellect disintegrates. Ideas disintegrate. Consciousness at the intellect disintegrates. Contact at the intellect disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect—experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—that too disintegrates.

“Insofar as it disintegrates, it is called the ‘cosmos.’” — *SN 35:82*

§ 160. At Sāvattḥi. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: “I will teach you the origination of the cosmos & the ending of the cosmos. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

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

The Blessed One said, “And what is the origination of the cosmos? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises eye-consciousness. The meeting of the three is 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. This is the origination of the cosmos.

“Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises ear-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises nose-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises tongue-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises body-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the intellect & qualities there arises intellect-consciousness. The meeting of the three is 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. This is the origination of the cosmos.

“And what is the ending of the cosmos? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises eye-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. Now, from the remainderless cessation & fading away of that very 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 ending of the cosmos.

“Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises ear-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises nose-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises tongue-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises body-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact.... Dependent on the intellect & qualities there arises intellect-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. Now, from the remainderless cessation & fading away of that very 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 ending of the cosmos.” — *SN 12:44*

§ 161. “Then the monk attained to such a state of concentration that the way leading to the gods of Brahmā’s retinue appeared in his centered mind. So he approached the gods of Brahmā’s retinue and, on arrival, asked them, ‘Friends, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the gods of Brahmā’s retinue said to the monk, ‘We also don’t know where the four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder. But there is Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror Unconquered, the All-Seeing, Wielder of Power, Sovereign Lord, Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. He is higher and more sublime than we. He should know where the four great elements... cease without remainder.’

“‘But where, friends, is the Great Brahmā now?’

“‘Monk, we also don’t know where Brahmā is or in what way Brahmā is. But when signs appear, light shines forth, and a radiance appears, Brahmā will appear. For these are the portents of Brahmā’s appearance: light shines forth and a radiance appears.’

“Then it was not long before the Great Brahmā appeared.

“So the monk approached the Great Brahmā and, on arrival, said, ‘Friend, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the Great Brahmā said to the monk, ‘I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror Unconquered, the All-Seeing, Wielder of Power, Sovereign Lord, Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be.’

“A second time, the monk said to the Great Brahmā, ‘Friend, I didn’t ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror Unconquered, the All-Seeing, Wielder of Power, Sovereign Lord, Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. I asked you where these four great elements... cease without remainder.’

“A second time, the Great Brahmā said to the monk, ‘I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror Unconquered, the All-Seeing, Wielder of Power, Sovereign Lord, Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be.’

“A third time, the monk said to the Great Brahmā, ‘Friend, I didn’t ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror Unconquered, the All-Seeing, Wielder of Power, Sovereign Lord, Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. I asked you where these four great elements... cease without remainder.’

“Then the Great Brahmā, taking the monk by the arm and leading him off to one side, said to him, ‘These gods of Brahmā’s retinue believe, “There is nothing that the Great Brahmā does not know. There is nothing that the Great Brahmā does not see. There is nothing of which the Great Brahmā is unaware. There is nothing that the Great Brahmā has not realized.” That is why I did not say in their presence that I too don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. So you have acted wrongly, acted incorrectly, in bypassing the Blessed One in search of an answer to this question elsewhere. Go right back to the Blessed One and, on arrival, ask him this question. However he answers it, you should take it to heart.’

“Then—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—the monk disappeared from the Brahmā world and immediately appeared in front of me. Having bowed down to me, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to me, ‘Venerable sir, where do these four great elements—the

earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?”

“When this was said, I said to him, ‘Once, monk, some sea-faring merchants took a shore-sighting bird and set sail in their ship. When they could not see the shore, they released the shore-sighting bird. It flew to the east, south, west, north, straight up, and to all the intermediate points of the compass. If it saw the shore in any direction, it flew there. If it did not see the shore in any direction, it returned right back to the ship. In the same way, monk, having gone as far as the Brahmā world in search of an answer to your question, you have come right back to my presence.

“Your question should not be phrased in this way: ‘Where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’ Instead, it should be phrased like this:

“Where do water, earth, fire, & wind
have no footing?
Where are long & short,
coarse & fine,
fair & foul,
name & form
brought to an end?

“And the answer to that is:

“Consciousness without surface,¹
without end,
luminous all around:
Here water, earth, fire, & wind
have no footing.
Here long & short
coarse & fine
fair & foul
name & form
are all brought to an end.
With the cessation of consciousness
each is here brought to an end.” — *DN 11*

NOTE: 1. For a discussion of this term, see §205, note 4.

THE BUDDHA’S SILENCE

§ 162. Then Vacchagotta the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, he asked the Blessed One: “Now then, Venerable Gotama, is there a self?”

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

“Then is there no self?”

A second time, the Blessed One was silent.

Then Vacchagotta the wanderer got up from his seat and left.

Then, not long after Vacchagotta the wanderer had left, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Why, lord, did the Blessed One not answer when asked a question by Vacchagotta the wanderer?”

“Ānanda, if I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self—

were to answer that there is a self, that would be in company with those contemplatives & brahmans who are exponents of eternalism [see Appendix Two]. If I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self—were to answer that there is no self, that would be in company with those contemplatives & brahmans who are exponents of annihilationism. If I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self—were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?"

"No, lord."

"And if I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self—were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered Vacchagotta would become even more bewildered: 'Does the self I used to have now not exist?'" — SN 44:10

§ 163. Then Uttiya the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One,

"Master Gotama, is it the case that *'The cosmos is eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless?'*"

"Uttiya, I haven't declared that *'The cosmos is eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.'*"

"Very well then, Master Gotama, is it the case that: *'The cosmos is not eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless?'*"

"Uttiya, I haven't declared that *'The cosmos is not eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.'*"

"Very well then, Master Gotama, is it the case that *'The cosmos is finite... ' ... 'The cosmos is infinite... ' ... 'The soul is the same thing as the body... ' ... 'The soul is one thing and the body another... ' ... 'After death a Tathāgata exists... ' ... 'After death a Tathāgata does not exist... ' ... 'After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist... ' ... 'After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless?'*"

"Uttiya, I haven't declared that *'After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.'*"

"But, Master Gotama, on being asked, 'Is it the case that *"The cosmos is eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless?"*' you inform me, 'Uttiya, I haven't declared that *"The cosmos is eternal: Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless."*' On being asked, 'Is it the case that *"The cosmos is not eternal... " ... "The cosmos is finite... " ... "The cosmos is infinite... " ... "The soul is the same thing as the body... " ... "The soul is one thing and the body another... " ... "After death a Tathāgata exists... " ... "After death a Tathāgata does not exist... " ... "After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist... " ... "After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless?"*' you inform me, 'Uttiya, I haven't declared that *"After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless."*' Now is there anything you have declared?"

"Uttiya, having directly known it, I teach the Dhamma to my disciples for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding."

"And, Master Gotama, when having directly known it, you teach the Dhamma to your disciples for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding, will all the

cosmos be led (to release), or a half of it, or a third?"

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Ānanda: "Don't let Uttiya the wanderer acquire the evil view-standpoint that, 'When I asked him an all-encompassing question, Gotama the contemplative faltered and didn't reply. Perhaps he was unable to.' That would be for his long-term harm & suffering." So he said to Uttiya, "Very well then, my friend, I will give you an analogy, for there are cases where it is through the use of analogy that intelligent people can understand the meaning of what is being said.

"Suppose that there were a royal frontier city with strong ramparts, strong walls & arches, and a single gate. In it would be a wise, competent, & knowledgeable gatekeeper to keep out those he didn't know and to let in those he did. Walking along the path encircling the city, he wouldn't see a crack or an opening in the walls big enough for even a cat to slip through. Although he wouldn't know that 'So-and-so many creatures enter or leave the city,' he would know this: 'Whatever large creatures enter or leave the city all enter or leave it through this gate.'

"In the same way, the Tathāgata isn't concerned with whether all the cosmos or half of it or a third of it will be led (to release) by means of that (Dhamma). But he does know this: 'All those who have been led, are being led, or will be led (to release) from the cosmos have done so, are doing so, or will do so after having abandoned the five hindrances—those defilements of awareness that weaken discernment—having well-established their minds in the four frames of reference, and having developed, as they have come to be, the seven factors for awakening. When you asked the Blessed One this question, you had already asked it in another way. That's why he didn't respond.'" — *AN 10:95*

QUESTIONS OF INAPPROPRIATE ATTENTION

§ 164. "Monks, I will teach you dependent co-arising & dependently co-arisen phenomena. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak....

"Now, what is dependent co-arising? From birth as a requisite condition comes aging-&-death. Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands—this regularity of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma, this this/that conditionality. The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, makes it plain, & says, 'Look.' From birth as a requisite condition comes aging-&-death.

[Similarly down through the causal stream to:]

"From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands—this regularity of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma, this this/that conditionality. The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, makes it plain, & says, 'Look.' From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. What's there in this way is a reality, not an unreality, not other than what it seems, conditioned by this/that. This is called dependent co-arising.

"And what are dependently co-arisen phenomena? Aging-&-death is a dependently co-arisen phenomenon: inconstant, compounded, dependently co-arisen, subject to ending, subject to passing away, subject to fading, subject to cessation.

[Similarly down through the causal stream to:]

"Ignorance is a dependently co-arisen phenomenon: inconstant, compounded, dependently co-arisen, subject to ending, subject to passing away, subject to fading, subject to cessation. These are called dependently co-arisen phenomena.

"When a disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising & these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they have come to be, 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 have come to be." — SN 12:20

§ 165. "Good, monks. Just as you say that, so do I: When this isn't, that isn't. From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that. In other words, from the cessation of 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.

"Now, knowing thus and seeing thus, would you run after the past, thinking, '*Were we in the past? Were we not in the past? What were we in the past? How were we in the past? Having been what, what were we in the past?*'"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you run after the future, thinking, '*Shall we be in the future? Shall we not be in the future? What shall we be in the future? How shall we be in the future? Having been what, what shall we be in the future?*'"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you 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?*'"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you say, 'The Teacher is our respected mentor. We speak thus out of respect for the Teacher?'"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you say, 'The Contemplative says this. We speak thus in line with the Contemplative's words?'"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you dedicate yourselves another teacher?"

"No, lord."

"Knowing thus and seeing thus, would you return to the observances, grand

ceremonies, & auspicious rites of common contemplatives & brahmans as having any essence?"

"No, lord."

"Is it the case that you speak simply in line with what you have known, seen, & understood for yourselves?"

"Yes, lord."

"Good, monks. You have been guided by me in this Dhamma which is to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the observant for themselves. For it has been said, 'This Dhamma is to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be by the observant for themselves,' and it was in reference to this that it was said." — *MN 38*

DEPENDENT CO-ARISING: EXTREMES AVOIDED

§ 166. [Kassapa the cloth-less ascetic:] "Now, then, Master Gotama, is pain self-made?"

"Don't say that, Kassapa," the Blessed One said.

"Then is pain other-made?"

"Don't say that, Kassapa," the Blessed One said.

"Then is pain self-made & other-made?"

"Don't say that, Kassapa," the Blessed One said.

"Then is pain, without self-making or other-making, spontaneously arisen?"

"Don't say that, Kassapa," the Blessed One said.

"Then is there no pain?"

"It's not the case that there is no pain, Kassapa. There is pain."

"Then in that case, Master Gotama doesn't know, doesn't see pain."

"It's not the case that I don't know, don't see pain, Kassapa. I do know pain. I do see pain." ...

"Then tell me about pain, Master Gotama. Teach me about pain."

"Kassapa, the statement, 'With the one who acts being the same as the one who experiences, existing from the beginning, pleasure & pain are self-made': This circles around eternalism [see Appendix Two]. And the statement, 'With the one who acts being one thing, and the one who experiences being another, existing as the one struck by the feeling': This circles around annihilationism. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.... 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 birth, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering." — *SN 12:17*

§ 167. As he was sitting there, Timbarukkha the wanderer said to the Blessed One, "Now, then, Master Gotama, are pleasure & pain self-made?"

"Don't say that, Timbarukkha," the Blessed One said.

"Then are pleasure & pain other-made?"

"Don't say that, Timbarukkha," the Blessed One said.

"Then are pleasure & pain self-made & other-made?"

"Don't say that, Timbarukkha," the Blessed One said.

"Then are pleasure & pain, without self-making or other-making,

spontaneously arisen?"

"Don't say that, Timbarukkha," the Blessed One said.

"Then is there no pleasure & pain?"

"It's not the case that there is no pleasure & pain, Timbarukkha. There is pleasure & pain."

"Then in that case, Master Gotama doesn't know, doesn't see, pleasure & pain."

"It's not the case that I don't know, don't see, pleasure & pain, Timbarukkha. I do know pleasure & pain. I do see pleasure & pain." ...

"Then tell me about pleasure & pain, Master Gotama. Teach me about pleasure & pain."

"Timbarukkha, I don't say that—with the feeling being the same as the one who feels, existing from the beginning—pleasure & pain are self-made. And I don't say that—with feeling being one thing and the one who feels another, existing as the one struck by the feeling—pleasure & pain are other-made. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.... 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 birth, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering." — SN 12:18

§ 168. "Whatever contemplatives & brahmins—teachers of kamma who declare that pleasure & pain are self-made: Even that is dependent on contact. Whatever contemplatives & brahmins—teachers of kamma who declare that pleasure & pain are other-made... self-made & other-made... without self-making or other-making, spontaneously arisen: Even that is from contact as a requisite condition.

"That any contemplatives & brahmins—teachers of kamma who declare that pleasure & pain are self-made—would be sensitive to pleasure & pain other than through contact: That isn't possible. That any contemplatives & brahmins—teachers of kamma who declare that pleasure & pain are other-made... self-made & other-made... without self-making or other-making, spontaneously arisen—would be sensitive to pleasure & pain other than through contact: That isn't possible. [Compare the final analysis in DN 1, §184]

"When there is a body, pleasure & pain arise internally with bodily intention as the cause; or when there is speech, pleasure & pain arise internally with verbal intention as the cause; or when there is intellect, pleasure & pain arise internally with intellectual intention as the cause.

"From ignorance as a requisite condition, then either of one's own accord one fabricates the bodily fabrication on account of which that pleasure & pain arise internally, or because of others one fabricates the bodily fabrication on account of which that pleasure & pain arise internally. Either alert one fabricates the bodily fabrication on account of which that pleasure & pain arise internally, or unalert one fabricates the bodily fabrication on account of which that pleasure & pain arise internally. [Similarly with verbal & intellectual fabrications.]

"Now, ignorance is bound up in these things. From the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance, there no longer exists (the sense of) the body on account of which that pleasure & pain internally arise. There no longer exists the speech... the intellect on account of which that pleasure & pain internally

arise. There no longer exists the field, the site, the dimension, or the issue on account of which that pleasure & pain internally arise.” — *SN 12:25*

§ 169. A certain brahman said to the Blessed One: “Now, then, Master Gotama: Is the one who acts the same one who experiences [the results of the act]?”

“[To say,] brahman, ‘The one who acts is the same one who experiences,’ is one extreme.”

“Then, Master Gotama, is the one who acts someone other than the one who experiences?”

“[To say,] brahman, ‘The one who acts is someone other than the one who experiences,’ is the second extreme. Avoiding both of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.... 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 birth, then aging-& death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.” — *SN 12:46*

§ 170. [Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Now tell me, Sāriputta my friend: Is aging-& death self-made or other-made or both self-made & other-made, or—without self-making or other-making—spontaneously arisen?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “It’s not the case, Koṭṭhita my friend, that aging-& death is self-made, that it is other-made, that it is both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—it’s spontaneously arisen. However, from birth as a requisite condition comes aging-& death.”

“Now tell me, friend Sāriputta: Is birth.... Is becoming.... Is clinging/sustenance... Is craving.... Is feeling.... Is contact.... Are the six sense media self-made or other-made or both self-made & other-made, or—without self-making or other-making—spontaneously arisen?”

“It’s not the case, Koṭṭhita my friend, that the six sense media are self-made, that they are other-made, that they are both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—they’re spontaneously arisen. However, from name-& form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.”

“Now tell me, friend Sāriputta: Is name-& form self-made or other-made or both self-made & other-made, or—without self-making or other-making—spontaneously arisen?”

“It’s not the case, Koṭṭhita my friend, that name-& form is self-made, that it is other-made, that it is both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—it’s spontaneously arisen. However, from consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-& form.”

“Now tell me, friend Sāriputta: Is consciousness self-made or other-made or both self-made & other-made, or—without self-making or other-making—spontaneously arisen?”

“It’s not the case, Koṭṭhita my friend, that consciousness is self-made, that it is other-made, that it is both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—it’s spontaneously arisen. However, from name-& form as a requisite condition comes consciousness.”

“Just now, friend Sāriputta, I understood your statement as, ‘It’s not the case, Koṭṭhita my friend, that name-& form is self-made, that it is other-made, that it is both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—

it's spontaneously arisen. However, from consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.' But then I understood your statement as, 'It's not the case, Kōṭṭhita my friend, that consciousness is self-made, that it is other-made, that it is both self-made & other-made, or that—without self-making or other-making—it's spontaneously arisen. However, from name-&-form as a requisite condition comes consciousness.' Now how is the meaning of these statements to be understood?"

Ven. Sāriputta: "Very well then, Kōṭṭhita my friend, I will give you an analogy; for there are cases where it is through the use of an analogy that intelligent people can understand the meaning of what is being said. It is as if two sheaves of reeds were to stand leaning against one another. In the same way, from name-&-form 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 suffering & stress.

"If one were to pull away one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall; if one were to pull away the other, the first one would fall. In the same way, from the cessation of name-&-form 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 suffering & stress." — *SN 12:67*

§ 171. Then a brahman cosmologist went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Now, then, Master Gotama, does everything exist?"

"Everything exists' is the senior form of cosmology, brahman."

"Then, Master Gotama, does everything not exist?"

"Everything does not exist' is the second form of cosmology, brahman."

"Then is everything a Oneness?"

"Everything is a Oneness' is the third form of cosmology, brahman."

"Then is everything a plurality?"

"Everything is a plurality is the fourth form of cosmology, brahman.

Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.... 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 birth, then aging-&-

death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.” — SN 12:48

§ 172. Then Ven. Kaccāyana Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “Lord, ‘Right view, right view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right view?”

“By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is supported by [takes as its object] a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world [cosmos] as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world doesn’t occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘existence’ with reference to the world doesn’t occur to one.

“By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings [sustenances], & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on ‘my self.’ He has no doubt or uncertainty that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It’s to this extent, Kaccāyana, that there is right view.

“‘Everything exists’: That is one extreme. ‘Everything doesn’t exist’: That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications....” — SN 12:15

§ 173. Then Bāhiya of the Bark-cloth, hurriedly leaving Jeta’s Grove and entering Sāvattthī, saw the Blessed One going for alms in Sāvattthī—calm, calming, his senses at peace, his mind at peace, tranquil & poised in the ultimate sense, accomplished, trained, guarded, his senses restrained, a Great One [*nāga*]. Seeing him, he approached the Blessed One and, on reaching him, threw himself down, with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and said, “Teach me the Dhamma, O Blessed One! Teach me the Dhamma, O One Well-Gone, that will be for my long-term benefit & happiness.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to him, “This is not the time, Bāhiya. We have entered the town for alms.”

A second time, Bāhiya said to the Blessed One: “But it is hard to know for sure what dangers there may be for the Blessed One’s life, or what dangers there may be for mine. Teach me the Dhamma, O Blessed One! Teach me the Dhamma, O One Well-Gone, that will be for my long-term benefit & happiness.”

A second time, the Blessed One said to him, “This is not the time, Bāhiya. We have entered the town for alms.”

A third time, Bāhiya said to the Blessed One: “But it is hard to know for sure what dangers there may be for the Blessed One’s life, or what dangers there may be for mine. Teach me the Dhamma, O Blessed One! Teach me the Dhamma, O One Well-Gone, that will be for my long-term benefit & happiness.”

“Then, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are

neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

Through hearing this brief explanation of the Dhamma from the Blessed One, the mind of Bāhiya of the Bark-cloth right then and there was released from fermentations through lack of clinging/sustenance. Having exhorted Bāhiya of the Bark-cloth with this brief explanation of the Dhamma, the Blessed One left. — *Ud 1:10*

DEPENDENT CO-ARISING: INVALID QUESTIONS

§ 174. "Monks, there are these four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical food, gross or refined; contact as the second; intellectual intention the third; and consciousness the fourth. These are the four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born."

When this was said, Ven. Moliya Phagguna said to the Blessed One, "Lord, who feeds on the consciousness-nutriment?"

"Not a valid question," the Blessed One said. "I don't say 'feeds.' If I were to say 'feeds,' then 'Who feeds on the consciousness-nutriment?' would be a valid question. But I don't say that. When I don't say that, the valid question is, 'Consciousness-nutriment for what?' And the valid answer is, 'Consciousness-nutriment for the production of future coming-into-being. When that has come into being and exists, then the six sense media. From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.'"

"Lord, who makes contact?"

"Not a valid question," the Blessed One said. "I don't say 'makes contact.' If I were to say 'makes contact,' then 'Who makes contact?' would be a valid question. But I don't say that. When I don't say that, the valid question is, 'From what as a requisite condition comes contact?' And the valid answer is, 'From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.'"

"Lord, who feels?"

"Not a valid question," the Blessed One said. "I don't say 'feels.' If I were to say 'feels,' then 'Who feels?' would be a valid question. But I don't say that. When I don't say that, the valid question is, 'From what as a requisite condition comes feeling?' And the valid answer is, 'From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.'"

"Lord, who craves?"

"Not a valid question," the Blessed One said. "I don't say 'craves.' If I were to say 'craves,' then 'Who craves?' would be a valid question. But I don't say that. When I don't say that, the valid question is, 'From what as a requisite condition comes craving?' And the valid answer is, 'From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.'"

"Lord, who clings?"

"Not a valid question," the Blessed One said. "I don't say 'clings.' If I were to say 'clings,' then 'Who clings?' would be a valid question. But I don't say that. When I don't say that, the valid question is, 'From what as a requisite condition comes clinging?' And the valid answer is, 'From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging. From clinging 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."¹

“Now from the remainderless fading & 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.” — SN 12:12

NOTE: 1. An alternative translation for this exchange—and one that, in light of the topic of nutriment, might actually be more apt—is:

“Lord, who takes sustenance?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said. “I don’t say ‘takes sustenance.’ If I were to say ‘takes sustenance,’ then ‘Who takes sustenance?’ would be a valid question. But I don’t say that. When I don’t say that, the valid question is, ‘From what as a requisite condition comes sustenance?’ And the valid answer is, ‘From craving as a requisite condition comes sustenance. From 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.’”

2. This refers to the moment of awakening, when the six sense media are transcended. See §198 and §208, and the discussion of “consciousness without surface” in *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, chapter 1.

§ 175. The Blessed One said, “From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.... 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.”

When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One: “Which is the aging-&death, lord, and whose is the aging-&death?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said. “If one were to ask, ‘Which is the aging-&death, and whose is the aging-&death?’ and if one were to say, ‘Aging-&death is one thing, and the aging-&death is something/someone else’s,’ both of them would have the same meaning, even though their words would differ. When there is the view that the soul is the same as the body, there is no leading the holy life. And when there is the view that the soul is one thing and the body another, there is no leading the holy life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From birth as a requisite condition comes aging-&death.”

“Which is the birth, lord, and whose is the birth?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.”

“Which is the becoming, lord, and whose is the becoming?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From clinging as a requisite condition comes becoming.”

“Which is the clinging, lord, and whose is the clinging?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging.”

“Which is the craving, lord, and whose is the craving?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.”

“Which is the feeling, lord, and whose is the feeling?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.”

“Which is the contact, lord, and whose is the contact?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.”

“Which are the six sense media, lord, and whose are the six sense media?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.”

“Which is the name-&-form, lord, and whose is the name-&-form?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.”

“Which is the consciousness, lord, and whose is the consciousness?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said.... “From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.”

“Which are the fabrications, lord, and whose are the fabrications?”

“Not a valid question,” the Blessed One said. “If one were to ask, ‘Which are the fabrications, and whose are the fabrications?’ and if one were to say, ‘Fabrications are one thing, and these fabrications are something/someone else’s,’ both of them would have the same meaning, even though their words would differ. When there is the view that the soul is the same as the body, there is no leading the holy life. And when there is the view that the soul is one thing and the body another, there is no leading the holy life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

“Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance, every one of these writhings & wriggings & wiggings—‘Which aging-&-death, and whose aging-&-death?’ or ‘Aging-&-death is one thing, and this aging-&-death is something/someone else’s’ or ‘The soul is the same as the body,’ or ‘The soul is one thing and the body another’—are abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.

“From the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance, every one of these writhings & wriggings & wiggings—‘Which is the birth.... Which is the becoming.... Which is the clinging.... Which is the craving.... Which is the feeling.... Which is the contact.... Which are the six sense media.... Which is the name-&-form.... Which is the consciousness.... Which are the fabrications, and whose are the fabrications?’ or ‘Fabrications are one thing, and these fabrications are something/someone else’s’ or ‘The soul is the same as the body,’ or ‘The soul is one thing and the body another’—are abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.” — SN 12:35

THE TEN UNDECLARED ISSUES

§ 176. Then, when it was evening, Ven. Mālunkyaputta arose from seclusion and went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Lord, just now, as I was alone in seclusion, this train of thought arose in my awareness: ‘These view-standpoints that are undeclared, set aside, discarded by the Blessed One... I don’t approve, I don’t accept that the Blessed One has not declared them to me. I’ll go ask the Blessed One about this matter. If he declares to me that “*The cosmos is eternal,*” or “*The cosmos is not eternal,*” or “*The cosmos is finite,*” or “*The cosmos is infinite,*” or “*The soul is the same thing as the body,*” or “*The soul is one thing and the body another,*” or “*After death a Tathāgata exists,*” or “*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*” or “*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*” or that “*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*” then I will live the holy life under him. If

he doesn't declare to me that "*The cosmos is eternal*," ... or that "*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*," then I will renounce the training and return to the lower life.'

"Lord, if the Blessed One knows that '*The cosmos is eternal*,' then may he declare to me that '*The cosmos is eternal*.' If he knows that '*The cosmos is not eternal*,' then may he declare to me that '*The cosmos is not eternal*.' But if he doesn't know or see whether the cosmos is eternal or not eternal, then, in one who is unknowing & unseeing, the straightforward thing is to admit, 'I don't know. I don't see.' If he doesn't know or see whether '*After death a Tathāgata exists... does not exist... both exists & does not exist... neither exists nor does not exist*,' then, in one who is unknowing & unseeing, the straightforward thing is to admit, 'I don't know. I don't see.'"

"Māluṅkyaputta, did I ever say to you, 'Come, Māluṅkyaputta, live the holy life under me, and I will declare to you that '*The cosmos is eternal*,' or '*The cosmos is not eternal*,' or '*The cosmos is finite*,' or '*The cosmos is infinite*,' or '*The soul is the same thing as the body*,' or '*The soul is one thing and the body another*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata exists*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*?'"

"No, lord."

"And did you ever say to me, 'Lord, I will live the holy life under the Blessed One and [in return] he will declare to me that '*The cosmos is eternal*,' or '*The cosmos is not eternal*,' or '*The cosmos is finite*,' or '*The cosmos is infinite*,' or '*The soul is the same thing as the body*,' or '*The soul is one thing and the body another*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata exists*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*,' or '*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*?'"

"No, lord."

"Then that being the case, foolish man, who are you to be claiming grievances?"

"Māluṅkyaputta, if anyone were to say, 'I won't live the holy life under the Blessed One as long as he does not declare to me that "*The cosmos is eternal*," ... or that "*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*,"' the man would die and those things would still remain undeclared by the Tathāgata.

"It's just as if a man were wounded with an arrow thickly smeared with poison. His friends & companions, kinsmen & relatives would provide him with a surgeon, and the man would say, 'I won't have this arrow removed until I know whether the man who wounded me was a noble warrior, a brahman, a merchant, or a worker.' He would say, 'I won't have this arrow removed until I know the given name & clan name of the man who wounded me... until I know whether he was tall, medium, or short... until I know whether he was dark, ruddy-brown, or golden-colored... until I know his home village, town, or city... until I know whether the bow with which I was wounded was a long bow or a crossbow... until I know whether the bowstring with which I was wounded was fiber, bamboo threads, sinew, hemp, or bark... until I know whether the shaft with which I was wounded was wild or cultivated... until I know whether the feathers of the shaft with which I was wounded were those of a vulture, a stork, a hawk, a peacock, or another bird... until I know whether the shaft with which I was wounded was bound with the sinew of an ox, a water buffalo, a langur, or a monkey.' He would say, 'I won't have this arrow removed until I know whether the shaft with which I was wounded was that of a common arrow, a curved arrow, a barbed, a calf-toothed, or an oleander arrow.' The man would die and those things would still remain unknown to him.

"In the same way, if anyone were to say, 'I won't live the holy life under the

Blessed One as long as he does not declare to me that “*The cosmos is eternal,*” ... or that “*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*” the man would die and those things would still remain undeclared by the Tathāgata.

“Māluṅkyaputta, it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ there is the living of the holy life. When there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ and when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ there is still the birth, there is the aging, there is the death, there is the sorrow, lamentation, pain, despair, & distress whose destruction I make known right in the here & now.

“It’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ there is the living of the holy life. When there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ and when there is the view, ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ there is still the birth, there is the aging, there is the death, there is the sorrow, lamentation, pain, despair, & distress whose destruction I make known right in the here & now.

“It’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ there is the living of the holy life. When there is the view, ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ and when there is the view, ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ there is still the birth, there is the aging, there is the death, there is the sorrow, lamentation, pain, despair, & distress whose destruction I make known right in the here & now.

“It’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ there is the living of the holy life. And it’s not the case that when there is the view, ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist*’ there is the living of the holy life. When there is the view, ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*’ there is still the birth, there is the aging, there is the death, there is the sorrow, lamentation, pain, despair, & distress whose destruction I make known right in the here & now.

“So, Māluṅkyaputta, remember what is undeclared by me as undeclared, and what is declared by me as declared. And what is undeclared by me? ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ is undeclared by me. ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ is undeclared by me. ‘*The cosmos is finite*’ ... ‘*The cosmos is infinite*’ ... ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body*’ ... ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*’ ... ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*’ is undeclared by me.

“And why are they undeclared by me? Because they are not connected with the goal, are not fundamental to the holy life. They do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding. That’s why they are undeclared by me.

“And what is declared by me? ‘*This is stress,*’ is declared by me. ‘*This is the origination of stress,*’ is declared by me. ‘*This is the cessation of stress,*’ is declared by me. ‘*This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress,*’ is declared by me. And why are they declared by me? Because they are connected with the goal, are fundamental to the holy life. They lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding. That’s why they are declared by me.

“So, Māluṅkyaputta, remember what is undeclared by me as undeclared,

and what is declared by me as declared.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Māluṅkyaputta delighted in the Blessed One’s words. — MN 63

§ 177. On one occasion Ven. Ānanda was staying near Rājagaha, at Tapoda monastery. Then, as night was ending, he got up & went to the Tapoda Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. Having bathed his limbs and having gotten out of the springs, he stood wearing only his lower robe, drying his limbs. Kokanuda the wanderer, as night was ending, also got up & went to the Tapoda Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. He saw Ven. Ānanda from afar, and on seeing him said to him, “Who are you, my friend?”

“I am a monk, my friend.”

“Which kind of monk?”

“A son-of-the-Sakyan contemplative.”

“I would like to ask you about a certain point, if you would give me leave to pose a question.”

“Go ahead and ask. Having heard [your question], I’ll inform you.”

“How is it, my friend: *‘The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’* Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Very well then: *‘The cosmos is not eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’* Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Very well then: *‘The cosmos is finite...’ ... ‘The cosmos is infinite...’ ... ‘The soul is the same thing as the body...’ ... ‘The soul is one thing and the body another...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata exists...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’* Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Then in that case, do you not know or see?”

“No, my friend. It’s not the case that I don’t know, I don’t see. I do know. I do see.”

“But on being asked, ‘How is it, my friend: *‘The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’* Is this the sort of view you have?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.’ On being asked, ‘Very well then: *‘The cosmos is not eternal...’ ... ‘The cosmos is finite...’ ... ‘The cosmos is infinite...’ ... ‘The soul is the same thing as the body...’ ... ‘The soul is one thing and the body another...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata exists...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’* Is this the sort of view you have?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.’ But on being asked, ‘Then in that case, do you not know or see?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend. It’s not the case that I don’t know or see. I do know. I do see.’ Now, how is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“*‘The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless,’* is a view-standpoint. *‘The cosmos is not eternal...’ ... ‘The cosmos is finite...’ ... ‘The cosmos is infinite...’ ... ‘The soul is the same thing as the body...’ ... ‘The soul is one thing and the body another...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata exists...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist...’ ... ‘After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless,’* is a view-standpoint. The extent to which there are view-

standpoints, view-stances, the taking up of views, obsessions with views, the cause of views, & the uprooting of views: that's what I know. That's what I see. Knowing that, I say 'I know.' Seeing that, I say 'I see.' Why should I say 'I don't know, I don't see'? I do know. I do see."

"What is your name, my friend? What do your fellows in the holy life call you?"

"My name is Ānanda, my friend, and that's what my fellows in the holy life call me."

"What? Have I been talking with the great teacher without realizing that he was Ven. Ānanda? Had I recognized that he was Ven. Ānanda, I would not have cross-examined him so much. May Ven. Ānanda please forgive me." — AN 10:96

§ 178. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, what is the cause, what is the reason, why uncertainty doesn't arise in an instructed disciple of the noble ones over the undeclared issues?"

"Because of the cessation of views, monk, uncertainty doesn't arise in an instructed disciple of the noble ones over the undeclared issues. The view-standpoint, '*After death a Tathāgata exists*,' the view-standpoint, '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*,' the view-standpoint, '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*,' the view-standpoint, '*After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist*': The uninstructed run-of-the-mill person doesn't discern view, doesn't discern the origination of view, doesn't discern the cessation of view, doesn't discern the path of practice leading to the cessation of view, and so for him that view grows. He is not freed from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, and despairs. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"But the instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns view, discerns the origination of view, discerns the cessation of view, discerns the path of practice leading to the cessation of view, and so for him that view ceases. He is freed from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, and despairs. He is freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"Thus knowing, thus seeing, the instructed disciple of the noble ones doesn't declare that '*After death a Tathāgata exists*,' doesn't declare that '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist*,' doesn't declare that '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*,' doesn't declare that '*After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist*.' Thus knowing, thus seeing, he is thus of a nature not to declare the undeclared issues. Thus knowing, thus seeing, he isn't paralyzed, doesn't quake, doesn't shiver or shake over the undeclared issues.

"'*After death a Tathāgata exists*'—this craving-standpoint, this perception-standpoint, this product of conceiving, this product of objectification, this clinging-standpoint: That's [an expression of] anguish.¹ '*After death a Tathāgata doesn't exist*': That's anguish. '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist*': That's anguish. '*After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist*': That's anguish.

"The uninstructed run-of-the-mill person doesn't discern anguish, doesn't discern the origination of anguish, doesn't discern the cessation of anguish, doesn't discern the path of practice leading to the cessation of anguish, and so for him that anguish grows. He is not freed from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, and despairs. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

"But the instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns anguish, discerns the

origination of anguish, discerns the cessation of anguish, discerns the path of practice leading to the cessation of anguish, and so for him that anguish ceases. He is freed from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, and despairs. He is freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

“Thus knowing, thus seeing, the instructed disciple of the noble ones doesn’t declare that ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ doesn’t declare that ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ doesn’t declare that ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ doesn’t declare that ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist.*’ Thus knowing, thus seeing, he is thus of a nature not to declare the undeclared issues. Thus knowing, thus seeing, he isn’t paralyzed, doesn’t quake, doesn’t shiver or shake over the undeclared issues.” — AN 7:51

NOTE: 1. “ANGUISH” HERE TRANSLATES VIPPAṬISĀRA, WHICH IS USUALLY RENDERED INTO ENGLISH AS “REMORSE” OR “REGRET.” HERE, HOWEVER, THE FEELING OF VIPPAṬISĀRA RELATES TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE, RATHER THAN THE PAST, AND SO NEITHER REMORSE NOR REGRET ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE CONTEXT. THE ANGUISH ALLUDED TO IN THIS PASSAGE IS BASED EITHER ON THE FEAR THAT AWAKENING WOULD ENTAIL AN END TO EXISTENCE OR ON THE CONTRARY FEAR THAT IT WOULDN’T.

§ 179. When the night had passed, the senior monks put on their robes in the early morning and—taking their bowls & outer robes—went to Citta’s residence. There they sat down on the appointed seats. Citta the householder went to them and, having bowed down to them, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the most senior monk:

“Venerable sir, concerning the various views that arise in the world: ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ or ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ or ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist;*’ these along with the sixty-two views mentioned in the Brahmajāla [DN 1: §152, §184]—when what is present do these views come into being, and when what is absent do they not come into being?”

When this was said, the senior monk was silent. A second time... A third time Citta the householder asked, “Concerning the various views that arise in the world... when what is present do they come into being, and what is absent do they not come into being?” A third time the senior monk was silent.

Now on that occasion Ven. Isidatta was the most junior of all the monks in that Community. Then he said to the senior monk, “Allow me, venerable sir, to answer Citta the householder’s question.”

“Go ahead & answer it, friend Isidatta.”

“Now, householder, are you asking this: ‘Concerning the various views that arise in the world... when what is present do they come into being, and what is absent do they not come into being?’”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“Concerning the various views that arise in the world, householder... when self-identity view is present, these views come into being; when self-identity view is absent, they don’t come into being.”

“But, venerable sir, how does self-identity view come into being?”

“There is the case, householder, where an ordinary uninstructed 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 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, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling. He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception. He assumes fabrications to be the self, or the self as possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications. 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 view comes into being.”

“And, venerable sir, how does self-identity view not come into being?”

“There is the case, householder, 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—doesn’t 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 doesn’t assume feeling to be the self.... He doesn’t assume perception to be the self.... He doesn’t assume fabrications to be the self.... He doesn’t 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 view doesn’t come into being.” — SN 41:3

§ 180. [Vacchagotta the wanderer:] “Now, Master Moggallāna, what is the cause, what is the reason why—when wanderers of other sects are asked in this way, they answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ or ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ or ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*’ yet when Gotama the contemplative is asked in this way, he does not answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ or ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ or ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist?*’”

[Ven. MahāMoggallāna:] “Vaccha, the members of other sects assume of the eye that ‘This is mine, this is my self, this is what I am.’ They assume of the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the intellect that ‘This is mine, this is my self, this is what I am.’ That is why, when asked in this way, they answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal*’... or that ‘*After death Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*’ But the Tathāgata, worthy and rightly self-awakened, doesn’t assume of the eye that ‘This is mine, this is my self, this is what I am.’ He doesn’t assume of the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the intellect that ‘This is mine, this is my self, this is what I am.’ That is why, when asked in this way, he does not answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal*’... or that ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*’”

Then Vacchagotta the wanderer, getting up from his seat, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he [addressed the same questions to the Blessed One and received exactly the same explanation].

“How amazing, Master Gotama! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one

another with regard to the supreme teaching! Just now, Master Gotama, I went to Moggallāna the contemplative and, on arrival, asked him about this matter, and he answered me with the same words, the same phrasing, as Master Gotama. How amazing, Master Gotama! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one another with regard to the supreme teaching!” — SN 44:7

§ 181. [Vacchagotta the wanderer:] “Now, Master Gotama, what is the cause, what is the reason why—when wanderers of other sects are asked in this way, they answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ or ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ or ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*’ yet when Master Gotama is asked in this way, he does not answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is not eternal,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is finite,*’ or ‘*The cosmos is infinite,*’ or ‘*The soul is the same thing as the body,*’ or ‘*The soul is one thing and the body another,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata exists,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist,*’ or ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,*’?”

“Vaccha, the members of other sects assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

“They assume feeling to be the self....

“They assume perception to be the self....

“They assume fabrications to be the self....

“They assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. That is why, when asked in this way, they answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal*’... or that ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*’

“But the Tathāgata, worthy and rightly self-awakened, doesn’t 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 doesn’t assume feeling to be the self....

“He doesn’t assume perception to be the self....

“He doesn’t assume fabrications to be the self....

“He doesn’t assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. That is why, when asked in this way, he does not answer that ‘*The cosmos is eternal*’... or that ‘*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.*’”

Then Vacchagotta the wanderer, getting up from his seat, went to Ven. MahāMoggallāna and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he [addressed the same questions to Ven. MahāMoggallāna and received exactly the same explanation].

“How amazing, Master Moggallāna! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one another with regard to the supreme teaching! Just now, Master Moggallāna, I went to Gotama the contemplative and, on arrival, asked him about this matter, and he answered me with the same words, the same phrasing, as Master Moggallāna. How amazing, Master Moggallāna! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one another with regard to the supreme teaching!” — SN 44:8

§ 182. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder went to the wanderers of other sects. 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 Gotama the contemplative has."

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

"Well, well. So you don't know entirely what views Gotama the contemplative 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 Gotama the contemplative 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 view-standpoint, 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 Anāthapiṇḍika 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 Anāthapiṇḍika, "*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 is the same thing as the body...*" ... "*The soul is one thing and the body another...*" ... "*After death a Tathāgata exists...*" ... "*After death a Tathāgata does not exist...*" ... "*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist...*" ... "*After death a Tathāgata 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, Anāthapiṇḍika 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 co-arisen. Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. This venerable one thus adheres to that very stress, submits himself to that very stress." [Similarly for the other view-standpoints.]

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

"Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful 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 co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. 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 co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it has come to be, I also discern the higher escape from it as it has come to be."

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words. Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, sensing 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 discussion 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 Anāthapiṇḍika the householder with a talk on Dhamma. When Anāthapiṇḍika the householder had been instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged by the Blessed One with a talk on Dhamma, he got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One and—keeping him to his right—departed. 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 sects in just the way Anāthapiṇḍika the householder has done." — AN 10:93

§ 183. Then Vacchagotta the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he asked the Blessed One, "How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The cosmos is eternal: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The cosmos is not eternal: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The cosmos is finite: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The cosmos is infinite: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The soul is the same thing as the body: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*The soul is one thing and the body another: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*After death a Tathāgata exists: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*After death a Tathāgata does not exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*After death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"Then does Master Gotama hold the view, '*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*'?"

"... no..."

"How is it, Master Gotama, when Master Gotama is asked if he holds the view, '*The cosmos is eternal...*' '*After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*,' he says '*... no...*' in each case. Seeing what drawback, then, is Master Gotama thus entirely dissociated from each of these ten view-standpoints?"

"Vaccha, the view-standpoint that '*the cosmos is eternal*' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding.

“The view-standpoint that *‘the cosmos is not eternal’* ...
 “... *‘the cosmos is finite’* ...
 “... *‘the cosmos is infinite’* ...
 “... *‘the soul is the same thing as the body’* ...
 “... *‘the soul is one thing and the body another’* ...
 “... *‘after death a Tathāgata exists’* ...
 “... *‘after death a Tathāgata does not exist’* ...
 “... *‘after death a Tathāgata both exists & does not exist’* ...
 “... *‘after death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist’* ... does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding.”

“Does Master Gotama have any view-standpoint at all?”

“A ‘view-standpoint,’ Vaccha, is something that a Tathāgata has done away with. What a Tathāgata sees is this: ‘Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is perception... such are fabrications... such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.’ Because of this, I say, a Tathāgata—with the ending, fading, cessation, renunciation, & relinquishment of all conceivings, all excogitations, all I-making & mine-making & obsessions with conceit—is, through lack of clinging/sustenance, released.” — MN 72

VIEW-STANDPOINTS FROM DN 1

§ 184. *A categorical Yes to the eternity of the cosmos:* “There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman—as a result of ardency, exertion, commitment, heedfulness, & right attention—attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he recollects his manifold past lives, i.e., ten eons of cosmic contraction & expansion, twenty... thirty... forty eons of cosmic contraction & expansion, (recollecting,) ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’ Thus he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes & details. He says, ‘The self & the cosmos are barren, stable as a mountain-peak, standing firm like a pillar. And even though beings roam, wander, fall [die], & reappear, it will stay just like that as long as eternity. Why is that? Because I... recollect my manifold past lives in their modes & details. By means of that, I know that the self & the cosmos are barren, stable as a mountain-peak, standing firm like a pillar. And even though beings roam, wander, fall [die], & reappear, there is just that which will be like that as long as eternity.’”

Another categorical Yes: “There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman is a logician, an inquirer. He states his own imagining, hammered out by logic, deduced from his inquiries: ‘The self & the cosmos are barren, stable as a mountain-peak, standing firm like a pillar. And even though beings roam, wander, fall [die], & reappear, there is just that which will be like that as long as eternity.’”

An analytical answer to the eternity/non-eternity of the cosmos: “There ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, this cosmos devolves. When the cosmos is devolving, beings for the most part head toward

the Radiant (brahmās). There they stay: mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time. Then there ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, this cosmos evolves. When the cosmos is evolving, an empty Brahmā palace appears. Then a certain being—from the exhaustion of his life span or the exhaustion of his merit—falls from the company of the Radiant and re-arises in the empty Brahmā palace. And there he still stays mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time.

“After dwelling there alone for a long time, he experiences displeasure & agitation: ‘O, if only other beings would come to this world!’

“Then other beings, through the ending of their life span or the ending of their merit, fall from the company of the Radiant and reappear in the Brahmā palace, in the company of that being. And there they still stay mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time.

“Then the thought occurs to the being who reappeared first: ‘I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. These beings were created by me. Why is that? First the thought occurred to me, “O, if only other beings would come to this world!” And thus my direction of will brought these beings to this world.’ As for the beings who reappeared later, this thought occurs to them: ‘This is Brahmā... Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. We were created by this Brahmā. Why is that? We saw that he appeared here before, while we appeared after.’ The being who reappeared first is of longer life span, more beautiful, & more influential, while the beings who reappeared later are of shorter life span, less beautiful, & less influential.

“Now, there is the possibility, monks, that a certain being, having fallen from that company, comes to this world. Having come to this world, he goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Having gone forth from the home life into homelessness, he—as a result of ardency, exertion, commitment, heedfulness, & right attention—attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he recollects that former life, but nothing beyond that. He says, ‘We were created by Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. He is constant, permanent, eternal, not subject to change, and will stay just like that as long as eternity. But we who have been created by him—inconstant, impermanent, short-lived, subject to falling—have come to this world.’”

Another analytical answer: “There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman is a logician, an inquirer. He states his own imagining, hammered out by logic, deduced from his inquiries: ‘That which is called “eye” & “ear” & “nose” & “tongue” & “body”’: That self is inconstant, impermanent, non-eternal, subject to change. But that which is called “mind” or “intellect” or “consciousness”’: That self is constant, permanent, eternal, not subject to change, and will stay just like that as long as eternity.’”

A categorical No to the eternity of the cosmos: “There are Devas called Beings without Perception. But, with the arising of perception, they fall from that company. Now, there is the possibility, monks, that a certain being, having fallen from that company, comes to this world. Having come to this world, he goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Having gone forth from the home

life into homelessness, he—as a result of ardency, exertion, commitment, heedfulness, & right attention—attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he recollects the arising of perception, but nothing beyond that. He says, “The self & the cosmos are spontaneously arisen. Why is that? Because before I wasn’t, now I am. Not having been, I sprang into being.”

Theories on the finitude/infinitude of the cosmos: “There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman—as a result of ardency, exertion, commitment, heedfulness, & right attention—attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he remains with the perception of ‘finite’ with regard to the cosmos. He says, “This cosmos is finite, encircled. Why is that? Because I... have attained the sort of awareness-concentration whereby I remain with the perception of “finite” with regard to the cosmos. By means of that, I know that the cosmos is finite, encircled....’

“There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman... attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he remains with the perception of ‘infinite’ with regard to the cosmos. He says, “This cosmos is infinite, unencircled. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is finite, encircled, are lying. This cosmos is infinite, unencircled. Why is that? Because I... have attained the sort of awareness-concentration whereby I remain with the perception of “infinite” with regard to the cosmos. By means of that, I know that the cosmos is infinite, unencircled....’

“There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman... attains the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he remains with the perception of ‘finite’ with regard to the cosmos above & below, but with the perception of ‘infinite’ all around. He says, “This cosmos is finite & infinite. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is finite, encircled, are lying. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is infinite, unencircled, are lying. This cosmos is finite & infinite. Why is that? Because I... have attained the sort of awareness-concentration whereby I remain with the perception of “finite” with regard to the cosmos above & below, but with the perception of “infinite” all around. By means of that, I know that the cosmos is finite & infinite....’

“There is the case where a certain contemplative or brahman is a logician, an inquirer. He states his own imagining, hammered out by logic, deduced from his inquiries: ‘The cosmos is neither finite nor infinite. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is finite, encircled, are lying. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is infinite, unencircled, are lying. Those contemplatives & brahmans who say that this cosmos is finite & infinite are lying. The cosmos is neither finite nor infinite.’”

Refrain: “This, monks, the Tathāgata discerns. And he discerns that these standpoints, thus seized, thus grasped at, lead to such & such a destination, to such & such a state in the world beyond. And he discerns what is higher than this. And yet discerning that, he does not grasp at that act of discerning. And as he is not grasping at it, unbinding [*nibbuti*] is experienced right within. Knowing, as they have come to be, the origination, ending, allure, & drawbacks of feelings, along with the emancipation from feelings, the Tathāgata, monks—through lack of clinging/sustenance—is released.”

Final analysis: “When those contemplatives & brahmans assert various types of theories... on 62 grounds, that is an agitation & vacillation to be felt by those contemplatives & brahmans who, not knowing, not seeing, are immersed in craving.... That comes from contact as a requisite condition.... That they would

experience that other than through contact: That isn't possible.... [Compare §168] They all experience that through repeated contact at the six sense media. For them, 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.

"But when a monk discerns the origination, ending, allure, drawbacks of, & emancipation from the six sense media, he discerns what is higher than all of this." — DN 1

THE TETRALEMMA

§ 185. "Cunda, whatever in this world—with its deva, Māras, & Brahmās, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people—is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect, that has been fully awakened to by the Tathāgata [§46]. Thus he is called the Tathāgata.

"From the night the Tathāgata fully awakens to the unsurpassed Right Self-awakening until the night he is totally unbound in the unbinding property with no fuel remaining, whatever the Tathāgata has said, spoken, explained is just so (*tatha*) and not otherwise. Thus he is called the Tathāgata.

"The Tathāgata is one who does in line with (*tatha*) what he teaches, one who teaches in line with what he does. Thus he is called the Tathāgata.

"In this world with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people, the Tathāgata is the unconquered conqueror, all-seeing, the wielder of power. Thus he is called the Tathāgata.

"It's possible, Cunda, that wanderers of other sects might say, 'How is it, friends? Is it the case that "*after death a Tathāgata exists: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*"?' The wanderers of other sects who say this should be told, 'Friends, it is undeclared by the Tathāgata that "*after death a Tathāgata exists: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*.'"

"It's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'How is it, friends? Is it the case that "*after death a Tathāgata does not exist...*" ... "*both exists & does not exist...*" ... "*neither does nor doesn't exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*"?' The wanderers of other sects who say this should be told, 'Friends, it is undeclared by the Tathāgata that "*after death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist: Only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless*.'"

"It's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'But why, friends, is this undeclared by Gotama the contemplative?' The wanderers of other sects who say this should be told, 'Friends, it isn't connected with the goal, isn't connected with the Dhamma, isn't fundamental to the holy life. It doesn't lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding. That's why it's undeclared by the Blessed One.'

"It's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'But what, friends, is declared by Gotama the contemplative?' The wanderers of other sects who say this should be told, "*This is stress,*" is declared by the Blessed One. "*This is the origination of stress,*" is declared by the Blessed One. "*This is the cessation of stress,*" is declared by the Blessed One. "*This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress,*" is declared by the Blessed One.'

"It's possible that wanderers of other sects might say, 'And why, friends, is

this declared by Gotama the contemplative?’ The wanderers of other sects who say this should be told, ‘This is connected with the goal, is connected with the Dhamma, is fundamental to the holy life. It leads to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening, unbinding. That’s why it’s declared by the Blessed One.’” — *DN 29*

§ 186. [Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Now, friend Sāriputta, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, ‘That has not been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata exists after death.”’ When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death... both exists & does not exist after death... neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, ‘That too has not been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.”’ Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that has not been declared by the Blessed One?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ is [a view] immersed in form. ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ is immersed in form. ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ is immersed in form. ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ is immersed in form.

“‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ is immersed in feeling....

“‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ is immersed in perception....

“‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ is immersed in fabrication....

“‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ is immersed in consciousness. ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ is immersed in consciousness. ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ is immersed in consciousness. ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist death’ is immersed in consciousness.

“This is the cause, this is the reason, why that has not been declared by the Blessed One.” — *SN 44:3*

§ 187. [Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Now, friend Sāriputta, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, ‘That hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata exists after death.”’ When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death... both exists & does not exist after death... neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, ‘That too hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.”’ Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “For one who doesn’t know & see form as it has come to be, who does not know & see the origination of form... the cessation of form... the path of practice leading to the cessation of form as it has come to be, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“For one who doesn’t know & see feeling as it has come to be....

“For one who doesn’t know & see perception as it has come to be....

“For one who doesn’t know & see fabrications as they have come to be....

“For one who doesn’t know & see consciousness as it has come to be, who does not know & see the origination of consciousness... the cessation of consciousness... the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness as it has come to be, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“But for one who knows & sees form as it has come to be, who knows & sees the origination of form... the cessation of form... the path of practice leading to the cessation of form as it has come to be, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“For one who knows & sees feeling as it has come to be....

“For one who knows & sees perception as it has come to be....

“For one who knows & sees fabrications as they have come to be....

“For one who knows & sees consciousness as it has come to be, who knows & sees the origination of consciousness... the cessation of consciousness... the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness as it has come to be, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“This is the cause, this is the reason, why that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One.” — *SN 44:4*

§ 188. [Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Now, friend Sāriputta, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, ‘That hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata exists after death.”’ When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death... both exists & does not exist after death... neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, ‘That too hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One: “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.”’ Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “For one whose passion for form has not been removed, whose desire... affection... thirst... fever... craving for form has not been removed, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“For one whose passion for feeling has not been removed....

“For one whose passion for perception has not been removed....

“For one whose passion for fabrication has not been removed....

“For one whose passion for consciousness has not been removed, whose desire... affection... thirst... fever... craving for consciousness has not been removed, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“But for one whose passion for form has been removed, whose desire... affection... thirst... fever... craving for form has been removed, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“For one whose passion for feeling has been removed....

“For one whose passion for perception has been removed....

“For one whose passion for fabrication has been removed....

“For one whose passion for consciousness has been removed, whose desire... affection... thirst... fever... craving for consciousness has been removed, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“This is the cause, this is the reason, why that hasn’t been declared by the

Blessed One." — *SN 44:5*

§ 189. [Ven. Sāriputta:] "Now, friend Koṭṭhita, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, 'That hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata exists after death."' When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death... both exists & does not exist after death... neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, 'That too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death."' Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that hasn't been declared by the Blessed One?"

[Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] "For one who loves form, who is fond of form, who cherishes form, who does not know or see, as it has come to be, the cessation of form, there occurs the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.'

"For one who loves feeling....

"For one who loves perception....

"For one who loves fabrication....

"For one who loves consciousness, who is fond of consciousness, who cherishes consciousness, who does not know or see, as it has come to be, the cessation of consciousness, there occurs the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.'

"But for one who doesn't love form, who isn't fond of form, who doesn't cherish form, who knows & sees, as it has come to be, the cessation of form, the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death' doesn't occur.

"For one who doesn't love feeling....

"For one who doesn't love perception....

"For one who doesn't love fabrication....

"For one who doesn't love consciousness, who isn't fond of consciousness, who doesn't cherish consciousness, who knows & sees, as it has come to be, the cessation of consciousness, the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death' doesn't occur.

"This is the cause, this is the reason, why that hasn't been declared by the Blessed One."

"But, my friend, would there another line of reasoning, in line with which that hasn't been declared by the Blessed One?"

"There would, my friend. For one who loves becoming, who is fond of becoming, who cherishes becoming, who does not know or see, as it has come to be, the cessation of becoming, there occurs the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.'

"But for one who doesn't love becoming, who isn't fond of becoming, who doesn't cherish becoming, who knows & sees, as it has come to be, the cessation of becoming, the thought, 'The Tathāgata exists after death' or 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death' or 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death' doesn't occur.

“This too is a line of reasoning in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One.”

“But, my friend, would there another line of reasoning, in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One?”

“There would, my friend. For one who loves clinging/sustenance, who is fond of clinging/sustenance, who cherishes clinging/sustenance, who does not know or see, as it has come to be, the cessation of clinging/sustenance, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“But for one who doesn’t love clinging/sustenance, who isn’t fond of clinging/sustenance, who doesn’t cherish clinging/sustenance, who knows & sees, as it has come to be, the cessation of clinging/sustenance, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“This too is a line of reasoning in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One.”

“But, my friend, would there another line of reasoning, in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One?”

“There would, my friend. For one who loves craving, who is fond of craving, who cherishes craving, who does not know or see, as it has come to be, the cessation of craving, there occurs the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.’

“But for one who doesn’t love craving, who isn’t fond of craving, who doesn’t cherish craving, who knows & sees, as it has come to be, the cessation of craving, the thought, ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ or ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t occur.

“This too is a line of reasoning in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One.”

“But, my friend, would there another line of reasoning, in line with which that hasn’t been declared by the Blessed One?”

“Now, what more do you want, friend Sāriputta? When a monk has been freed from the classification of craving, there exists no cycle for describing him.”
— SN 44:6

THE TETRALEMMA DECLARED MEANINGLESS

§ 190. [Vacchagotta the wanderer:] “Does Master Gotama have any view-standpoint at all?”

“A ‘view-standpoint,’ Vaccha, is something that a Tathāgata has done away with. What a Tathāgata sees is this: ‘Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is perception... such are fabrications... such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.’ Because of this, I say, a Tathāgata—with the ending, fading, cessation, renunciation, & relinquishment of all conceivings, all excogitations, all I-making & mine-making & obsessions with conceit—is, through lack of clinging/sustenance, released.”

“But, Master Gotama, the monk whose mind is thus released:¹ Where does he reappear?”

“Reappear,’ Vaccha, doesn’t apply.”

“Very well then, Master Gotama, does he not reappear?”

“Does not reappear,’ Vaccha, doesn’t apply.”

“Very well then, Master Gotama, does he both reappear & not reappear?”

“Both reappears & does not reappear,’ Vaccha, doesn’t apply.”

“Very well then, Master Gotama, does he neither reappear nor not reappear?”

“Neither reappears nor does not reappear,’ Vaccha, doesn’t apply.”

“How is it, Master Gotama, when Master Gotama is asked if the monk reappears... does not reappear... both does & does not reappear... neither does nor does not reappear, he says, ‘... doesn’t apply’ in each case? At this point, Master Gotama, I am befuddled; at this point, confused. The modicum of clarity coming to me from your earlier discussion is now obscured.”

“Of course you’re befuddled, Vaccha. Of course you’re confused. Deep, Vaccha, is this phenomenon, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. For those with other views, other practices, other satisfactions, other aims, other teachers, it is difficult to know. That being the case, I will counter-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think, Vaccha? If a fire were burning in front of you, would you know that ‘This fire is burning in front of me?’”

“... yes...”

“And if someone were to ask you, Vaccha, ‘This fire burning in front of you: Dependent on what is it burning?’ Thus asked, how would you reply?”

“... I would reply, ‘This fire burning in front of me is burning dependent on grass & timber as its sustenance.’”

“If the fire burning in front of you were to go out, would you know that ‘This fire burning in front of me has gone out?’”

“... yes...”

“And if someone were to ask you, ‘This fire that has gone out in front of you: In which direction from here has it gone? East? West? North? Or south?’ Thus asked, how would you reply?”

“That doesn’t apply, Master Gotama. Any fire burning dependent on a sustenance of grass & timber, being unnourished—from having consumed (that sustenance) and not being offered any other—is classified simply as ‘out’ [unbound].”

“In the same way, Vaccha, any form by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That form the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form, Vaccha, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the ocean. ‘Reappears’ doesn’t apply. ‘Does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Both does & does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Neither reappears nor does not reappear’ doesn’t apply.

“Any feeling.... Any perception.... Any fabrication....

“Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That consciousness the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness, Vaccha, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the ocean. ‘Reappears’ doesn’t apply. ‘Does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Both does & does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Neither reappears nor does not reappear’ doesn’t apply.” — MN

72

NOTE: 1. The fact that the terminology here switches from the Tathāgata to a monk whose mind is released shows that, in this context at least, the two terms are

interchangeable. This is one of the few passages in the Canon where the term Tathāgata has this meaning. (For another, see §193.)

§ 191. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatti at Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. And on that occasion the bhikkhuni Khemā, wandering on tour among the Kosalans, had taken up residence between Sāvatti and Sāketa at Torānavatthu. Then King Pasenadi Kosala, while traveling from Sāketa to Sāvatti, took up a one-night residence between Sāvatti and Sāketa at Torānavatthu. Then he addressed a certain man, "Come, now, my good man. Find out if in Torānavatthu there's the sort of contemplative or brahman I might visit today."

"As you say, sire," the man replied to the king, but having roamed all over Torānavatthu he did not see the sort of contemplative or brahman the king might visit. But he did see the bhikkhuni Khemā residing in Torānavatthu. On seeing her, he went to King Pasenadi Kosala and on arrival said to him, "Sire, in Torānavatthu there is no contemplative or brahman of the sort your majesty might visit. But there is a bhikkhuni named Khemā, a disciple of the Blessed One, worthy and rightly self-awakened. And of this lady, this admirable report has spread about: 'She is wise, competent, intelligent, learned, a fluent speaker, admirable in her ingenuity.' Let your majesty visit her."

Then King Pasenadi Kosala went to the bhikkhuni Khemā and, on arrival, having bowed down to her, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to her, "Now then, lady, does the Tathāgata exist after death?"

"That, great king, hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata exists after death.'"

"Well then, lady, does the Tathāgata not exist after death?"

"Great king, that too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata does not exist after death.'"

"Then does the Tathāgata both exist and not exist after death?"

"That hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death.'"

"Well then, does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death?"

"That too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.'"

"Now, lady, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, 'That hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata exists after death.''" When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death... both exists & does not exist after death... neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, 'That too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: 'The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.''" Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that hasn't been declared by the Blessed One?"

"Very well then, great king, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think, great king? Do you have an accountant or calculator or mathematician who can count the grains of sand in the river Ganges as 'so many grains of sand' or 'so many hundreds of grains of sand' or 'so many thousands of grains of sand' or 'so many hundreds of thousands of grains of sand'?"

"No, lady."

"Then do you have an accountant or calculator or mathematician who can count the water in the great ocean as 'so many buckets of water' or 'so many hundreds of buckets of water' or 'so many thousands of buckets of water' or 'so many hundreds of thousands of buckets of water'?"

"No, lady. Why is that? The great ocean is deep, boundless, hard to fathom."

“Even so, great king, any form by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That form the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form, great king, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the ocean. ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata doesn’t exist after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t apply.

“Any feeling.... Any perception.... Any fabrication....

“Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That consciousness the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness, great king, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the ocean. ‘The Tathāgata exists after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’ doesn’t apply. ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ doesn’t apply.”¹

Then King Pasenadi Kosala, delighting in & approving of the bhikkhuni Khemā’s words, got up from his seat, bowed down to her and—keeping her to his right—departed.

Then at another time he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, [he asked the Blessed One the same questions he had asked the bhikkhuni Khemā, and received precisely the same responses and analogies. Then he exclaimed:]

“How amazing, lord! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one another with regard to the supreme teaching! Recently, lord, I went to the bhikkhuni Khemā and, on arrival, asked her about this matter, and she answered me with the same words, the same phrasing, as the Blessed One. How amazing, lord! How astounding!—how the meaning and phrasing of the teacher and disciple agree, coincide, and do not diverge from one another with regard to the supreme teaching!

“Now, lord, we must go. Many are our duties, many our responsibilities.”

“Then do, great king, what you think it is now time to do.”

So King Pasenadi Kosala, delighting in and approving of the Blessed One’s words, got up from his set, bowed down to the Blessed One and—keeping him to his right—departed. — *SN 44:1*

§ 192. Then Ven. Anurādha went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Just now I was staying not far from the Blessed One in a wilderness hut. Then a large number of wandering sectarians came and.... said to me, ‘Friend Anurādha, the Tathāgata—the supreme person, the superlative person, attainer of the superlative attainment—being described, is described with [one of] these four positions: After death the Tathāgata exists; after death he does not exist; after death he both exists & does not exist; after death he neither exists nor does not exist.’

“When this was said, I said to them, ‘Friends, the Tathāgata—the supreme person, the superlative person, attainer of the superlative attainment—being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: After death the Tathāgata exists; after death he does not exist; after death he both exists & does not exist; after death he neither exists nor does not exist.’

“When this was said, the wandering sectarians said to me, ‘This monk is

either a newcomer, not long gone forth, or else an elder who is foolish & inexperienced.' So, addressing me as they would a newcomer or a fool, they got up from their seats and left.

"Then not long after the wandering sectarians had left, this thought occurred to me, 'If I am questioned again by those wandering sectarians, how will I answer in such a way that will I speak in line with what the Blessed One has said, will not misrepresent the Blessed One with what is unfactual, will answer in line with the Dhamma, so that the legitimate implications of what I say give no grounds for criticism?'"

"What do you think, Anurādha? Is form constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it proper to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"Is feeling constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord"....

"Is perception constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord"....

"Are fabrications constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord"....

"Is consciousness constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it proper to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Anurādha? Do you regard form as the Tathāgata?"

"No, lord."

"Do you regard feeling as the Tathāgata?"

"No, lord."

"Do you regard perception as the Tathāgata?"

"No, lord."

"Do you regard fabrications as the Tathāgata?"

"No, lord."

"Do you regard consciousness as the Tathāgata?"

"No, lord."

"Now, what do you think, Anurādha? Do you regard the Tathāgata as being in form?... Elsewhere than form?... In feeling?... Elsewhere than feeling?... In perception?... Elsewhere than perception?... In fabrications?... Elsewhere than fabrications?... In consciousness?... Elsewhere than consciousness?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think, Anurādha? Do you regard the Tathāgata as form-feeling-perception-fabrications-consciousness?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think, Anurādha? Do you regard the Tathāgata as that which is without form, without feeling, without perception, without fabrications, without consciousness?"

"No, lord."

"And so, Anurādha—when you can't pin down the Tathāgata as a truth or reality even in the present life—is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the

Tathāgata—the supreme person, the superlative person, attainer of the superlative attainment—being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: After death the Tathāgata exists; after death he does not exist; after death he both exists & does not exist; after death he neither exists nor does not exist’?”

“No, lord.”

“Very good, Anurādha. Very good. Both formerly & now, it is only stress that I describe, and the cessation of stress.” — *SN 44:2*

§ 193. Then in the evening Ven. Sāriputta left his seclusion, went to Ven. Yamaka, and on arrival exchanged courteous greetings. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Yamaka, “Is it true, my friend Yamaka, that this evil supposition has arisen to you: ‘As I understand the Teaching explained by the Blessed One, a monk with no more fermentations, on the breakup of the body, is annihilated, destroyed, & does not exist after death.’”

“Yes, my friend. As I understand the Teaching explained by the Blessed One, a monk with no more fermentations, on the breakup of the body, is annihilated, destroyed, & does not exist after death.”

“Now, what do you think, my friend Yamaka? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, my friend.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, my friend.”

“And is it proper to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, my friend.”

“Is feeling constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, my friend”....

“Is perception constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, my friend”....

“Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, my friend”....

“Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, my friend.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, my friend.”

“And is it proper to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, my friend.”

“Now, what do you think? Do you regard form as the Tathāgata?”¹

“No, my friend.”

“Do you regard feeling as the Tathāgata?”

“No, my friend.”

“Do you regard perception as the Tathāgata?”

“No, my friend.”

“Do you regard fabrications as the Tathāgata?”

“No, my friend.”

“Do you regard consciousness as the Tathāgata?”

“No, my friend.”

“Now, what do you think? Do you regard the Tathāgata as being in form?... Elsewhere than form?... In feeling?... Elsewhere than feeling?... In perception?... Elsewhere than perception?... In fabrications?... Elsewhere than fabrications?...”

In consciousness?... Elsewhere than consciousness?"

"No, my friend."

"What do you think? Do you regard the Tathāgata as form-feeling-perception-fabrications-consciousness?"

"No, my friend."

"What do you think? Do you regard the Tathāgata as that which is without form, without feeling, without perception, without fabrications, without consciousness?"

"No, my friend."

"And so, my friend Yamaka—when you can't pin down the Tathāgata as a truth or reality even in the present life—is it proper for you to declare, 'As I understand the Teaching explained by the Blessed One, a monk with no more fermentations, on the breakup of the body, is annihilated, destroyed, & does not exist after death?'"

"Previously, my friend Sāriputta, I did foolishly hold that evil supposition. But now, having heard your explanation of the Dhamma, I have abandoned that evil supposition and have broken through to the Dhamma."

"Then, friend Yamaka, how would you answer if you are asked, 'A monk, a worthy one, with no more fermentations: What is he on the breakup of the body, after death?'"

"Thus asked, my friend, I would answer, 'Form is inconstant... Feeling... Perception... Fabrications... Consciousness is inconstant. That which is inconstant is stressful. That which is stressful has ceased and gone to its end.'"

"Very good, my friend Yamaka. Very good." — SN 22:85

NOTE: 1. The fact that the terminology here switches from the monk whose mind is released to the Tathāgata shows that, in this context at least, the two terms are interchangeable. This is one of the few passages in the Canon where the term Tathāgata has this meaning. (For another, see §190.)

§ 194. [Vacchagotta the wanderer:] "Now, Master Kaccāyana, when asked if the Tathāgata exists after death, you say, 'That hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata exists after death."' When asked if the Tathāgata does not exist after death, you say, 'That too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata does not exist after death."' When asked if the Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death, you say, 'That hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death."' When asked if the Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death, you say, 'That too hasn't been declared by the Blessed One: "The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death."' Now, what is the cause, what is the reason, why that hasn't been declared by Gotama the contemplative?"

[Ven. Sabhiya Kaccāyana:] "Vaccha, whatever cause, whatever reason there would be for describing him as 'possessed of form' or 'formless' or 'percipient' or 'non-percipient' or 'neither percipient nor non-percipient': If that cause, that reason, were to cease totally everywhere, totally in every way without remainder, then describing him by what means would one describe him as 'possessed of form' or 'formless' or 'percipient' or 'non-percipient' or 'neither percipient nor non-percipient'?"

"How long has it been since you went forth, Master Kaccāyana?"

"Not long, my friend. Three years."

"Whoever has gained just this much in this much time has gained a great deal, my friend—to say nothing of what he has thus gone beyond." — SN 44:11

§ 195. “Now, Ānanda, insofar as a monk doesn’t assume feeling to be the self, nor the self as oblivious, nor that ‘My self feels, in that my self is subject to feeling,’ then, not assuming in this way, he is not sustained by anything [does not cling to anything] in the world. Unsustained, he is not agitated. Unagitated, he is totally unbound right within. He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“If anyone were to say with regard to a monk whose mind is thus released that ‘The Tathāgata exists after death,’ is his view, that would be mistaken; that ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death’... that ‘The Tathāgata both exists & does not exist after death’... that ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death’ is his view, that would be mistaken. Why? Having directly known the extent of designation and the extent of the objects of designation, the extent of expression and the extent of the objects of expression, the extent of description and the extent of the objects of description, the extent of discernment and the extent of the objects of discernment, the extent to which the cycle revolves: Having directly known that, the monk is released. The view that, ‘Having directly known that, the monk released does not see, does not know’: That would be mistaken.”¹ — DN 15

NOTE: 1. The various readings for this sentence all seem corrupt. The sense of the paragraph, read in light of AN 10:96 [§177], demands that the view expressed in the last sentence be *about* the monk released, unlike the four earlier views, which are wrongly *attributed* to the monk released. In other words, the monk released has no opinion on the question of whether the Tathāgata does, doesn’t, etc., exist after death. This might lead to the supposition that his lack of opinion comes from a lack of knowledge or vision. The description of what he comes to know in the course of gaining release shows that this supposition is inappropriate. He does know, he does see, and what he knows and sees about the limitations of language and concepts shows him that the question of the existence of the Tathāgata after death should be set aside.

Thus I would reconstruct the Pali of the final sentence in this paragraph as: *Tad-abhiññā vimutto bhikkhu na jānāti na passati iti sā ditṭhi tad-akallaṃ.*

§ 196. *This was said by the Blessed One, said by the Arahant, so I have heard:* “There are these three times. Which three? Past time, future time, & present time. These are the three times.”

Perceiving in terms of signs, beings
take a stand on signs.
Not fully comprehending signs, they
come into the bonds
of death.
But fully comprehending signs, one
doesn’t construe a signifier.
Touching liberation with the heart,
the state of peace unsurpassed,
consummate in terms of signs,
peaceful,
enjoying the peaceful state,
judicious,
an attainer-of-wisdom
makes use of classifications
but can’t be classified.¹ — *Iti 63*

NOTE: 1. At first glance, the verses here don't bear much relationship to the prose introduction. However, when viewed in the context of MN 2 [§25], their relationship becomes clear: The person who applies appropriate attention to the notion of past, present, and future time does not define him or herself in those terms, and so does not cling to any sense of self in those terms. Without clinging, one is liberated from birth and death.

This verse is almost identical with one in SN 1:20:

Perceiving in terms of signs, beings
take a stand on signs.
Not fully comprehending signs, they
come into the bonds
of death.
But fully comprehending signs, one
doesn't construe
a signifier.
Yet nothing exists for him
by which one would say,
'To him no thought occurs.'

The point of this version of the verse is that the mind of the awakened one is so unknowable that one cannot say whether he or she thinks or not. See AN 11:10.

§ 197. "Monks, I will teach you the all. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded.

The Blessed One said, "What is the all? Simply the eye & forms, ear & sounds, nose & aromas, tongue & flavors, body & tactile sensations, intellect & ideas. This, monks, is called the all.¹ Anyone who would say, 'Repudiating this all, I will describe another,' if questioned on what exactly might be the grounds for his statement, would be unable to explain, and furthermore, would be put to grief. Why? Because it lies beyond range." — SN 35:23

NOTE: 1. The Commentary's treatment of this discourse is very peculiar. To begin with, it delineates three additional "all's," one of them supposedly larger in scope than the one defined here: the allness of the Buddha's omniscience (literally, All-knowingness). This, despite the fact that the discourse says that the description of such an all lies beyond the range of explanation.

Secondly, the Commentary includes nibbāna (unbinding) within the scope of the all described here—as a dhamma, or object of the intellect—even though many other discourses in the Canon specifically state that nibbāna lies beyond the range of the six senses and their objects. Sn 5:6 [§202], for instance, indicates that a person who has attained nibbāna has gone beyond all phenomena (*sabbe dhammā*), and therefore cannot be described. MN 49 [§204] discusses a "consciousness without surface" (*viññāṇaṇi anidassanaṇi*) that does not partake of the "allness of the all." AN 9:36 [§139] states that full awakening occurs only when passion and delight for the dhamma of deathlessness—i.e., the perception of the deathless as a dhamma—is abandoned. Furthermore, SN 35:24 says that the "all" is to be abandoned. At no point does the Canon say that nibbāna is to be abandoned. Nibbāna follows on cessation (*nirodha*), which is to be realized. Once nibbāna is realized, there are no further tasks to be done.

Thus a better interpretation would be to read this discourse's discussion of "all" as intended to limit the use of the word "all" throughout the Buddha's teachings to the six sense spheres and their objects. As SN 35:24 and SN 35:28 both show, this would also include the consciousness, contact, and feelings connected with the sense spheres and their objects. Nibbāna would lie outside of the word, "all." This interpretation coincides with another point made several times in the Canon: that dispassion is the highest of all dhammas (Iti 90), while the arahant has gone beyond even dispassion (Sn 4:6; Sn 4:10).

This raises the question, if the word "all" does not include nibbāna, does that mean that one may infer from the statement, "all phenomena are not-self" that nibbāna is self? The answer is No. As AN 4:173 [§208] states, even to ask if there is anything remaining or not remaining (or both, or neither) after the cessation of the six sense spheres is to objectify what is by nature not objectified. The range of objectification goes only as far as the "all." Perceptions of self or no self, which would count as objectification, would not apply beyond the "all." When the cessation of the "all" is experienced, all objectification is allayed.

§ 198. “Monks, that dimension should be experienced where the eye ceases and the perception of form fades. That dimension is to be experienced where the ear ceases and the perception of sound fades... where the nose ceases and the perception of aroma fades... where the tongue ceases and the perception of flavor fades... where the body ceases and the perception of tactile sensation fades... where the intellect ceases and the perception of idea/phenomenon fades: That dimension should be experienced.” — SN 35:117

§ 199. As he was sitting there, Ven. Rādhā said to the Blessed One: “‘A being,’ lord. ‘A being,’ it’s said. To what extent is one said to be ‘a being’?”

“Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for form, Rādhā: When one is caught up [*satta*] there, tied up [*visatta*] there, one is said to be ‘a being [*satta*].’

“Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for feeling... perception... fabrications...”

“Any desire, passion, delight, or craving for consciousness, Rādhā: When one is caught up there, tied up there, one is said to be ‘a being.’

“Just as when boys or girls are playing with little sand castles [lit: dirt houses]: As long as they are not free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for those little sand castles, that’s how long they have fun with those sand castles, enjoy them, treasure them, feel possessive of them. But when they become free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for those little sand castles, then they smash them, scatter them, demolish them with their hands or feet and make them unfit for play.

“In the same way, Rādhā, you too should smash, scatter, demolish form, and make it unfit for play. Practice for the ending of craving for form.

“You should smash, scatter, demolish feeling, and make it unfit for play. Practice for the ending of craving for feeling.

“You should smash, scatter, demolish perception, and make it unfit for play. Practice for the ending of craving for perception.

“You should smash, scatter, demolish fabrications, and make them unfit for play. Practice for the ending of craving for fabrications.

“You should smash, scatter, demolish consciousness, and make it unfit for play. Practice for the ending of craving for consciousness—because the ending of craving, Rādhā, is unbinding.” — SN 23:2

§ 200. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “It would be good, lord, if the Blessed One would teach me the Dhamma in brief such that, having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.”

“Monk, whatever one stays obsessed with, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified. Whatever one doesn’t stay obsessed with, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.”

“I understand, O Blessed One! I understand, O One Well-gone!”

“And how, monk, do you understand the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief?”

“If one stays obsessed with form, lord, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with feeling....

“If one stays obsessed with perception....

“If one stays obsessed with fabrications....

“If one stays obsessed with consciousness, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“But if one doesn’t stay obsessed with form, lord, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with feeling....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with perception....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with fabrications....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with consciousness, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“Lord, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of what you have said in brief.”

“Good, monk. Very good. It’s good that this is how you understand the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief.

“If one stays obsessed with form, monk, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with feeling....

“If one stays obsessed with perception....

“If one stays obsessed with fabrications....

“If one stays obsessed with consciousness, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“But if one doesn’t stay obsessed with form, monk, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with feeling....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with perception....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with fabrications....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with consciousness, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“This is how the detailed meaning of what I have said in brief should be seen.”

Then the monk, delighting in and approving of the Blessed One’s words, got up from his seat and bowed down to the Blessed One, circled around him, keeping the Blessed One to his right, and departed. Then, dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained 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. He knew, “Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus he became another one of the arahants. — *SN 22:36*

§ 201. “Freed, disjoined, & released from ten things, Bāhuna, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness. Which ten? Freed, disjoined, & released from form, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness. Freed, disjoined, & released from feeling... Freed, disjoined, & released from perception... Freed, disjoined, & released from fabrications... Freed, disjoined, & released from consciousness... Freed, disjoined, & released from birth... Freed, disjoined, & released from aging... Freed, disjoined, & released from death... Freed, disjoined, & released from stress... Freed, disjoined, & released from defilement, the Tathāgata dwells with unrestricted awareness.

“Just as a red, blue, or white lotus born in the water and growing in the water, rises up above the water and stands with no water adhering to it, in the same way the Tathāgata—freed, disjoined, & released from these ten things— dwells with unrestricted awareness.” — *AN 10:81*

§ 202. *Upasīva*:

One free from passion
for all sensual pleasures
relying on nothingness, letting go of all else,
released in the highest emancipation of perception:
Does he stay there unaffected?

The Buddha:

One free from passion
for all sensual pleasures
relying on nothingness, letting go of all else,
released in the highest emancipation of perception:
He stays there unaffected.

Upasīva:

If he stays there, O All-around Eye,
unaffected for many years,
right there
would he be cooled & released?
Would his consciousness be like that?

The Buddha:

As a flame overthrown by the force of the wind
goes to an end
that cannot be classified,
so the sage free from naming activity
goes to an end
that cannot be classified.

Upasīva:

He who has reached the end:
Does he not exist,
or is he for eternity
free from dis-ease?
Please, sage, declare this to me
as this phenomenon [*dhamma*]
has been known by you.

The Buddha:

One who has reached the end
has no criterion
by which anyone would say that—
for him it doesn't exist.
When all phenomena are done away with,
all means of speaking
are done away with as well. — *Sn 5:6*

§ 203. *Māra*:

“By whom was this being created?
Where is the being’s maker?
Where has the being originated?
Where does the being cease?”

Sister Vajirā:

“What? Do you assume a ‘being,’ Māra?
Have you gone to a view-standpoint?
This is purely a pile of fabrications.
Here no being
can be pinned down.

Just as when, with an assemblage of parts,
there’s the word,
chariot,
even so when aggregates are present,
there’s the convention of
a being.

For only stress is what comes to be;
 stress, what remains & falls away.
Nothing but stress comes to be.
Nothing ceases but stress.”

Then Māra the Evil One—sad & dejected at realizing, “Vajirā the bhikkhuni knows me”—vanished right there. — *SN 5:10*

§ 204. Then Vacchagotta the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, a few days ago a large number of contemplatives, brahmans, & wanderers of various sects were sitting together in the Debating Hall when this discussion arose among them: ‘This Pūraṇa Kassapa—the leader of a community, the leader of a group, the teacher of a group, honored and famous, esteemed as holy by the mass of people—describes a disciple who has died and passed on in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.” Even when the disciple is a supreme person, a superlative person, attained to the superlative attainment, Pūraṇa Kassapa describes him, when he has died and passed on, in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.”

“This Makkhali Gosāla... This Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta... This Saṅjaya Velatṭhaputta... This Pakudha Kaccāyana... This Ajita Kesakambalin—the leader of a community, the leader of a group, the teacher of a group, honored and famous, esteemed as holy by the mass of people—describes a disciple who has died and passed on in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.” Even when the disciple is a supreme person, a superlative person, attained to the superlative attainment, Ajita Kesakambalin describes him, when he has died and passed on, in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.”

“This contemplative Gotama—the leader of a community, the leader of a group, the teacher of a group, honored and famous, esteemed as holy by the

mass of people—describes a disciple who has died and passed on in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.” But when the disciple is a supreme person, a superlative person, attained to the superlative attainment, Gotama the contemplative does not describe him, when he has died and passed on, in terms of places of rebirth: “That one is reborn there; that one is reborn there.” Instead, he describes him thus: “He has cut through craving, severed the fetter, and by rightly breaking through conceit has made an end of suffering & stress.”

“So I was simply befuddled. I was uncertain: How is the teaching of Gotama the contemplative to be understood?”

“Of course you’re befuddled, Vaccha. Of course you’re uncertain. When there is a reason for befuddlement in you, uncertainty arises. I designate the rebirth of one who has clinging/sustenance, Vaccha, and not of one without clinging/sustenance. Just as a fire burns with clinging/sustenance and not without clinging/sustenance, even so I designate the rebirth of one who has clinging/sustenance and not of one without clinging/sustenance.”

“But, Master Gotama, at the moment a flame is being swept on by the wind and goes a far distance, what do you designate as its clinging/sustenance then?”

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

“And at the moment when a being sets this body aside and is not yet reborn in another body, what do you designate as its clinging/sustenance then?”

“Vaccha, when a being sets this body aside and is not yet reborn in another body, I designate it as craving-sustained, for craving is its clinging/sustenance at that time.” — SN 44:9

§ 205. “[Baka Brahmā:] ‘Well, monk, how do you discern my sphere, how do you discern my splendor: “Baka Brahmā has this much great power. Baka Brahmā has this much great might. Baka Brahmā has this much great influence”?’

“[The Buddha:] ‘As far as suns & moons revolve,
shining, illuminating the directions,
over a thousand-fold world
your control holds sway.
There you know those above & below,
those with lust & those without,
the state of what is as it is,
the state of what becomes otherwise,
the coming & going of beings.

“That, brahmā, is how I discern your sphere, that is how I discern your splendor: “Baka Brahmā has this much great power. Baka Brahmā has this much great might. Baka Brahmā has this much great influence.” There are, brahmā, groups other than yours that you don’t know, don’t see, but that I know, I see. There is, brahmā, the group named Ābhassara [Radiant/Luminous] from which you fell away & reappeared here. From your having lived here so long, your memory of that has become muddled. That is why you don’t know it, don’t see it, but I know it, I see it. Thus I am not your mere equal in terms of direct knowing, so how could I be inferior? I am actually superior to you.

“There is, brahmā, the group named Subhakiṇha [Beautiful Black/Refulgent Glory].... the group named Vehapphala [Sky-fruit/Great Fruit], {...the group named Abhibhū [Conqueror]}¹ which you don’t know, don’t see, but that I

know, I see. Thus I am not your mere equal in terms of direct knowing, so how could I be your inferior? I am actually superior to you.

“‘Having directly known earth as earth, and having directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the earthness of earth,² I wasn’t earth, I wasn’t in earth, I wasn’t coming from earth, I wasn’t “Earth is mine.” I didn’t affirm earth.³ Thus I am not your mere equal in terms of direct knowing, so how could I be inferior? I am actually superior to you.

“‘Having directly known liquid as liquid... fire as fire... wind as wind... beings as beings... devas as devas... Pajāpati as Pajāpati... brahmā as brahmā... the radiant as radiant... the beautiful black as the beautiful black... the sky-fruit as the sky-fruit... the conqueror as the conqueror...

“‘Having directly known the all as the all, and having directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the allness of the all, I wasn’t the all, I wasn’t in the all, I wasn’t coming forth from the all, I wasn’t “The all is mine.” I didn’t affirm the all. Thus I am not your mere equal in terms of direct knowing, so how could I be inferior? I am actually superior to you.’

“‘If, good sir, you have directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the allness of the all, may it not turn out to be actually vain and void for you.’

“‘Consciousness without surface,
without end, luminous all around,

has not been experienced through the earthness of earth... the liquidity of liquid... the fieriness of fire... the windiness of wind... the allness of the all.”⁴

“‘Well then, good sir, I will disappear from you.’

“‘Well then, brahmā, disappear from me if you can.’

“‘Then Baka Brahmā, (thinking,) ‘I will disappear from Gotama the contemplative. I will disappear from Gotama the contemplative,’ was not able to disappear from me. When this was said, I said to Baka Brahmā, ‘Well then, brahmā, I will disappear from you.’

“‘Well then, good sir, disappear from me if you can.’

“‘So then, monks, I fabricated a fabrication of psychic power to the extent that Brahmā, the Brahma-assembly, and the attendants of the Brahma-assembly heard my voice but did not see me. Having disappeared, I recited this verse:

‘Having seen
danger
right in becoming,
and becoming
searching for non-becoming,
I didn’t affirm
any kind of becoming,
or cling to any delight.’

“‘Then in Brahmā, the Brahma-assembly, and the attendants of the Brahma-assembly there arose a sense of amazement & astonishment: ‘How amazing! How astounding!—the great power, the great might of Gotama the contemplative! Never before have we seen or heard of any other contemplative or brahman of such great power, such great might as that of this Gotama the contemplative, who went forth from a Sakyan clan! Living in a generation that so delights in becoming, so rejoices in becoming, is so fond of becoming, he has pulled out becoming by the root!’” — MN 49

1. The phrase in braces is from the Burmese edition of the Canon.
2. What is not experienced through the earthness of earth (and so on through the list of categories up through the allness of the all) is nibbāna, or unbinding. It is described in these terms because it is directly known, without intermediary of any sort.
3. These statements can be read in two ways. The first way is to regard them in light of the standard definition of self-identity view [§179] in which one defines self either as identical with an aggregate, as possessing an aggregate, as being contained in an aggregate, or as containing an aggregate within it. The second way is to regard the statements in light of the parallel passage from MN 1, in which one engages in metaphysical speculation as to whether one's being is identical with something, lies within something, or comes from something. For more on this topic, see the introduction to the Mūlapariyāya Sutta (MN 1) in *Handful of Leaves*, volume one.
4. Consciousness without surface (*viññānaṃ anidassanaṃ*): This term appears to be related to the following image from SN 12:64:

"Just as if there were a roofed house or a roofed hall having windows on the north, the south, or the east. When the sun rises, and a ray has entered by way of the window, where does it land?"

"On the western wall, lord."

"And if there is no western wall, where does it land?"

"On the ground, lord."

"And if there is no ground, where does it land?"

"On the water, lord."

"And if there is no water, where does it land?"

"It doesn't land, lord."

"In the same way, where there is no passion for the nutriment of physical food... contact... intellectual intention... consciousness, where there is no delight, no craving, then consciousness does not land there or grow. Where consciousness does not land or grow, name-&-form does not alight. Where name-&-form does not alight, there is no growth of fabrications. Where there is no growth of fabrications, there is no production of renewed becoming in the future. Where there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging, & death. That, I tell you, has no sorrow, affliction, or despair."

In other words, normal sensory consciousness is experienced because it has a "surface" against which it lands: the sense organs and their objects, which constitute the "all." For instance, one experiences visual consciousness because of the eye and forms of which one is conscious. Consciousness without surface, however, is directly known, without intermediary, free from any dependence on conditions at all. In terms of the above image, it is a paradoxical luminosity that does not reflect off of anything at all.

This consciousness thus differs from the consciousness factor in dependent co-arising, which is defined in terms of the six sense media. Lying outside of time and space, it would also not come under the consciousness-aggregate, which covers all consciousness near and far; past, present, and future. And, as SN 35:23 [§197] notes, the word "all" in the Buddha's teaching covers only the six sense media, which is another reason for not including this consciousness under the aggregates. However, the fact that it is outside of time and space—in a dimension where there is no here, there, or in between [§173], no coming, no going, or staying [§206]—means that it cannot be described as permanent or omnipresent, terms that have meaning only within space and time.

Some have objected to the equation of this consciousness with nibbāna, on the grounds that nibbāna is nowhere else in the Canon described as a form of consciousness. Thus they have proposed that consciousness without surface be regarded as an arahant's consciousness of nibbāna in meditative experience, and not nibbāna itself. This argument, however, contains two flaws: (1) The term *viññānaṃ anidassanaṃ* also occurs in DN 11 [§161], where it is described as "where name & form are brought to an end": surely a synonym for nibbāna. (2) If nibbāna is an object of mental consciousness (as a *dhamma*), it would come under the all, as an object of the intellect. There are passages in the Canon [§139] that describe meditators experiencing nibbāna as a *dhamma*, but these passages seem to indicate that this description applies up through the level of non-returning. Other passages, however, describe nibbāna as the ending of all *dhammas*. For instance, Sn 5:6 [§202] quotes the Buddha as calling the attainment of the goal the transcending of all *dhammas*. Sn 4:6 and Sn 4:10 state that the arahant has transcended dispassion, said to be the highest *dhamma*. Thus, for the arahant, nibbāna is not an object of consciousness. Instead it is directly known without mediation. Because consciousness without surface is directly known without mediation, there seems good reason to equate the two.

§ 206. Now at that time the Blessed One was instructing, urging, rousing, & encouraging the monks with Dhamma-talk concerned with unbinding. The monks—receptive, attentive, focusing their entire awareness, lending ear—listened to the Dhamma.

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

“There is that dimension where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind; neither dimension of the infinitude of space, nor dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, nor dimension of nothingness, nor dimension of neither perception nor non-perception; neither this world, nor the next world, nor sun, nor moon. And there, I say, there is neither coming, nor going, nor staying; neither passing away nor arising: unestablished, unevolving, without support [mental object]. This, just this, is the end of stress.” — *Ud 8:1*

§ 207. It’s hard to see the unaffected,
for the truth is not easily seen.
Craving is pierced
in one who knows;
for one who sees,
there is nothing. — *Ud 8:2*

§ 208. Then Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita went to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Sāriputta, “With the remainderless cessation & fading of the six contact-media [vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, & intellection], is it the case that there is anything else?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “Don’t say that, my friend.”

[Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “With the remainderless cessation & fading of the six contact-media, is it the case that there is not anything else?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “Don’t say that, my friend.”

[Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “...is it the case that there both is & is not anything else?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “Don’t say that, my friend.”

[Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “...is it the case that there neither is nor is not anything else?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “Don’t say that, my friend.”

[Ven. MahāKoṭṭhita:] “Being asked if, with the remainderless cessation & fading of the six contact-media, there is anything else, you say, ‘Don’t say that, my friend.’ Being asked if... there is not anything else... there both is & is not anything else... there neither is nor is not anything else, you say, ‘Don’t say that, my friend.’ Now, how is the meaning of your words to be understood?”

[Ven. Sāriputta:] “The statement, ‘With the remainderless cessation & fading of the six contact-media is it the case that there is anything else?’ objectifies the non-objectified. The statement, ‘... is it the case that there is not anything else... is it the case that there both is & is not anything else... is it the case that there neither is nor is not anything else?’ objectifies the non-objectified. However far the six contact-media go, that is how far objectification goes. However far objectification goes, that is how far the six contact media go. With the remainderless fading & cessation of the six contact-media, there comes to be the

cessation, the allaying of objectification.” — *AN 4:173*