

# Samyutta Nikāya

## An Anthology Part III

by

*M. O'C. Walshe*

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## Preface

Unlike the anthology of the Aṅguttara Nikāya in this series by the Ven. Nyanaponika, this selection from the Saṃyutta is by three different hands: Part I (WH 107–109) by John D. Ireland, Part II (WH 183–185) by the Ven. Ñāṇananda, and Part III by the undersigned. Since the choice of each translator ranged over the entire Nikāya, the three parts do not present the whole material in canonical order. Accordingly an index has been provided showing all extracts in that order. (Scan in.) A certain lack of terminological consistency was another unavoidable disadvantage, though this is in practice probably not very serious. It should further be noted that the Anthology does not include three important items—the Buddha’s first three sermons—since these have already appeared in No. 17 of the Wheel series. With one small exception, too, the important Vedanā Saṃyutta (SN 36) is not represented, because a separate translation of it has meanwhile been published (WH 303–304).

The full translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya published by the Pali Text Society runs to five volumes, the first two by Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids (who edited the whole), and the last three by F.L. Woodward. In the preface to Vol. I Mrs Rhys Davids wrote: “It has been more than once suggested that a volume of selections would be of more instant service than would be afforded by the long drawn out appearance of the whole work in its original order... it will be for a later generation to exercise private judgment in compiling eclectic extracts.” And indeed anyone familiar with that translation, or with the original, will be likely to agree that a version drastically pruned of much repetitive material is desirable. This selection may be regarded as a contribution towards such a version, which is to be wished for not only in the interests of concision, but because, despite the eminence and the devotion of the original translators, their version has many shortcomings. A certain number of actual mistakes have here been corrected by all three translators, but also many stylistic changes have been deemed necessary. The prose (and the verse!) of the earlier version is often intolerably stilted, sometimes to a point where it is almost unreadable, indeed, scarcely perhaps intelligible, to some present-day readers. Another difference is that whereas the PTS version was intended for a limited, fairly scholarly and largely non-Buddhist public, the present rendering will doubtless be used mainly by practicing Buddhists all over the world, to many of whom English is not their mother tongue but the language of international discourse.

It may safely be claimed that, by presenting their version in good modern English, free from archaic frills, the translators will have succeeded in bringing the message of the Buddha, as found in this Saṃyutta, closer to the reader. It is also safe to say that many will be surprised and delighted at the wealth that it contains, by its vivid similes and occasional humour. Thus in the present volume the reader will find the delightful story of the female deva who tried to tempt a young and handsome bhikkhu, and of how the Buddha dealt with the situation; of how the Buddha persuaded King Pasenadi not to over-eat; we hear how Nanda, the Buddha’s cousin, paraded before the Teacher with well-pressed robes and painted eyes; of how the Buddha coped with angry Brahmans and how the Ven. Udāyī taught a Brahman lady to show proper respect for the Sangha; from the Ven. Khemaka we even learn something of what it feels like to be an *anāgāmin*. There is comfort and hope, too, for those who may feel their human weaknesses debar them from progress, and besides mindfulness we are reminded of the value of faith (not of course blind faith, but a reasoned confidence in the Teacher).

The Saṃyutta Nikāya deserves to be better known among Western Buddhists than it appears to be, and it is to be hoped that this anthology will help to bring its many treasures to a wider readership.

M.O'C. Walshe  
St. Albans  
November 1981

# *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

## Part One: The Section with Verses (Sagāthaka Vagga)

### 1. The Doomed

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattihī, at Jeta Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. Now a certain deva,<sup>1</sup> as the night was passing away, lighting up the whole Jeta Grove with his effulgent beauty, approached the Blessed One and, having approached, stood on one side.

Standing thus on one side, the deva spoke this verse before the Blessed One:  
Life but leads to doom. Our time is short.  
From Decay there's naught can keep us safe.  
Contemplating thus the fear of death,  
Let's make merit that will bring us bliss.

[The Blessed One replied:]

Life but leads to doom. Our time is short.  
From Decay there's naught can keep us safe.  
Contemplating thus this fear of death,  
Scorn such worldly bait, seek final peace.<sup>2</sup>

SN 1:1.3

### 2. Vain Conceits

..the deva spoke this verse...:  
Who has not tamed all vain conceits,<sup>3</sup>  
Who lacks in wisdom, uncontrolled,  
Heedless, in the woods may dwell alone,  
Yet will not escape the realm of death.

[The Blessed One replied:]

---

<sup>1</sup> These words are repeated from the beginning of the whole work (SN 1:1), translated in Vol. I and Vol. II with slight differences. I render *Bhagavā* literally as 'the Blessed One,' cf. Vol. I: 'the Lord,' Vol. II with KS: 'the Exalted One'. For the meaning of *deva* (or *devatā*) see Vol. I, n.1. In general, information given in the notes to Vols I and II will not be repeated here.

<sup>2</sup> The Buddha here makes a vital distinction which is valid to this day as marking the difference between the aims of 'popular Buddhism' and the serious treading of the Path. 'Merit' (*puñña*) can lead to a happier rebirth, perhaps in one of the *deva*-worlds, but this too will come to an end. The proper course is to tread the Noble Eightfold Path and gain the 'final peace' of Nibbāna. Note, however, the remarks of the Ven. Khantipālo in *The Buddhist Monk's Discipline* (WH 130/131, p.7): "Puñña is the benefit of increasing purity of mind derived from skilful actions such as generosity, virtue, helpfulness, etc. 'Merit' is an inadequate rendering."

<sup>3</sup> *Māna-kāma*: 'conceit and lust.'

Who, concentrated, leaves conceits behind,  
His heart and mind<sup>4</sup> set fair, and wholly freed,  
Heedful dwelling in the woods alone,  
Shall indeed escape the realm of death.<sup>5</sup>

SN 1:1.9

### 3. Difficult (or The Tortoise)

..the deva spoke this verse...:  
Hard it is to keep, and hard to bear,  
Recluse-life for him who lacks the skill.  
Obstacles abound, the fool is lost.  
How long can he endure the holy life,  
If he cannot hold his heart in check?  
Caught now here, now there, he stumbles, falls.

[The Blessed One replied:]

As the tortoise draws into his shell  
Each limb, the monk, withdrawn, with mind applied,  
Unattached, and doing harm to none,  
Passions wholly stilled, dwells blaming none.<sup>6</sup>

SN 1:2.7

### 4. Samiddhi

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying at Rājagaha in the Tapodā Park. Now the Venerable Samiddhi, as dawn approached, arose and went to the Hot Springs<sup>7</sup> to bathe. Having bathed, he came out of the Hot Springs and stood, clad in a single garment, drying his limbs. Then a certain she-deva,<sup>8</sup> as the night was passing away, lighting up the entire Hot Springs lake with her effulgent beauty, approached the Venerable Samiddhi and, hovering in the air, addressed him thus in verse:

Having had no sport, monk seeking alms,<sup>9</sup>  
Having none today, just seeking alms,

---

<sup>4</sup> *Citta*: 'mind,' but often like the metaphorical use of 'heart' in English.

<sup>5</sup> He will pass 'beyond death' to Nibbāna.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Bhagavadgītā* II, 58: "He who withdraws his senses on all sides from sense-objects as the tortoise draws in his limbs, is firmly established in wisdom." The same image occurs in SN 35.199 (not included in this Anthology).

<sup>7</sup> This is the meaning of Tapodā (cf. place-names such as Teplā, Teplice in Czecho-Slovakia, all associated with hot springs).

<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking, 'she-deva' is ungrammatical, since deva ([n.1](#)) is masculine (the fem. *devī* usually means 'queen'). In all of these little stories the Pali text has the abstract noun *devatā* which, like our word 'deity,' covers both sexes. It is clear from the context as well as the pronouns used later in some (but not all) manuscripts that this one is female. In its anglicised form, 'deva' can perhaps legitimately be taken to denote either sex.

<sup>9</sup> In Pali there is an untranslatable play here on the two meanings of *bhuttvā*, 'having eaten,' and 'having enjoyed oneself.' Such puns and similar ambiguities are not infrequent in the texts, and are often difficult to bring out in translation.

Why not get your fill, monk, then seek alms,  
Lest your fleeting hour should slip away?<sup>10</sup>

[Samiddhi replied:]

“Hour” you say, but I know not the hour.  
Hidden is my hour, and not revealed:  
Therefore, self-restrained, I just seek alms,  
Lest my fleeting hour should slip away.<sup>11</sup>

Then the she-deva came down to earth and said to Samiddhi: “You are young, bhikkhu, to have left the world, black-haired, with the bloom of youth. In your youthful prime you do not enjoy the pleasures of the senses. Get your fill, bhikkhu, of human pleasures. Don’t reject the present moment to pursue what time will bring.”<sup>12</sup>

“I, friend, do not reject the present moment to pursue what time will bring. I reject what time will bring to pursue the present moment. Time’s pleasures, friend, as the Blessed One has said, are fraught with pain, fraught with tribulation, leading to greater danger. This Dhamma is here-present, out of time, inviting inspection, leading onward, to be realised by the wise each for himself.”<sup>13</sup>

“In what way, bhikkhu, has the Blessed One said that time’s pleasures are fraught with pain, fraught with tribulation and leading to greater danger? In what way is this Dhamma here-present, out of time, inviting inspection, leading onward, to be realised by the wise each for himself?”

“I, friend, am fresh, having not long left the world, a newcomer. I am not able to explain in detail this Dhamma and discipline. But the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Fully Self-Enlightened One, is staying at Rājagaha in the Tapodā Park. Go to the Blessed One and ask him about the matter. Then bear in the mind the explanation he gives to you.”

“It is not easy for us, bhikkhu, to approach the Blessed One. He is surrounded by other devas of great power. If you, bhikkhu, will approach the Blessed One and ask him about the matter, then perhaps we can come to hear the teaching.”

“Very well, friend,” the Venerable Samiddhi replied to her, and he went to the Blessed One, made his obeisance and sat down to one side.

[He then told the whole story in identical words to the Buddha.]

“If, Lord, that deva was telling the truth, she is right here, not far away.”

When he had said this, the deva said to the Venerable Samiddhi: “Ask him, bhikkhu, ask him! I’ve managed to get here!”

Then the Blessed One addressed the deva in verse:

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<sup>10</sup> As will be seen, the devas, (none of whom, of course, are enlightened) are at various stages of spiritual development. This one is clearly not very advanced!

<sup>11</sup> The hour Samiddhi means is that of his death.

<sup>12</sup> *Kālika*: ‘concerned with time’ (‘time-ish’: Mrs. Rhys Davids). The deva probably means ‘there is time for all that as you are young,’ but the word is no doubt introduced together with *sandiṭṭhika* (here rendered ‘the present moment’) to enable Samiddhi to quote the standard formula on the Dhamma ([n. 13](#)).

<sup>13</sup> *Sandiṭṭhiko akālika ehipassiko opānāyiko paccattaṃ veditaṭṭha viññūhi*. *Sandiṭṭhiko* lit means ‘visible’ but has the sense of ‘present, at the present time, in this life’; *akālika* ‘timeless’ can mean both ‘immediate’ and ‘not involving time, outside of time,’ *ehi-passiko* = ‘come-and-see-ish’; *opānāyiko* (from *upa-neti* ‘leads towards’) means ‘leading to the goal.’ The Dhamma as Truth can only be realised individually by insight.



Those who go by names, who go by concepts,  
Making their abode in names and concepts,  
Failing to discern the naming-process,  
These are subject to the reign of death,  
He who has discerned the naming-process  
Does not suppose that one who names exists.  
No such case exists for him in truth,  
Whereby one could say: "He's this or that."<sup>14</sup>

If you know what this means,<sup>15</sup> tell me, fairy.<sup>16</sup>

"Lord, I do not fully grasp the meaning of what Your Blessedness has expressed in brief. It would be well for me, Lord, if your Blessedness would explain in full what has been expressed in brief, that I may know its meaning."

[The Blessed One said:]

"Equal I am, or better, of less degree":  
All such idle fancies lead to strife,  
Who's unmoved by all these three conceits  
Such vain distinctions leaves unmade.<sup>17</sup>

If you know what this means, tell me, fairy.

"Lord, neither do I full grasp the meaning of this which Your Blessedness has expressed in brief. It would be well for me, Lord, if Your Blessedness would explain in full what has been explained in brief, that I may know its meaning."

[The Blessed One said:]

Who labels not, and holds no vain conceits,  
Has cut off craving here for name-and-form<sup>18</sup>  
Free from bonds and pain, with no desires,  
Vainly seeking, none will find that man,  
Neither gods nor men, on earth, above,  
Not in heaven, nor in any sphere.<sup>19</sup>

If you know what this means, tell me, fairy.

"Lord, the meaning of what Your Blessedness has expressed in brief I understand in full like this:

---

<sup>14</sup> Mrs Rhys Davids says 'The Buddha rebukes the fairy [see below, [n. 16](#)] for her suggestive ambiguities.' But the real ambiguity lies deeper than such frivolity, being concerned with the difference between conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*) which takes beings, etc., as being real, and the ultimate truth (*paramattha-sacca*) which does not (see also [§ 5](#), *The Arahant*).

<sup>15</sup> *Sace vijānāsi*: Mrs. Rhys Davids renders "If thou knowest [such a man]." But the clear meaning is 'if you can grasp this distinction,' which is how the she-deva takes it, admitting that she cannot.

<sup>16</sup> 'Fairy': *yakkhī*, a female *yakkha*. These (Sanskrit *yakṣa*) are somewhat ambiguous creatures, sometimes helpful, sometimes harmful to man, though later they are thought of as demons (see PED). There is doubtless an implied rebuke in the Buddha's choice of this form of address. 'Fairy' (also an ambivalent expression) is probably the best word here (as used by Mrs. Rhys Davids).

<sup>17</sup> The three forms of conceit (*māna*) are to think one is equal to, less than, or better than another. All three are due to the ego-illusion (see [§ 30](#)).

<sup>18</sup> *Nāma-rūpa*.

<sup>19</sup> He has passed into Nibbāna, and therefore cannot be found anywhere.

One should do no evil by one's speech,  
Not anywhere, by body or in thought,  
Leave desires, be mindful and aware,  
Thus avoiding pain that's purposeless."<sup>20</sup>

SN 1:2.10

## 5. The Arahant

[Deva:]

He who's an Arahant, his work achieved,  
Free from taints, in final body clad,  
That monk still might use such words as "I."  
Still perchance might say: "They call this mine."

...

Would such a monk be prone to vain conceits?

[The Blessed One:]

Bonds are gone for him without conceits,  
All delusion's chains are cast aside.  
Truly wise, he's gone beyond such thoughts.<sup>21</sup>  
That monk still might use such words as "I,"  
Still perchance might say: "They call this mine."  
Well aware of common worldly speech,  
He would speak conforming to such use.<sup>22</sup>

SN 1:3.5

## 6. Tāyana

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying at Sāvattthī. ... Then Tāyana, son of the devas,<sup>23</sup> formerly a teacher of a [different] sect,...<sup>24</sup> spoke thus in verse before the Blessed One:

Put forth strength and cut the stream at the source,  
Brahman,<sup>25</sup> scatter all desires of the sense.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> She has, according to SA, rightly discerned the Middle Way between self-indulgence and self-torture. In fact, it looks as if her understanding is still somewhat limited: she has, however, grasped the fact that she was indulging in wrong speech at the ethical, if not the ontological level referred to by the Buddha, and she has also understood that one should 'leave desires.' If she has been cured of her frivolity, that at least is a good start!

<sup>21</sup> *Yaṃ mataṃ*: 'whatever is thought.' Mrs Rhys Davids' emendation of *yamataṃ* in the text (paraphrased as 'conceits and deemings of the errant mind,' following the Commentarial *maññanaṃ* 'imagining').

<sup>22</sup> Cf. DN 9: "These are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world, which the Tathāgata uses without misapprehending them."

<sup>23</sup> *Devaputta*. See Vol. I, n. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Though he held certain wrong views, he believed in kamma (a vital point!), and so was reborn in a heaven state. He came to realise the superiority of the Buddha's teaching and therefore came to encourage disciples.

<sup>25</sup> Used here in the sense of a recluse.

<sup>26</sup> Dhṃ 383.

Else the sage can not attain the goal.<sup>27</sup>  
 That which must be done, with vigour do:<sup>28</sup>  
 Feeble recluseship but stirs up dust.  
 Better nothing done than evil wrought:  
 Ill one's done will cause one pain again.  
 If the deed is good, it's better done:  
 Good deeds will bring no pain to come.  
 A blade of grass if wrongly seized,  
 Will only serve to cut the clumsy hand,  
 So ascetic life, if wrongly tried,  
 Merely drags one down to states of woe.<sup>29</sup>  
 Whatever action's slackly carried out,  
 Practices improperly observed,  
 Dubious keeping of the holy life:  
 None of this will bring a great reward.

So said Tāyana, the devas' son and, so saying, he passed with his right side to the Blessed One in salutation and vanished there and then. And when the night was past, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus.

[He repeated the verses and then said:]

“Bhikkhus, learn Tāyana's verses, learn them by heart; Tāyana's verses are for your good, they pertain to the fundamentals of the holy life.”

SN 2:1.8

## 7. Jantu

Thus have I heard. Once a large number of bhikkhus were living among the Kosalans, on the slopes of the Himalayas, in a forest-lodging. And they were haughty, unsteady, garrulous, of loose speech, unmindful, thoughtless, without concentration, with wandering minds and faculties uncontrolled. Now Jantu, son of the devas, on a fifteenth-day Uposatha,<sup>30</sup> came into the presence of those bhikkhus and addressed them in verse:

Happy was the life in former times,  
 Led by Gotama's disciples then:  
 Unhankering, they sought their frugal alms,  
 Unhankering, their lodging and their bed.  
 The world's impermanence they understood:  
 Knowing this, they made an end of woe.  
 Now, making evil-doers of themselves,  
 Just like village headmen they behave,  
 Eating, eating, till they drop with sleep,  
 Coveting the things their neighbour has.  
 To the Sangha having paid respect,

<sup>27</sup> *Ekattam*: 'unity.'

<sup>28</sup> The next 16 lines are found (differently ordered) as Dhṛ 313/314, 311/312.

<sup>29</sup> *Niraya*: 'the downward path.'

<sup>30</sup> The Buddhist 'sabbath': the eve of the full moon, the new moon, and the first and last quarters, i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the lunar month. The 15<sup>th</sup> day is used for exhortation. Called in Sri Lanka *poya*, and in Thailand *wan phra*.

Certain bhikkhus present here I greet:  
Others are like outcasts, masterless,  
To the realm of hungry ghosts<sup>31</sup> as if consigned.  
Those who thus persist in heedlessness  
Are they to whom my message is addressed.  
But to those who dwell in mindfulness  
I accord full honour and respect.

SN 2:3.5

## 8. Mallikā

[The Blessed One was at Sāvattihī]

At this time King Pasenadi of Kosala was on the upper terrace of the palace with Queen Mallikā. And the king asked her: “Mallikā, is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?”<sup>32</sup>

“Your Majesty, there is no one dearer to me than myself. And you, sire, is anyone dearer to you than yourself?”

“Nor is there anyone dearer to me, Mallikā, than myself.”

Then the king went down from the palace and visited the Blessed One [and told him the whole story.] And the Blessed One, understanding, thereupon uttered this verse:

Though in thought we range throughout the world,  
We'll nowhere find a thing more dear than self.  
So, since others hold the self so dear,  
He who loves himself should injure none.

SN 3:1.8

## 9. A Heavy Meal

The King Pasenadi of Kosala dined off a tubful of rice.<sup>33</sup> Then the King, replete and puffing, went to see the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down to one side. And the Blessed One, observing how he was replete and puffing, at once uttered this verse:

Those who always dwell in mindfulness,  
Observing measure in the food they eat,  
Find that their discomfort<sup>34</sup> grows the less.  
Ageing gently, life for them is long.

Now just then, Prince Sudassana was standing behind the king. And the king said to him:

---

<sup>31</sup> *Petā*. Miserable beings who, because of previous greed and avarice, go hungry. I do not understand Mrs Rhys Davids rendering: “As cast out bodies of the dead.”

<sup>32</sup> *Attā*. Used in everyday speech this word most often simply means ‘myself, yourself,’ etc. with absolutely no ‘metaphysical’ implications—a point frequently overlooked by those who wish at all costs to prove that Buddhism teaches the existence of some kind of ‘self.’ Here we have the Buddhist equivalent of “Do as you would be done by.” Cf. Dhṛ 157.

<sup>33</sup> *Doṇapakā*: a tub (as measure of capacity). The same story is told in greater detail in DhṛA.

<sup>34</sup> *Vedanā*: ‘feeling,’ here obviously ‘unpleasant bodily feeling.’

“Come, my dear Sudassana, learn this verse from the Blessed One and recite it to me when you bring me my dinner, and I will arrange for you to be paid a daily allowance of a hundred pence<sup>35</sup> in perpetuity.”

“Very well, Your Majesty,” said Sudassana [*and did as he was told.*]

After that the king made it a rule to eat no more than one-fourth of a tubful of rice.<sup>36</sup> Thus it came about that on a later occasion King Pasenadi, his body in good shape, stroked his healthy limbs and fervently exclaimed: “Truly the Blessed One has doubly shown compassion for my welfare, both in this life and in the life to come!”

SN 3:2.3

## 10. Dhanañjāni

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove,<sup>37</sup> at the Squirrels’ Feeding-Place. Now at that time the brahman lady Dhanañjāni, wife of a certain brahman of the Bhāradvāja family, was a fervent supporter of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. And this lady, while serving the Bhāradvāja Brahman with his dinner, came before him and burst out with this triple inspired utterance: “Praise to the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Fully Self-Enlightened One! Praise to the Dhamma! Praise to the Sangha!”

At these words the brahman said to her “Now then, now then! Every chance she gets this wretched woman has to sing the praises of that shaveling recluse! Now, woman, I’m going to tell that teacher of yours what I think of him!”

“Oh, brahman, I know of nobody in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, with its recluses and brahmans, whether they be divine or human, who could thus rebuke the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Fully Self-Enlightened One. But go on, brahman, go and you will find out.”

Then the brahman, angry and displeased, went to see the Blessed One. After exchanging greetings and compliments with the Blessed One in a friendly and courteous manner, he sat down to one side. So seated, he addressed the Blessed One thus in verse:

What must we slay to live in happiness?  
What must we slay if we would weep no more?  
Is there any single thing of which,  
You’d approve the killing, Gotama?

[The Blessed One replied:]

By slaying wrath you’ll live in happiness  
Slaying wrath, you’ll no more need to weep.  
Kill the poisoned root of anger, brahman,  
Which with sweetness leads to fevered rage.<sup>38</sup>  
Killing this the noble Ones commend:  
Slaying this, you’ll no more need to weep.

<sup>35</sup> *Kahāpaṇa*: the square copper coinage of the time.

<sup>36</sup> One *nāḷika* (one-fourth of a *doṇa*) was the standard amount offered to one bhikkhu. Being meant to last all day, it was probably a substantial amount.

<sup>37</sup> Veluvana.

<sup>38</sup> *Madhur-agga* appears to mean ‘the height (*agga*) of intoxicating sweetness (*madhura*).’

At these words the brahman said to the Blessed One: “Excellent, good Gotama,<sup>39</sup> most excellent! It is, good Gotama, as if someone were to set up something that had been knocked down, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to point out the right path to a man who had got lost, or to bring an oil lamp into a dark place so that those with eyes could see what was there—just so has the good Gotama shown me the truth<sup>40</sup> in various ways! I declare<sup>41</sup> that I go to the Lord Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of monks, I wish to embrace the homeless life<sup>42</sup> under the Lord Gotama, I wish to receive ordination.”<sup>43</sup>

So the Bhāradvāja Brahman was received into the homeless life under the Blessed One, and received ordination. And not so long after his ordination the Venerable Bhāradvāja, remaining alone and secluded, heedful, ardent and resolute, quickly attained that for which young men of good birth rightly go forth from home into the homeless life, coming to realise for himself, in this present life, the unsurpassed goal of the holy life, realising that “birth is destroyed, the holy life has been accomplished, what was to be done is done! There is no further life in this world.”<sup>44</sup>

And that Bhāradvāja became an Arahant.

SN 7:1.1

## 11. Abuse

... Now, Akkosaka<sup>45</sup> of the Bhāradvāja Brahmins heard [of this]. Angry and displeased, he went to see the Blessed One, overwhelming him with abuse and reproaches. At these words the Blessed One said: “What do you think, brahman? Do you receive visits from friends and colleagues, blood-relations and others?”

“Yes, good Gotama, sometimes such people come.”

“What do you think? Do you serve them with solid food, soft food and savouries?”

“Yes, good Gotama, sometimes.”

“But supposing, brahman, they do not accept what you offer, whose is it?”

“If they do not accept, good Gotama, then it belongs to us.”

“So it is here, brahman. The abuse, the scolding, the reviling you hurl at us who do not abuse or scold or revile, we do not accept from you. It all belongs to you, brahman, it all belongs to you! If a man replies to abuse with abuse, to scolding with scolding, to reviling with reviling, brahman, that is like you joining your guests for dinner. But we are not joining you for dinner. It is all yours, brahman, it is all yours!”

“The king and his court believe that Gotama the recluse is an Arahant. And yet the good Gotama can get angry!”<sup>46</sup>

[The Blessed One said in verse:]

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<sup>39</sup> He still, to begin with, uses the patronising address *bho Gotama*.

<sup>40</sup> *Dhamma*.

<sup>41</sup> *Esāhaṃ*: ‘I’ (emphatic)

<sup>42</sup> *Pabbajjā*: now the term for the lower ordination as a *sāmaṇera* (novice).

<sup>43</sup> *Upasampadā*: now the term for the higher ordination as a bhikkhu.

<sup>44</sup> *Itthattāya*: see Vol. II, n. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Really a nickname: ‘The Reviler.’

<sup>46</sup> A perfect example of projection on Akkosaka’s part!

How could anger rise in him who's free,  
 Wrathless, all his passions tamed, at peace,  
 Freed by highest insight, by himself,  
 So abiding, perfectly serene?  
 If a man's abused and answers back,  
 Of the two he shows himself the worse.  
 He who does not answer back in kind,  
 Celebrates a double victory.  
 From his action both sides benefit,  
 He himself and his reviler too:  
 Understanding that man's angry mood,  
 He can help him clear it and find peace.<sup>47</sup>  
 He's the healer of them both, because  
 He and the other benefit thereby.  
 People think a man like that's a fool,  
 For they cannot understand the Truth.

[Akkosaka responds exactly as above in § 10]

And another Venerable Bhāradvāja became an Arahant.

SN 7:1.2

## 12. Saṅgārava

[At Sāvattḥi]... At that time the brahman Saṅgārava was living there, a “purity-by-water” man who believed in purification by water: his practice was to go down into the water every evening and every morning. Now the Venerable Ānanda, rising early, took his robe and bowl and went into Sāvattḥi for alms. [On returning, he went to the Blessed One and said:] “It would be well, Lord, if the Blessed One were to visit the dwelling of Saṅgārava the Brahman, out of compassion for him.”

The Blessed One silently consented. [Visiting him, the Blessed One said:] “Is it true, brahman, that you are a ‘purity-by-water’ man... that you go down to the water every evening and morning?”

“Yes, good Gotama.”

“What benefit do you expect from [this practice]?”

“It is like this, good Gotama. The evil deeds that I do in the day I cause to be borne away in the evening, and the evil deeds that I do in the night I cause to be borne away in the morning. That is the benefit I expect from [this practice.]”

[The Blessed One said:]

Dhamma is a lake, virtue's the ford,<sup>48</sup>  
 Undeiled, which good men praise to others:  
 Men of wisdom come and bathe therein,  
 Then, clean of limb, they reach the Other Shore.

<sup>47</sup> *Upasammati*, ‘he (the other) becomes calm,’ i.e., as a result of the first one's understanding. Here, as elsewhere, we see the Buddha's profound understanding of psychological processes. Cf. Dh 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Tittha*, ‘ford,’ also means ‘bathing-place.’ There is an intentional play on both meanings of the word here.

At these words the Brahman Saṅgārava said to the Blessed One: “Excellent... [as in § 10, but ending:] I go to the Lord Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of monks. May the Lord Gotama accept me as a lay-disciple who has taken refuge in him from this day forth as long as life shall last.”

SN 7:2.11



# Part Two: The Section on Causation (Nidāna Vagga)

## 13. Gotama the Great Sage of the Sakya <sup>49</sup>

“Monks, [likewise<sup>50</sup>] before I attained supreme Enlightenment, while I was still a Bodhisatta,<sup>51</sup> the thought occurred to me: ‘This world, alas, has fallen into sore distress. There is being born, growing old, dying, passing over and being reborn. But from all this suffering, from decay and death, no way of release is apparent. Surely there must be some way of release discoverable from this suffering, this decay-and-death.’

“Then, monks, this thought occurred to me ‘What being present does decay-and-death come to be? What conditions decay-and-death?’ Then, monks, as I considered this thoroughly,<sup>52</sup> the insight and comprehension dawned on me: ‘Birth being present, death-and-decay comes to be; decay-and-death is conditioned by birth.’ Then the thought occurred to me: ‘What being present does birth come to be? What conditions birth?... becoming... grasping... craving... feeling... contact... the six sense-bases... name-form... consciousness... (kamma-)formations?...’<sup>53</sup> Then, as I considered this thoroughly, the insight and comprehension dawned on me: ‘Ignorance being present, the formations come to be; the formations are conditioned by ignorance.’ And so we have it like this: ‘Conditioned by ignorance are the formations, conditioned by the formations is consciousness... So there comes about the arising of this entire mass of suffering.’

“‘Arising, arising!’—At this thought, monks, there arose in me, concerning things unheard of before, vision,<sup>54</sup> knowledge,<sup>55</sup> understanding,<sup>56</sup> light.

“Then, monks, the thought occurred to me: ‘By the absence of what does decay-and-death not come to be?’ Then, monks, as I considered this thoroughly, the insight and comprehension dawned on me: ‘In the absence of birth, decay-and-death does not come to be; from the ceasing

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<sup>49</sup> *Sakyamuni*. The designation is found here only in the superscription, and is rare in the Pali Canon (Childers in his dictionary deprecates its use in Western writings), though later frequently used in Mahāyāna writings to distinguish the Buddha Gotama (Sanskrit *Gautama*) from other Buddhas there referred to. Here too, other Buddhas have just been mentioned (see [n. 50](#)).

<sup>50</sup> Preceding sections have told the same story about Gotama’s predecessors, the Buddhas Vipassī, Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgama, and Kassapa. All those who attain Buddhahood are assumed to undergo the same basic experiences, at immense intervals of time.

<sup>51</sup> This term, in Theravāda Buddhism, is applied to one who is on his way to becoming a Buddha, thus normally to Gotama before his enlightenment (but also to the previous Buddhas mentioned in [n. 50](#) before their enlightenment). The more famous Sanskrit term *Bodhi-sattva* means literally ‘Enlightenment-Being.’ It may however be a false Sanskritization for *Bodhi-sakta* (which would also be *Bodhi-satta* in Pali) ‘one who is attached to or desires to gain Enlightenment.’ See relevant article in EB, Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, London For an instance of Mahāyāna influence on the Theravāda commentarial tradition see also Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The All-Embracing Net of Views* (BPS 1978), pp. 49f, 254–330.

<sup>52</sup> *Yoniso manasikārā*: a frequent expression. *Yoni* (lit. ‘womb’) means ‘source, foundation,’ etc. The modern idiom might be ‘investigation in depth.’

<sup>53</sup> *Saṅkhāras*, i.e., wholesome or unwholesome volitional activities of body, speech or mind (see BD s.v. *saṅkhāra* (I) 1).

<sup>54</sup> *Cakkhu*: lit. ‘eye.’ ‘Knowledge with the sense of vision’ (SA).

<sup>55</sup> *Nāṇa*: ‘As meaning what is known’ (SA).

<sup>56</sup> *Paññā*: ‘wisdom.’ As meaning ‘penetration’ (SA).

of birth comes the ceasing of decay-and-death... becoming... grasping... craving... feeling... contact... the six sense-bases... name-form... consciousness... the formations... by the ceasing of ignorance comes the ceasing of the formations... So comes about the cessation of this entire mass of suffering.’

“Cessation, cessation!”—At this thought, monks, there arose in me, concerning things unheard of before, vision, knowledge, understanding, light.”

SN 12:10

## 14. Kaccāyana

[At Sāvattthī the Ven. Kaccāyana asked the Blessed One:] “‘Right view,<sup>57</sup> right view,’ it is said, Lord. In what way, Lord, is there right view?”

“The world in general, Kaccāyana, inclines to two views, to existence<sup>58</sup> or to non-existence.<sup>59</sup> But for him who, with the highest wisdom, sees the uprising of the world as it really is,<sup>60</sup> ‘non-existence of the world’ does not apply, and for him who, with highest wisdom, sees the passing away of the world as it really is, ‘existence of the world’ does not apply.

“The world in general, Kaccāyana, grasps after systems and is imprisoned by dogmas.<sup>61</sup> But he<sup>62</sup> does not go along with that system-grasping, that mental obstinacy and dogmatic bias, does not grasp at is, does not affirm: ‘This is my self.’<sup>63</sup> He knows without doubt or hesitation that whatever arises is merely *dukkha*<sup>64</sup> that what passes away is merely *dukkha* and such knowledge is his own, not depending on anyone else. This, Kaccāyana, is what constitutes right view.

“Everything exists,<sup>65</sup> this is one extreme [view]; ‘nothing exists,’ this is the other extreme. Avoiding both extremes the Tathāgata<sup>66</sup> teaches a doctrine of the middle: Conditioned by ignorance are the formations... [as § 13]... So there comes about the arising of this entire mass of suffering. But from the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance, there comes the

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<sup>57</sup> *Samma Ditṭhi*: the first step of the Noble Eightfold Path, lit. ‘Right Seeing.’ It is also rendered ‘Right Understanding,’ but the connotations of this are too exclusively intellectual. The rendering ‘Right Views’ (plural) is to be rejected, since it is not a matter of holding ‘views’ (opinions) but of ‘seeing things as they really are.’

<sup>58</sup> *Atthitā*: ‘is-ness.’ The theory of ‘Eternalism’ (*sassatavāda*).

<sup>59</sup> *Natthitā*: ‘is-not-ness.’ The theory of ‘Annihilationism’ (*ucchedavāda*). All forms of materialism come under this heading. See the discussion in Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation of DN 1, *The All-Embracing Net of Views* pp. 30–33. (Cf. [n. 51](#)).

<sup>60</sup> *Yathābhutaṃ*: cf. [n. 57](#).

<sup>61</sup> Or, as we might say today, ‘ideologies’ or ‘isms.’

<sup>62</sup> I take this to mean the man who sees ‘with the highest wisdom’ mentioned above. Mrs Rhys Davids seems to have gone slightly astray here.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. [n. 32](#). Feer’s PTS edition of SN reads here *attā na me ti* ‘this is not myself,’ which would also make sense but is contradicted, not only in SA, but also when the story is repeated at III, 90.

<sup>64</sup> The usual translation ‘suffering,’ always a makeshift, is inappropriate here. *Dukkha* in Buddhist usage refers to the inherent unsatisfactoriness and general insecurity of all conditioned existence.

<sup>65</sup> *Sabbaṃ atthi*. From the Sanskrit form of this expression, *sarvaṃ asti* (though used in a slightly different sense), the Sarvāstivādin school got their name. They held that *dharma*s existed in ‘three times,’ past, present and future. It was mainly to this early school that the label ‘Hinayāna’ (‘Lesser Career or Vehicle’) was applied and later illegitimately applied to the Theravāda (see [n. 77](#)).

<sup>66</sup> Lit. probably either ‘Thus come’ *tathā-āgata* or ‘Thus gone (beyond)’ (*tathā-gata*): the Buddha’s usual way of referring to himself. For other meanings, see *The All-Embracing Net of Views* (n. 51), pp. 50–53, pp. 331–344.

cessation of the formations, from the cessation of the formations comes the cessation of consciousness... So there comes about the complete cessation of this entire mass of suffering.”

SN 12:15

## 15. The Teacher of Dhamma

[A monk said:] “‘Dhamma-teacher, Dhamma-teacher’ they say, Lord.”

“If, monk, anyone teaches a doctrine of disenchantment<sup>67</sup> with decay-and-death, of dispassion<sup>68</sup> [leading to] its cessation, that suffices for him to be called a monk who teaches Dhamma.<sup>69</sup>

“If anyone has trained himself in this disenchantment with decay-and-death, in dispassion<sup>70</sup> [leading to] its cessation, that suffices for him to be called a monk who is trained in what is in conformity with Dhamma.<sup>71</sup>

“If anyone, through disenchantment with decay-and-death, through dispassion [leading to] its cessation, is liberated from grasping, that suffices for him to be called one who has attained Nibbāna in this life.”<sup>72</sup>

[The same three distinctions are made in respect of birth... ignorance]

SN 12:16

## 16. Naked Kassapa (part)

[At Veḷuvana the wanderer Acela-Kassapa (Naked Kassapa) questioned the Buddha:]

“Well now, good Gotama, is suffering caused by oneself?”

“No indeed, Kassapa,” said the Blessed One.

“Well then, good Gotama, is one’s suffering caused by another?”

“No indeed, Kassapa.”

“Well then, good Gotama, is suffering caused by both oneself and another?”

“No indeed, Kassapa.”

“Well then, good Gotama, this suffering which is caused neither by oneself nor by another, is it the result of chance?”<sup>73</sup>

“No indeed, Kassapa.”

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<sup>67</sup> *Nibbidā*: sometimes rendered ‘revulsion,’ but this suffers from the defect of suggesting too strong an emotional reaction. ‘Disenchantment’ covers it better.

<sup>68</sup> *Virāga* is quite literally ‘dis-passion.’ The syntax of this sentence is rather curious, but the meaning is clear enough.

<sup>69</sup> This gives a clear indication of the minimum standard required for anyone (today, in the West, often a lay person) setting up as a teacher of Buddhism. It denotes a ‘worldling’ (*puthujjana*, i.e., one who has not ‘entered the stream’) who has the basic intellectual knowledge mentioned here.

<sup>70</sup> This one is a *sekha* ‘trainee,’ i.e., one who has at least ‘entered the stream’ (and thus knows in part from experience), but is not an Arahant.

<sup>71</sup> His training is proceeding along the right path.

<sup>72</sup> He is an *asekha* (‘non-trainee,’ i.e., one who has finished his training), an Arahant.

<sup>73</sup> Not caused by any conditions.

“Well then, good Gotama, is suffering non-existent?”

“No Kassapa: suffering is not non-existent. Suffering exists.”

“Then the good Gotama neither knows nor sees suffering.”

“No, Kassapa, it is not that I neither know nor see suffering: I know suffering, I see suffering.”

“Well now, good Gotama, when I asked you, ‘Is suffering caused by oneself?’ you answered ‘No indeed’ [and so on for all the other questions.] Would the Lord, the Blessed One,<sup>74</sup> expound suffering to me! Would the Lord, the Blessed One, teach me about suffering!”

“He who performs the act also experiences [the result]—what you, Kassapa, first called ‘suffering caused by oneself’—this amounts to the Eternalist<sup>75</sup> theory. ‘One person performs the act, another experiences,’—which to the person affected seems like ‘suffering caused by another’—this amounts to the Annihilationist<sup>76</sup> theory. Avoiding both extremes, Kassapa, the Tathāgata teaches a doctrine of the middle: Conditioned by ignorance are the (kamma-) formations... [as § 14]... so there comes about the cessation of this entire mass of suffering.”

[Kassapa is converted and eventually becomes an Arahant.]

SN 12:17

## 17. From the ‘Ten Powers’ Sutta

“It is not by that which is low,<sup>77</sup> monks, that the highest is attained; it is by the highest that the highest is attained. Most excellent<sup>78</sup> is the holy life. The teacher has come to you face to face. Therefore stir up energy, monks, to gain what has not been gained, to attain what has not been attained, to realise what has not been realised. Then this our leaving the world<sup>79</sup> will not prove a barren thing, but fruitful and productive of results. So too the requisites<sup>80</sup> we enjoy—robe, alms, lodging, medicine in sickness—trifling as they are, will be very fruitful for us, very profitable. For thus, monks, you must train yourselves: perceiving his own benefit<sup>81</sup> a man

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<sup>74</sup> Kassapa here switches from the familiar *bho Gotama* to the more respectful form. He is now ready to accept instruction.

<sup>75</sup> *Sassatavāda* (n. 58).

<sup>76</sup> *Ucchedavāda* (n. 59).

<sup>77</sup> *Hīnaṃ*: This is the adjective used in the term ‘Hīnayāna,’ as contrasted with the designation ‘Mahāyāna,’ for the developed or expanded Buddhism of the Northern schools. Curiously enough, it is often adopted today by Oriental Theravāda Buddhists themselves, despite the fact that it is both offensive and erroneous. The facts are set out succinctly in E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought* (London 1933), 177f. According to Thomas, *yāna* in this context means not ‘vehicle,’ as usually translated, but ‘career.’ Thus Mahāyāna designates the ‘great career’ of the Bodhisattva (cf. n. 51) as distinct from the ‘disciples career’ (*śrāvakayāna*; Pali *sāvaka-yāna*) and the career culminating in the status of ‘solitary Buddha’ (*Pratyeka-Buddha*; Pali *Pacceka-Buddha*), who is enlightened but does not teach. The word *hīnayāna* ‘low or base career’ is “a term which has become popularised as the translation of a phrase used by Chinese pilgrims, who seem to have known it as a convenient name for all schools which were not Mahāyāna. But this is not the way the term is used in the Sanskrit texts” (Thomas). It is time the opprobrious term was dropped altogether, and especially with regard to Theravāda, a school almost certainly unknown to those who coined it. It mainly referred to the long-extinct Sarvāstivādins (cf. n 65).

<sup>78</sup> *Maṇḍapeyyaṃ*: lit. ‘to be drunk like cream.’

<sup>79</sup> A rare case in which the Buddha associates himself with his disciples in order to encourage them. For him, his ‘leaving the world’ has already produced the highest results.

<sup>80</sup> The standard list of ‘requisites’ permitted to a bhikkhu.

<sup>81</sup> The benefit to himself (*attā*). Here, as elsewhere, the Buddha does not hesitate to refer to ‘self’ in the relative, conventional sense (cf. n. 32).

should exert himself tirelessly;<sup>82</sup> perceiving the benefit to others, he should exert himself tirelessly; perceiving the benefit to both, he should exert himself tirelessly.”<sup>83</sup>

SN 12:22

## 18. From the Upanisā Sutta<sup>84</sup>

[At Sāvattḥī the Blessed One said:]

“Monks, I declare that the destruction of the cankers<sup>85</sup> comes for him who knows and sees, and not for him who does not know and does not see. By knowing what, by seeing what, does the destruction of the cankers come about? ‘Such is material form, such is its arising, such is its passing away; such is feeling... such is perception... such are the mental formations... such is consciousness, such is its arising, such is its passing away’: for him who knows this, for him who sees this, the destruction of the cankers comes about.

“Regarding this knowledge of destruction, I declare that there is a supporting condition without which it does not arise...<sup>86</sup> What is this supporting condition? Liberation... Liberation has a supporting condition...: Dispassion... Dispassion has a supporting condition...: Disenchantment... Disenchantment has a supporting condition...: Knowledge-and-vision-of-things-as-they-are... Knowledge-and-vision-of-things-as-they-are has a supporting condition...: Concentration... Concentration has a supporting condition...: Happiness... Happiness has a supporting condition...: Tranquillity... Tranquillity has a supporting condition...: Rapture...<sup>87</sup> Rapture has a supporting condition...: Joy... Joy has a supporting condition...: Faith...<sup>88</sup> Faith has a supporting condition...: Suffering...<sup>89</sup> Suffering has a supporting condition...: Birth...<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Alaṃ... appamādena sampādetuṃ*: cf. the Buddha’s last words as given in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16). The Rhys Davids translation there (DN 16, vi, 7 [ii, 156]) “Work out your salvation with diligence”; has become altogether too popular.

<sup>83</sup> This provides one of the two main answers to ignorant suggestions that Buddhism is ‘selfish’: (a) since, in terms of absolute truth (cf. [n. 14](#)), all things are ‘self-less’ (*anattā*), there is no real basis for selfishness; and (b) since, as here, in the relative sense according to which ‘selves’ can be said to exist, the Dhamma is of benefit both to oneself and to others.

<sup>84</sup> The final part of this very important sutta is translated as No. 19 in Vol. I of this anthology. See now also Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Transcendental Dependent Arising* (WH 277–8, 1980).

<sup>85</sup> *Āsavā*. From *ā-savati* ‘flows towards’ (i.e., either ‘into’ or ‘out’ towards the observer), thus lit. either ‘influx’ or ‘secretion.’ The most generally accepted translation today is ‘cankers.’ [Another meaning is ‘fermentation,’ hence ‘intoxicants’ is a possible alternative rendering.] The four cankers are those of (1) sense-desire (*kāmāsava*), (2) desire for continued existence (*bhavāsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*, cf. [n. 57](#)), and (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*)—although (3) is often omitted, being doubtless included in (4). The destruction of the cankers is equivalent to Arahantship, and an Arahant is sometimes called *khīṇāsava*.

<sup>86</sup> *Upanisā*: a word of various meanings: ‘support, cause, means,’ etc. Formally it looks like the Pali equivalent of *upaniṣad*, but it may be a contraction of *upanissaya* ‘decisive support’ in the list of the 24 Conditions (see BD, s.v. *paccaya*). It is glossed in SA as *kāraṇa* ‘cause,’ *paccaya* ‘condition.’

<sup>87</sup> *Pīti*. A particularly difficult word to translate. Like *passaddhi* ‘tranquillity,’ but unlike *sukha* ‘happiness,’ it belongs to a group of mental formations (*saṅkhārakkhandha*), and ranges from ‘interest’ through ‘zest’ to ‘rapture.’ The five degrees of *pīti* are described in VM IV, 94–99 (in Ven. Ñāṇamoli’s translation of the text *pīti* is rendered ‘happiness’ and *sukha* ‘bliss’).

<sup>88</sup> *Saddhā*. This is not blind faith but confidence in the Buddha and his teaching.

<sup>89</sup> *Dukkha* stands here for the usual ‘decay-and-death’ (*jarā-maraṇa*) or, in full, ‘decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair’ (*jarā-maraṇa-soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyāsa*).

<sup>90</sup> *Jāti*. All the rest, down to ‘ignorance’ as in the usual formula of Dependent Origination. See Vol. I, n. 29–30.

Becoming... Grasping... Craving... Feeling... Contact... the Six Sense-Bases... Name-and-Form... Consciousness... the (kamma-) formations... Ignorance...

“Thus, monks, Ignorance is the supporting condition for the (kamma-) formations [etc. to] Birth. Birth for Suffering, Suffering for Faith, Faith for Joy, Joy for Delight, Delight for Tranquillity, Tranquillity for Happiness, Happiness for Concentration, Concentration for Knowledge-and-vision-of-things-as-they-are, Knowledge-and-vision-of-things-as-they-are for Disenchantment, Disenchantment for Dispassion, Dispassion for Liberation, Liberation for Knowledge of the destruction of the cankers.”

SN 12:23

## 19. Volition <sup>91</sup>

[At Sāvattḥī the Blessed One said:] “Monks, what a man wills, what he plans, what he dwells on forms the basis for the continuation of consciousness.<sup>92</sup> This basis being present, consciousness has a lodgement. Consciousness being lodged there and growing, rebirth of renewed existence takes place in the future, and from this renewed existence arise birth, decay-and-death, grief, lamentation, suffering, sorrow and despair. Such is the uprising of this entire mass of suffering.

“Even if a man does not will and plan, yet if he dwells on something, this forms a basis for the continuation of consciousness:... rebirth... takes place...”

“But if a man neither wills nor plans nor dwells on anything, no basis is formed for the continuation of consciousness. This basis being absent, consciousness has no lodgement. Consciousness not being lodged there and not growing, no rebirth of renewed existence takes place in the future, and so birth, decay-and-death, grief, lamentation, suffering, sorrow and despair are destroyed. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering.”

SN 12:38

## 20. Ānanda’s Mistake

The Blessed One was once staying among the Kurus at their market-town of Kammāsadamma. [And the Venerable Ānanda said:] “Wonderful, Lord, marvellous, Lord, is the profundity of this law of Dependent Origination, and how profound it appears! And yet to me it appears perfectly plain.”

“Do not say that, Ānanda, do not say that! This law of Dependent Origination is indeed profound and appears profound. It is through not knowing, not understanding, not penetrating this truth <sup>93</sup> that this generation has become entangled like a knotted string, covered with blight, like grass and reeds, and cannot pass over the downfall, the woeful way, the sorrowful state, the cycle of birth-and-death.”<sup>94</sup>

SN 12:60

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<sup>91</sup> *Cetanā*. This is equated in AN 6.13 with kamma.

<sup>92</sup> Consciousness (defined as ‘karmic consciousness’ in SA) is dependent on the formations (*saṅkhārā*) of which volition ([n. 91](#)) is one.

<sup>93</sup> *Dhamma*.

<sup>94</sup> *Samsāra*.

## 21. Contentment

“Monks, Kassapa<sup>95</sup> here is content with any old robe. He praises contentment with any robe, and he does not commit any offence of unseemliness or impropriety<sup>96</sup> on account of a robe. If he has not got a robe, he does not worry; if he has got a robe he enjoys the use of it without clinging or foolish attachment, not committing any offence, aware of the danger and wisely avoiding it.<sup>97</sup> Kassapa is content with whatever alms he gets... whatever lodging... whatever requisites in the way of medicines for sickness... he enjoys the use of these things without clinging or foolish attachment, not committing any offence, aware of the danger and wisely avoiding it.

“Therefore, monks, you should train yourselves thus: ‘We will be content with whatever robe... alms... lodging... medicines... we may get... We will enjoy the use of these things without clinging or foolish attachment, not committing any offence, aware of the danger and wisely avoiding it.’

“Monks, I will exhort you by the example of Kassapa, or one like Kassapa. So exhorted, you should practise to gain the goal.”<sup>98</sup>

SN 16:1

## 22. Carelessness

Thus have I heard. Once the Venerable Mahā-Kassapa and the Venerable Sāriputta were staying near Benares, at Isipatana in the Deer Park. [Sāriputta said:] “It is said, friend Kassapa, that without ardour and without taking care,<sup>99</sup> one is unable to gain enlightenment, unable to gain Nibbāna, unable to gain relief from bondage,<sup>100</sup> but that with ardour, with taking care, enlightenment... can be gained. [How is this?]”

“When, friend, a monk thinks: ‘Evil<sup>101</sup> and unskilled<sup>102</sup> states that have not arisen would, if they were to arise, be to my detriment,’ and he does not arouse ardour when he thinks: ‘Evil and unskilled states that have arisen will, if they are not abandoned, be to my detriment,’ and he does not arouse ardour; when he thinks: ‘Skilled states that have not arisen, if they do not arise, this will be to my detriment,’ and he does not arouse ardour; when he thinks: ‘Skilled states that

<sup>95</sup> This is Kassapa the Great (Mahā-Kassapa), one of the Buddha’s chief disciples and later leader of the Sangha. Not to be confused with the Kassapa mentioned in [§ 16](#).

<sup>96</sup> Unlike, e.g., Nanda ([§ 25](#)).

<sup>97</sup> *Nissaraṇapañño*: lit. ‘wise as to deliverance.’

<sup>98</sup> *Tathatta*: ‘the state of thusness,’ Nibbāna. With a different suffix there is the almost equivalent term *tathatā*, found mainly in Mahāyāna texts, but also occurring in VM XVII, 6, etc., where it means ‘the state of being really so.’

<sup>99</sup> *Anottāpī*: ‘without moral dread (*ottappa*).’ *Ottappa* is fear of wrongdoing (and its consequences). It is usually coupled with *hiri* ‘moral shame,’ i.e., fear of doing what one would be ashamed of. These two are known as the ‘guardians of the world’ (*loka-pālā*), and together may be regarded as the objective and subjective aspects of what Christians call conscience. Here, *anātāpī* and *anottāpī* are linked together by rhyme. If this translation were more concerned with literary effect than with meaning, this could be to a certain extent imitated by a rendering such as ‘without fire and without care.’

<sup>100</sup> *Yogakkhema*: *Yoga* (etymologically related to English *yoke*), is sometimes used in Buddhism with positive connotations of religious discipline, etc., but more usually has the negative sense as here. Specifically the ‘yokes’ are synonymous with the cankers (*āsavā*, cf. [n. 85](#)).

<sup>101</sup> *Pāpakā*: ‘(objectively) evil’

<sup>102</sup> *Akusalā*: lit. ‘unskilled,’ the negated form of *kusala* ‘skilful’ or ‘wholesome,’ i.e., productive of favourable kammic results. Such wholesome states are accompanied by the ‘wholesome roots’ of non-greed (*alobha*) non-hate (*adosa*) and sometimes also non-delusion (*amoha*).

have arisen, if they should cease, this will be to my detriment,’ and he does not arouse ardour—this, friend, is being without ardour.”

[The same is repeated for ‘without taking care’]

“Thus it is friend, that without taking ardour, without taking care, one is unable to gain enlightenment, unable to gain Nibbāna, unable to gain relief from bondage. And how, friend, is one ardent? When a monk thinks: ‘Evil and unskilled states...’ ... ‘Skilled states...’ [As before but after each thought: ‘and he arouses ardour’]—this, friend, is arousing ardour. [The same repeated with: ‘taking care’]. Thus it is, friend, that by arousing ardour and taking care, one is able to gain enlightenment, to gain Nibbāna, to gain relief from bondage.”

SN 16:2

## 23. False Dhamma

[At Sāvattthī, Kassapa asked the Buddha:] “What is the reason, Lord, and depending on what conditions is it that formerly there were fewer precepts, yet more monks attained enlightenment?<sup>103</sup> What is the reason, Lord, and depending on what conditions is it that nowadays there are more precepts, and fewer monks attain enlightenment?”

“It is like this, Kassapa. When beings are in decline,<sup>104</sup> and the true Dhamma is waning, then there are more precepts and fewer monks attain enlightenment. But there is no disappearance of the true Dhamma, Kassapa, till a counterfeit Dhamma arises in the world; but when a counterfeit Dhamma arises, then there is a disappearance of the true Dhamma, just as there is no disappearing of gold so long as no counterfeit gold has arisen in the world...<sup>105</sup> The earth-element<sup>106</sup> does not make the true Dhamma disappear, the water-element... the fire-element... the air-element..., but right here,<sup>107</sup> men of straw<sup>108</sup> appear, and it is they who bring about the disappearance of the true Dhamma. A ship, Kassapa, may sink all at once, but it is not thus that the true Dhamma disappears. There are five contributory factors,<sup>109</sup> Kassapa, which lead to the adulteration<sup>110</sup> and disappearance of the true Dhamma. Which five? It is when monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers behave disrespectfully and rebelliously towards the Teacher,... towards the Dhamma,... towards the Sangha,... towards the training,... towards meditation.<sup>111</sup>

“But when monks and nuns, male and female lay followers behave respectfully and deferentially towards the Dhamma,... towards the Sangha,... towards the training,... towards meditation, then these five things conduce to the maintenance, the purity and the preservation of the true Dhamma.”

SN 16:13

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<sup>103</sup> *Aññā*: ‘highest knowledge, gnosis’: the knowledge gained by Arahants.

<sup>104</sup> *Sattesu hāyamānesu* ‘with the dwindling of [numbers of] beings.’ Mrs Rhys Davids has ‘when members [*sic*! = numbers?] decrease,’ with a note: ‘As in the case of physical cataclysms, such as the three cosmic “involutions”... discussed in *Visuddhimagga* 414f. [VM XIII, 28ff.]’

<sup>105</sup> A Buddhist ‘Gresham’s Law’?

<sup>106</sup> The ‘four great elements’ (*mahābhūtā*) cf. [n. 232](#).

<sup>107</sup> Here in the Sangha.

<sup>108</sup> Worthless, empty men.

<sup>109</sup> *Okkamaniyā dhammā*: ‘factors which enter in’ (*okkamati=avakkamati*). Mrs Rhys Davids has ‘lowering factors.’ The article on the verb *okkamati* in PED is thoroughly muddled and muddling.

<sup>110</sup> *Sammosāya*: ‘confusing, bewildering’: from the same root as *musā-* in *musāvādā* ‘wrong speech.’

<sup>111</sup> *Samādhi*, here in the general sense of ‘meditation.’



## 24. The Dung-Beetle <sup>112</sup>

“Fatal things, monks, are gains, favours and fame, bitter, harsh impediments to the attainment of the unsurpassed freedom from bondage. It is just like a beetle, feeding on dung, full of dung, gorged with dung, standing before a great dung-hill, who might despise other beetles, saying: ‘I am a dung-eater, full of dung, gorged with dung, and before me is this great dung-hill!’

“In the same way, monks, if some monk is overwhelmed with gains, favours and fame so that his head is turned, so, having risen early and taken his robe and bowl and gone for alms to the village or market town, he eats his fill, gets invited again for next day, and has a full bowl. Then he goes to the monks’ park,<sup>113</sup> and boasts in the midst of the assembled monks: ‘I have had a good meal, and I am invited again for tomorrow. My bowl is full. I have got a robe, alms, lodgings and medical requisites. But these other monks have little merit and little influence; they do not get [all these] requisites.’ Thus this bhikkhu, who is so overwhelmed with gains, favours and fame that his head is turned, despises other well-behaved bhikkhus. But this will bring harm and sorrow to that wretched man for many a long day. That shows you, monks, how disastrous gains, favours and fame are, what a bitter, harsh impediment to the attainment of the unsurpassed freedom from bondage. Therefore monks, you should train yourselves thus: ‘Whatever gains, favours and fame may come our way we will reject, lest it turn our heads.’ So, monks, you should train yourselves.”

SN 17:5

## 25. Nanda

[At Sāvattī]... Now the Venerable Nanda, the Blessed One’s first cousin, put on well-pressed<sup>114</sup> robes, painted his eyes,<sup>115</sup> took a bright shiny bowl and went before the Blessed One. Having saluted the Blessed One he sat down to one side. As he sat there the Blessed One said: “It is not suitable for you, Nanda, who as a young man of good family has left the household life, in faith, for homelessness, to appear in well-pressed robes, with painted eyes and a bright shiny bowl. The proper thing for you, Nanda,... is to be a forest-dweller, to go for alms in ragged robes, dwelling aloof from sense-desires.” [He added the verse:]

Maybe I’ll see Nanda once  
In the forest, dressed in rags,  
Living just from cast-off scraps,<sup>116</sup>  
Quite detached from sense-desires.

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<sup>112</sup> The meaning (and indeed the form) of this word is doubtful. Feer’s text (PTS) has ‘*piḥhika* (or *miḥhaka?*)’ in the heading, and the word is translated in KS (as here) ‘dung-beetle.’ The PED says the reading should be *miḥhakā* and renders it ‘cess-pool,’ which is obvious nonsense, since a creature of some kind is required. Under *piḥhaka* the PED quotes SA as ‘incorrectly’ explaining it by a low insect ‘breeding in excrements.’ While ‘dung-beetle’ may conceivably not be entomologically quite correct (a point about which this translator can offer no opinion), there can be no doubt that some such creature is intended, and the PED remarks can only be described as perverse.

<sup>113</sup> *Ārāma*. From the meaning of ‘pleasure’ (*ā + ramati* ‘enjoys’) this word developed the sense of ‘pleasure-park’ and, after the donation of such parks to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍika and Ambapālī, specifically such a park for the use of bhikkhus. Now also used for a monastery complex.

<sup>114</sup> Lit. ‘flattened and pressed all round’ (PED): explained at some length in KS II, p. 191.

<sup>115</sup> With collyrium. This was against the (later) rules, we might have expected this little story to have been used, like other such, in the Vinaya Piṭaka as an explanation for the introduction of such a rule.

<sup>116</sup> Food rejected by others.

After that the Venerable Nanda became a forest-dweller, going for alms in ragged robes, dwelling aloof from sense-desires.

SN 21:8

# Part Three: The Section on the Aggregates (Khandha-Vagga)

## 26. Grasping and Worrying

[At Sāvattḥī the Blessed One said:] “Monks, I will explain to you grasping and worrying, and also not grasping and not worrying... Here, monks, the uninstructed worldling, with no regard for Noble Ones,<sup>117</sup> unskilled and untrained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones [and] of those who are worthy<sup>118</sup> regards body as the self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. Change occurs to this man’s body, and it becomes different. Because of this change and alteration in his body, his consciousness is preoccupied with bodily change. Due to this preoccupation with bodily change, worried thoughts arise and persist, laying a firm hold on his mind. Through this mental obsession he becomes fearful and distressed, and being full of desire<sup>119</sup> and attachment he is worried. He regards feeling as the self,... change occurs to his feeling... he is worried. [Similarly with ‘perception,’ ‘the mental formations’ and ‘consciousness’]. In this way, monks, grasping and worrying arise. And how, monks, do not grasping and not worrying arise?”

“Here, monks, the well-instructed Ariyan disciple, who has regard for the Noble Ones, is skilled and trained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, who has regard for those who are worthy, is skilled and trained in the Dhamma of the worthy ones, does not regard body as the self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. Change occurs to this man’s body, and it becomes different, but despite this change and alteration in his body, his consciousness is not preoccupied with bodily change... Not being full of desire and attachment, he is not worried. [Similarly with ‘feeling,’ ‘perception,’ ‘the mental formations’ and ‘consciousness’]. In this way, monks, grasping and worrying do not arise.”

SN 22:7

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<sup>117</sup> According to MA on MN 1 the ‘Noble Ones’ (*ariyā*) are Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas (cf. [n. 77](#)) and disciples (*sāvaka*). ‘With no regard...’ means not seeing with knowledge (*nāṇena adassāvī*), i.e., seeing them with physical eye but not knowing them for what they are. See *The Discourses on the Root of Existence* [= MN 1], translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (BPS 1980), p. 42.

<sup>118</sup> *Sappurisā*: MA (as in [n. 117](#)) says these are Pacceka Buddhas and disciples. Alternatively it is stated that the ‘Noble Ones’ may refer to Buddhas alone, or that both terms may refer to all the classes.

<sup>119</sup> *Apekhavā ca upādāya ca*. KS has ‘owing to vexation and clinging,’ but *apekhavā* = ‘full of longing or desire’ (PED s.v. *apekhavant*).

## 27. The Burden <sup>120</sup>

“Monks, I will explain to you the burden, the laying hold of the burden, the holding on to the burden,<sup>121</sup> the laying down of the burden. Listen.

“What, monks, is the burden?

“‘The five groups of clinging<sup>122</sup> is the answer. Which five? They are: the group of clinging to corporeality,... to feelings,... to perceptions,... to mental formations,... to consciousness. This, monks, is called ‘the burden.’

“What is the laying hold of the burden? The answer is that it is the person,<sup>123</sup> the Venerable So-and-so, of such-and-such a family. This, monks, is called ‘the laying hold of the burden.’

“What is the holding on to the burden? The answer is that it is that craving which gives rise to fresh rebirth and, bound up with lust and greed, now here, now there, finds ever fresh delight. It is sensual craving,<sup>124</sup> craving for existence,<sup>125</sup> craving for non-existence.<sup>126</sup> This, monks, is called ‘the holding on to the burden.’<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> This sutta, as E.J. Thomas (*Early Buddhist Scriptures*, London 1935, p. 123) says, “has been appealed to both by those who would find in Buddhism the doctrine of something permanent in addition to the five groups [i.e., the *saṅkhāras*], and also by those who deny it.” To the former party belong, e.g., H.C. Warren, who included it in his *Buddhism in Translations* (Harvard 1896, rep. 1963), and Erich Frauwallner, who prints in his *Philosophie des Buddhismus* [East] Berlin 1956, p. 25f., a German translation from the Chinese version of *Tsa Ahan* (Taisho 99, k. 3), which he entitles *Das Sutra vom Lasttrager* (‘The Sutra of the Burden-Bearer’) with the Sanskrit heading (retranslated from the Chinese) *Bhārahārasūtram*. But Woodward in KS, countering a similar view expressed by A.B. Keith, says: “No bearer of the burden is mentioned at all, but a bearing. *Hāro* is ‘a taking.’ *The puggalo* [‘person’] is the taking hold of the fivefold mass.” (Woodward’s italics). Woodward’s view is expressly supported by Mrs Rhys Davids, as editor, in a note of her own, though she doubtless changed her mind about this later, having subsequently (as is well known) drifted into wrong views! The sutta is discussed briefly twice in EB, and, curiously, different opinions are expressed on this point. Under *Bhāra*, U. K[arunaratana] says: ‘the burden-bearer (*bhārahāra*) is the person (*puggala*),’ while under *Bhāra Sutta* L[akshmi] R. G[oonsekere] writes: “the ‘laying hold of the burden’ [= *bhārahāra*] is the individual.” Grammar would seem to be on the side of the latter view, and while I am unable to say whether Frauwallner has translated from the Chinese correctly or not, the same would apply to the Sanskrit title he quotes. It is further noteworthy that in Frauwallner’s text the four things are given in a different order from the Pali, namely: ‘The Burden,’ ‘the taking up of the burden’ (but see [n. 121](#)), ‘the laying down of the burden,’ and ‘the bearer of the burden’ [= *bhārahāra*.] The last of these four is said to be ‘the person,’ etc., but with a somewhat expanded description. The final verses are also somewhat different. In any case the Sanskrit text (on which the Chinese version is based) is clearly secondary.

It is easy to understand how this sutta could be misunderstood, both in ancient and in modern times, since (doctrinal issues apart) one would expect the ‘person’ to be described as the bearer rather than the ‘bearing.’ The explanation is that the ‘person’ is in terms of relative truth what the *khandhas* are according to ultimate truth (cf. [n. 14](#)).

One is tempted to think that this sutta was originally delivered for the benefit of one or other of the Bhāradvājas (see §§ [10](#), [11](#), [42](#)), whose name appears to mean ‘twice-born burden’!

<sup>121</sup> *Bhārādāna*: generally translated as ‘taking up the burden,’ etc., but *ādāna*, like *upādāna*, can also mean ‘clinging,’ which gives a more pregnant meaning.

<sup>122</sup> See Vol. I, n. 49.

<sup>123</sup> *Puggala*. A term of relative truth, as pointed out in [n. 120](#).

<sup>124</sup> *Kāmatanḥā*: ‘sensual craving,’ the first and crudest of three kinds of craving.

<sup>125</sup> *Bhavatanḥā*, the desire for continued existence connected with ‘Eternalism’ (see [n. 58](#)).

<sup>126</sup> *Vibhavanḥā*, the desire for non-existence or the ‘death-wish,’ connected with ‘Annihilationism’ (see [n. 59](#)). In older works sometimes mistranslated as ‘desire for wealth’ (also *vibhava* but a different word).

<sup>127</sup> The formula is that for the Second Noble Truth.

“What is the laying down of the burden? It is the complete fading away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and giving up, liberation and detachment from it. This, monks, is called ‘the laying down of the burden.’”<sup>128</sup>

Thus said the Blessed One. The Well-farer,<sup>129</sup> the Teacher then said:

The five groups are the heavy load,  
The seizing of the load is man.  
Holding it is misery,  
Laying down the load is bliss.  
Laying down this heavy load,  
And no other taking up,  
By uprooting all desire,  
Hunger’s stilled, Nibbāna is gained.<sup>130</sup>

SN 22:22

## 28. An Island to Oneself

“Monks, be islands unto yourselves,<sup>131</sup> be your own refuge, having no other; let the Dhamma be an island and a refuge to you, having no other. Those who are islands unto themselves... should investigate to the very heart of things:<sup>132</sup> ‘What is the source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair? How do they arise?’ [What is their origin?]

“Here, monks, the uninstructed worldling [continued as in § 26.] Change occurs in this man’s body, and it becomes different. On account of this change and difference, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise. [Similarly with ‘feelings,’ ‘perceptions,’ ‘mental formations,’ ‘consciousness’].

“But seeing<sup>133</sup> the body’s impermanence, its change-ability, its waning,<sup>134</sup> its ceasing, he says ‘formerly as now, all bodies were impermanent and unsatisfactory, and subject to change.’ Thus, seeing this as it really is, with perfect insight, he abandons all sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. He is not worried at their abandonment, but unworried lives at ease, and thus living at ease he is said to be ‘assuredly delivered.’”<sup>135</sup> [Similarly with ‘feelings,’ ‘perceptions,’ ‘mental formations,’ ‘consciousness’].

SN 22:43

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<sup>128</sup> The formula is that for the Third Noble Truth.

<sup>129</sup> *Sugato* lit. ‘well-gone.’ All three designations refer, of course, to the Buddha. It is difficult to render the whole phrase into English without awkwardness.

<sup>130</sup> Lit. ‘he is sated and brought to peace (or ‘cooled’).’

<sup>131</sup> *Atta-dīpā*. *Dīpa* means both ‘island’ (Sanskrit *dvīpa*) and ‘lamp’ (Sanskrit *dīpa*), but the meaning ‘island’ is well-established here. The ‘self’ referred to is of course the unmetaphysical pronoun ‘oneself’: cf. [n. 32](#).

<sup>132</sup> It is necessary to withdraw, to be ‘an island unto oneself,’ at least for a time (as any meditator knows), not for any ‘selfish’ reasons but precisely in order to make this profound introspective investigation. In another sense, Buddhists would of course agree with John Donne that ‘No man is an island.’

<sup>133</sup> As Woodward remarks in KS, one would expect to find here the words which he inserts in the text: ‘The well-taught Ariyan disciple,’ as in many passages. If one in fact sees these things and reflects as said in the text, one will cease to be a ‘worldling.’

<sup>134</sup> *Virāga*. Elsewhere translated as ‘dispassion’ ([n. 68](#)), it also has this meaning.

<sup>135</sup> *Tadanganibbuto* means rather more than Woodward’s ‘one who is rid of all that.’

## 29. Ways of Regarding

“Monks, those recluses and brahmins who regard the self in various ways do so in terms of the five groups of clinging, or some of them. Which five?”

“Here, monks, the uninstructed worldling... regards body as the self, the self as having body, body as being in the self, or the self as being in the body. [Similarly with ‘feelings,’ ‘perceptions,’ ‘mental formations,’ ‘consciousness’]. So this way of regarding arises: it occurs to him to think ‘I am.’<sup>136</sup>

“Now when it has occurred to him to think ‘I am,’ the five (sense-) faculties<sup>137</sup> come into play<sup>138</sup>—the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

“Monks, there is mind,<sup>139</sup> there are mind-objects,<sup>140</sup> there is the element of ignorance.<sup>141</sup> The uninstructed worldling, touched by the feeling<sup>142</sup> born of contact with ignorance, thinks ‘I am,’ ‘I am this,’ ‘things will be,’ ‘things will not be,’<sup>143</sup> ‘things will be embodied,’<sup>144</sup> ‘things will be disembodied,’ ‘things will be conscious,’ ‘things will be unconscious,’ ‘things will be neither conscious-nor-unconscious.’<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> The too famous ‘discovery’ of Descartes, *Cogito, ergo sum* (‘I think, therefore I am’), comes precisely under this heading. Descartes identified himself with, in Buddhist terms, *vicāra* ‘discursive thought,’ which belongs to the ‘mental formations’ group (*saṅkhārakkhandha*). When Goethe (whom many would consider a greater thinker than Descartes) said ‘*Gefühl ist alles*’ (‘Feeling is everything’), it might be thought that (at that moment) he was identifying himself with the ‘feeling’ group (*vedanākkhandha*). But these are sensations, physical and mental, and what Goethe meant corresponds more probably to *pīti* ([n. 87](#)), which also belongs to the mental formations.

<sup>137</sup> *Indriya*. The standard translation for this word is ‘faculty’ which, though rather vague, is convenient. For the full list of the 22 *Indriyas*, see BD. These first five are associated with the five (bodily) senses also recognised in the West, to which Buddhism adds mind as the sixth. See also [n. 138](#).

<sup>138</sup> *Avakkanti hoti*: lit. ‘there is a descent’ (into the womb), they are ‘born.’ The meaning is that they exert their influence. The word *indriya* comes from *ind[r]a* ‘lord’ (cf. the god Indra) and implies ‘control’; hence they are sometimes referred to as the ‘controlling faculties.’

<sup>139</sup> *Atthi bhikkhave mano*. Woodward badly mistranslates this as ‘Mind is the result,’ which would render *hoti* ‘comes to be,’ not *atthi* ‘is, exists.’ To say that mind is the ‘result’ of bodily factors is certainly not the Buddhist view and smacks of modern materialistic theories. Mind, even ignorant mind, is not derived from matter. Cf. DhP 1–2: *Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā* ‘Mind precedes all states.’

<sup>140</sup> *Dhammā* (plural). This is one of the regular meanings of this multivalent word.

<sup>141</sup> *Avijjā-dhātu*, an unusual combination. Probably in the sense of the (ignorant) *manodhātu* ‘mind-element,’ which “performs the function of advertence (*āvajjana*) towards the object of inception of a process of sensuous consciousness” (BD, s.v. *dhātu*). The reading *vijjā-dhātu* ‘element of knowledge’ in Feer’s (PTS) text must, as Woodward recognises, be wrong.

<sup>142</sup> *Vedayitena*: ‘by what is felt.’ A variant reading is *cetasikena* ‘by the mental factor.’ In the Abhidhamma the *cetasikas* are the (conventionally 50) ‘mental formations’ comprising the *saṅkhārakkhandha* plus the *khandhas* of feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*), thus making a total of 52. See BD.

<sup>143</sup> According to SA, these are the Eternalist and Annihilationist views ([nn. 58, 59](#)) respectively; i.e., he believes that he will, or will not, survive after death as a continuing entity.

<sup>144</sup> *Rūpī*: lit. ‘having a body.’ This and the next term refer to the lower and higher *jhānas* (‘absorptions’) associated respectively with the ‘world of form’ (or ‘fine-material world’: BD) (*rūpaloka*) and the ‘formless world’ (or ‘immaterial world’: BD) (*arūpaloka*), and to the types of rebirth dependent on the attainment of these. See [n. 244](#).

<sup>145</sup> *Nevasaññīnāsaññī*, associated with the state of ‘neither-perception-nor-non-perception,’ the very subtle state of the fourth ‘formless’ (or ‘immaterial’) *jhāna*. This can still be attained by a ‘worldling,’ as was done by Gotama’s second teacher, Uddaka Rāmaputta, before the Bodhisatta ([n. 51](#)) decided to ‘go it alone.’ Uddaka had thus progressed as far as it is possible to go without ‘breaking through’ to the path of enlightenment.

“It is just in this way, monks, that the five (sense-) faculties persist. But here, for the well taught Ariyan disciple, ignorance is abandoned and knowledge arises.<sup>146</sup> With the waning of ignorance and the arising of knowledge, he does not come to think ‘I am,’ ‘I am this,’ ‘things will be,’ ‘things will not be,’ ‘things will be embodied,’ ‘things will be disembodied,’ ‘things will be conscious,’ ‘things will be unconscious,’ ‘things will be neither conscious-nor-unconscious.’”

SN 22:47

### 30. Soṇa (or Conceit)

[At Veluvana, Soṇa the householder’s son approached the Blessed One... The Buddha said:] “Whatever recluses and brahmans, Soṇa, hold views about the body, which is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change, such as ‘I am better [than you],’ ‘I am equal [to you],’ or ‘I am worse [than you]’ [likewise ‘feeling,’ ‘perception,’ ‘mental formations,’ ‘consciousness’], what else are they but folk who do not see things as they really are?

“But, Soṇa, whatever recluses and brahmans do not hold such views... What else are they but those who see things as they really are?”

SN 22:49

### 31. Clinging

[At Sāvathī a certain (unnamed) monk came to the Blessed One and said:] “It would be well for me, Lord, if the Blessed One would teach me briefly a doctrine so that having heard it I might dwell alone, in seclusion, unwearied, ardent and resolute.”

“Monk, if you cling to anything, you are in bondage to Mara.<sup>147</sup> If you do not cling, you are free of the Evil One.”

“I have understood, Blessed One; I have understood, Well-farer!”

“But how, monk, do you understand in full what I have stated in brief?”

“Lord, if one clings to the body, one is in bondage to Mara. If one does not cling to the body, one is free of the Evil One. [Similarly with ‘feelings,’ ‘perceptions,’ ‘mental formations,’ ‘consciousness’]. That, Lord, is how I understand in full the sense of what the Blessed One has stated in brief.”

“Good, good, monk! You have well understood in full the sense of what I stated in brief. If you cling to the body,... feelings,... perceptions,... mental formations,... consciousness, you are in bondage to Mara. If you do not cling, you are free of the Evil One. That is how the sense of what I have stated in brief is to be understood in full.”

SN 22:63

### 32. Going Begging: A Stern Admonition (part)

“This, monks, is the meanest <sup>148</sup> of callings—that of one who goes begging! It is a term of abuse in the world to say: ‘You scrap-gatherer, wandering about bowl in hand!’ This is the life

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<sup>146</sup> ‘Of the Arahant’s path’ (SA).

<sup>147</sup> 147147. See Vol I, Part I n. 14.

<sup>148</sup> *Antaṃ*: lit. ‘the end’. SA says=*lāmakam* ‘inferior, mean.’

undertaken by young men of good family seeking their own good because it is good, not compelled by rulers, not compelled by robbers, not on account of debts, not through fear, not for a livelihood,<sup>149</sup> but with the thought: 'Here I am, plunged into birth, decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, thrown into suffering, overcome with suffering! Surely there must be a way of bringing this entire mass of suffering to an end!'

"So, monks, a young man of good family leaves the world, but he is greedy for sense pleasures, with fierce passions, with hate in his heart, corruptly motivated,<sup>150</sup> lacking in mindfulness, inattentive, unconcentrated, scatter-brained, his faculties uncontrolled. Just as, monks, a funeral-torch lit at both ends and smeared in the middle with dung is no good as fuel either in the village or in the forest—that is how I would describe that man who has lost his home and wealth without satisfying the demands of the recluse life. There are, monks, three unskilled ways of thought: thoughts of lust, thoughts of ill will, thoughts of hurting. And these three unskilled states disappear utterly in him whose heart is well established in the four foundations of mindfulness, or who practises concentration on the signless.<sup>151</sup>

"Indeed, monks, this concentration on the signless is greatly to be commended; the concentration on the signless, if developed and frequently practised, is of great fruit, of great profit.

"There are, monks, these two views: the existence view and the non-existence view. And the well-taught Ariyan disciple deliberates: 'Is there anything in the world that I can cling to without being at fault?' And he realises: 'There is nothing in the world that I can cling to without being at fault. Suppose I were to grasp and cling to the body,... to feelings,... perceptions,... the mental formations,... consciousness. Conditioned by my clinging, becoming would arise; conditioned by becoming, birth; conditioned by birth; decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. In that way the whole mass of suffering would arise.'"

SN 22:80

### 33. Tissa the Waverer (part)

[The Ven. Tissa tells the other monks:] "As you see, friends, my body has become as if drugged, I have lost my bearings, the teachings are not clear to me,<sup>152</sup> my heart is beset with sloth and torpor,<sup>153</sup> I take no pleasure in the holy life and I have doubts about the teachings."

[The other monks advise Tissa to see the Buddha, who, after catechizing him, gives this simile:]

"Suppose, Tissa, there are two men, one of whom does not know his way,<sup>154</sup> and the other does. And the man who does not know his way asks the other to direct him. He replies: 'Yes, friend, this is the way. Go on for a while and you will see that the road forks. Don't go to the left but take the right-handed path. Go on for a while and you will see a dense jungle. Keep going,

<sup>149</sup> Or 'not from fear of having no livelihood.'

<sup>150</sup> *Paduṭṭha-mana-saṅkappa*: cf. Dh 1 *manasā ce paduṭṭhena*... 'if with a mind corrupted...' Also means having *micchā-saṅkappa* 'wrong-thought': the opposite of *sammā-saṅkappa* 'Right Thought,' the second step of the Noble Eightfold Path.

<sup>151</sup> "Signless, being secluded from the sign of the five aggregates, taken as having no graspable entity (*aviggaha*)."  
Comm. to VM XVI, 23 (quoted, PP p. 664n.). Cf. also § 53.

<sup>152</sup> *Dhammā*: i.e., doctrines learned.

<sup>153</sup> *Thīna-middha*: one of the five hindrances. See n. 190.

<sup>154</sup> *Amaggakusalo, maggakusalo*, 'unskilled in the path, skilled in the path' is the explanation, but primarily meaning, 'who does not know his way' and 'who knows his way.'



and you will see a great sunken swamp. Keep going and you will see a steep precipice. Go a bit further and you will see a delightful stretch of level ground.’

“I have made this parable, Tissa, to help you to understand. This is the explanation. ‘The man who does not know his way’ denotes the worldling.<sup>155</sup> ‘The man who knows the way’ is the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Fully Self-enlightened One. ‘The road-fork’ is the state of wavering. ‘The left-hand path’ is the false eightfold path, that is: wrong view... wrong concentration. ‘The right-hand path’ is the Noble Eightfold Path, that is: Right View... Right Concentration. ‘The dense jungle’ means ignorance, ‘the great sunken swamp’ denotes sense-desires,<sup>156</sup> ‘the steep precipice’ denotes anger and despair, ‘the delightful stretch of level ground,’ Tissa, denotes Nibbāna. Cheer up, Tissa, cheer up! I am here to advise you, help you and teach you!”

So said the Blessed One, and the Venerable Tissa was cheered by his words.

SN 22:84

## 34. Anurādha is Caught Out

[The Ven. Anurādha, dwelling alone in a forest hut, is quizzed by wanderers of another sect. He takes his problem to the Buddha, who is staying at Vesāli:]

“I am staying, Lord, in a forest hut not far away. Now a number of wanderers of another sect came to me... and said: ‘Friend Anurādha, a Tathāgata, a superman, a man supreme, one who has gained the Highest, must be describable in [one of] four ways: a Tathāgata comes to be after death; he does not come to be after death; he both comes to be and does not come to be after death; he neither comes to be nor does not come to be after death.’<sup>157</sup> To this Lord, I replied...: ‘A Tathāgata can be described otherwise than in these four ways...’ At my reply the wanderers of another sect said: ‘This monk must be a novice, not long ordained, or if he is an elder, he is an ignorant fool.’ Then the wanderers, abusing me as a novice and a fool, got up and went away. Soon after they had left, Lord, I thought: ‘If these wanderers were to ply me with further questions,<sup>158</sup> how should I answer them so as to express correctly the Blessed One’s standpoint without misrepresentation, in accordance with the true doctrine, so that no follower of his teacher would incur reproach?’”

“Now what do you think Anurādha, is the body permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, Lord.” ...

“Well then, Anurādha, do you equate the Tathāgata with his body,<sup>159</sup>... feelings,... perceptions,... mental formations,... consciousness?”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Puthujjana*. ‘Worldling’ is now the standard translation. The rendering ‘many-folk’ favoured by earlier translators is literal but not natural English, and also implies a plural. The meaning is one who has not ‘entered the stream’; cf [n. 176](#).

<sup>156</sup> *Kāmā*: ‘sense-desires.’ Like the Biblical ‘lusts of the flesh,’ it certainly means more than sexual desire, with which it is often exclusively identified, even in the plural form as here. Woodward’s ‘feeling-desires’ is not idiomatic English, though probably intended to cover the wider meaning.

<sup>157</sup> The fourfold division of Indian logic: a thing (1) is, (2) is not, (3) both is and is not, (4) neither is nor is not.

<sup>158</sup> Or: ‘were to ask me the same question again.’

<sup>159</sup> Here, as in other similar passages, SA glosses *Tathāgata* ([n. 66](#)) with *satta* ‘a being,’ to the confusion of scholars. The point seems to be that even in this life any ‘being,’ and not merely the Tathāgata, is only real in terms of conventional, not of ultimate truth (see [n. 14](#)). The difference lies in what happens after death.

<sup>160</sup> The identification of a person with ‘consciousness’ is strongly condemned by the Buddha’s rebuke to ‘Sāti the fisherman’s son’ in MN 38.

“No indeed, Lord.”

“Do you consider he has no body,... feelings,... perceptions,... mental formations,... consciousness?”

“No indeed, Lord.”

“Then, Anurādha, since in this very life the Tathāgata is not to be regarded as really and truly existing, is it proper for you to declare of him: ‘Friends, he who is a Tathāgata... can be described otherwise than in these four ways...?’”<sup>161</sup>

“No indeed, Lord.”

“Good, good, Anurādha. As before, so now I proclaim just suffering and the ceasing of suffering.”

SN 22:86

## 35. Vakkali (part): Seeing the Dhamma

[The Buddha visits the Ven. Vakkali, who is sick]

Now the Venerable Vakkali saw the Blessed One coming from a distance, and tried to get up.<sup>162</sup> Then the Blessed One said to the Venerable Vakkali: “Enough, Vakkali, do not try to get up. There are these seats made ready. I will sit down there.” And he sat down on a seat that was ready. Then he said:

“Are you feeling better, Vakkali? Are you bearing up? Are your pains getting better and not worse? Are there signs that they are getting better and not worse?”<sup>163</sup>

“No, Lord, I do not feel better, I am not bearing up. I have severe pains, and they are getting worse, not better. There is no sign of improvement, only of worsening.”

“Have you any doubts, Vakkali? Have you any cause for regret?”

“Indeed, Lord, I have many doubts. I have much cause for regret.”

“Have you nothing to reproach yourself about as regards morals?”

“No, Lord, I have nothing to reproach myself about as regards morals.”

“Well then, Vakkali, if you have nothing to reproach yourself about as regards morals, you must have some worry or scruple that is troubling you.”

“For a long time, Lord, I have wanted to come and set eyes on the Blessed One, but I had not the strength in this body to come and see the Blessed One.”

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<sup>161</sup> Anurādha was of course wrong to say that a Tathāgata can be *described* otherwise than in one of these four ways, since he cannot after death be described at all. He would have been right to deny that any one of the four ways of description ([n. 157](#)) was correct, but not to suggest that there is any other possible description. We may note that the ‘wanderers of another sect’ were obviously extremely well informed about the Buddha’s teaching (even though they did not really understand it!), and laid a careful trap for Anurādha. They had the terminology off pat, and were only too ready to pounce on a seeming weakness.

<sup>162</sup> ‘Stirred on his bed’ (Woodward). ‘Tried to get up’ (‘out of reverence’: SA) is the obvious sense.

<sup>163</sup> The standard way of enquiring about a sick person.

“Enough, Vakkali! What is there to see in this vile body? He who sees Dhamma, Vakkali, sees me; he who sees me sees Dhamma. Truly seeing Dhamma, one sees me; seeing me one sees Dhamma.”<sup>164</sup>

SN 22:87

### 36. Khemaka (part)

[The other monks hear that the Ven. Khemaka has said:] “In these five groups of clinging I perceive no self, nor any thing pertaining to a self.”

[They therefore wrongly conclude that he is an Arahant. Finally, though sick, he comes in person to explain. They ask:] “As for this ‘I am’ you mention, friend Khemaka, what is it? Do you say this ‘I am’ is the body or not the body, feelings..., perceptions..., mental formations..., consciousness or not consciousness?”

“No, friends, I do not say this ‘I am’ is the body,... consciousness, nor that it is other than the body,... consciousness. Yet with regard to the five groups of clinging,<sup>165</sup> ‘I am’ comes to me,<sup>166</sup> but I do not consider it (by way of wrong views) as ‘This I am.’ It is just like the scent of a blue, red or white lotus.<sup>167</sup> If someone were to say, ‘The scent belongs to the petals, or the colour, or the fibres,’<sup>168</sup> would he be describing it correctly?”

“Surely not, friend.”

“Then how would he describe it correctly?”

“As the scent of the flower would be the correct explanation.”

“In the same way, friends, I do not say this ‘I am’ is the body,... consciousness, nor that it is other than the body,... consciousness. Yet with regard to the five groups of clinging, ‘I am’ comes to me, but I do not consider it as ‘This I am.’ Though, friends, an Ariyan disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters,<sup>169</sup> there still remains in him a subtle remnant<sup>170</sup> from among the five groups of clinging, a subtle remnant of the ‘I-conceit, of the ‘I-desire, an unextirpated lurking tendency<sup>171</sup> to think: ‘I am.’ Later on he dwells contemplating the rise and fall of the five groups of clinging,<sup>172</sup> and he sees: ‘This is the body, this is its arising, this is its passing away. These are feelings,... perceptions,... mental formations,... this is consciousness, this is its arising, this is its passing away.’

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<sup>164</sup> A famous quotation. It has been compared with Christ’s words: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30)

<sup>165</sup> ‘As a whole’ (DA).

<sup>166</sup> Subcommentary says: “By way of clinging and conceit (*taṇhā-māna*),” that is, not by wrong views (*diṭṭhi*). At this stage, wrong views would have been eliminated, but the other factors would still be residually present. Attention is drawn to this significant passage by the Ven. Dr W. Rāhula in his excellent little book *What the Buddha Taught* (Bedford 1956, p. 65).

<sup>167</sup> *Uppala, paduma, puṇḍarīka* are different varieties of lotus usually of the colours mentioned.

<sup>168</sup> Or ‘stamens.’

<sup>169</sup> The Ven. Khemaka is indirectly claiming to be a ‘non-returner’ (*anāgāmi*). To lay claim, even truthfully, to higher attainments is an offence. To do so, knowing the claim would be false, would be a *pārājika* offence involving irrevocable expulsion from the Sangha.

<sup>170</sup> *Anu- (anu-) sahaḡato*: ‘accompanied by a minimum.’

<sup>171</sup> *Anusaya*: ‘proclivity.’

<sup>172</sup> This represents a definite stage in the *vipassanā* (‘insight’) meditation practice: see BD s.v. *vipassanā*.

“So, as he dwells thus in contemplation of the rise and fall of the five groups of clinging, this subtle remnant from among the five groups of clinging, this subtle remnant of the ‘I’-conceit, of the ‘I’-desire, this unextirpated lurking tendency to think: ‘I am’ is brought to an end.”<sup>173</sup>

“Friends, it is like a cloth, soiled and stained, whose owners give it to the washerman. He rubs it smooth with salt-earth, lye or cow-dung then rinses it in clean water. Now though the cloth has been cleaned and thoroughly purified, there still hangs about it, unremoved, the subtle smell of salt-earth, lye or cow-dung. The washerman returns it to the owners, who put it away carefully in a sweet-smelling box. Then the smell of salt-earth, lye or cow-dung that still clung to it disappears completely.

“In just the same way, friends, though an Ariyan disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters... [as above]... this unextirpated lurking tendency to think: ‘I am’ is brought to an end.”

Now when this teaching was thus expounded, the hearts of some sixty elders<sup>174</sup> were completely freed from the cankers as too was that of Venerable Khemaka.<sup>175</sup>

SN 22:89

### 37. The Sotāpanna (‘Stream-Winner’)

[At Sāvattthī the Blessed One said:] “Monks, there are these five groups of clinging. What five? The body-group of clinging, the feeling-group, the perception-group, the mental-formations-group, the consciousness-group of clinging.

“And when, monks, the Ariyan disciple understands as they really are the arising and passing away, the attractiveness and the danger, and the deliverance from the five groups of clinging, he is called an Ariyan disciple who is a Stream-Winner, not liable to states of woe,<sup>176</sup> assured of final enlightenment.”

SN 22:109

### 38. The Arahant

[As above:] “And when, monks, a monk, having seen as they really are the arising and passing away, the attractiveness and the danger, and the deliverance from the five groups of clinging, is released without clinging, he, monks, is called a monk in whom the cankers are destroyed, who has lived the life to perfection, done what had to be done, put down the burden, gained the highest goal, worn through the fetters of rebirth, and is liberated by perfect insight.”<sup>177</sup>

SN 22:110

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<sup>173</sup> Enlightenment (Arahantship) is gained.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Elders’ = *therā*, probably meaning then as now monks of at least ten years’ standing.

<sup>175</sup> This illustrates the principle that by doing good to others one does good to oneself (as far as, in this context, it is permissible to speak of ‘oneself’).

<sup>176</sup> The Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*) is assured of enlightenment and will not be reborn more than seven times, or in any state lower than the human. See also [n. 310](#).

<sup>177</sup> The whole phrase is a standard description of the Arahant found at many places in the Canon.

# Part Four: The Section on the Sixfold Sense-Base (Saḷāyatana Vagga)

## 39. Migajāla (or Dwelling Alone)

[At Sāvattḥi the Ven. Migajāla said to the Buddha:] “Dwelling alone, Lord, dwelling alone, it is said: How far, Lord, does one dwell alone, and to what extent does one dwell with a mate?”<sup>178</sup>

“There are, Migajāla, objects cognizable by the eye—attractive, pleasing, charming, agreeable, enticing, lust-inspiring. And if a monk takes pleasure in them, welcomes them, persists in clinging to them, then because of this taking pleasure, welcoming and persistent clinging, enjoyment comes, and from enjoyment, infatuation. Infatuation brings bondage, and a monk who is trapped in the bondage of enjoyment is called ‘one who dwells with a mate’... ear... nose... tongue... body...<sup>179</sup> mind... and a monk who is trapped in the bondage of enjoyment is called ‘one who dwells with a mate.’ And a monk so dwelling, Migajāla, even though he may frequent jungle glades and remote forest-dwellings, free from noise, with little sound, far from the madding crowd,<sup>180</sup> undisturbed by men, well fitted for seclusion—still he is termed ‘one who dwells with a mate.’ Why is this? Craving is the mate he has not left behind, and therefore he is called ‘one who dwells with a mate.’

“But, Migajāla, there are objects cognizable by the eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... mind—attractive, pleasing, charming, agreeable, enticing, lust-inspiring. And if a monk takes no pleasure in them, does not welcome them, does not persist in clinging to them, then, because of his not taking pleasure, not welcoming them and not persisting in clinging to them, enjoyment fades away, and without enjoyment there is no infatuation. Without infatuation no bondage is generated, and the monk who is freed from the bondage of enjoyment is called ‘one who dwells alone.’

“And a monk so dwelling, Migajāla, even though he may live near a village crowded with monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers, kings and royal ministers, sectarians and their followers—still he is termed ‘one who dwells alone.’ Why is this so? Craving is the mate he has left behind, and therefore he is called one who dwells alone.”

SN 35:63

## 40. Māluṅkyaputta

[The Ven. Māluṅkyaputta said:] “It would be well for me, Lord, if the Blessed One would teach me briefly a doctrine so that having heard it I might dwell alone, in seclusion, unwearied, ardent and resolute.”

“Well now, Māluṅkyaputta, what am I to say to the younger monks if you, a frail, aged, venerable man, far gone in years, at the end of your life, ask for instruction in brief?

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<sup>178</sup> *Sadutiyo*: lit. ‘with a second.’

<sup>179</sup> As the organ of touch and tactile sensations.

<sup>180</sup> *Vijana-vātāni*, hardly Woodward’s ‘free from the breath (*vāta*) of crowds,’ but rather ‘pervaded by loneliness’ (PED).

“What do you think, Māluṅkyaputta? Objects cognizable by the eye, not seen, which you have not seen before, which you do not see now and do not wish to see—have you any desire, lust and fondness for them?”

“No indeed, Lord.”

[Similarly for sounds, scents, flavours, tangible things, mental objects.]

“Well then, Māluṅkyaputta, in things seen, heard, sensed,<sup>181</sup> cognized: in the seen there will only be the seen, in the heard only the heard, in the sensed only the sensed, in the cognized only the cognized... Then, Māluṅkyaputta, there will be no ‘thereby’ for you.<sup>182</sup> Having no ‘thereby’ you have no ‘there.’<sup>183</sup> Having no ‘there,’ Māluṅkyaputta, there is for you neither this world, nor the next, nor anywhere in between.<sup>184</sup> That in itself is the end of suffering.”

“Indeed, Lord, I understand in full the meaning of what the Blessed One has stated in brief.”

Forms perceived cause loss of mindfulness,  
If we dwell on their endearing charms,  
Passion grips the heart, and feeling flows,  
Clinging has us firmly in its grip:  
So emotions rise and grow in strength,  
Of divers kinds, all based on what was seen.  
Some of greed and some of hatred born —  
Grievously they all afflict the heart of man,  
Heaping up his store of pain and woe:  
Thus for him Nibbāna’s far away.

[Similarly for sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles, thoughts.]

He who’s not inflamed by things he sees,  
Seeing forms retains his mindfulness,  
Not in passion’s grip, simply feels,  
On him clinging cannot get a hold.  
If he just observes the things he sees,  
Not reacting to their shape or form,  
He’ll pull down the pile, not build it up.  
Mindfully proceeding on his way,  
Heaping up no store of pain and woe:  
Then for him Nibbāna’s very near.

[Similarly for sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles, thoughts.]

“Indeed, Lord, I understand in full the meaning of what the Blessed One has stated in brief.”

[The Buddha confirms Māluṅkyaputta’s words; in due course Māluṅkyaputta becomes an Arahant.]

SN 35:95

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<sup>181</sup> *Muta*: i.e., smelled, tasted or touched.

<sup>182</sup> This is almost impossible to translate adequately. There is no agent, i.e., no ‘seer,’ ‘feeler,’ ‘knower.’ “There will be no ‘thereby’ whereby one will be lustful, hating or deluded (SA).”

<sup>183</sup> If there is no agent (i.e., ‘self’), then there is nowhere such an agent can be located. “You will have no ‘there’: you will not be bound ‘there’ or attached ‘there,’ i.e., with regard to the seen, heard, sensed and cognized” (SA).

<sup>184</sup> ‘You will realise that nothing is really reborn.’

## 41. Sāriputta

[At Sāvattthī a certain monk said to the Ven. Sāriputta:]

“Friend, Sāriputta, my companion has renounced the training and reverted to the lower life.”<sup>185</sup>

“This is what happens, friend, with one whose sense-doors are unguarded, who is immoderate in eating and not given to wakefulness [like that monk]. As long as he lives it will be impossible for him to maintain the holy life in all its fullness and purity. But if a monk guards his sense-doors, is moderate in eating and given to watchfulness, then it will be possible for him, as long as he lives, to maintain the holy life in all its fullness and purity.

“And how, friend, does one guard the sense-doors? In this a monk seeing an object with the eye, does not seize hold of either its general appearance or its details. Because anyone dwelling with the eye-faculty uncontrolled could be overwhelmed by cupidity and dejection, evil and unwholesome states of mind, therefore he practises to control the eye-faculty, guards it and gains control over it. So one guards the sense-doors.

[Similarly with ear, nose, tongue, body (touch), mind]

“And how, friend, is one moderate in eating? In this a monk takes his food properly considering,<sup>186</sup> not for sport, for intoxication, for adornment or beautification, but purely for the maintenance and nourishment of this body, for keeping it unharmed, as an aid to the practice of the holy life, thinking: ‘I shall put an end to the old feeling,<sup>187</sup> and not produce any new feeling.<sup>188</sup> Thus I shall keep going, incur no fault, and live at ease.’ That, friend, is how one is moderate in eating.

“And how, friend, is one given to watchfulness? In this a monk walks up and down by day and then sits,<sup>189</sup> thus cleansing his mind from obstructive states.<sup>190</sup> [Similarly for the first watch<sup>191</sup> of the night.] In the middle watch of the night, lying on his right side, he adopts the lion posture,<sup>192</sup> resting one foot on the other, mindful and clearly aware, with his thoughts fixed on rising. In the last watch of the night he rises, walks up and down, and then sits, thus cleansing his mind from obstructive states. That, friend, is how one is given to watchfulness.

“Therefore, this is how you should train yourselves: ‘We will guard the doors of our senses, be moderate in eating and given to watchfulness.’

“This, friend, is the way for you to train yourself.”

SN 35:120

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<sup>185</sup> The lay life or ‘householder’s life.’

<sup>186</sup> With due attention (*yoniso*)

<sup>187</sup> Of hunger.

<sup>188</sup> Of greed.

<sup>189</sup> He practises walking and sitting meditations: forms of *vipassanā* or insight-meditation.

<sup>190</sup> States connected with the five hindrances: Sensuality (*kāmacchanda*), Ill will (*vyāpāda*), Sloth-and-Torpor (*thīna-middha*), Worry-and-Flurry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and Sceptical Doubt (*vicikicchā*). These can be temporarily overcome by the *jhāna* absorptions, or dispelled by mindfulness.

<sup>191</sup> A period of three hours, probably from 9 pm to midnight.

<sup>192</sup> *Sihaseyya*: the posture seen in ‘Reclining Buddha’ images.

## 42. Bhāradvāja Instructs a King

[King Udena of Kosambi consults the Ven. Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja:] “How can it come about, Bhāradvāja, depending on what is it, that these young monks, youthful, black-haired, with the bloom of youth, in the prime of life, never having enjoyed the pleasure of the senses, can practise the holy life fully and perfectly to the end of their days?”

“It has been said, sire, by the Blessed One who knows and sees, the Arahant, the Fully Self-enlightened One: ‘Come, monks, whatever woman is a mother, think of her just as a mother; whatever woman is a sister, think of her just as a sister; whatever woman is a daughter, think of her just as a daughter.’<sup>193</sup> That is how these young monks... can practise the holy life... to the end of their days.”

“But, Bhāradvāja, the heart is fickle. It may well be that at times thoughts of desire arise towards those they think of just as mothers, just as sisters, just as daughters. Is there any other cause, any other reason whereby these young monks, youthful and black-haired... can practise the holy life to the end of their days?”

“It has been said, sire, by the Blessed One...: ‘Come, monks, contemplate this body, upwards from the soles of the feet, downwards from the top of the head, bounded by the skin, full of manifold impurities. There are in this body: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, bowels, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, tallow, saliva, synovial fluid, urine.’<sup>194</sup> That is how these young monks... can practise the holy life... to the end of their days.”

“Well, Bhāradvāja, for those monks who train the body, morals, mind and insight, that is easy, but for those who do not, it is difficult. Sometimes when a man thinks, ‘I will regard this as repulsive,’ he comes to think of it as attractive. Is there any other cause, any other reason whereby those young monks... can practise the holy life... to the end of their days?”

“It has been said, sire, by the Exalted One...: ‘Come, monks, guard the doors of your sense-faculties. Seeing an object with the eye, do not seize hold of either its general appearance or its details. Because anyone dwelling with the eye-faculty uncontrolled could be overwhelmed by cupidity and dejection, evil and unwholesome states of mind, therefore practise to control the eye-faculty, guard it and gain control over it. [Similarly with ear, nose, tongue, body (touch), mind.]’ That is how these young monks... can practise the holy life... to the end of their days.”

“Wonderful, good Bhāradvāja, it is marvellous how well spoken are the words of the Blessed One... I myself, good Bhāradvāja, whenever I enter the inner parts of my palace<sup>195</sup> with body, speech and mind unguarded, with mindfulness unestablished, with sense-faculties uncontrolled, am at such times overcome with lustful thoughts. But when I do so with body, speech and mind guarded, with mindfulness established, with faculties controlled, then lustful thoughts do not overcome me.”

[The king takes refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha as a lay-follower.]

SN 35:127

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<sup>193</sup> Woodward’s translation here is barely English: “In the case of those who are just mothers, sisters and daughters, do ye call up the mother-mind, the sister-mind, the daughter-mind.”

<sup>194</sup> The standard set of ‘parts of the body’ for meditation purposes given in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN 22, MN 10) and elsewhere in Canon. See also *Vism* VIII.83ff. for full details. Traditionally newly-ordained *sāmaṇeras* are given the first five of these to meditate on.

<sup>195</sup> *Antepuram*: i.e., probably the women’s quarters.



## 43. Lohicca

[The pupils of the Brahman Lohicca abused the Ven. Kaccāna the Great (Mahā-Kaccāna.) He addressed them in these verses:]

First in virtue were the men of old,  
Brahmans who preserved the ancient ways,  
In whom well guarded were the doors of the sense.  
They were never overcome by wrath.  
Meditating on the Law<sup>196</sup> their joy,  
Brahmans who preserved the ancient ways.  
These backsliders who but chant by rote,  
Drunk with pride of birth they stagger on.  
Full of violent rage, aggression prone,  
They lose respect from weak and strong alike:  
Their unguarded senses bring them loss,  
Like a treasure hoard found in a dream.

Fasting, sleeping on the ground, and such,  
Dawn ablutions, chanting Vedic texts,  
Garb of skins, matted hair and filth,  
Magic spells and rites and penances,  
Trickery, deception, blows as well,  
Ritual washing, rinsing of the mouth,  
These are caste-marks<sup>197</sup> of the Brahman-folk,  
Done and practised for some trifling gain.  
But a heart that's firm and concentrated,  
Purified, of all defilements freed,  
Kind and gentle to all living things—  
That's the path that gains the highest goal.

[Lohicca goes angrily to see the Ven. Kaccāyana, who confirms what he has said. Then Lohicca asks:] “You said ‘with sense-doors unguarded,’ Venerable Kaccāyana. In what way is one ‘with sense-doors unguarded?’”

“In this case, brahman, someone, seeing objects with the eye, is attracted to things that are pleasing, and repelled by things that are unpleasing. He dwells without mindfulness and his mind is restricted. He does not experience the emancipation of the heart through wisdom. And so those evil and unwholesome states do not cease without remainder. Hearing a sound..., smelling a scent..., tasting a flavour..., touching an object..., cognizing a mind-object..., he is attracted by things that are pleasing, and repelled by things that are unpleasing... And so those evil and unwholesome states do not cease without remainder. That is how one is ‘with sense-doors unguarded.’ Now in what way is one ‘with sense-doors guarded?’

“In this case, brahman, a monk, seeing objects with the eye, is not attracted to things that are pleasing and not repelled by things that are unpleasing. He dwells with mindfulness present, and his mind is unbounded. Thus he experiences the emancipation of the heart through wisdom and so those evil and unwholesome states that arise cease without remainder.

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<sup>196</sup> Not, of course, here the Buddha-Dhamma but the Vedic law.

<sup>197</sup> *Vañṇā*, lit. ‘colours.’ This is the word rendered ‘caste’ in English (from Portuguese *casta* ‘breed, race’).

[Likewise for sounds, smells, flavours, tangibles and mind-objects.] “In this way one is ‘with sense-doors guarded.’”

[Lohicca becomes a lay-follower.]

SN 35:132

## 44. Verahaccāni (or How to Listen to Dhamma)

[The Brahman lady Verahaccāni invites the Ven. Udāyī to a meal.]

Then the Brahman lady Verahaccāni served the Venerable Udāyī, with her own hands, with choice foods both hard and soft, until he had had enough. When he had eaten and withdrawn his hand from the bowl, the lady Verahaccāni put on her shoes, sat down on a high seat, covered her head,<sup>198</sup> and said to the Venerable Udāyī: “Teach me your doctrine, recluse.”

“The time will come for that, sister,” he said, and getting up from his seat he went on his way.

[The young man who had persuaded the lady to invite the Ven. Udāyī goes to him again, receives instruction, and returns to the lady with a renewed request to invite him. She says:] “You are speaking thus, my lad, in praise of the recluse Udāyī. But when I said to this Udāyī, ‘Teach me your doctrine, recluse,’ he replied, ‘The time will come for that, sister,’ and then got up from his seat and returned home.”

“Well, my lady, you put on your shoes, sat down on a high seat, covered your head, and said: ‘Teach me your doctrine, recluse.’ But these venerable recluses honour their doctrine, they hold it in high esteem.”

“Very well, young man. Invite the recluse Udāyī on my behalf to a meal tomorrow.”

[He does so, and the lady serves the Ven. Udāyī as before.]

When the Venerable Udāyī had eaten and withdrawn his hand from the bowl, the lady sat down, barefoot and bare-headed,<sup>199</sup> on a low seat and said to the Venerable Udāyī: “Tell me, Venerable Sir,<sup>200</sup> what do the Arahants say causes weal and woe to exist?<sup>201</sup> What do they say causes them not to exist?”

“Where the eye is, sister, the Arahants declare that weal and woe exist. Where the eye is absent, they declare that weal and woe do not exist. [Similarly for ear, nose, tongue, body (touch) mind.]”

[The lady Verahaccāni becomes a lay-follower.]

SN 35:133

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<sup>198</sup> According to the *sekhīya* rules of the *Pātimokkha* (cf. [n. 289](#)), a monk is not allowed to instruct a person doing any of these three things.

<sup>199</sup> The text says: “having taken off her shoes... and bared her head.” But presumably she was already barefooted and bareheaded. An example of the standardisation of the sutta-text overreaching itself, as occasionally happens.

<sup>200</sup> The lady now uses the proper respectful term of address.

<sup>201</sup> It is noteworthy that now, instead of the curt “teach me your doctrine,” she asks a highly intelligent question.

## 45. Kamma

“Monks, I will teach you about new kamma and old kamma, about the ceasing of kamma and the path that leads to the ceasing of kamma. Listen well, pay close attention and I will speak.

“What, monks, is old kamma?

“The eye [ear, nose tongue, body (touch), mind],<sup>202</sup> monks, is to be regarded as old kamma, brought into existence and created by volition,<sup>203</sup> forming a basis for feeling.<sup>204</sup> This, monks, is called ‘old kamma.’

“And what, monks, is new kamma?

“The action<sup>205</sup> one performs now by body, speech and mind. This monks, is called ‘new kamma.’

“When, monks, by ceasing actions of body, speech and mind, one touches liberation,<sup>206</sup> this, monks, is called ‘the ceasing of kamma.’

“And what, monks, is the path that leads to the ceasing of kamma?

“It is the Noble Eightfold Path, namely Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action,<sup>207</sup> Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. This, monks, is called ‘the path that leads to the ceasing of kamma.’<sup>208</sup>

“Whatever, monks, a teacher ought to do out of compassion, for the profit of his disciples, that I have done, having compassion for you.

“Here monks, are the roots of trees! Here are lonely places! Meditate monks. Do not be slothful, have no subsequent regrets. Thus we charge you.”

SN 35:145

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<sup>202</sup> Woodward quotes SA as correctly pointing out that “Eye in itself is not old but it has come about by former actions [i.e., *kamma*.]”

<sup>203</sup> Cf. the classic definition of kamma at AN 6:63: *cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi* ‘volition, monk, I declare to be kamma’ (see *Āṅguttara Nikāya: An Anthology* translated by Nyanaponika Thera, Part II (WH 208–211, p.67).

<sup>204</sup> *Vedanīyaṃ*. Hence a basis for craving etc.

<sup>205</sup> The same word *kamma* is used in the Pali.

<sup>206</sup> This is really the Third Noble Truth.

<sup>207</sup> The word here is *kammanta*. Right Action is specifically the observance of the first three precepts, i.e., abstaining from killing, theft and sexual misconduct.

<sup>208</sup> *Kammanirodha-gāminī-paṭipadā*. The usual term for the Path is *dukkhanirodha-gāminī-paṭipadā* ‘the path (or practice) that leads to the extinction of suffering.’ Here the link between *kamma* and *dukkha* is clearly brought out. Those who have attained the goal do not create even good kamma.

[Cf. MN 57, where 4 kinds of kamma are described, good, bad, mixed, and the last one being kamma which leads to the end of kamma, i.e., the intention (*cetanā*) to abandon the other 3 types of kamma. The simile of the raft in MN 22 and the simile of the relay chariot in MN 24 are also of use in clarifying this interesting aspect of the Teaching. See also the Bhikkhunī Sutta at A II 144/AN 4:159 where Ven. Ānanda states that “dependent on craving, craving is to be abandoned,” etc, and A I 281/AN 3:128 where Ven. Anuruddha’s final obstacles to arahathood are described. In M I 350/MN 52 it is said that a bhikkhu who does not attain the full destruction of the *āsava*s, because of “lust and delight towards the Dhamma” with the destruction of the five lower fetters is reborn in a realm from where he will not return. (BPS ed.)]

## 46. Is There a Criterion? <sup>209</sup>

“Is there, monks, any criterion whereby a monk, apart from faith, apart from persuasion,<sup>210</sup> apart from inclination, apart from rational speculation, apart from delight in views and theories, could affirm the attainment of enlightenment:<sup>211</sup> ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life as been accomplished, what was to be done is done, there is no further living in this world’?”

“For us, Lord, all things have the Blessed One as their root, their guide, their refuge. It would be well, Lord, if the meaning of these words were to be made clear by the Blessed One.<sup>212</sup> Hearing it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it.”

“There is such a criterion, monks, whereby a monk... could affirm the attainment of enlightenment... What is that method?”

“In this, monks, a monk seeing an object with the eye recognises within himself the presence of lust, hatred or delusion, knowing ‘Lust, hatred or delusion is present in me,’ or he recognises the absence of these things, knowing ‘There is no lust, hatred or delusion present in me.’ Now, monks, as regards that recognition of the presence or absence of these things within him, are these matters to be perceived by faith, by persuasion, by inclination, by rational speculation, by delight in views and theories?”

“No, indeed, Lord.”

“Are not these matters to be perceived by the eye of wisdom?”<sup>213</sup>

“Indeed, Lord.”

“Then, monks, this is the criterion whereby a monk, apart from faith, apart from persuasion, apart from inclination, apart from rational speculation, apart from delight in views and theories, could affirm the attainment of enlightenment: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been accomplished, what was to be done is done, there is no further living in this world.’”

[Similarly for ear, nose, tongue, body (touch), mind.]

SN 35:152

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<sup>209</sup> *Pariyāya*: a word with several meanings, lit. ‘going around,’ hence ‘succession,’ ‘mode,’ ‘procedure,’ etc. This short sutta deals with the very basic question of how, objectively, one can be sure that the declared goal of the Buddha’s practice has been achieved: thus the rendering ‘criterion’ is appropriate. It may be compared with the frequently-quoted *Kālāma Sutta* (AN 3.56, translated in WH 8).

<sup>210</sup> Not influenced by anybody else.

<sup>211</sup> *Aññam vyākareyya*. Woodward’s rendering ‘could affirm insight’ is inadequate, because *aññā* definitely means the highest insight of enlightenment. The declaration takes the form shown below: ‘Birth is destroyed... etc.’

<sup>212</sup> The formula is abbreviated in the text here. It is found in full elsewhere.

<sup>213</sup> I follow Woodward’s rendering for *paññāya* (lit. ‘with wisdom’). The actual expression *paññācakkhu* ‘eye of wisdom’ occurs elsewhere.

## 47. The Ocean

“The ocean, the ocean!’ monks, says the ignorant worldling. But that is not the ocean in the Ariyan discipline, that is just a great heap of water, a great flood of water.

“The human eye, monks, is the ocean; its impulsion is produced by visible forms. Whoever withstands its buffeting produced by visible forms, is said to have ‘crossed over’. The brahman<sup>214</sup> has traversed and passed over the ocean of the eye with its waves and whirlpools, its crocodiles<sup>215</sup> and monsters and stands on dry land.”

[Similarly with ear, nose, tongue, body (touch), mind.]

The teacher declared:

He who’s crossed this monster-teeming sea,  
Hardly to be crossed for mighty waves.  
Wisdom’s his,<sup>216</sup> the holy life he’s lived,  
The world’s end he’s reached, and gone beyond.

SN 35:187

## 48. Koṭṭhika

[At Isipatana the Venerable Koṭṭhika the Great called on the Venerable Sāriputta and said:]

“How is it, friend: Is the eye the fetter<sup>217</sup> of visual objects or are visual objects the fetter of the eye?... Is the tongue the fetter of tastes, or are tastes the fetter of the tongue?... Is mind the fetter of thoughts,<sup>218</sup> or are thoughts, the fetter of mind?”

“It is not, friend, that the eye is the fetter of visual objects, nor are visual objects the fetter of the eye, but that based on these two desire and lust<sup>219</sup> arise, and they are the fetter,... it is not that the tongue is the fetter of tastes,... that mind is the fetter of thoughts,... but that based on these two desire and lust arise, and they are the fetter.

“It is just as if there were a black and a white ox bound together by one rope or one yoke-tie: would it be right to say that the black ox is the fetter of the white one, or the white one of the black?”

“No, indeed, friend.”

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<sup>214</sup> The term *brāhmaṇa* is used in two different ways in the Pali Canon: (1) to denote a member of the Brahman caste, often depicted rather like the Pharisees in the New Testament; and (2) in the positive sense of one leading a pure life, even an Arahant. Cf. *inter alia* the Brāhmaṇavagga of the Dhammapada.

<sup>215</sup> *Saḡāhaṇi*: ‘(with) sharks’: Woodward. *Gāha* lit. ‘grabber’ is given in the PED as ‘crocodile’: in fact the estuarine crocodile swims far out to sea and so could well be meant here. Another word for ‘crocodile,’ *suṃsumāra*, is used in §52.

<sup>216</sup> *So vedagū*: lit. ‘he is well-versed in the Vedas,’ but this word too, like *brāhmaṇa* (n. 217), is often given a different, Buddhist, sense.

<sup>217</sup> The word used is *saṃyojana*, more technically employed for the ten fetters which must be successively broken on the path to enlightenment. The question here concerns the relation between the senses and their objects: which ‘fettors’ which? The answer is: ‘Neither.’

<sup>218</sup> *Dhammā* is here used in one of its specific senses: ‘mind-objects.’

<sup>219</sup> *Chandarāga*. *Chanda* is, as such, an ethically neutral term for ‘intention,’ etc. But in combination with *rāga* ‘lust, greed,’ it is definitely unwholesome. It is this state, based on the coexistence of eye and sight-objects, etc, that constitutes the ‘fetter.’

“Neither the black nor the white ox is the fetter of the other, but they are bound together by the same rope or the same yoke-tie, that is the fetter. So too friend, the eye is not the fetter of objects, nor are objects the fetter of eye,... the tongue,... the mind... but based on these two desire and lust arise, and they are the fetter.

“If, friend, the eye were the fetter of visual objects, or visual objects were the fetter of the eye, ... if the tongue,... if the mind were the fetter of thoughts or thoughts were the fetter of mind,<sup>220</sup> then this holy life would not be discernible<sup>221</sup> for the utter destruction of suffering. But since it is not case..., therefore this holy life is discernible for the utter destruction of suffering.

“Thus it should be understood that the eye is not the fetter..., the tongue..., the mind..., but that based on these two desire and lust arise, and they are the fetter. The Blessed One, friend, has eyes, he sees objects with the eye. But in the Blessed One there is no desire or lust. The Blessed One’s heart is completely liberated. The Blessed One has a tongue..., a mind, he knows thoughts with the mind. But in the Blessed One there is no desire or lust. The Blessed One’s heart is completely liberated. Thus it should be understood that the eye is not the fetter..., the tongue..., the mind, but that based on these two desire and lust arise, and they are the fetter.”<sup>222</sup>

SN 35:191

## 49. Things Productive of Suffering<sup>223</sup> (extracts)

“Monks, when a monk knows as they really are both the arising and the destruction of states productive of suffering, then indeed the sense-pleasures are truly seen by him. When he sees the sense-pleasures, the desire and love for sense-pleasures, the infatuation and feverish longing for sense-pleasures that is inherent in them, all this does not obsess him. His life and practice<sup>224</sup> are so informed with wisdom<sup>225</sup> that, living thus, he is not assailed by longing and depression,<sup>226</sup> which are evil and unskilled states.

...

“When, monks, a monk lives and practises like this, it occasionally happens that, through a lapse of mindfulness, evil and unskilled states arise, memories and thoughts<sup>227</sup> pertaining to the fetters. His mindfulness is aroused only slowly,<sup>228</sup> but then he soon abandons that state, drives it out, abolishes it, puts an end to it. Just as if, monks, a man were to let fall two or three drops of water into an iron pot that had been heated all day, those few drops would soon be wiped out and vanish—in the same way it occasionally happens to a monk living and practising like this... but he soon puts an end to it.

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<sup>220</sup> It is only possible because the eye is *not* the ‘fetter’ of objects, and so on, that release is possible.

<sup>221</sup> *Na paññāyetha* lit. ‘would not be perceived.’

<sup>222</sup> Woodward goes astray here. He translates: “The bond is the desire and lust which are in things.” The whole point, however, is that the desire and lust are in the *mind*, and not in ‘things,’ or there would indeed be no deliverance.

<sup>223</sup> *Dukkhadhammā*. Woodward’s ‘States of Ill’ does not bring out the true meaning sufficiently.

<sup>224</sup> *Cāro ca vihāro ca*. Not as Woodward has it, ‘His path abroad and his lodging at home.’

<sup>225</sup> *Anubuddha*, past participle of *anubodhati*, makes good sense. Woodward conjectures *anubuddha* ‘followed,’ and translates ‘practised.’

<sup>226</sup> *Abhijjhā domanassa*: ‘coveting and dejection’: Woodward. It is time to get away from the antiquated ‘coveting’ for *abhijjhā*. Other and more suitable words exist.

<sup>227</sup> *Sāra-saṅkappā*. Memory (*sāra*) arises first, and then thoughts, plans, etc. (*saṅkappā*) take over.

<sup>228</sup> “At the third attempt he is certain to succeed” (SA).

“Thus, monks, if a monk’s life and practice are so informed with wisdom that, living thus, he is not assailed by longing and depression, which are evil states, then, monks, if a king’s ministers, friends, favourites, kinsmen or blood-relations should come and offer him wealth, saying: ‘Come, good master! Why let these yellow robes torment you? Why go around with shaven head and bowl? Come on, return to the lower life, enjoy possessions and do works of merit!’—monks, for a monk so living and practising to reject the training and revert to the lower life would just be impossible.”

SN 35:203

## 50. The ‘What’s It’ Tree (Kimsuka) <sup>229</sup>

A certain monk visited another monk and said: “Tell me, friend, how does a monk’s vision become fully purified?”

“Friend, when a monk fully comprehends as they really are the arising and passing away of the six spheres of contact,<sup>230</sup> to that extent his vision becomes fully purified.”

But that monk was dissatisfied with the other’s answer, so he went to another monk...

“Friend, when a monk fully comprehends as they really are the arising and passing away of the five groups of clinging,<sup>231</sup> to that extent his vision becomes fully purified.”

But that monk was dissatisfied with the other’s answer, and he went to another monk...

“Friend, when a monk fully comprehends as they really are the arising and passing away of the four great elements,<sup>232</sup> to that extent his vision becomes fully purified.”

But that monk was dissatisfied with the other’s answer, so he went to another monk...

“Friend, when a monk fully comprehends as it really is that whatever is of a nature to arise is bound to pass away,<sup>233</sup> to that extent his vision becomes fully purified.”

But that monk was dissatisfied with the other’s answer, and he went to the Blessed One...

“Suppose, monk, a man had never seen a ‘what’s it’ tree. So he went to someone who had seen one,<sup>234</sup> and said: ‘Tell me, good sir, what does a “what’s it” tree look like?’ The other man replied: ‘Well now, a “what’s it” tree is sort of blackish, like a burnt stump.’ But that man was not long satisfied with this answer, so he went to another man... ‘Well now, a “what’s it” tree is sort of reddish, like a lump of meat.’ But that man was not long satisfied with this answer, so he went to another man... ‘Well now, a “what’s it” tree is stripped of its bark, with burst pods, rather like an acacia.’ But that man was not long satisfied with this answer, so he went to

<sup>229</sup> *Butea frondosa*, a tall tree known as ‘flame of the forest.’ The title ‘Judas Tree’ (KS) arouses inappropriate associations. The literal meaning of the Pali is ‘What’s It,’ which is entirely appropriate to the humour of the story of the doubting monk’s questionings.

<sup>230</sup> Eye and visible object, ear and sound, etc, the sixth pair being, of course, mind and mind-object (objects of thought).

<sup>231</sup> The five *khandhas*: body (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), the mental formations (*saṅkhārā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). See Vol. I, n. 49.

<sup>232</sup> The earth-element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*) or ‘extension’; the water-element (*āpo-dhātu*) or ‘cohesion’; the fire-element (*tejo-dhātu*) or ‘temperature’; the air-element (*vāyo-dhātu*) or ‘motion.’ These are, of course, not to be confused with ‘elements’ in the modern sense; they are qualities of matter, and all four are present in varying degree in every physical object.

<sup>233</sup> A frequently recurring formulation of a very basic Buddhist tenet.

<sup>234</sup> *Dassāvī*. This word is generally used in the pregnant sense of one ‘seeing with insight’—which is of course hinted at here. The descriptions of the tree are as it appears at different seasons.

another man... 'Well now, a "what's it" tree has very thick leaves. It gives close shade like a banyan.' So for a while he sees the 'what's it' tree as that man sees it.

"In the same way, monk, according to the way the vision of these wise monks<sup>235</sup> has become purified, so they explain it, each according to his disposition.

"It is, monk, just like some king's border-city, with strong walls and arches, and with six gates. And there is a wise, skilled and experienced gatekeeper who keeps out the unknown and admits the known. From the east there comes a swift pair of messengers, and they say to the gatekeeper: 'Where is the lord of this city?'—'He is over there, sirs, at the cross-roads in the centre.' Then the two messengers take a truthful report to the lord of the city, and return the way they came. [Likewise from the west, south, north.]

"I have given you a parable, monk, and so that you can understand it, this is the explanation. 'The city' is a name for the body, composed of the four great elements, born of mother and father, an accumulation of rice and gruel, impermanent, subject to abrasion, dissolution and disintegration. 'The six gates' denote the six internal sense-spheres.<sup>236</sup> 'The gatekeeper' denotes mindfulness. 'The two swift messengers' denote calm and insight.<sup>237</sup> 'The lord of the city' denotes consciousness. 'The cross-roads at the centre' denotes the four great elements: the earth-element, the water-element, the fire-element, the air-element. 'The truthful report' denotes Nibbāna. 'The way they came,' monk, denotes the Noble Eightfold Path, that is to say Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration."

SN 35:204

## 51. The Ox <sup>238</sup> [from section entitled 'The Lute']

"Suppose, monks, there is some ripe corn, and a lazy guardian. And an ox, fond of corn, gets into the field and eats his fill with ravenous delight. In the same way, monks, the ignorant worldling, being uncontrolled in the six sense-spheres, eats his fill with ravenous delight among the five kinds of sense-pleasure.<sup>239</sup>

"But suppose, monks, there is some ripe corn, and a vigilant guardian. And an ox, fond of corn, gets into the field. The guardian seizes him firmly by the muzzle. Holding him by the muzzle, he gets a firm grip on his forehead and holds him fast. He then gives him a sound thrashing with a stick, and then lets him go. [A second and a third time he does this.] So it comes about monks, that that ox, fond of corn, though he wanders about in the village or the forest, whether he stands still or lies down, will not go into that field again because he

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<sup>235</sup> *Sappurisa*, somewhat inadequately rendered 'worthies' by Woodward. It is a term of higher (and less ambiguous) praise than that (see [n. 118](#)).

<sup>236</sup> Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body (as organ of touch), mind. The 'internal' halves of the six pairs mentioned in [n. 230](#).

<sup>237</sup> *Samatha-vipassanā*: the two branches of *bhāvanā* (generally rendered 'meditation' but better called 'mind-training'). *Samatha* 'calm, tranquillity' is developed by the practice of the eighth step of the Noble Eightfold Path (*sammā-samādhi*), and *vipassanā* 'insight' by the seventh (*sammā-sati*). Both are necessary parts of the Buddhist training, though *vipassanā* is the practice that leads to the goal.

<sup>238</sup> *Goṇa*: definitely an ox and not, as Woodward translates, a cow. It is very odd how much confusion exists in English versions of Buddhist scriptures in regard to these well-known bovine creatures: thus we hear of Zen 'ox-herding' pictures, whereas it is obvious that the creature to be tamed is no ox but a ferocious bull! See Ven. W. Rāhula, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull*, Bedford 1978, pp. 15ff.

<sup>239</sup> *Kāma-guṇā*: sense-pleasures associated with the five external sense objects: visual forms, sounds, scents, tastes and tangibles.



remembers the beating he got there before. In the same way, monks, when a monk's mind is strongly stirred by the six sense-spheres, nevertheless he stands firm inwardly, becomes calm, one-pointed and concentrated."<sup>240</sup>

SN 35:205

## 52. The Six Animals (part)

"Suppose, monks, a man catches six animals of different domains and different resorts of living—a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal and a monkey, tethering each with a stout rope. Having tethered them with a stout rope, he fastens the ropes together in the middle, he lets them go. Now, monks, these six animals of different domains and feeding habits would swing around and struggle, each trying to get to his natural domain. The snake would struggle, thinking 'I'll get to the ant-hill'; the crocodile: 'I'll get into the water'; the bird: 'I'll fly up in the air'; the dog: 'I'll make for the village'; the jackal: 'I'll make for the charnel-ground'; the monkey: 'I'll head for the forest.'

"Now, monks, when those six hungry animals grew weary, they would yield to the one that was the strongest, go his way and be under his power. In the same way, monks, whenever a monk fails to practise and develop mindfulness as to body, the eye struggles to draw him towards attractive objects, while unattractive objects are repellent to him... The mind struggles to draw him towards attractive objects of thought, while unattractive objects of thought are repellent to him. This, monks, is lack of restraint. And what, monks, is restraint? In this, a monk, seeing objects with the eye, is not drawn to attractive objects, is not repelled by unattractive objects. He remains with firmly established mindfulness as to body, his mind being unrestricted.<sup>241</sup> He knows in truth that liberation of the heart, that liberation by wisdom,<sup>242</sup> through which those evil, unskilled states that have arisen pass away without remainder...

"Suppose a man catches six animals (as before), and he fastens the rope together to a stout post or pillar... Then, when those six animals grow weary, they would have to stand, crouch or lie down by the stout post or pillar. In the same way, monks, when a monk practises and develops mindfulness as to the body, the eye does not struggle to draw him towards attractive visual objects, nor are unattractive visual objects repellent to him... the mind does not struggle to draw him towards attractive objects of thought, nor are unattractive objects of thought repellent to him. This, monks, is restraint.

"'Tethered to a stout post or pillar,' monks, denotes mindfulness as to body. Therefore, monks, this is how you must train yourselves: 'We shall practise mindfulness as to body,

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<sup>240</sup> According to SA, these adjectives refer to the four *jhānas* (see [n. 244](#)). The remainder of this sutta is translated in Vol. 1, No 61.

<sup>241</sup> *Appamāṇa*: 'boundless.'

<sup>242</sup> *Cetovimutti paññāvimutti*. Woodward translates too literally 'that emancipation of the heart, that emancipation of wisdom,' which makes little sense. Arahantship is meant by both terms.

develop it, make it our vehicle, our dwelling-place our resort, we will build it up and undertake it thoroughly.' This, monks, is how you must train yourselves."

SN 35:206

## 53. The Signless<sup>243</sup>

[The Ven. Moggallāna has described how, with the aid of the Buddha, he has passed through all the jhānas<sup>244</sup> right up to the "sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception."]

"Then, friends, I thought: 'The signless concentration of the heart, the signless concentration of the heart, they say—now what is that?'

"Then I thought: 'In this a monk, paying no attention to any distinguishing signs,<sup>245</sup> enters on and dwells in that concentration of the heart which is without signs. This is called "The signless concentration of heart."'

"Then, friends, paying no attention to any distinguishing signs, I entered on and dwelt in that concentration of the heart which is without signs. But as I dwelt thus,<sup>246</sup> the consciousness-conforming-to-signs arose.<sup>247</sup>

"And then, friends, the Blessed One came to me by his powers<sup>248</sup> and said: 'Moggallāna, Moggallāna, Brahman,<sup>249</sup> do not slacken off in the signless concentration, make your mind steady, make the mind one-pointed, concentrate your mind in the signless concentration!'

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<sup>243</sup> *Animitto*: cf. [n. 151](#). Not, as Woodward translates, 'The unconditioned,' which would be *asaṅkhata*—*Nibbāna*.

<sup>244</sup> There are the four 'lower' *jhānas* ('absorptions') associated with the World of Form (*rūpaloka*), and the four 'higher' *jhānas* associated with the Formless World (*arūpaloka*). They are referred to in similar terms in the first eight sections of Saṃyutta 40 (not included in this Anthology) thus: 1. 'With Thought-Conception' (*savitakka*); 2. 'Without Thought-Conception' (*avitakka*); 3. 'By Happiness' (*sukhena*); 4. 'Balanced' (*upekkhako*); 5. '[Infinity of] Space' (*ākāsa*); 6. '[Infinity of] Consciousness' (*viññāṇa*); 7. 'Nothingness' (*ākāṅkamañña*); 8. 'Neither-perception [nor-non-perception]' (*nevasaññā*). For further details of these absorptions, which are pre-Buddhist and not essential to the attainment of enlightenment, see BD.

<sup>245</sup> *Nimitta*. The characteristic features of anything.

<sup>246</sup> Woodward translates: "But when I so abode (and had emerged from trance)." His parenthetical addition, here and in the previous eight suttas (not included in this Anthology) is not justified by the text. Moggallāna had not emerged from the absorption (Woodward's 'trance'), but his concentration having momentarily weakened, he was lapsing into the state below (i.e., in this case, 'Neither-perception-nor-non-perception').

<sup>247</sup> *Nimittānusāri-viññāṇaṃ*. Woodward's 'consciousness that followed after distinguishing marks' is not quite correct. He himself refers to the Commentary on the Sutta Nipāta: "i.e., consciousness that was still tainted with *rāga-dosa-moha* [lust, hatred and ignorance]."

<sup>248</sup> *Iddhiyā*. Woodward's 'by magic power' is inappropriate. The meaning is telepathic power, which is neither 'magical' nor confined to Buddhas. See BD s.v. *Abhiññā*.

<sup>249</sup> 'Brahman' here is clearly used in the second of the two senses ([n. 214](#)).

“And after that, friends, paying no attention to any distinguishing signs, I entered on and dwelt in the signless concentration of the heart.

“Now, friends, if anyone were to truly declare: ‘Through the Teacher’s compassion the disciple gained great super-knowledge,<sup>250</sup> he could rightly declare this of me.”

SN 40:9

## 54. Seeing the Sick (Citta)

At that time Citta the householder was a sick man, suffering from a serious illness. Then a number of devas that dwell in gardens, forests and trees, the devas of healing herbs and of great trees in the forest, gathered together and said to Citta the householder:<sup>251</sup> “Make a resolve, householder: ‘In some future time, may I be a king, a world-ruler!’”<sup>252</sup>

To this Citta replied... “That is something impermanent, something to be rejected and passed over.”

Now Citta’s friends, colleagues and blood-relations heard him say this, and they said to him: “Sir!<sup>253</sup> Set up mindfulness, don’t ramble!”

“What have I said that makes you tell me to set up mindfulness and not to ramble?”

“Why, sir, you just said: ‘That is something impermanent, something to be rejected and passed over.’”

“Yes, but I said that to the devas who dwell in gardens... who bade me make a resolve that in some future time I might be a king, a world-ruler.”

“Sir, what purpose did those devas have in mind in urging you to make such a resolve?”

“This is what those devas thought: ‘This householder Citta is a virtuous man, of noble disposition. If he makes a resolve that in some future time he may be a king, a world-ruler, this will be profitable to that virtuous man, having made such a resolve with a pure heart, and will bring the just man a just and great reward...’ So then I said, ‘That is something impermanent, something to be rejected and passed over.’”

[Citta then instructs them to have perfect faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, and passes away.]

SN 41:10

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<sup>250</sup> *Mahā-abhiññatā*. Moggallāna has attained to the sixth *abhiññā*, the only one that is supramundane: the extinction of the cankers (*āsavakkhaya*) (cf. [n. 85](#)).

<sup>251</sup> A whole Saṃyutta (SN 41) is devoted to this householder (see also Vol. II, No 23), who is held up as a model layman in SN 17.23 (not translated here). His name is not the same as *citta* ‘mind,’ but means ‘bright, shining.’

<sup>252</sup> *Cakkavatti*, lit. ‘a wheel-turning monarch,’ the Indian term for a universal ruler. This was what Gotama could have become if he had not become a Buddha. The devas are aware of Citta’s great virtues (though they possibly exaggerate in thinking he could become a world-ruler!), but are not wise enough to think of his spiritual progress (cf. [n. 10](#)).

<sup>253</sup> *Ayyaputta* = *ariyaputta* lit. ‘son of the Ariyans’ (cf. [n. 117](#)).

## 55. Teaching

[At Nalanda the village headman Asibandhakaputta asks the Buddha:] “Does not the Blessed One dwell in compassion for all living beings?”

“Indeed, headman, the Tathāgata does dwell in compassion for all living beings.”

“Well then, Lord, does not the Blessed One teach Dhamma in full <sup>254</sup> to some, but not so fully to others?”

“I will reply to this question, headman, with another. Answer as seems proper to you. What do you think? Suppose a peasant farmer has three fields, one excellent, one middling, and one poor, sandy, salty, with bad soil. Tell me, when the farmer wants to sow his seed, which field would he sow first: the excellent one, the middling one or the poor one that is sandy, salty and with bad soil?”

“Lord, the farmer who wanted to sow his seed would sow the excellent field first. Having done that, he would sow the middling field next, and the one that was poor, sandy, salty, with bad soil he might or might not sow. Why? Well it might do for cattle-food.”

“Well, headman, that excellent field is like my monks and nuns. To them I teach the Dhamma which is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle and lovely in its ending, in spirit and in letter,<sup>255</sup> I display to them the holy life, perfectly fulfilled and purified. Why? Because these people adhere to me as their island, their shelter, their resort, their refuge.

“The middling field is like my male and female lay-followers. To these too I teach the Dhamma which is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle and lovely in its ending, in spirit and in letter, I display to them the holy life, perfectly fulfilled and purified. Why? Because these people adhere to me as their island, their shelter, their resort, their refuge.

“The poor field that is sandy, salty and with bad soil is my like wandering recluses and Brahmans of other sects.<sup>256</sup> To them I also teach the Dhamma which is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle and lovely in its ending, in spirit and in letter, I display to them the holy life, perfectly fulfilled and purified. Why? Because if the only understand a single phrase, it would long be for their profit.”

SN 42:7

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<sup>254</sup> *Sakkaccaṃ*: ‘carefully, thoroughly.’

<sup>255</sup> *Sāttham* (= *sa-attham*) *savyañjanam* ‘with its meaning and (detailed) characteristics’: *vyañjana* also means ‘letter (of alphabet)’ or ‘syllable’. In a syllabic script these are overlapping concepts.

<sup>256</sup> As Woodward points out, *mayham* ‘my’ is repeated here, ‘possibly for the sake of framework’ (i.e., as a mechanical repetition, as apparently in § 44: see n. 199).



# Part Five: The Great Section (Mahā-Vagga)

## 56. For All Comers

“Suppose, monks, there is a guest-house. Travellers come from the east, the west, the north, the south to lodge here: nobles and brahmans, merchants and serfs.<sup>257</sup> In the same way, monks, a monk who cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path, who assiduously practises the Noble Eightfold Path, comprehends with higher knowledge those states that are to be so comprehended, abandons with higher knowledge those states that are to be so abandoned, comes to experience with higher knowledge those states that are to be so experienced, and cultivates with higher knowledge those states that are to be so cultivated.

“What, monks, are the states to be comprehended with higher knowledge?<sup>258</sup>

“They are the five groups of clinging. Which five? The body-group, the feeling-group, the perception-group, the mental-formation group, the consciousness-group...

“What, monks, are the states to be abandoned with higher knowledge?

“They are ignorance and the desire for [further] becoming.

“And what, monks, are the states to be experienced with higher knowledge?

“They are knowledge and liberation.

“And what, monk, are the states to be cultivated with higher knowledge?

“They are calm and insight.<sup>259</sup>

“And how does a monk who cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path, who assiduously practises the Noble Eightfold Path, comprehend..., abandon..., come to experience..., cultivate with higher knowledge those states that are to be so comprehended, abandoned, experienced, cultivated?

“In this, monks, a monk cultivates Right View,... Right Concentration that is based on detachment, dispassion, leading to maturity of surrender.<sup>260</sup> In this way he comprehends..., abandons..., comes to experience..., cultivates with higher knowledge those states that are to be so comprehended, abandoned, experienced, cultivated.”

SN 45:159

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<sup>257</sup> The four ‘colours’ from which the later caste system developed: the *khattiyas* (Sanskrit *kṣatriya*) or nobles, the group to which Gotama himself belonged; the *brāhmaṇas* or brahmans, the ‘priestly’ caste (see [n. 214](#)); the *vessas* (Sanskrit *vaiśya*) or merchant class, and the *suddas* (Sanskrit *sūdra*), the lowest class. For these, the term ‘serfs’ in the text is not entirely appropriate, but it is hard to find an equivalent. See EB s.v. *Caste*.

<sup>258</sup> *Abhiññā*.

<sup>259</sup> *Samatha, vipassanā*: see [n. 237](#).

<sup>260</sup> *Vossaggapariṇāmi*. In a note to SN 3.2.8 (not included in this Anthology), Mrs Rhys Davids quotes SA on this term: “Surrender... is twofold: the ejection of all lower passions (*kilesa*) and the forward leap, or *elan*, to Nibbāna.”

## 57. Suffering

“Monks, there are these three kinds of suffering.<sup>261</sup> What three? Suffering caused by pain,<sup>262</sup> suffering caused by the formations (or conditioned existence),<sup>263</sup> suffering due to change.<sup>264</sup> It is for the full comprehension, clear understanding, ending and abandonment of these three forms of suffering that the Noble Eightfold Path is to be cultivated...”

SN 45:165

## 58. Fire (or Right and Wrong Times)

“At such times, monks, as the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to cultivate the enlightenment-factor<sup>265</sup> of tranquillity, the enlightenment-factor of concentration, the enlightenment-factor of equanimity. What is the reason? A sluggish mind is hard to arouse by these factors.

“Suppose a man wants to make a small fire blaze. If he heaps wet grass, wet cow-dung and wet sticks on it, if he exposes it to wind and rain and sprinkles it with dust, can he make that small fire blaze?”

“No indeed, Lord.”

“Just so, when the mind is sluggish it is the wrong time to cultivate the enlightenment-factors of tranquillity, concentration and equanimity, because a sluggish mind is hard to arouse through these factors.

“But, monks, when the mind is sluggish, that is the right time to cultivate the enlightenment-factor of investigation-of-states, the enlightenment-factor of energy, the enlightenment-factor of rapture.<sup>266</sup> What is the reason? A sluggish mind is easy to arouse by these factors.

“Suppose a man wants to make a small fire blaze. If he heaps dry grass, dry cow-dung and dry sticks on it, blows on it with his mouth, and does not sprinkle it with dust, can he make that fire blaze?”

“Yes indeed, Lord.”

“... a sluggish mind is easy to arouse through these factors.

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<sup>261</sup> *Dukkhatā*, an abstract noun denoting ‘suffering’ in the most general sense.

<sup>262</sup> *Dukkha-dukkhatā*, the actual feeling of physical or mental pain or anguish.

<sup>263</sup> *Saṅkhāra-dukkhatā*, the suffering produced by all ‘conditioned phenomena’ (i.e., *saṅkhāras*, in the most general sense: see BD s.v. *saṅkhāra* I, 4). This includes also experiences associated with hedonically neutral feeling. The suffering inherent in the formations has its roots in the imperfectability of all conditioned existence, and in the fact that there cannot be any final satisfaction within the incessant turning of the Wheel of Life. The neutral feeling associated with this type of suffering is especially the indifference of those who do not understand the fact of suffering and are not moved by it.

<sup>264</sup> *Viparināma-dukkhatā*, the suffering associated with pleasant bodily and mental feelings: ‘because they are the cause for the arising of pain when they change’ (VM XIV, 35).

<sup>265</sup> *Bojjhaṅga* (= *bodhi-aṅga*, lit. ‘limb of enlightenment’) or *sambojjaṅga*. The seven *bojjhaṅgas* are so called (SN 46.5) ‘because they lead to enlightenment’ (*bodhi*). They are: 1. mindfulness (*sati-sambojjaṅga*), 2. investigation of (mental and physical) states (*dhamma-vicaya-s.*), 3. energy (*virīya-s.*), 4. rapture (*pīti-s.*), 5. tranquillity (*passaddhi-s.*), 6. concentration (*samādhi-s.*), 7. equanimity (*upekkhā-s.*). The text makes it clear that of these the first, mindfulness, is the most important, since it is valuable in all circumstances, whereas the others are not always appropriate.

<sup>266</sup> *Pīti*: see [n. 87](#).

“Monks, when the mind is agitated,<sup>267</sup> it is the wrong time to cultivate the enlightenment-factors of investigation-of-states, of energy, of rapture. Why? An agitated mind is hard to calm through these factors.

“Suppose a man wants to put a big fire out. If he heaps dry cow-dung and dry sticks on it, blow on it with his mouth, and does not sprinkle it with dust, can he put that fire out?”

“No indeed, Lord.”

“... an agitated mind is not easy to calm through these factors.

“When the mind is agitated, that is the right time to cultivate the enlightenment-factors of tranquillity, concentration, equanimity. Why? Because an agitated mind is easy to calm<sup>268</sup> through these factors.

“Suppose a man wants to put out a big fire. If he heaps wet grass, wet cow-dung, wet sticks on it and if he exposes it to wind and rain, if he sprinkles it with dust, can he put that big fire out?”

“Yes indeed, Lord.”

“Just so, monks, when the mind is agitated, that is the right time to cultivate the enlightenment-factors of tranquillity, concentration, equanimity. An agitated mind is easy to calm through these factors.

“But as for mindfulness, monks, I declare that it is always useful.”

SN 46:53

## 59. The Brahma-Vihāras<sup>269</sup> (part)

“And how, monks, does a monk cultivate the heart’s release by loving kindness? What is its goal, its excellence, its fruit and its outcome?”

“In this case, monks, a monk cultivates the enlightenment-factor of mindfulness accompanied by loving kindness and similarly the enlightenment-factors of investigation-of-states, energy, rapture, tranquillity, concentration, equanimity, accompanied by loving kindness which is based on detachment, dispassion, leading to maturity of surrender. If he wishes to dwell perceiving the repulsive in what is not repulsive, he dwells thus perceiving the repulsive. If he wishes to dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in what is repulsive, he dwells thus perceiving the unrepulsive. If he wishes to dwell perceiving the repulsive both in what is repulsive and what is not repulsive, if he wishes to dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in both..., he dwells thus. If he wishes, avoiding both the repulsive and unrepulsive, to dwell equanimous,<sup>270</sup> mindful and clearly aware,<sup>271</sup> he dwells thus, equanimous, mindful and clearly aware, or, attaining the heart’s release called ‘beautiful’<sup>272</sup> he abides there. I declare that the heart’s release by loving kindness

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<sup>267</sup> 267267. *Uddhataṃ*: not ‘elated’ as translated by Woodward.

<sup>268</sup> Woodward has here, by an oversight, ‘is easily raised up.’ Below, he has correctly ‘is easily calmed.’

<sup>269</sup> The four *brahma-vihāras* (‘divine abidings’), also called the four ‘boundless (*appamaññā*) states,’ are: 1. loving kindness (*mettā*), 2. compassion (*karuṇā*), 3. sympathetic joy (*muditā*), 4. equanimity (*upekkhā*).

<sup>270</sup> *Upekkhā*, the adjective from *upekkhā*. ‘Equanimous’ is a rare word in modern English, but is less misleading than ‘indifferent.’ It is used by the Ven. Ñāṇamoli in *Path of Purification*.

<sup>271</sup> *Sato sampajāno*. The old rendering (introduced by T. W. Rhys Davids) ‘mindful and self-possessed’ dies hard, but is far too vague, if not positively misleading. The real meaning of *sampajāna* is ‘clearly aware’: see BD s.v. *sampajāna*.

<sup>272</sup> *Subha*. This is explained in MN 77 as being associated with the fourth (lower) *jhāna* ([n. 244](#)).



has the beautiful for its excellence. This is the attainment of a wise monk who penetrates to no higher release.<sup>273</sup> And how, monks, does a monk cultivate release by compassion? What is its goal, its excellence, its fruit and its outcome? In this, monks, a monk cultivates the enlightenment-factors of mindfulness... equanimity accompanied by compassion... [as above]... he dwells thus, equanimous, mindful, clearly aware, or, by passing utterly beyond all perceptions of objects, by the going-down of perceptions of sensory reactions,<sup>274</sup> by disregarding perceptions of diversity, thinking 'space is infinite,' he attains and dwells in the sphere of infinite space.<sup>275</sup> I declare that the heart's release by compassion has the sphere of infinite space for its excellence. This is the attainment of a wise monk who penetrates to no higher release.

"And how, monks, does a monk cultivate the heart's release by sympathetic joy? What is its goal, its excellence, its fruit and its outcome?

"In this, monks, a monk cultivates the enlightenment-factors of mindfulness... equanimity accompanied by sympathetic joy... [as above...] he dwells thus, equanimous, mindful, clearly aware or, by passing utterly beyond the sphere of infinite space, thinking 'consciousness is infinite,' he attains and dwells in the sphere of infinite consciousness.<sup>276</sup> I declare that the heart's release by sympathetic joy has the sphere of infinite consciousness for its excellence. This is the attainment of a wise monk who penetrates to no higher release.

"And how, monks, does a monk cultivate the heart's release by equanimity? What is its goal, its excellence, its fruit and its outcome?

"In this case, monks, a monk cultivates the enlightenment-factors of mindfulness, investigation-of-states, energy, rapture, tranquillity, concentration, equanimity accompanied by equanimity<sup>277</sup> which is based on detachment, dispassion, leading to maturity of surrender. If he wishes to dwell... [as above...] he dwells thus, equanimous, mindful and clearly aware. Or by passing utterly beyond the sphere of infinite consciousness, thinking 'there is nothing,' he attains and dwells in the sphere of nothingness.<sup>278</sup> I declare that the heart's release by equanimity had the sphere of nothingness for its excellence. This is the attainment of a wise monk who penetrates to no higher release."

SN 46:54

## 60. Saṅgārava (or The Hindrances)

[At Sāvattthī the Brahman Saṅgārava asked the Buddha:] "Why is it, good Gotama, how does it come about that sometimes sacred words<sup>279</sup> I have long studied are not clear to me, not to mention those I have not studied? And how is it too that sometimes other sacred words that I have not so studied are clear to me, not to mention those I have studied?"

"Well, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by sense-desires, and does not know, as it really is, the way of escape from sense-desires that have arisen,

<sup>273</sup> Cf. VM IX, 76: "If unable to reach higher than the attainment of loving kindness and attain Arahantship, then when he falls from this life, he reappears in the Brahma world as one who wakes up from sleep."

<sup>274</sup> *Paṭigha* (here) 'resistance' (as of solid objects). Another meaning of this word is 'resentment.'

<sup>275</sup> The first of the higher (formless) *jhānas* (n. 244).

<sup>276</sup> The second of the higher (formless) *jhānas*.

<sup>277</sup> Equanimity (*upekkhā*) as an enlightenment-factor (n. 265) is here distinguished from equanimity as a *Brahma-vihāra* (n. 269). The difference lies in the mode of attainment.

<sup>278</sup> The third of the higher (formless) *jhānas*.

<sup>279</sup> *Mantā*: 'mantras' or, presumably, sacred texts of the brahmins.

then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, nor can he know and see what is to the profit of others, or of both himself and others. Then even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has studied.

“Imagine, brahman, a bowl of water mixed with lac, turmeric, dark green or crimson dye. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was. In the same way, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by sense-desires... then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both. Then even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has studied.

“Again, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed with ill will... then he cannot know or see...

“Imagine a bowl of water, heated on a fire, boiling up and bubbling over. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

“Again, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by sloth-and-torpor... then he cannot know or see...

“Imagine a bowl of water covered over with slimy moss and water-plants. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

“Again, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by worry-and-flurry... then he cannot know or see...

“Imagine a bowl of water ruffled by the wind, so that the water trembled, eddied and rippled. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was...

“Again, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by doubt-and-wavering... he cannot know or see...

“Imagine a bowl of water, agitated, stirred up muddied, put in a dark place. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was. In the same way, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by doubt-and-wavering... then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both. Then even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has studied. But, brahman, when a man dwells with his heart not possessed, not overwhelmed by sense-desires... ill will... sloth-and-torpor... worry-and-flurry... doubt-and-wavering... [like the five bowls of water not as previously described, but ‘clear, limpid, pellucid, set in the open’]... then he knows and sees, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both himself and others. Then even sacred words he has not long studied are clear to him, not to mention those he has studied.”

SN 46:55

## 61. Mindfulness (from The Nuns' Lodging)

“In this, Ānanda, a monk dwells contemplating the body,<sup>280</sup> ardent, clearly aware<sup>281</sup> and mindful, putting aside worldly desire and dejection.<sup>282</sup> As he thus dwells contemplating the body, some bodily object arises, or physical discomfort or mental drowsiness causes his mind to wander to external things. Then, Ānanda, that bhikkhu's attention should be directed to some inspiring<sup>283</sup> object of thought. As he thus directs it to some inspiring object of thought, delight springs up in him. When he is thus delighted, rapture arises. When he experiences rapture, his body is calmed down. With body so calmed down, he experiences joy. Being joyful, his mind is concentrated. He reflects thus: ‘The aim on which I set my mind has been achieved. Let me now withdraw my mind [from the inspiring object].’ So he does so, without starting or continuing the thought-process.<sup>284</sup> And he is aware of being free from initial or sustained thought, inwardly mindful and joyful. [Similarly with feelings, state of mind and mind-objects<sup>285</sup>.]

“Such, Ānanda, is the practice for the direction<sup>286</sup> of mind. And what, Ānanda, is the practice for the non-direction of mind?

“A monk who does not direct his mind to external things<sup>287</sup> is aware: ‘My mind is not directed to external things.’ Then he is aware: ‘My mind is not concentrated on before or after,<sup>288</sup> it is set free and undirected.’ And then he is aware: ‘I dwell in contemplation of the body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful. I am joyful.’ [Similarly with feelings, state of mind and mind-objects.]

“This, Ānanda, is the practice for the non-direction of mind.”

SN 47:10

## 62. Obligation (Pāṭimokkha)

[A certain monk said to the Buddha:] “It would be well for me, Lord, if the Blessed One would teach me briefly a doctrine so that having heard it I might dwell alone, in seclusion, unwearied, ardent and resolute.”

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<sup>280</sup> *Kāye kāyānupassī*. Woodward translates: ‘dwells in body contemplating body (as transient)’ (the bracketed words are Woodward’s own unnecessary addition) and similarly, e.g., I. B. Horner in her rendering of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (MLS 10) has: ‘contemplating the body in the body.’ These and other similar renderings are perhaps unnecessarily literal versions of the Pali idiom. But cf. Commentary on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*: ‘Why is the word body used twice? For the sake of an unmixed determination (of the object of meditation). He (the meditator) does not contemplate the feelings, etc, in (regard to) the body, but just the body.’

<sup>281</sup> *Sampajāno*. Cf. [n. 271](#).

<sup>282</sup> *Abhijjhādomanassa*. Woodward’s ‘the dejection in the world which arises from coveting’ is another possible rendering (but see [§ 49, n. 228](#)).

<sup>283</sup> *Paśādanīye*. Woodward has ‘pleasurable’ which is dangerously ambiguous, even though in a note he quotes SA as saying ‘such as the Buddha.’ The meaning is ‘that which inspires (faith, etc.).’

<sup>284</sup> *Vitakka-vicāra*: ‘initial and sustained thought,’ as rendered in the next sentence.

<sup>285</sup> These are the four standard objects of mindfulness.

<sup>286</sup> *Paṇidhāya*. The difference between the two kinds of meditation is that between concentration on an object (*samādhi*) and ‘choiceless awareness,’ which is *sati*. See [n. 237](#). For a full account of this practice, see Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, London 1962.

<sup>287</sup> Such as the object previously envisaged. SA says *kammaṭṭhāna* ‘the meditation object.’

<sup>288</sup> Woodward considers that ‘before’ means the practice, and ‘after’ means its goal, i.e., Nibbāna. More probably it means keeping his mind in the present moment, dwelling neither on the past nor on the future.

“Well then, monk, you should purify the rudiments of skill. And what are the rudiments of skill?

“In this, monk, you must dwell restrained according to the restraint of the Obligations,<sup>289</sup> having perfected the scope of your practice,<sup>290</sup> aware of danger in the slightest faults, undertaking the precepts and training yourself in them.<sup>291</sup>

“Having done this, then, monk, with morality<sup>292</sup> as your support, established in morality, you must practise the four foundations of mindfulness. Which four?

“In this, monk, you must dwell in contemplation of body... feelings... mind... mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having got rid of worldly longing and depression.

“Then, monk, when, with morality as your support, established in morality, you have cultivated the four foundations of mindfulness, then you will obtain by night and by day that hoped-for increase in skilled states, which will not decline.”

[Delighted, the monk practised as instructed and, in due course, became an Arahant.]

SN 47:46

## 63. The Brahman Uṇṇābha

[At Sāvattḥī the Brahman Uṇṇābha said to the Buddha:] “There are these five sense faculties, good Gotama, of different spheres, different action, and they do not share in each other’s sphere of action. Which five? The sense of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.<sup>293</sup> As these five faculties are of different scope and range, and do not share in each other’s sphere of action, what is their resort,<sup>294</sup> and who profits from their combined activity?”<sup>295</sup>

“There are, brahman, these five sense-faculties... which do not share in each other’s sphere of action. Mind is their resort, and it is mind that profits from their combined activity.”

“But, good Gotama, what is mind’s resort?”

“Mind’s resort, brahman, is mindfulness.”<sup>296</sup>

“Then, good Gotama, what is the resort of mindfulness?”<sup>297</sup>

“The resort of mindfulness, brahman, is liberation.”

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<sup>289</sup> *Pātimokkha*, the monastic code of conduct, now enshrined in the 227 rules which are recited fortnightly.

<sup>290</sup> *Ācāra-gocara-sampanno*, i.e., ‘having perfected the training up to the stage you have reached.’

<sup>291</sup> Reading with Woodward *sikkhāhi* ‘train yourself’ (imperative) instead of Feer’s *sikkhasi*.

<sup>292</sup> *Sīla*: ‘disciplined behaviour.’

<sup>293</sup> These are, of course, the five senses recognised in the West, to which Buddhism adds mind as the sixth.

<sup>294</sup> *Paṭisaraṇaṃ*. ‘Resort’ is a somewhat desperate attempt (after Woodward) to find an equivalent. Probably not from *saraṇa* ‘refuge’ but from *sarati* (PED) in the sense of ‘referring back.’ Woodward refers to DN 3.1.28 (final verse) (= *Dialogues* I, 122n.). The word is rendered ‘repository’ by I. B. Horner at MLS 43 (S I 355). In a somewhat similar context in MN 44, *paṭibhāga* (‘counterpart’: I. B. Horner, MLS I p. 367) is used.

<sup>295</sup> At first glance one might suppose that Uṇṇābha was either thinking in terms of a ‘self’ or trying to trap the Buddha into admitting the existence of one, but since we learn that he was an *anāgāmin* (n. 300), this is not so. Cf. § 36.

<sup>296</sup> This may in effect be a play on words, since *paṭisaraṇaṃ* here can well be taken as ‘protection,’ i.e., differently derived from that in n. 294. Something of the effect could be achieved by rendering above: ‘to what (or whom) do the faculties report?’, and here: ‘to what (whom) does mind resort (for protection)?’

“Then, good Gotama, what is the resort of liberation?”

“The resort of liberation is Nibbāna.”

“Then, good Gotama, what is the resort of Nibbāna?”

“That question goes too far brahman. No answer can encompass it. The aim of the holy life, brahman, is immersion<sup>298</sup> in Nibbāna, it has Nibbāna for its final end, Nibbāna for its conclusion.”

The Brahman Uṇṇābha was delighted with the words of the Blessed One and rejoiced in them. He rose, saluted the Blessed One and departed. Not long after his departure the Blessed One said to the monks:

“Monks, imagine a house or a pavilion with a peaked roof, with a window to the east. When the sun rises and its rays strike through the window, what do they rest on?”

“On the western wall, Lord.”

“Just so, monks, the faith of the Brahman Uṇṇābha is settled on the Tathāgata, rooted in him, established in him. It is strong, and cannot be uprooted by any recluse or brahman, deva or Mara, Brahma or anyone else in the world.

“Monks, if the Brahman Uṇṇābha were to die now,<sup>299</sup> there is no fetter to bind the Brahman Uṇṇābha and cause him to return to this world.”<sup>300</sup>

SN 48:42

## 64. In the Foot

“Just as monks, all the foot-characteristics of all jungle creatures<sup>301</sup> are combined in the elephant’s and the elephant’s foot is reckoned chief of them in size, so too, monks, of all the elements<sup>302</sup> that conduce to enlightenment the faculty of wisdom<sup>303</sup> is reckoned their chief as regards the attainment of enlightenment.

“And which are those elements that conduce to enlightenment? The faculty of faith, monks, conduces to enlightenment, the faculties of energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom conduce to enlightenment.

“Just as, monks, all the foot-characteristics of all jungle creatures are combined in the elephant’s foot and the elephant’s foot is reckoned chief of them in size, so too, monks, of all the

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<sup>297</sup> Here rather in the sense of [n. 294](#). Cf. the discussion by Mrs Rhys Davids in BPE, introduction, p. lxxxvii.

<sup>298</sup> The ‘immersion’ is of course metaphorical, since there is nothing, and nobody, that ‘enters’ Nibbāna! We may compare the well-known concluding line of Sir Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia*:

<sup>299</sup> Woodward translates too literally ‘were to make an end,’ which suggests suicide. This is not implied by *kālaṃ kareyya*, which is merely an idiomatic expression for dying.

<sup>300</sup> This means that he is an *anāgāmin* or ‘Non-Returner’ who, having destroyed the five lower fetters (see Vol. I, [n. 83](#)), will not return to this world.

<sup>301</sup> Reverting to *jaṅgalānaṃ* in Feer’s text, as opposed to Woodward’s ‘creatures as roam about’ based a dubious *jaṅgamānaṃ* (for *cankamānaṃ*) of some MSS.

<sup>302</sup> *Padāni* lit. ‘feet’ is an untranslatable pun. *Paḍaṃ* ‘foot’ has even more metaphorical meanings in Pali than the English word: see PED.

<sup>303</sup> *Paññīndriya*. The fifth of the five ‘spiritual faculties’: 1. faith (*saddhā*), 2. energy (*virīya*), 3. mindfulness (*sati*), 4. concentration (*samādhi*), 5. wisdom (*paññā*). See BD s.v. *indriya* and also *indriya-samatta*. It will be noticed that these five partly overlap with the seven *bojjhaṅgas* ([n. 260](#)).

elements that conduce to enlightenment the faculty of wisdom is reckoned chief as regards the attainment of enlightenment.”

SN 48:54

## 65. Sarakāni (Who Took to Drink)

[At Kapilavatthu] Now at that time Sarakāni the Sakyan, who had died, was proclaimed by the Blessed One to be a Stream-Winner, not subject to rebirth in states of woe, assured of enlightenment. At this, a number of the Sakyans, whenever they met each other or came together in company, were indignant and angry, and said scornfully: “A fine thing, a marvellous thing! Nowadays anyone can become a Stream-Winner, if the Blessed One has proclaimed Sarakāni who died to be Stream-Winner... assured of enlightenment! Why, Sarakāni failed in his training and took to drink!”

[Mahānāma the Sakyan reported this to the Buddha who said:] “Mahānāma, a lay-follower who has for a long time taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha—how could he go to states of woe? [And this can be truly said of Sarakāni the Sakyan.] How could he go to states of woe?

“Mahānāma, take the case of a man endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha, declaring ‘He is the Blessed One...’,<sup>304</sup> the Dhamma... the Sangha... He is joyous and swift in wisdom, one who has gained release.<sup>305</sup> By the destruction of the cankers he has by his own realisation gained the cankerless heart’s release, the release through wisdom, in this very life, and abides in it. The man is entirely released from the hell-state, from rebirth as an animal,<sup>306</sup> he is free from the realm of hungry ghosts, fully freed from the downfall, the evil way, from states of woe.

“Take the case of another man. He is endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha... the Dhamma... the Sangha... he is joyous and swift in wisdom but has not gained release. Having destroyed the five lower fetters,<sup>307</sup> he is reborn spontaneously<sup>308</sup> where he will attain Nibbāna without returning from that world. That man is entirely released from... states of woe.

“Take the case of another man. He is endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha. But he is not joyous in wisdom and has not gained release. Yet by destroying three fetters<sup>309</sup> and weakening lust, hatred and delusion, he is a Once-returner, who will return once more to this world and put an end to suffering. That man is entirely freed from... states of woe.

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<sup>304</sup> These are, of course, the standard formulations for referring to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. They seem to fit awkwardly into the context here and may have been interpolated.

<sup>305</sup> These terms are used of Sāriputta at SN 2.9 (not translated here). Cf. the distinction between difficult and easy progress in VM XXI, 117.

<sup>306</sup> Theosophists and others maintain that rebirth as an animal, after a human existence, is impossible. This view is not supported by the Buddhist texts of any school.

<sup>307</sup> Cf. [n. 300](#). This is the *anāgāmin* or ‘Non-Returner.’

<sup>308</sup> I.e., not born from a womb by spontaneously arising in another world (in this case the ‘Pure Abodes’ (*suddhāvāsā*), where they will attain to final release without returning to this world).

<sup>309</sup> These are the first three of the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiya-saṃyojanāni* Vol. I, n. 83), i.e., *sakkāya-ditṭhi* ‘personality-view’ or belief in a permanent, really existing self; *vicikicchā* ‘doubt’ (once the ‘personality-view’ has been shattered, there can be no further fundamental doubt about the Dhamma); and *silabbata-parāmāsa* ‘attachment to virtues and vows’ (*śīla + vata*). It is noteworthy that even at this (second) stage on the Path, sensuality (*kāmarāga*) and ill will (*vyāpāda*), the fourth and fifth fetters, are only weakened but not destroyed. Their destruction is, however, inevitable.

“Take the case of another man. He is endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha. But he is not joyous in wisdom and has not gained release. Yet by destroying three fetters he is a Stream-Winner, not subject to rebirth in states of woe, assured of enlightenment. That man is entirely freed... from states of woe.

“Take the case of another man. He is not even endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha. He is not joyous and swift in wisdom and has not gained release. But perhaps he has these things: the faculty of faith, of energy, of mindfulness, of concentration, of wisdom. And the things proclaimed by the Tathāgata are moderately approved by him with insight. That man does not go to the realm of hungry ghosts, to the downfall, to the evil way, to states of woe.

“Take the case of another man. He is not even endowed with unwavering devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha. He is not joyous and swift in wisdom and has not gained release. But he has just these things: the faculty of faith, of energy, of mindfulness, of concentration, of wisdom. Yet if he has merely faith, merely affection for the Tathāgata, that man, too, does not go to... states of woe.<sup>310</sup>

“Why, Mahānāma, if these great sal trees could distinguish what is well spoken from what is ill spoken, I would proclaim these great sal trees to be Stream-Winners... bound for enlightenment, how much more so than Sarakāni the Sakyan! Mahānāma, Sarakāni the Sakyan fulfilled the training at the time of death.’<sup>311</sup>

SN 55:24

## 66. Wordy Warfare

“Monks, do not wage wordy warfare, saying: ‘You don’t understand this Dhamma and discipline, I understand this Dhamma and discipline’; ‘How could you understand it? You have fallen into wrong practices: I have the right practice’; ‘You have said afterwards what you should have said first, and you have said first what you should have said afterwards’;<sup>312</sup> ‘What I say is consistent, what you say isn’t’; ‘What you have thought out for so long is entirely reversed’; ‘Your statement is refuted’; ‘You are talking rubbish!’; ‘You are in the wrong’; ‘Get out of that if you can!’

“Why should you not do this? Such talk, monks, is not related to the goal, it is not fundamental to the holy life, does not conduce to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, tranquillity, higher knowledge, enlightenment or to Nibbāna. When you have discussions, monks, you should discuss Suffering, the Arising of Suffering, its Cessation, and the path that leads to its Cessation. Why is that? Because such talk is related to the goal... it conduces to disenchantment... to Nibbāna. This is the task you must accomplish.”

SN 56:9

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<sup>310</sup> An encouraging message for many! Cf. the end of MN 22, and also the charming image of the newborn calf in MN 34. The Commentary (MA) to MN 22 says such people are termed ‘lesser stream-winners’ (*cūlasotāpanna*). This term is discussed in VM XIX, 27. The stress laid here on the importance of faith is interesting in view of later developments such as the Pure Land Schools (e.g., Jodo-Shishu or ‘Shin-Buddhism’ in Japan).

<sup>311</sup> Sarakāni in fact became a Stream-winner at the moment of death.

<sup>312</sup> ‘You are putting the cart before the horse!’

## 67. Knowledge

Those who know not suffering,  
Nor how suffering comes to be,  
Nor yet how all such suffering  
To a final end is brought,  
They do not know the Path  
Leading to its calming down,  
Cannot find the heart's release  
Cannot be by wisdom freed,  
With no chance to make an end,  
To birth and ageing they're condemned.  
Those who do know suffering,  
And how suffering comes to be,  
Know too how all such suffering  
To a final end is brought,  
They who know the Path indeed  
Leading to its calming down,  
They can find the heart's release,  
They can be by wisdom freed.  
They know how to make an end,  
To birth and ageing no more bound.

SN 56:22

## 68. The Siṃsapā Leaves <sup>313</sup>

At one time the Blessed One was staying at Kosambi in Siṃsapā Grove. Then the Blessed One, taking a few Siṃsapā leaves in his hand, said to the monks: "What do you think, monks? Which are the more numerous, the few leaves I have here in my hand, or those up in the trees of the grove?"

"Lord, the Blessed One is holding only a few leaves: those up in the trees are far more numerous."

"In the same way, monks, there are many more things that I have found out, but not revealed to you.<sup>314</sup> What I have revealed to you is only a little. And why, monks, have I not revealed it?"

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<sup>313</sup> The siṃsapā, a tall and beautiful tree, is *Dalbergia sisu*, also known as the Asoka tree.

<sup>314</sup> This famous saying has been taken to justify the doctrines of various Mahāyāna schools, Theosophy and so on. While it may do so in many cases, the real meaning is somewhat different. The Buddha was naturally aware of many things, unknown to others, which he did not deem it necessary to teach for the gaining of enlightenment. We can accept, even without interpreting full enlightenment vulgarly as 'omniscience,' that the Buddha was at least potentially aware of whatever he wished or needed to know. He knew precisely which religious and philosophical doctrines that were or might be propounded were (a) true and (b) conducive to enlightenment. He borrowed nothing, as such, from previous systems because he did not need to, but he gave his approval to whatever conformed to these criteria.

'The dewdrop slips into the shining sea.'

It has occasionally been urged that if the Buddha was really all-enlightened, he must have been able to foresee modern scientific discoveries. In fact, he probably could have done so, but that was not his task, and he will certainly have been more aware than such critics of the dangers inherent in modern discoveries, with their power not only to destroy but also to corrupt. As a matter of fact he did not even



“Because, monks, it is not related to the goal, it is not fundamental to the holy life, does not conduce to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, tranquillity, higher knowledge, enlightenment or Nibbāna. That is why I have not revealed it. And what, monks, have I revealed?”

“What I have revealed is: ‘This is Suffering, this is the Arising of Suffering, this is the Cessation of Suffering, and this is the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering.’ And why, monks, have I revealed it?”

“Because this is related to the goal, fundamental to the holy life, conduces to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, tranquillity, higher knowledge, enlightenment and Nibbāna, therefore I have revealed it.

“Therefore, monks, your task is to learn: ‘This is Suffering, this is the Arising of Suffering, this is the Cessation of Suffering, this is the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering.’ That is your task.”

SN 56:31

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utilise a very basic technical device which was known in his time—the art of writing. He clearly preferred that his teachings should be preserved orally by those attempting to practise them and indeed the oral tradition has continued to this day. (Cf. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London 1903, pp. 107ff.). There is, however, one ‘modern science’ which the Buddha not only anticipated but far surpassed: psychology. The superiority of Buddhist psychological insights to the findings of the West can be readily verified (some examples can be found in this Anthology). Cf. Nyanaponika Thera *Abhidhamma Studies* (BPS 1965), and Douglas M. Burns, *Buddhist Meditation and Depth Psychology* (WH 88–89).

We may compare the saying quoted here with another, no less famous one occurring at SN 47.9 (not included in this Anthology) as well as in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, *Dial.* 16, II, 25 (= D ii, 100):

*Desito Ānanda mayā dhammo anantaraṃ abāhiraṃ katvā, natth’ Ānanda Tathāgatassa dhammesu ācariyamuttīhi*

‘I have taught Dhamma, Ānanda, making no ‘inner’ and ‘outer’: the Tathāgata has no ‘teacher’s fist’ in respect of the doctrines.’

There is, of course, no contradiction between the two statements, which in fact point once again to the middle way between the extremes. Both equally imply that, whatever else the Buddha may have been aware of about the world, he taught just what was needed for the gaining of enlightenment, holding back nothing, but refraining from imparting irrelevant information. As the life of the monks was pared down to essentials, so was the teaching.

It is fair to suggest that here, in the Pali Canon, we have the Buddhist teaching presented in its purest and simplest form, in the words of the Teacher himself. This statement is not meant to be in any way polemical, or to claim that doctrines developed in the later, so-called Mahāyāna schools are necessarily wrong. Recent research, indeed, has conclusively shown that the germ of many such doctrines can be traced back to the Pali Canon. For instance, there is little real conflict between the ideas expressed by Nāgārjuna, founder of the Madhyamika school, and the Theravāda (a school with which he was almost certainly entirely unacquainted). Likewise, while the proposition recently put forward that Zen is the ‘Theravāda of Japan’ can scarcely be literally maintained, the idea nevertheless contains a strong element of truth, since Zen visibly represents an effort to rid later Buddhism of some of the accretions that had tended to obscure the original message. Zen, too, inclines more to something like the Arahant ideal of Theravāda than to that of the Bodhisattva. On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that the Bodhisattva career is one that is open to followers of the Theravāda school (cf. [n. 51](#) and the work of Bhikkhu Bodhi there mentioned; also the Ven. W. Rāhula’s *Zen and the Taming of the Bull* (Bedford 1978). And, as indicated in [n. 310](#), even the apparently extremist Pure Land schools with their emphasis on faith receive rather more support from the Pali Canon than is sometimes thought. In this context K. Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, transl. K. Yamamoto (Oyama 1969) is of interest.

Finally, in connection with the relation of ‘Buddhism and Science,’ the wise words of an American astronaut, Ed Mitchell, in a TV programme may be quoted. He said: “Science is a methodology. As a belief system, it is disastrous.” Buddhism, it may be urged, is a spiritual methodology analogous to that of physical science, which makes the acceptance of *any* pure ‘belief system’ superfluous.

## Abbreviations

AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya
DN	Dīgha Nikāya
Dhp	Dhammapada
MN	Majjhima Nikāya
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya

(For all of the above, see Russell Webb, *An Analysis of the Pali Canon* (WH 217/220, 1975))

VM	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa
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## Commentaries

Dhp A	Commentary ( <i>Aṭṭhakathā</i> ) on Dhp
MA	Commentary ( <i>Aṭṭhakathā</i> ) on MN
SA	Commentary ( <i>Aṭṭhakathā</i> ) on SN (= Sāratthapakāsinī)

(For these see Lakshmi R. Goonesekere, *Buddhist Commentarial Literature* (WH 113/114, 1967))

## Translations

Dial	<i>Dialogues of the Buddha</i> (3 vols.) (=DN) (SBB)
KS	<i>Kindred Sayings</i> (5 vols.) I-II by Mrs C. A. F. Rhys Davids, III-V by F. L. Woodward (=SN) (PTS)
PP	<i>The Path of Purification</i> (=VM) by Ven. Ñāṇamoli (Colombo 1956)

## Miscellaneous

BD	<i>Buddhist Dictionary</i> by Ven. Nyanatiloka (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. by Ven. Nyanaponika, Colombo 1972)
BPE	<i>Buddhist Psychological Ethics</i> (= Dhammasaṅgaṇī [Book 1 of Abhidhamma Piṭaka] transl. by Mrs Rhys Davids, PTS 1900, 1974)
BPS	Buddhist Publication Society (Kandy)
EB	<i>Encyclopaedia of Buddhism</i> Colombo 1961 (in progress)
PED	<i>Pali English Dictionary</i> (PTS)
PTS	Pali Text Society
SBB	Sacred Books of the Buddhists (series continued by PTS)
WH	Wheel Publications (BPS)

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