

Linked Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato

LINKED DISCOURSES

A plain translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya



translated and introduced by

BHIKKHU SUJATO

VOLUME 2

SN 12–21

THE GROUP OF LINKED DISCOURSES
BEGINNING WITH CAUSATION

NIDĀNAVAGGASAMĪYUTTA

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The Group of Linked Discourses Beginning With Causation

LINKED DISCOURSES ON CAUSATION

The Chapter on the Buddhas

SN 12.1

Dependent Origination

Paṭiccasamuppādasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.¹ At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattṭhi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I will teach you dependent origination.² Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 1.7

1. Dependent origination depicts the unfolding of existence through a series of twelve links, which describe how our response to present experience generates future suffering. For an overview, see my Introduction to the Linked Discourses. To better understand the context for this terminology, I give some non-Buddhist usages, especially from texts closest in time and place to the Buddha. In the next discourse we see how the Buddha redefined these terms to his purpose. I also note new coinages which may be innovations by the Buddha.

2. As an account of the origination of things, dependent origination compares to creation myths composed centuries before the Buddha, found in the tenth and final section of the Rig Veda. Perhaps there was an ocean of darkness, from which being was forged by fire and set in motion by desire (Rig Veda 10.129); or else the world was shaped from the sacrifice of the cosmic Man (10.90); or else the beginning was a Golden Egg, a Creator later called Pajāpati, but at first known only as "Who?" (10.121). From the unknowable One arose innumerable names and forms, all linked by their shared origin and woven together in the ritual (10.130). The connections (*nidāna*) are cloaked in mystery, known only by poets (10.114.2), who protect the truth by hiding the highest

1.9 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 “And what is dependent origination?³ Ignorance is a requirement for choices.⁴ Choices are a requirement for consciousness.⁵ Consciousness is a requirement for name and form.⁶ Name and form are

names (10.5). | Note that the key term for Vedic creation (*srj*) is assiduously avoided in Buddhism.

3. “Dependent” is *paṭicca*, from the root *i* (“to go”) and prefix *paṭi* (“re-”) having the sense, “go back to, return to, resort to, depend on, require”. It is the gerund form of the verb *pacceṭi*, the noun form of which is *paccaya* (“dependency, requirement”). It is characteristically used of those who “return to” or “resort to” the father Pajāpati to dispel the darkness (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.5.3, 7) or seek wisdom (2.2.4.16, cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.2.4). | “Origination” is *samuppāda*. This is not a regular pre-Buddhist term, but we are told that “all beings originate from space” and into space they return (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.9.1). More commonly we find the related term *abhisampad* in the sense “becomes, attains to, acquires” a body (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.8), godhood (BU 4.3.33, CU 8.15.1), or more generally the results of one’s deeds (BU 4.4.5).

4. “Knowledge” (*veda*) pertained to the immortal gods, so knowledge itself is immortal, while ignorance (*avijjā*), being perishable, traps the fool in suffering for life after life. Knowledge and ignorance are part of the mortal condition (Atharva Veda 11.8.23). “A man crosses death through ignorance and attains immortality through knowledge” (Īśa Upaniṣad 11; cf. Paṅgala Upaniṣad 2.11, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 5.1, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.9).

5. Early meanings of *saṅkhāra* (Sanskrit *samas kurva*, *saṃskāra*) include “construct” (Rig Veda 1.38.12) and “prepare”, where “prepare” also means “energize, empower”, as an army for battle (RV 8.33.9, 8.77.11) or an offering (RV 5.76.2). It is used for the “reviving” or “rejuvenation” of the god Pajāpati when he is depleted by the act of creation, like a fire run low or a man after sex (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 7.2.1.5 *et passim*). The sacrificer thereby perpetuates the creative process, building a new self or body (10.4.1.2). The ritual is “performed” by body, speech, and mind in full awareness (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.16.2–3), “rejuvenating” or “energizing” the Self (Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 2.6). Thus the creative act became determined by moral “choices”: a person becomes something good by good deeds, bad by bad deeds (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5). This sense is echoed in the later use of *saṃskāra* as “rite of passage”, where the ceremony prepares or empowers a person to transform from one stage of life to the next.

6. “Consciousness” (*viññāṇa*, Sanskrit *vijñāna*) means to “know clearly, understand”, and hence the sense of awareness that is conscious of whatever happens. The “self” is the Person made of consciousness (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.16). One who is dying abandons the body and senses, becoming one with consciousness, embraced by previous knowledge and actions (Bṛhadāraṇyaka

requirements for the six sense fields.⁷ The six sense fields are requirements for contact.⁸ Contact is a requirement for feeling.⁹ Feeling is a requirement for craving.¹⁰ Craving is a requirement for grasping.¹¹ Grasping is a requirement for continued existence.¹² Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.¹³ Rebirth is a requirement for

Upaniṣad 4.4.2). They reach out to a new life and become established there, like a caterpillar moving from one leaf to the next.

7. “Name” (*nāma*) and “form” (*rūpa*) are the means by which we identify a person of such and such name and appearance (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.7). The world manifests as name, form, and action (1.6.1). A virtuous man abandons his old form (for “old age alters our form like a cloud”, Rig Veda 1.72.10) and fashions a better one as a god, etc. (BU 4.4.4). As the rivers lose their individual names and forms when they enter the ocean, the liberated soul returns to the cosmic Man (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.8, Praśna Upaniṣad 6.5). “Name” (*nāma*) is also defined as the various branches of Vedic lore (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.1.4).

8. A “field” (*āyatana*) is an “abode” or “proper place” in which one is at rest and safe. Before the Buddha, senses were treated unsystematically—the order and number varies, and they are mixed with other things. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.5.20, for example, says when a man sleeps, he no longer thinks, tastes, smells, sees, or hears. Or take Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.1, which speaks of inadequate (“one-footed”) manifestations of Divinity: speech, breath, eye, ear, mind (*mano*), heart.

9. “Contact” (*phassa*, Sanskrit *sparsa*) is touch felt by the skin (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.11, 3.2.9). It is poetically extended to touching “heaven” (Rig Veda 2.41.20), “the heart” (4.1.1), or “the truth” (4.50.3), as well as the healing touch of hands (10.137.7). Jains likewise treat contact as physical touch (Tattvārtha Sūtra 5.23), suggesting that its use as a general term for sense contact was a Buddhist innovation.

10. “Feeling” (*vedanā*) does not seem to be used in the sense of hedonic experience pre-Buddhist, but we do find it in Jainism (Tattvārtha Sūtra 3.3, 9.32). Manu 12.13 says that the “soul” (*jīva*) experiences pleasure and pain through the different rebirths.

11. “Craving” (*taṇhā*, Sanskrit *trṣṇā*) seems to be always used in the literal sense of “thirst”.

12. “Grasping” (*upādāna*) is found widely in later texts in the sense “take for oneself, appropriate”, and hence to “derive”, as well as “material cause”. But it does not seem to be pre-Buddhist.

13. The idea of three “worlds” (*loka*) or “states of existence” (*bhava*), variously defined, is shared between Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. It originally referred to the earth (*bhū*, *prthivi*), the midspace (*antarikṣa*), and the heavens or sky (*diva*, *svarga*), the respective abodes of humanity, the ancestors, and the

old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be.¹⁴ That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. This is called dependent origination.

- 3.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, choices cease.¹⁵ When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

- 3.13 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

gods. In the mythology underlying the Vedas they were formed by Indra’s heroic deeds: empowered by soma, he first slew the dragon Vṛtra who bound the world in a mass of darkness, then he separated earth from sky, leaving the midspace between (Rig Veda 2.15), thus creating the visible or intelligible world. However, while both Jains and Hindus know *bhava* in the sense “course of transmigration”, “ongoing series of births”, I cannot trace this before Buddhism.

14. What happens after death is described in multiple ways, but it was generally understood that a person would be reborn through some process or other and that this would continue until one’s knowledge was perfected. For example, Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.19 says the unenlightened go “from death to death”.

15. For the general process of dependent origination, compare Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5–7, which says that as a man desires so he wills, as he wills so he acts, and what he acts he attains. He who is attached goes with his deeds to the place he clings. When that deed is exhausted he returns to this world and further deeds. But if he is without desire, desiring only the Self, he attains immortal Divinity.

SN 12.2

Analysis

Vibhaṅgasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach and analyze for you dependent origination.¹⁶ Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

1.2

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

1.4

“And what is dependent origination? Ignorance is a requirement for choices.¹⁷ Choices are a requirement for consciousness. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are require-

2.1

16. An “analysis” (*vibhaṅga*) is a discourse that defines the terms of a particular teaching. It acts as a key for unlocking the meaning of that teaching wherever it appears. Special attention should be paid to the meanings of these terms, and they should be borne in mind whenever considering the topic. This allows us to both fix the intended meanings and exclude a range of false interpretations. | We find “analysis” discourses for the truths (MN 141), elements (MN 140), the six senses (MN 137), kamma (MN 135, MN 136), the path (SN 45.8), mindfulness (SN 47.40), the faculties (SN 48.9), and the bases of psychic power (SN 51.20). The category is not always clear-cut. For example, the “analysis” of mindfulness does not really define the terms, and the Satipaṭṭhānasutta acts more as a classic analysis despite not being called that. The aggregates lack an analysis, but see SN 22.56. The idea of the “analysis” led to the creation of the Abhidhamma book of that name (Vb 1), which draws on the analysis discourses and elaborates them further.

17. A note on syntax. The links proceed as a list of nouns, which can be literally rendered as, “Due to the ignorance dependency, choices; due to the choices dependency, consciousness ...”. The causal sense is expressed by the ablative case. There is no verb until the very end of the list, where old age and death, etc. “come to be” (*sambhavanti*). The commentary says the verb applies transitively to all the factors. However, the cessation sequence likewise ends with a verb, but it could hardly be said that “the cessation of choices ceases”. The better explanation is that each phrase relies on the verb “to be”, which is normally implicit, but is supplied in the abstract principle of dependent origination (SN 12.37:2.2). Thus we might translate, “With ignorance as dependency, there are choices ...”. In some constructions, the verb *uppajjati* (“arises”) is supplied (SN 35.24:1.4). In my translation, I opt for a more idiomatic rendering.

ments for contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

3.1 And what is old age and death?¹⁸ The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings.¹⁹ This is called old age. The passing away, passing on, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings.²⁰ This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death.

4.1 And what is rebirth? The rebirth, inception, conception, regeneration, manifestation of the aggregates, and acquisition of the sense fields of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings.²¹ This is called rebirth.

18. Now the Buddha defines each term, starting from the end and working backwards. Complementary definitions are offered in DN 15.

19. “Old age” (*jarā*, related to English “geriatric”) is the physical decay in the late stages of life. It is not “aging” in the sense “growing old” as it does not refer to, for example, the maturing of children into adults. It also excludes purely psychological and metaphorical readings. Finally, it applies not just to the human realm, but in one way or another to all realms.

20. Death (*maraṇa*, cf. “mortality”) is the end of life. The series of synonyms here serves to clarify that it refers to literal death, not metaphorical or psychological death.

21. “Rebirth” (*jāti*, cf. “genesis”) refers to ongoing transmigration into new lives. It doesn’t refer to “childbirth”, namely parturition or emergence from the womb, which is *vijāti* (SN 3.16:1.4, SN 24.1:1.4, SN 37.3:1.9). Nor does it have a religious sense, as in a “spiritual renewal”, nor a psychological one as the arising of a sense of self.

And what is continued existence?²² There are these three states 5.1
of existence. Existence in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous
form, and the formless realm.²³ This is called continued existence.

And what is grasping? There are these four kinds of grasping.²⁴ 6.1
Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and
theories of a self.²⁵ This is called grasping.

22. “Continued existence” (*bhava*, cf. “being”) is the “life” or “plane of existence” in which one is born as an ongoing series of manifestations of the aggregates. It includes both the active aspects of life (defilements and deeds) as well as the resultant body and mind. Consider it by analogy with, say, visiting a park. First there is the spark of an idea, a vague impression of a “park” in the mind, which solidifies into an intention. Acting on it, one goes to the park, where it becomes one’s reality, the “world” one inhabits. Likewise, by creating ideas and volitions in the mind, one is aligning or tuning into the corresponding realm of existence, priming the mind to project itself into that state and make it a reality when one is reborn there. The deeds that determine rebirth in a state of existence shape the baseline experience in that state. Since the deed is of necessity limited in power, the resultant state must be impermanent.

23. The “sensual realm” encompasses all realms, including the human, from the lowest hell to the highest of the sensual heavens, the gods who control what is imagined by others. | “Luminous form” (*rūpa*) refers to the Brahmā realms attained through the luminous mind of *jhāna*. | The “formless” realms are attained through the formless meditations.

24. “Grasping” (*upādāna* “taking”, the inverse of *dāna* “gift”, cf. “donation”) refers to grabbing something, holding it close to oneself, and refusing to let go. It has a secondary meaning of “fuel” for the fire (SN 3.1:10.1, SN 12.52:1.2).

25. While “sensual pleasures” are a near-universal attachment, the other three forms of grasping require a mature cognition. Babies and cats do not develop a set of religious observances, nor do they theorize about the nature of their soul. This implies that grasping is developed as a child grows up, and explains why animals and infants are not karmically responsible for their deeds in the same way as adult humans. The primary bases of such theories are the five aggregates (MN 75:24.8, SN 22.80:9.10).

- 7.1 And what is craving? There are these six classes of craving.²⁶ Craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas.²⁷ This is called craving.
- 8.1 And what is feeling? There are these six classes of feeling. Feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.²⁸ This is called feeling.
- 9.1 And what is contact? There are these six classes of contact. Contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.²⁹ This is called contact.
- 10.1 And what are the six sense fields? The sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.³⁰ These are called the six sense fields.
- 11.1 And what are name and form? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, and application of mind.³¹ This is called name. The four principal states, and form derived from the four principal states.³²

26. From here, the definitions are couched in terms of the six senses. Remember that this is the reverse order; if taken in the forward order, these factors flow on from the six sense spheres.

27. Craving (*taṇhā*, cf. “thirst”) is primal desire to experience pleasure and avoid pain. It moves out through the senses. The standard definition says it is “the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure wherever it lands” (SN 56.11:4.4).

28. “Feeling” (*vedanā*, cf. “wit”, “wisdom”, “visual”) is the affective or hedonic tone of experience. Each sense can trigger a response of pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

29. “Contact” (*phassa*) is the conjunction of the external sense stimulus (“sight”) with the inner sense organ (“eye”) in awareness (“eye consciousness”).

30. The “mind” (*mano*) is incorporated along with the physical senses, to show that, even though it is very different in many ways, it still shares a fundamental structure requiring stimulus and the presence of awareness.

31. The Buddha treats “name” (*nāma*) analytically, distancing it from the root sense. This can be seen as a reductive definition: that which you refer to under your “name” turns out to rely on a whole series of conditioned mental processes. These factors are active constituents of the mind that contribute to linguistic conceptualizing. The Buddhist tradition regards them as being universal concomitants of consciousness, essential to the functioning of all kinds of awareness.

32. The “principal states” (*mahābhūta*) are earth, water, fire, and air, corresponding to the modern concepts of solid, liquid, plasma, and gas. | “Derived” (*upādaya*) form is not explained in the suttas, but one passage indicates it includes

This is called form.³³ Such is name and such is form. These are called name and form.

And what is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness.³⁴ This is called consciousness.

And what are choices? There are three kinds of choices. Choices by way of body, speech, and mind.³⁵ These are called choices.

And what is ignorance? Not knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.³⁶ This is called ignorance.

And so, ignorance is a requirement for choices. 15.1

“space” (MN 28:26.1). The Abhidhamma traditions explain it as including the objects of the senses, the subtle matter that receives sense impressions, and various other material phenomena.

33. “Form” (*rūpa*) or “body”, “appearance” is possibly related to Avestan *urvan* “soul” via the sense “ghost, vision, apparition”. Here it refers primarily to the body, as well as the physical properties experienced through the five senses. It also includes the purely mental perception of physical properties, such as color or shape or position as imagined in the mind. In the analysis of the six senses, it has the narrower meaning of that which is seen, i.e. “sight”.

34. Consciousness” (*viññāṇa*, cf. “know”) is presented analytically, showing that “mind consciousness” is not an eternal metaphysical entity but a conditioned psychological process. Consciousness is simple subjective awareness, the sense of knowing. It arises stimulated by either an external sense impression or a mental phenomena such as thought, memory, etc. It is the subjective awareness that makes the entire multiform world of concepts and appearances possible.

35. *Saṅkhāra* is used in several ways in early Buddhism. Perhaps the most general sense is “potencies”, as in energies or phenomena potent to create more energies or phenomena. In dependent origination and the five aggregates (SN 22.56:10.1) it means morally potent deeds performed by way of body, speech, and mind, so I translate as “choices”. This is not to be confused with the meditative stilling of active physical, verbal, and mental “processes” (SN 41.6:1.7). As a word for a cause or reason I translate as “condition” (SN 48.40:5.3), and use the same word for the conditioned phenomena produced by causes (SN 22.81:5.5, AN 6.93:1.3, MN 102:4.5). Sometimes, such as in the bases for psychic power, it means “effort” (SN 51.1:1.3).

36. Since all good qualities are included in these four noble truths (MN 28:2.1), the most important quality in the Buddhist path is wisdom which overcomes ignorance (SN 48.54:1.1).

- 15.2 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease.³⁷ When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”³⁸

SN 12.3

Practice

Paṭipadāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the wrong practice and the right practice.³⁹ Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 1.4 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “And what’s the wrong practice? Ignorance is a requirement for choices.
- 2.3 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. This is called the wrong practice.
- 3.1 And what’s the right practice? When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices

37. The cessation sequence, like the origination, proceeds as a list of nouns with a verb only at the end. The syntax is not entirely parallel, however, as the grammar of the compounds is different. *Avijjāpaccaya* is a *kammadhāraya*, “ignorance **as** dependency” (Commentary: *avijjā ca sā paccayo ca*), whereas the *nirodha* compounds are *tappurisa*, “with the cessation **of** ignorance ...”. This distinction mirrors the ontological asymmetry of the two halves: ignorance is *present* as a condition for choices, but it is its *absence* that triggers the cessation of choices. Ignorance is a dependency, but it is not a cessation.

38. Each of the terms in the cessation sequence can be considered a synonym for Nibbāna.

39. This discourse, located so prominently in the Saṃyutta, heads off the misconception that dependent origination is purely a theoretical or philosophical doctrine. Obviously it has a philosophical dimension, but it is aligned with the path of practice which also proceeds via cessation. The next Sutta shows how the sequence unfolded as a contemplative reflection. See too SN 45.1, where ignorance lies at the head of the noble eightfold path.

cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is called the right practice.”

SN 12.4

About Vipassī

Vipassīsutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, Vipassī the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully 1.2
awakened Buddha had this thought before his awakening, when he
was still unawakened but intent on awakening:⁴⁰ ‘Alas, this world
has fallen into trouble. It’s born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is
reborn, yet it doesn’t understand how to escape from this suffering,
from old age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this
suffering, from old age and death?’

Then Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, thought: ‘When what 2.1
exists is there old age and death? What is a requirement for old age
and death?’⁴¹ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī

40. In early texts, Vipassī is invariably mentioned along with the full group of seven Buddhas (Thag 7.5, DN 32:3.2, Bu Pj 1:3.1.6). Their details are given in the Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14). There, the story of Vipassī is recounted in full; the key doctrinal passages are shared with the current discourse (DN 14:2.18.5). | *Bodhisatta* is explained by the commentary here as either “one possessed of awakening”, or one who is certain of awakening in the proximity of Buddhahood. The latter explanation allows a reading equivalent to Sanskrit *bodhiśakta* (“one intent on awakening”), rather than the more familiar *bodhisattva* (“awakening-being”).

41. This phrasing corresponds to the abstract principle of dependent origination (SN 12.37:2.2). Compare Śaunaka’s question at Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.3: “When what is understood, sir, is all this understood?” (*kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvaṃ idaṃ vijñātaṃ bhavati*).

penetrated with wisdom:⁴² ‘When rebirth exists there’s old age and death. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.’

3.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there rebirth? What is a requirement for rebirth?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When continued existence exists there’s rebirth. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.’

4.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there continued existence? What is a requirement for continued existence?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When grasping exists there’s continued existence. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence.’

5.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there grasping? What is a requirement for grasping?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When craving exists there’s grasping. Craving is a requirement for grasping.’

6.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there craving? What is a requirement for craving?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When feeling exists there’s craving. Feeling is a requirement for craving.’

7.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there feeling? What is a requirement for feeling?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When contact exists there’s feeling. Contact is a requirement for feeling.’

8.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there contact? What is a requirement for contact?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When the six sense fields exist there’s contact. The six sense fields are requirements for contact.’

9.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists are there the six sense fields? What is a requirement for the six sense fields?’ Then,

42. *Yoniso maniskāra* (“rational application of mind”) is a distinctively Buddhist term that literally means “applying the mind by way of source”. It is mostly used in investigating causality, although over time it came to have a more general sense of “reflection, inquiry, attention”.

through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When name and form exist there are the six sense fields. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists are there name and form? What is a requirement for name and form?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When consciousness exists there are name and form. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form.’ 10.1

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there consciousness? What is a requirement for consciousness?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When choices exist there’s consciousness. Choices are a requirement for consciousness.’⁴³ 11.1

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists are there choices? What is a requirement for choices?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When ignorance exists there are choices. Ignorance is a requirement for choices.’ 12.1

And so, ignorance is a requirement for choices. 13.1

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. ‘Origination, origination.’ While Vipassī was intent on awakening, such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in him regarding teachings not learned before from another. 13.2

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there’s no old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.’ 14.1

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth? When what ceases does rebirth cease?’ Then, through rational 15.1

43. Here we have the normal twelve links, whereas in DN 14 the sequence omits ignorance and choices, emphasizing rather the mutual interdependence of consciousness with name and form, a variation found also in the context of Gotama’s awakening at SN 12.65.

application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When continued existence doesn’t exist there’s no rebirth. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases.’

16.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no continued existence? When what ceases does continued existence cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When grasping doesn’t exist there’s no continued existence. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases.’

17.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no grasping? When what ceases does grasping cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When craving doesn’t exist there’s no grasping. When craving ceases, grasping ceases.’

18.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no craving? When what ceases does craving cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When feeling doesn’t exist there’s no craving. When feeling ceases, craving ceases.’

19.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no feeling? When what ceases does feeling cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When contact doesn’t exist there’s no feeling. When contact ceases, feeling ceases.’

20.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no contact? When what ceases does contact cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When the six sense fields don’t exist there’s no contact. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases.’

21.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist are there no six sense fields? When what ceases do the six sense fields cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When name and form don’t exist there are no six sense fields. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease.’

22.1 Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist are there no name and form? When what ceases do name and form cease?’ Then,

through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When consciousness doesn’t exist there are no name and form. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no consciousness? When what ceases does consciousness cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When choices don’t exist there’s no consciousness. When choices cease, consciousness ceases.’ 23.1

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist are there no choices? When what ceases do choices cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, Vipassī penetrated with wisdom: ‘When ignorance doesn’t exist there are no choices. When ignorance ceases, choices cease.’ 24.1

And so, when ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. ‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, regarding teachings not learned before from another.”⁴⁴ 25.1

*(Tell in full for each of the seven Buddhas.)*⁴⁵

SN 12.5

Sikhī

Sikhīsutta

“Sikhī, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha ...” 1.1

44. This phrasing recalls the Buddha’s first sermon (SN 56.11:5.1), an insight that is said to be common to all Buddhas (SN 56.12:1.1). | *Pubbe ananussutesu* (“not learned before from another”) means that this is a fresh insight not passed down in an oral tradition.

45. This instruction is noted in the Pali text.

SN 12.6

Vessabhū

Vessabhūsutta

- 1.1 “Vessabhū, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha ...”

SN 12.7

Kakusandha

Kakusandhasutta

- 1.1 “Kakusandha, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha ...”

SN 12.8

Koṇāgamana

Koṇāgamanasutta

- 1.1 “Koṇāgamana, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha ...”

SN 12.9

Kassapa

Kassapasutta

- 1.1 “Kassapa, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha ...”

Gotama

Gotamasutta

“Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened 1.1
but intent on awakening—I thought:⁴⁶ ‘Alas, this world has fallen
into trouble. It’s born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn,
yet it doesn’t understand how to escape from this suffering, from old
age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this suffering,
from old age and death?’

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what exists is there old age and 2.1
death? What is a requirement for old age and death?’ Then, through
rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: ‘When
rebirth exists there’s old age and death. Rebirth is a requirement for
old age and death.’

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what exists is there rebirth? ... 3.1
continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ...
the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... ‘When
what exists are there choices? What is a requirement for choices?’
Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wis-
dom: ‘When ignorance exists there are choices. Ignorance is a re-
quirement for choices.’

And so, ignorance is a requirement for choices. 4.1

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this 4.2
entire mass of suffering originates. ‘Origination, origination.’ Such
was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose
in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old 5.1
age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then,
through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom:

46. This is also told at SN 12.65. For the significance of the variations, see notes there.

‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there’s no old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.’

- 6.1 Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth? ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... ‘When what doesn’t exist are there no choices? When what ceases do choices cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: ‘When ignorance doesn’t exist there are no choices. When ignorance ceases, choices cease.’

- 7.1 And so, when ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. ‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.”

The Chapter on Fuel

SN 12.11

Fuel

Āhārasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. ...

"Mendicants, these four fuels maintain sentient beings that have 1.3
been born and help those about to be born.⁴⁷ What four? Edible
food, whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental intention
the third, and consciousness the fourth.⁴⁸ These are the four fuels

47. *Āhāra* ("fuel", "food", "nutriment") means literally "intake", and is etymologically parallel to *upādāna* ("grasping", "uptake"). Both terms have dual senses, on the one hand denoting fuel or sustenance, and on the other grasping and attachment. | "About to be born" is *sambhavesī*, which I follow Norman and Bodhi in reading as a future active participle, although the commentary takes it in the sense "seeking" to be born. Compare such Sanskrit constructions as Rig Veda 1.66.8, *yamo ha jāto yamo janitvaṃ* ("the twin that is born and the twin about to be born") and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.3.1.24, *bhūtaṃ caiva bhaviṣyacca jātaṃ ca janiṣyamāṇaṃ* ("has become and will be, born and to be born"). | The phrase is one of several in the suttas that appears to indicate an intermediate state between one life and the next, despite the fact that this view is formally rejected by the Theravada Abhidhamma (Kv 8.2).

48. Coarse edible food sustains the bodies of beings in the human and animal realms, while fine edible food sustains the gods and ancestors, a belief intertwined with the Vedic notion that the gods partake of the food offered in sacrifice (eg. Rig Veda 1.187). | "Contact" (*phassa*) is the interaction between the inner and outer worlds, allowing us to situate ourselves in a sensory world full

that maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born.

- 2.1 What is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of these four fuels? Craving.⁴⁹ And what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of craving? Feeling. And what is the source of feeling? Contact. And what is the source of contact? The six sense fields. And what is the source of the six sense fields? Name and form. And what is the source of name and form? Consciousness. And what is the source of consciousness? Choices. And what is the source of choices? Ignorance.
- 3.1 And so, mendicants, ignorance is a requirement for choices.
- 3.2 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.12

Phagguna of the Top-Knot

Moġiyaphaggunasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.⁵⁰
- 1.2 “Mendicants, these four fuels maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born. What four? Edible food,

of fears and joys, stimulating feeling and hence the craving for more. | “Volition” (*manosañcetanā*) allows us to act in the world revealed by the senses and secure further “fuel”. | “Consciousness” (*viññāṇa*) is aware of all this, experiencing suffering, and giving rise to a new “name and form” in a future life in a fruitless search to find a world free of pain. Thus the four “fuels” can be considered as a distinctive perspective on dependent origination.

49. *Āhāra* is created by craving, just like *upādāna* in the standard sequence (MN 9:11.5, MN 38:16.1).

50. In this discourse, “ignorance”, “choices”, and “name and form” are not mentioned directly, but they are, as I note below, implicit.

whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. These are the four fuels that maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those that are about to be born.”

When he said this, Venerable Phagguna of the Top-Knot said to the Buddha,⁵¹ “But sir, who consumes consciousness as fuel?”⁵² 2.1

“That’s not a cogent question,” said the Buddha.⁵³ 2.3

“I don’t speak of one who consumes. If I were to speak of one who consumes, then it would be cogent to ask who consumes. But I don’t speak like that. Hence it would be cogent to ask: ‘For what is consciousness the fuel?’ And a cogent answer to this would be: ‘Consciousness as fuel is a requirement for regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. When the being is present, there are the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for contact.’”⁵⁴ 2.4

“But sir, who contacts?” 3.1

“That’s not a cogent question,” said the Buddha. 3.2

“I don’t speak of one who contacts. If I were to speak of one who contacts, then it would be cogent to ask who contacts. But 3.3

51. This monk appears in three discourses, in none of which he distinguishes himself. At MN 21 he is reprimanded for being too friendly with nuns. And at SN 12.32 Venerable Sāriputta gets word that Phagguna had disrobed. According to the commentary, he was called Phagguna “of the Top-Knot” because of the style he wore his hair as a layperson. The name stuck, presumably to distinguish him from the Phagguna of AN 6.56 (and probably SN 35.83) who died in robes as a non-returner after hearing a Dhamma talk.

52. Evoking the mysterious Creator *ka* (“who?”) of Rig Veda 121, Phagguna assumes an agent who acts, which of course would be the Self. This leans on the feature of Pali and Sanskrit whereby the agent of a verb need not be stated but can be assumed. This lends itself to the notion that a hidden agent underlies the act of creation.

53. “Ignorance” is implicit in the questions.

54. Here “rebirth into a new state of existence in the future” occupies the link between consciousness and the six senses, where we normally find “choices” and “name and form”. The being who has been reborn is referred to as *bhūta*. For “name and form” as the individual growing from embryo to adulthood, see DN 15:21.2).

I don't speak like that. Hence it would be cogent to ask: 'What is a requirement for contact?' And a cogent answer to this would be: 'The six sense fields are requirements for contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling.'

4.1 "But sir, who feels?"

4.2 "That's not a cogent question," said the Buddha.

4.3 "I don't speak of one who feels. If I were to speak of one who feels, then it would be cogent to ask who feels. But I don't speak like that. Hence it would be cogent to ask: 'What is a requirement for feeling?' And a cogent answer to this would be: 'Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving.'"

5.1 "But sir, who craves?"

5.2 "That's not a cogent question," said the Buddha.

5.3 "I don't speak of one who craves. If I were to speak of one who craves, then it would be cogent to ask who craves. But I don't speak like that. Hence it would be cogent to ask: 'What is a requirement for craving?' And a cogent answer to this would be: 'Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping.'"

6.1 "But sir, who grasps?"

6.2 "That's not a cogent question," said the Buddha.

6.3 "I don't speak of one who grasps. If I were to speak of one who grasps, then it would be cogent to ask who grasps. But I don't speak like that. Hence it would be cogent to ask: 'What is a requirement for grasping?' And a cogent answer to this would be: 'Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence.' ...⁵⁵ That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

7.1 When the six fields of contact fade away and cease with no residue left behind, contact ceases.⁵⁶ When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When

55. The Pali text omits rebirth, etc. The commentary says Phaggunā stopped asking questions here, offering three quite different reasons why. A simpler explanation would be that the text is abbreviated.

56. Here, cessation starts with the six senses (as at SN 12.24:21.9).

continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.13

Ascetics and Brahmins

Samaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvatthī.⁵⁷

1.1

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation.⁵⁸ They don’t understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They don’t understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I don’t deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight in this very life.⁵⁹

1.2

57. Each item in dependent origination is treated according to the four noble truths.

58. The terms “ascetics and brahmins” is often used as a generic catch-all for ‘religious practitioners’ (SN 3.1:2.1). | “Ascetics” (*samaṇa*) include the renunciate practitioners of the non-Vedic religions such as the Buddhists, Jains, and Ājīvakas. Such religious movements typically rejected Vedic authority and caste system, and proposed their own philosophy and practice (DN 2:2.2). | “Brahmins” were a hereditary caste of Vedic priests charged with maintaining scripture and performing rituals. In the Vedas, brahmins served worldly prosperity and, more vaguely, heavenly rebirth. Perhaps under the influence of the ascetics, they later developed a renunciate movement of contemplatives who looked for a merger with Divinity beyond the cycle of rebirth.

59. Literally, “they are not deemed by me as ascetics among ascetics, or brahmins among brahmins”. The Buddha recognized these terms as spiritually valid, even if the individuals sometimes do not live up to them. This distinction is not uniquely Buddhist, for we find it among the Jains (eg. Uttarādhyayana Sūtra 17) and brahmins (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.10).

- 2.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.”

SN 12.14

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand these things, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. What things don’t they understand?
- 2.1 They don’t understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They don’t understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They don’t understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They don’t understand these things, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I don’t deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight in this very life.
- 3.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand these things, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. What things do they understand?

They understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, 4.1
 and the practice that leads to their cessation. They understand re-
 birth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ...
 contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness
 ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the
 practice that leads to their cessation. They understand these things,
 their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their ces-
 sation. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables
 realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having real-
 ized it with their own insight.”

SN 12.15

Kaccānagotta

*Kaccānagottasutta*At Sāvattthī.⁶⁰

1.1

Then Venerable Kaccānagotta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat 1.2
 down to one side, and said to him:⁶¹

“Sir, they speak of this thing called ‘right view’. How is right view 1.3
 defined?”⁶²

“Kaccāna, this world mostly relies on the duality of existence and 2.1
 non-existence.”⁶³

60. This discourse was quoted by Ānanda to Channa at SN 22.90:9.1. It was cited by name in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 15.7: “In the Advice to Kātyāyana, both ‘exists’ and ‘does not exist’ are denied by the Buddha, expert in being and non-being.” Nāgārjuna’s text, an important Buddhist philosophical treatise, is studied extensively to this day.

61. Called *Sandha Kātyāyana* in Sanskrit.

62. Right view is normally defined as understanding the four noble truths (DN 22:21.4, MN 141:24.1, SN 45.8:3.1).

63. The Buddha is referring to a widely held belief, which can be traced to the saying: “This is twofold, there is no third: truth and falsehood. The gods are truth, humans are falsehood.” (*Dvayaṃ vā idaṃ na tṛtīyamasti: satyaṃ caivāṇṛtaṃ ca. Satyameva devā anṛtaṃ manuṣyā; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1.1.1.4, 3.3.2.2, 3.9.4.1). The word for “truth” here is *satya* (Pali *sacca*), which like

- 2.2 But for one who truly sees the origin of the world with right understanding, the concept of non-existence regarding the world does not occur.⁶⁴ And for one who truly sees the cessation of the world with right understanding, the concept of existence regarding the world does not occur.⁶⁵
- 2.4 This world is for the most part shackled by getting involved, grasping, and insisting.⁶⁶
- 2.5 But if, when it comes to this getting involved & grasping, mental fixation, and insistence & underlying tendency, they are not attracted, do not grasp, and do not fixate on the thought, “my self”,⁶⁷ they’ll have no doubt or uncertainty that what arises is just suffering

atthitā (“existence”) is an abstract noun from the root *as* (“exist”). The word for “falsehood” is *anṛta*. Pali prefers the simple negative, but *satya* and *anṛta* are a standard pair in pre-Buddhist Sanskrit, harking back to Rig Veda 7.49.3. The gods are truly real because they are immortal, whereas transient humans are not truly real. Consider also the hymn of creation at Arthava Veda 10.2.14: “Who placed truth in him, who falsehood, who mortality, who immortality?” This confirms the interpretation of both Nāgārjuna and the Theravāda tradition that existence/non-existence refers to eternalism and annihilationism. See also the discussion of “duality” at SN 35.92:2.2.

64. To paraphrase, when a person sees that their current actions are generating future lives, it is no longer possible to think that this life is all there is. | The “origin of the world” is the origination sequence of dependent origination (SN 35.107; see too SN 2.26:5.2).

65. To paraphrase, when a person sees the cessation of the craving and kamma that generate future lives, they realize there is no such thing as an eternal soul.

66. The three factors here express a gradual process by which one is “shackled” (*vinibaddha*): attracted, one gets involved (*upaya*), then one takes up (*upādāna*), and finally one insists on keeping (*abhinivesa*). The latter term especially refers to dogmatic insistence on a view, alluding to the Brāhmaṇa text we cited earlier: “This is twofold, there is no third.” In the next sentence, the three factors are expanded with the addition of “mental fixation” (*cetaso adhiṭṭhāna*) and “underlying tendency” (*anusaya*). The latter implies that the defilement has become so ingrained that it is no longer conscious, but “underlies” choices conscious or not.

67. This sentence is grammatically tricky. For *tañcāyaṃ* read *taṃ ce ayaṃ* following the Sanskrit *etāni ced*. *Taṃ* refers to the several defilements listed (hence the Sanskrit is plural), while *ayaṃ* is “this (person)”, namely the practitioner. Read together with the similar passage at SN 22.85:28.1, taking both as “accusative of

arising, and what ceases is just suffering ceasing. Their knowledge of this is independent of others.⁶⁸

This is how right view is defined. 2.7

‘All exists’: this is one extreme.⁶⁹ 3.1

‘All does not exist’: this is the second extreme. 3.2

Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way.⁷⁰ 3.3

‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices. Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’” 3.7

SN 12.16

A Dhamma Speaker

Dhammakathikasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: 1.2

“Sir, they speak of a ‘Dhamma speaker’. How is a Dhamma speaker defined?” 1.3

“If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be 2.1

relation”. I think the sense is that, despite the fact that these defilements are still present, the wise do not fall under their sway.

68. The final sentence, as well as the absence of doubt, indicates that they have become a stream-enterer, at which stage they have confirmed right view.

69. Also at SN 12.47:2.2, and said to be the “oldest cosmology” at SN 12.48:2.2.

70. This “teaching by the middle way” (*majjhena dhammadesanā*) is the philosophical counterpart of the “middle way of practice” (*majjhimā paṭipadā*, SN 56.11:2.4).

called ‘a mendicant who speaks on Dhamma.’⁷¹ If they practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who practices in line with the teaching.’⁷² If they’re freed by not grasping, by disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who has attained extinguishment in this very life.’⁷³

- 3.1 If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment regarding rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... choices ... If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who speaks on Dhamma’. If they practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who practices in line with the teaching’. If they’re freed by not grasping, by disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who has attained extinguishment in this very life.’”

71. In *jarāmarāṇassa ce bhikkhu*, *bhikkhu* can be read as either vocative or nominative. At SN 12.67:9.1 we find *jarāmarāṇassa ce, āvuso, bhikkhu*, where *āvuso* is the vocative and *bhikkhu* is nominative. If *bhikkhu* was the vocative here, it would result in a repeated *bhikkhu bhikkhu*. I suspect one *bhikkhu* was dropped in error to avoid this, so translate as nominative.

72. This is the trainee (-sekha-).

73. The arahant.

SN 12.17

With Kassapa, the Naked Ascetic

Acelakassapasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.⁷⁴ At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 1.3
and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. The naked ascetic Kassapa saw
the Buddha coming off in the distance.⁷⁵ He went up to the Buddha,
and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood 1.6
to one side and said to the Buddha,

"I'd like to ask the worthy Gotama about a certain point, if you'd 1.7
take the time to answer."

"Kassapa, it's the wrong time for questions. We've entered an 1.8
inhabited area."

74. The things that are "made by oneself" and "made by another" are here said to be "suffering" (as at SN 12.24, SN 12.26). Since suffering comes with its opposite, sometimes it is said to be "pleasure and pain" (AN 6.95, SN 12.18, SN 12.25). Since pleasure and pain characterize the world, to that is sometimes added "the self and the cosmos" (DN 29:34.13, Ud 6.5, Ud 6.6). To emphasize universality, it can also be all factors of dependent origination (SN 12.67). While these discourses reject the notion since it assumes a metaphysical self, from a conventional point of view it may still be said that good deeds "done by oneself" are a friend in the hereafter (SN 1.53:2.5), or that a thief is punished for what they themselves have done (Mil 5.3.11:3.7), "like a spider caught in the web she wove" (Dhp 347). Later canonical texts, on the other hand, deny that merit is "made by oneself or given by gods" (Ja 524:28.2, Vv 84:22.2, Pv 37:22.2).

75. Naked ascetics are still found in India today. Digambara Jains went naked, but if he were a Jain he would have been introduced as such. Kassapa is an ancient clan name of the brahmins, and we meet four naked ascetics named Kassapa in the canon (here, DN 8, SN 41.9, and MN 124). They cannot be the same person, for at the end of each account it is said they went forth and attained arahantship.

- 2.1 A second time, and a third time, Kassapa spoke to the Buddha and the Buddha replied. When this was said, Kassapa said to the Buddha,
- 2.8 “I don’t want to ask much.”⁷⁶
- 2.9 “Ask what you wish, Kassapa.”⁷⁷
- 3.1 “Well, worthy Gotama, is suffering made by oneself?”⁷⁸
- 3.2 “Not so, Kassapa,” said the Buddha.
- 3.3 “Then is suffering made by another?”⁷⁹
- 3.4 “Not so, Kassapa,” said the Buddha.
- 3.5 “Well, is suffering made by both oneself and another?”⁸⁰
- 3.6 “Not so, Kassapa,” said the Buddha.

76. When someone says to me, “Just a small question,” it’s usually followed by, “So, what is consciousness really? And how does it relate to Nibbāna?”

77. The following set of questions appear several times as views held or debated among the non-Buddhists who believe in kamma. The popularity of such discussions shows kamma was a hot topic of the day, with many different ideas about what it was, how it worked, or if indeed it was real. And it also shows that dependent origination was the Buddha’s answer to the vexed question of kamma, personal identity, and responsibility.

78. This draws on the Vedic notion that the act of creation is a kind of self-emptying, as the creator deity forms the world by and of themselves. Thus the sacrificer offers to Prajāpati as the sun with the words, “You are self-made” (*svāmkrta*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 4.1.1.22, 4.1.2.21). In another context, Atharva Veda 8.5.9c refers to magic spells performed by oneself or prepared by another.

79. For Pali *paraṅkata* we find Sanskrit *anyakṛta*: “Let me not suffer for what was done by another, o king” (Rig Veda 2.28, cf. 6.51.7). Malicious dealings, violence, curses, and maleficent spirits were potent sources of suffering.

80. When suffering arises on a personal level, particular instances of suffering might be attributed solely to either oneself or the other. Sometimes it may be both, for example, when someone who acts in compliance with an evil regime is subsequently punished. But if we speak of suffering *in general*, then suffering that is *purely* one’s own fault might occur if all things are determined by one’s own past deeds. And suffering that is *purely* another’s fault might arise from the will of a malevolent deity. Suffering that is both might occur in a world where certain beings determine their own future and others do not.

- “Then does suffering arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another?”⁸¹ 3.7
- “Not so, Kassapa,” said the Buddha. 3.8
- “Well, is there no such thing as suffering?” 3.9
- “It’s not that there’s no such thing as suffering. Suffering is real.” 3.10
- “Then does the worthy Gotama not know or see suffering?”⁸² 3.12
- “It’s not that I don’t know or see suffering. I do know suffering, I do see suffering.” 3.13
- “Worthy Gotama, when asked these questions, you say ‘not so.’ Yet you say that there is such a thing as suffering. And you say that you do know suffering, and you do see suffering. Sir, let the Blessed One explain suffering to me!⁸³ Let the Blessed One teach me about suffering!” 4.1
- “Suppose that he who does the deed and he who experiences the result are one and the same. Then for one who has existed since the beginning, suffering is made by oneself. In speaking like this, one implies this is eternal.⁸⁴ Suppose that he who does the deed is one, and he who experiences the result is another. Then for one stricken 5.1

81. *Adhicca* is usually translated in this context as “chance”. The root meaning refers to something that has been “lifted out”, making it a “special exception” or “anomaly”. It isn’t used in Sanskrit for a philosophical theory of chance, for which we find instead *yadṛcchā* (“arbitrariness”, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.2). The theory proposed here is not that the universe in general operates by chance, but that the happenstance of creation is an “anomaly” in the general scheme of things. At SN 12.24:3.4 and SN 12.25:2.4 we learn that some philosophers who believed in the doctrine of kamma nonetheless argued that suffering arose anomalously.

82. The Pali is not explicitly phrased as a question, but SN 12.17:4.6 below confirms that that is the intent.

83. The change of address shows that he has acquired faith.

84. The person who performs the deed in this life is identical to the person who experiences the result in future lives. The syntax employs repeated demonstrative pronouns (*so ... so*) to assert emphatic identity, as in the phrases, “the self and the cosmos are one and the same” (SN 22.81:10.7) or “the soul and the body are one and the same” (SN 12.35:5.2). Hence this is identified as eternalism. | *Pareti* normally means “to depart”, literally “go to the other”, and its use here is apparently unique. I take it in the sense “convey the meaning”, “imply” (cf.

by feeling, suffering is made by another. In speaking like this, one implies this is annihilated.⁸⁵ Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way:⁸⁶ ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

- 5.5 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’”
- 6.1 When this was said, Kassapa said to the Buddha, “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what’s there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s presence?”
- 7.1 “Kassapa, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they’ll give the going

Sanskrit *pārayati*, “convey”). | See Bodhi’s discussion of *ādito sato* in *Connected Discourses*, notes 39 and 40.

85. A person does a deed in this life, and a completely different person experiences the result in a future life. Thus the one who did the deed has been annihilated.

86. The Buddha does not discuss the final two terms of the tetralemma. For the view that suffering is made by both oneself and another, compare the doctrines of “partial eternalism”, i.e. that some beings are eternal, others not (DN 1:2.1.1). For the view that suffering arose by chance, see the doctrines of origination by chance (DN 1:2.30.1).

forth, the ordination into monkhood.⁸⁷ However, I have recognized individual differences.”⁸⁸

“Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I’ll 8.1
spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if
the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the
ordination into monkhood.”

And the naked ascetic Kassapa received the going forth, the or- 9.1
dination in the Buddha’s presence. Not long after his ordination,
Venerable Kassapa, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and res-
olute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in
this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal
for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homeless-
ness.

He understood: “Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been 9.3
completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing
further for this place.” And Venerable Kassapa became one of the
perfected.

SN 12.18

With Timbaruka

Timbarukasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

87. In the early period, there was no distinction between “going forth” (*pa-bbajjā*) and “ordination” (*upasampadā*). They are two sides of the same coin: leaving the home life and entering the ascetic life. Ordination was originally granted by the Buddha with the simple call, “Come mendicant!” (Kd 1:6.32.1). As the community grew, the Buddha authorized the Saṅgha to perform the “going forth and ordination” (Kd 1:12.1.1). Later still, the novice (*sāmaṇaera*) platform was introduced for teenagers and became known as “going forth” (Kd 1:54.3.2). Finally, the novice ordination was standardized for all ordinands, even if it was merely preliminary to the “full ordination”.

88. In addition to individual exceptions, there are general exceptions for dread-locked fire-worshipping ascetics, since they believe in kamma, and for the Buddha’s relatives (Kd 1:38.11.3).

- 1.2 Then the wanderer Timbaruka went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.⁸⁹ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:
- 2.1 “Well, worthy Gotama, are pleasure and pain made by oneself?”
- 2.2 “Not so, Timbaruka,” said the Buddha.
- 2.3 “Then are pleasure and pain made by another?”
- 2.4 “Not so, Timbaruka,” said the Buddha.
- 2.5 “Well, are pleasure and pain made by both oneself and another?”
- 2.6 “Not so, Timbaruka,” said the Buddha.
- 2.7 “Then do pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another?”
- 2.8 “Not so, Timbaruka,” said the Buddha.
- 2.9 “Well, is there no such thing as pleasure and pain?”
- 2.10 “It’s not that there’s no such thing as pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are real.”
- 2.12 “Then does the worthy Gotama not know or see suffering?”
- 2.13 “It’s not that I don’t know or see pleasure and pain. I do know pleasure and pain, I do see pleasure and pain.”
- 3.1 “Worthy Gotama, when asked these questions, you say ‘not so’. Yet you say that there is such a thing as pleasure and pain. And you say that you do know pleasure and pain, and you do see pleasure and pain. Sir, explain pleasure and pain to me! Teach me about pleasure and pain!”
- 4.1 “Suppose that the feeling and the one who feels it are one and the same. Then for one who has existed since the beginning, pleasure and pain is made by oneself. I don’t say this.⁹⁰ Suppose that the feeling is one thing and the one who feels it is another. Then for one

89. This individual is otherwise unknown.

90. The feeling is believed to be an inalienable property of the eternal Self who feels. Though eternalism is not explicitly mentioned, it is implied by the parallel construction of this discourse with the previous, except with feeling and the feeler rather than deed and the experiencer. In that discourse, the phrase “for one who has existed since the beginning” is part of the eternalist view, not the annihilationist, and the same is true here. See MN 2:8.8 and note there.

stricken by feeling, pleasure and pain is made by another. I don't say this. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: 'Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.'"^{4.5}

When he said this, the wanderer Timbaruka said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! ... I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."^{5.1}

SN 12.19

The Astute and the Foolish

Bālappaṇḍitasutta

At Sāvatthī.⁹¹

1.1

"Mendicants, for a fool shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced."⁹² So there is this duality: this body and external name and form. Contact depends on this duality.^{1.2}

91. Ignorance is a cognitive defilement, craving an emotional defilement. Their pairing here shows that they work together, rather than being in a strict linear relationship as in the standard set of twelve links. Dependent origination is textually stated as a line, and pictorially as a circle. However in many ways, the best image is a spiral: twisting around like a coiling snake or like DNA, never exactly repeating yet never really new.

92. The phrase "shrouded by ignorance" describes beings roaming through transmigration (SN 15.1, AN 3.76, Iti 14). *Nīvaraṇa* ultimately stems from *Vṛtra*, the serpent who, by coiling around the mountain, both "shrouded" it in darkness, and "hindered" or blocked it. | The reading here is *sampayutta* ("coupled") rather than *saṃyojana* ("fettered") found elsewhere.

When contacted through one or other of the six sense fields, the fool experiences pleasure and pain.⁹³

- 2.1 For an astute person shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced.⁹⁴ So there is this duality: this body and external name and form. Contact depends on this duality. When contacted through one or other of the six sense fields, the astute person experiences pleasure and pain.⁹⁵
- 3.1 What, then, is the difference between the foolish and the astute?”⁹⁶
- 3.2 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”
- 4.1 “Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 4.2 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

93. In the standard sequence, this corresponds to the emergence of consciousness with name and form in a new life. | For the unique phrase “this body and external name and form” (*ayañceva kāyo bahiddhā ca nāmarūpaṃ*), compare the stock phrase “this conscious body and all external stimuli” (*saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu*, eg. SN 18.21:1.3). “Name and form” are that which is known, the labels and concepts as well as physical sense stimuli, all of which is felt as “external” to the knowing consciousness, the “lord of the city” seated in the central square (SN 35.245:9.7). For the body in the process of rebirth, compare Rig Veda 10.56. | The idiom *etesaṃ vā aññatarena* (“one or other”) takes the instrumental, so it applies to the six senses, not pleasure and pain.

94. *Paṇḍita* is normally used for a learned scholar, rather than a contemplative “sage”. Pali has many more terms for “a wise person” than does English, and it is not easy to distinguish the senses. “Astute” is meant to convey the sense of one who is observant and of sound judgment.

95. These factors are all resultant, not kammically active.

96. While the opposition between the fool (or “child”, *bāla*) and the astute (or “learned”, *paṇḍita*) is consistent in Buddhism, not so in the pre-Buddhist literature. There the pair rarely appear, and when they do it is to subvert expectations. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.5.1 says a brahmin should stop being a *paṇḍita* and become a *bāla*, and when they are no longer either of those, they become a sage (*muni*); and when they stop being a sage, they become a brahmin.

“For a fool shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this 5.1
body has been produced. But the fool has not given up that ignorance
or finished that craving. Why is that? The fool has not completed the
spiritual journey for the complete ending of suffering.⁹⁷ Therefore,
when their body breaks up, the fool passes on to another body.⁹⁸
When they have passed on to another body, they’re not freed from
rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness,
and distress. They’re not freed from suffering, I say.

For an astute person shrouded by ignorance and coupled to crav- 6.1
ing, this body has been produced. But the astute person has given
up that ignorance and finished that craving. Why is that? The astute
person has completed the spiritual journey for the complete ending
of suffering. Therefore, when their body breaks up, the astute person
does not pass on to another body. Not passing on to another body,
they’re freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamen-
tation, pain, sadness, and distress. They’re freed from suffering, I say.
This is the difference here between the foolish and the astute, that is,
leading the spiritual life.”

SN 12.20

Conditions

Paccayasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

97. The “fool” in Buddhism is not one who lacks intelligence, but one who, lacking moral sense, lives heedlessly.

98. This corresponds with the generation of “continued existence” and future rebirth in the standard sequence. Thus the process evolves over at least three lives: the past life, where you made kamma driven by ignorance and craving; this life, where you experience the results and can choose to act differently; and the next life where you will experience the results of choices in this life. It can be more than three, as kamma takes effect over many lifetimes. The different factors are all observable in every life, but it is only when the process is seen evolving over time that their full nature is understood.

- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you dependent origination and dependently originated phenomena.⁹⁹ Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 1.4 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “And what is dependent origination? Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death. Whether Realized Ones arise or not, this law of nature persists, this regularity of natural principles, this surety of natural principles, specific conditionality.¹⁰⁰ A Realized One awakens to this and comprehends it, then he explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses it. ‘Look,’ he says, ‘Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.’
- 3.1 Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth ... Grasping is a requirement for continued existence ... Craving is a requirement for grasping ...
- 3.4 Feeling is a requirement for craving ... Contact is a requirement for feeling ... The six sense fields are requirements for contact ... Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields ...
- 3.8 Consciousness is a requirement for name and form ...
- 3.9 Choices are a requirement for consciousness ... Ignorance is a requirement for choices. Whether Realized Ones arise or not, this law of nature persists, this regularity of natural principles, this surety of natural principles, specific conditionality. A Realized One awakens to this and comprehends it, then he explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses it. ‘Look,’ he says, ‘Igno-

99. Dependent origination is the process, dependently originated phenomena are the products.

100. The principles of the Dhamma are not impermanent, since they are not things that exist. Rather, they are laws of nature that describe a process or a pattern which is always observable, so it is always true to describe it in that way. At AN 3.136 the same idea applies to impermanence, suffering and not-self. Also see Poṭṭhapāda at DN 9:31.10. | For “surety” (*niyāmata*) compare Rig Veda 4.3.9, “With truth I invoke the truth set down” (*rtena rtaṁ niyatam*). It is related to the idea that the stream-enterer “steps into the sure path”, i.e. enters the noble eightfold path, and is therefore “assured” in the sense of confident, and “assured” in the sense of being bound for awakening.

rance is a requirement for choices.’ So the fact that this is real, not unreal, not otherwise; the specific conditionality of it: this is called dependent origination.¹⁰¹

And what are the dependently originated phenomena? Old age 4.1
and death are impermanent, conditioned, dependently originated,
liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease. Rebirth ... Continued
existence ... Grasping ... Craving ...

Feeling ... Contact ... The six sense fields ... Name and form ... 4.7

Consciousness ... 4.11

Choices ... Ignorance is impermanent, conditioned, dependently 4.12
originated, liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease. These are
called the dependently originated phenomena.

When a noble disciple has clearly seen with right wisdom this de- 5.1
pendent origination and these dependently originated phenomena
as they are, it will be quite impossible for them to turn back to the
first beginning, thinking:¹⁰² ‘Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist
in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After
being what, what did I become in the past?’¹⁰³ Or to turn forward
to the final end, thinking: ‘Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist
in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the
future? After being what, what will I become in the future?’ Or to
be undecided about the present, thinking: ‘Am I? Am I not? What
am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from?
And where will it go?’ Why is that? Because that noble disciple has
clearly seen with right wisdom this dependent origination and these
dependently originated phenomena as they are.”

101. This phrase is also at SN 12.1:2.14. Note that there is no corresponding “dependent cessation”. The ending of dependent origination is Nibbāna, extinguishment.

102. Compare MN 38:23.1.

103. These are called “irrational thoughts” at MN 2:7.3. These are ways of thinking driven by anxiety over the perpetuation or dissolution of the assumed Self.

The Chapter on the Ten Powers

SN 12.21

The Ten Powers

Dasabalasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, a Realized One has ten powers and four kinds of self-assurance. With these he claims the bull’s place, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.¹⁰⁴

1.3 Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form.¹⁰⁵ Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the

104. The purpose of this discourse (and the next) seems to be to extol dependent origination as a special insight of the Buddha. But it does so artlessly, simply plonking down a series of teachings without connecting them in any way. Editors and translators have tried to smooth it over, but I translate as-is. | The ten powers (of a Realized One) are explained at MN 12:9.1, where they are followed by the four kinds of self-assurance (MN 12:22.1). The powers are found independently at AN 10.21 and AN 10.22, and are claimed by Anuruddha at SN 52.15–24. The four kinds of self-assurance are at AN 4.8. | The “divine wheel” (*brahmacakka*) is a synonym for the “wheel of the teaching” (*dharmacakka*). In Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.6, the same term refers to the circle of existence in which all things live.

105. This is a recommended meditation (MN 10:38.4) leading to perfection (SN 12.23:1.4). In one place it exemplifies the Buddha’s teaching, but there it follows organically and is marked as quote (SN 22.78:2.2). Here it is simply

disappearance of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the disappearance of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the disappearance of choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.

So, when this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises.¹⁰⁶ When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is:

Ignorance is a requirement for choices. 1.10

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.” 1.11

SN 12.22

The Ten Powers (2nd)

Dutiyaḍasabalasutta

At Sāvattḥi. 1.1

“Mendicants, a Realized One has ten powers and four kinds of self-assurance. With these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel. 1.2

Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the disappearance of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the disappearance of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the disappearance of 1.3

pasted in after the previous passage. It does not offer an integration between the aggregates and dependent origination; they simply appear side by side.

106. This is the abstract principle of dependent origination; see discussion at SN 12.37:2.2. Again there is no textual link with the previous passages.

choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.

- 1.8 So, when this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is:

1.10 Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

1.11 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

- 2.1 The teaching well-explained thus by me is clarified, revealed, illuminated, and stripped of patchwork.¹⁰⁷ In this teaching thus well-explained, it is quite enough for a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith to rouse up energy.¹⁰⁸ 'Gladly, let only skin, sinews, and tendons remain! Let the flesh and blood waste away in my body! I will not stop trying until I have achieved what is possible by human strength, energy, and vigor.'¹⁰⁹

- 3.1 A lazy person lives in suffering, mixed up with bad, unskillful qualities, neglecting their heart's great goal.¹¹⁰ But an energetic person lives happily, secluded from bad, unskillful qualities, fulfilling their heart's great goal.

107. "Stripped of patchwork" is ironic given that this is, in fact, a patchwork discourse. This passage appears at MN 22:42.1, where it has a meaningful context. The following section on arousing energy is another patchwork, this time of passages from elsewhere in the canon on arousing energy.

108. This sentence is not entirely coherent. The opening phrase is normally followed by "those who", while *alameva* ("quite enough") follows the accusative, not the locative.

109. Also at AN 2.5:1.4, SN 21.3:3.6, SN 12.22:2.3, and MN 70:27.6.

110. Elsewhere we find, "in a well explained teaching and training a lazy person lives in suffering" at AN 1.325:1.1, and "mixed up with bad, unskillful qualities" at AN 3.40:2.11.

The best isn't reached by the worst.¹¹¹ The best is reached by the best. This spiritual life is the cream, mendicants, and the Teacher is before you. 3.3

So you should rouse up energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized, thinking:¹¹² 'In this way our going forth will not be barren, but will be fruitful and fertile.¹¹³ And the services of those whose robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick we enjoy shall be very fruitful and beneficial for them.' That's how you should train. 3.6

Considering what is good for yourself, mendicants, is quite enough for you to persist with diligence. Considering what is good for others is quite enough for you to persist with diligence. Considering what is good for both is quite enough for you to persist with diligence." 3.10

SN 12.23

Vital Conditions

Upānīśasutta

At Sāvattḥī.¹¹⁴

1.1

"Mendicants, I say that the ending of defilements is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know or see.¹¹⁵ For one who knows and sees what? 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling ... Such is percep-

1.2

111. These lines are unique.

112. MN 118:4.3.

113. Almost the same as AN 7.72:17.2ff.

114. This discourse uniquely links the conditional arising of suffering with the conditional unfolding of the path, showing that liberation is not possible without suffering.

115. The "ending of defilements" (*āsavānaṃ khayam*) is a common sutta term for arahantship. | "Knowing and seeing" refers to the penetrating insight that arises from meditative immersion (*samādhi*, eg. AN 5.168:2.2, AN 10.2:2.3, SN 12.23:6.18, DN 2:83.1). | The opening is shared with SN 22.101, SN 56.25, MN 2, and Iti 102.

tion ... Such are choices ... Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.' The ending of the defilements is for one who knows and sees this.

- 2.1 I say that this knowledge of ending has a vital condition, it doesn't lack a vital condition.¹¹⁶ And what is it? You should say: 'Freedom.'¹¹⁷ I say that freedom has a vital condition, it doesn't lack a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: 'Dispassion.'¹¹⁸ I say that dispassion has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: 'Disillusionment.'¹¹⁹ I say that disillusionment has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: 'Truly knowing and seeing.'¹²⁰ I say that truly knowing and seeing has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: 'Immersion.'¹²¹ I say that immersion has a vital condition.

116. An *upanisā* is a conditional factor that is both necessary and strongly conducive. It functions as a contraction of *upanissaya* ("rely on"). Elsewhere, *saupanisa* is used of the seven path factors as "vital conditions" for right immersion (SN 45.28:1.2, MN 117:2.1). Pali *upanisā* is also found in the distinct sense "sitting close" to a teacher (AN 3.67:6.7). | It is not clear if *upanisā* is the same as the Sanskrit *upaniṣad*, for which the oldest sense is "correspondence, equivalence", referring to the secret links between things (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.4.5.1; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.26, 4.2.1; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.11.3, 8.8.4; Taittiriya Upaniṣad 1.11.4, 2.9.1). These equivalences are explained in the esoteric teachings that themselves came to be known as Upaniṣads.

117. "Freedom" here is the liberation from defilements, namely arahantship itself. The arahant reviews their freedom, which is the "knowledge of ending".

118. "Dispassion" (*virāga*) has a dual sense in Pali: a state where lust (*rāga*) is absent, and the process of defilements "fading away", which leans on the sense of *rāga* as "dye" (eg. the "fading away of ignorance" at SN 12.51:9.4).

119. "Disillusionment" (*nibbidā*) is the turning away in disappointment upon realizing that one cannot get what one wants (MN 50:31.15, SN 35.240:1.8).

120. This is the insight of stream-entry.

121. "Immersion" (*samādhi*) is a general term for the absorptions (*jhāna*) and other profound meditations free of the hindrances. It is an integrated emotional state of elevated consciousness, during which the mind is extremely bright and powerful. For a meditator with right view, the empowered mind emerging from immersion naturally inclines toward insight into the suffering of holding on and the bliss of letting go.

And what is it? You should say: ‘Bliss.’¹²² I say that bliss has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Tranquility.’¹²³ I say that tranquility has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Rapture.’¹²⁴ I say that rapture has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Joy.’¹²⁵ I say that joy has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Faith.’¹²⁶ I say that faith has a vital condition.

And what is it? You should say: ‘Suffering.’¹²⁷ I say that suffering has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Rebirth.’¹²⁸ I say that rebirth has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Continued existence.’ I say that continued existence has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Grasping.’ I say that grasping has a vital condition. And what is it? You should say: ‘Craving.’ I say that craving has a vital condition.

And what is it? You should say: ‘Feeling.’ ... You should say: ‘Contact.’ ... You should say: ‘The six sense fields.’ ... You should say: ‘Name and form.’ ... You should say: ‘Consciousness.’ ... You

122. Because immersion is an emotional release, its primary condition is deep, pervasive, lasting, and subtle bliss or pleasure (*sukha*). It cannot be realized with purely neutral feeling.

123. “Tranquility” is a settled and serene body and mind, as activities or energies become stilled through the process of meditation.

124. “Rapture” (*pīti*) is a heightened emotional response to happiness or joy. Minor forms appear as tingling or thrill, and it deepens into a pervasive spiritual sense of elevation or uplift in meditation.

125. “Joy” (*pāmojja*) is the upwelling of happiness connected with wholesome things, such as hearing the Dhamma (MN 33:23.2), or reflecting on one’s progress (MN 7:11.1, MN 40:8.2) or ethical purity (AN 10.2:1.6).

126. “Faith” inspires the courage to progress. It is a “grounded faith” based on experience, and tested through the path (MN 47:16.1).

127. Someone afflicted by suffering looks about in despair to find anyone who can help. When they hear the Buddha or a disciple speaking about suffering, faith arises (AN 6.63:42.3). | With this link, the discourse reveals the connection between the path to freedom and dependent origination. Suffering is the condition into which we have been born, but the experience of suffering is also the stimulus we need to seek freedom.

128. From here the discourse proceeds back through the standard links in reverse order.

should say: ‘Choices.’ ... I say that choices have a vital condition, they don’t lack a vital condition. And what is the vital condition for choices? You should say: ‘Ignorance.’

6.1 So, mendicants: ignorance is the vital condition for choices.¹²⁹

Choices are the vital condition for consciousness. Consciousness is the vital condition for name and form. Name and form are the vital conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are the vital conditions for contact. Contact is the vital condition for feeling. Feeling is the vital condition for craving. Craving is the vital condition for grasping. Grasping is the vital condition for continued existence. Continued existence is the vital condition for rebirth. Rebirth is the vital condition for suffering. Suffering is the vital condition for faith. Faith is the vital condition for joy. Joy is the vital condition for rapture. Rapture is the vital condition for tranquility. Tranquility is the vital condition for bliss. Bliss is the vital condition for immersion. Immersion is the vital condition for truly knowing and seeing. Truly knowing and seeing is the vital condition for disillusionment. Disillusionment is the vital condition for dispassion. Dispassion is the vital condition for freedom. Freedom is the vital condition for the knowledge of ending.

7.1 It’s like when the heavens rain heavily on a mountain top, and the water flows downhill to fill the hollows, crevices, and creeks. As they become full, they fill up the pools. The pools fill up the lakes, the lakes fill up the streams, and the streams fill up the rivers. And as the rivers become full, they fill up the ocean.¹³⁰

129. The syntax is subtly different to the standard sequence (SN 12.2:2.2). There, the initial term is ablative, which conveys the *causal* sense and might be literally rendered, “Due to the ignorance dependency, choices”. Here the two terms are both nominative, so there is no causal sense in the nouns. We must assume, then, that the causal sense is supplied by the implicit verb *hoti* in the pregnant sense “bring about, beget, yield”. A literal rendering might be, “The ignorance vital condition begets choices.”

130. This simile is also found in SN 55.38, AN 3.95, AN 4.147, AN 10.61, and AN 10.62. Compare Kaṭha Upaniṣad 4.15.

In the same way, ignorance is the vital condition for choices. ... 8.1
Freedom is the vital condition for the knowledge of ending.”

SN 12.24

Followers of Other Religions

Aññatitthiyasutta

Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then Venerable Sāriputta 1.1
robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Then it occurred to him, “It’s too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Why don’t I visit the monastery for the wanderers of other religions?”¹³¹

Then he went to the monastery for the wanderers of other re- 2.1
ligions and exchanged greetings with the wanderers there. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The wanderers said to him:

“Reverend Sāriputta, there are ascetics and brahmins who teach 3.1
the efficacy of deeds. Some of them assert that suffering is made by oneself.¹³² Some of them assert that suffering is made by another. Some of them assert that suffering is made by both oneself and another. Some of them assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another.¹³³ What does the ascetic Gotama say about this? How does he explain it? How should we answer so as to repeat what the ascetic Gotama has said, and not misrepresent him

131. Sāriputta, like his teacher, seeks out meaningful discussion with people who are not Buddhist.

132. See SN 12.17 and notes.

133. They believed in the efficacy of deeds, but not that such deeds created suffering (or “pleasure and pain” in the next discourse). This seems odd, but it’s not irrational. Perhaps they believed that one’s deeds create a new life, but that the experiences of pleasure and pain in that life arise from circumstances beyond the control of oneself or others.

with an untruth? How should we explain in line with his teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?”¹³⁴

4.1 “Reverends, the Buddha has said that suffering is dependently originated. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.¹³⁵ In speaking like this, you would repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth. You would explain in line with his teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.

5.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by oneself, that’s dependent on contact. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by another, that’s also dependent on contact. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by oneself and another, that’s also dependent on contact. In the case of those who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another, that’s also dependent on contact.

6.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by oneself, it’s impossible that they will experience that without contact.¹³⁶ In the case of those who declare that suffering is made by another, it’s impossible that they will experience that without contact. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by oneself and another, it’s impossible that they will experience that without contact. In the case of those who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another, it’s impossible that they will experience that without contact.”

134. The wanderers frame their question carefully and respectfully, so Sāriputta answers them directly and affirms their manner of questioning.

135. The wanderers have already shown their epistemological caution, so, in identifying “contact” as the key dependency, Sāriputta indicates one of the most directly observable factors of dependent origination. But contact is also a key underlying cause of wrong views (DN 1:3.45.1).

136. Sāriputta clarifies the meaning of “dependent”: it is something without which the other cannot be experienced, i.e. it is a necessary condition.

Venerable Ānanda heard this discussion between Venerable Sā- 7.1
 riputta and those wanderers of other religions. Then Ānanda wan-
 dered for alms in Rājagaha. After the meal, on his return from alm-
 sround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and
 informed the Buddha of all they had discussed.

“Good, good, Ānanda! It’s just as Sāriputta has so rightly ex- 8.1
 plained. I have said that suffering is dependently originated. De-
 pendent on what? Dependent on contact. Saying this you would
 repeat what I have said, and not misrepresent me with an untruth.
 You would explain in line with my teaching, and there would be no
 legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.¹³⁷

Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of 9.1
 deeds. In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by one-
 self, that’s dependent on contact. ... In the case of those who assert
 that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another,
 that’s also dependent on contact.

In the case of those who assert that suffering is made by oneself, 10.1
 it’s impossible that they will experience that without contact. ... In
 the case of those who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not
 made by oneself or another, it’s impossible that they will experience
 that without contact.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo 11.1
 Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. Then I robed up in the morning
 and, taking my bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Then I
 thought: ‘It’s too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Why don’t I
 visit the monastery for the wanderers of other religions?’

Then I went to the monastery for the wanderers of other religions 12.1
 and exchanged greetings with the wanderers there. When the greet-
 ings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side. ...”

(The wanderers asked the Buddha the very same questions, and 13.1
 he gave the same answers.)

137. The explicit affirmation and repetition of information reinforces the correct text in the memory and wards off creeping disinformation.

- 17.1 “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how the whole matter is stated with one phrase.¹³⁸ Could there be a detailed explanation of this matter that is both deep and appears deep?”¹³⁹
- 18.1 “Well then, Ānanda, clarify this matter yourself.”
- 18.2 “Sir, suppose they were to ask me: ‘Reverend Ānanda, what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of old age and death?’ I’d answer like this: ‘Reverends, rebirth is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of old age and death.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.
- 19.1 Suppose they were to ask me: ‘What is the source of rebirth?’ I’d answer like this: ‘Continued existence is the source of rebirth.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.
- 20.1 Suppose they were to ask me: ‘What is the source of continued existence?’ I’d answer like this: ‘Grasping is the source of continued existence.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.
- 21.1 Suppose they were to ask me: ‘What is the source of grasping?’ ... craving ... feeling ... Suppose they were to ask me: ‘What is the source of contact?’ I’d answer like this: ‘The six sense fields are the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of contact.’ ‘When the six fields of contact fade away and cease with no residue left behind, contact ceases.¹⁴⁰ When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.”

138. Compare with *attho vutto* in the Itivuttaka. Here the sense is that the topic can be summed up with one statement.

139. The phrase “deep and appears deep” is spoken twice elsewhere, also by Ānanda in the context of dependent origination (DN 15:1.5, SN 12.60:1.4).

140. Ānanda recapitulates, confirming that the sequence here goes back only as far as the six senses. This agrees with DN 1:3.71.12, which likewise goes back to the six senses. There, the factors beginning with ignorance are implied under wrong view.

With Bhūmija

Bhūmijasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Bhūmija came out of retreat, went to Venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with him.¹⁴¹

1.2

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to him:

“Reverend Sāriputta, there are ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. Some of them assert that pleasure and pain are made by oneself. Some of them assert that pleasure and pain are made by another. Some of them assert that pleasure and pain are made by both oneself and another. Some of them assert that pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another.¹⁴² What does the Buddha say about this? How does he explain it? How should we answer so as to repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth? How should we explain in line with his teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?”

2.1

“Reverend, the Buddha has said that pleasure and pain are dependently originated.¹⁴³ Dependent on what? Dependent on contact. In speaking like this, you would repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth. You would explain in line with his teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.

3.1

141. We meet Bhūmija also in MN 126.

142. They believed in the efficacy of deeds, but not that such deeds created pleasure and pain. This seems odd, but it's not irrational. Perhaps they believed that one's deeds create a new life, but not the experiences of pleasure and pain in that life.

143. In this discourse, the twelve links are merely hinted at here and in the mention of ignorance at the end.

- 4.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain are made by oneself, that's dependent on contact. ... In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another, that's also dependent on contact.
- 5.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain are made by oneself, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact. ... In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact."
- 6.1 Venerable Ānanda heard this discussion between Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Bhūmija. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all they had discussed.
- 7.1 "Good, good, Ānanda! It's just as Sāriputta has so rightly explained. I have said that pleasure and pain are dependently originated. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact. In speaking like this, you would repeat what I have said, and not misrepresent me with an untruth. You would explain in line with my teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.
- 8.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain are made by oneself, that's dependent on contact. ... In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another, that's also dependent on contact.
- 9.1 Consider the ascetics and brahmins who teach the efficacy of deeds. In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain are made by oneself, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact. ... In the case of those who assert that pleasure and pain arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact.

Ānanda, as long as there's a body, the intention that gives rise to 10.1
bodily action causes pleasure and pain to arise in oneself.¹⁴⁴ As long
as there's a voice, the intention that gives rise to verbal action causes
pleasure and pain to arise in oneself. As long as there's a mind, the
intention that gives rise to mental action causes pleasure and pain to
arise in oneself. But this is only when dependent on ignorance.¹⁴⁵

By oneself one instigates the choice that gives rise to bodily, verbal, 11.1
and mental action, conditioned by which that pleasure and pain arise
in oneself. Or else others instigate the choice ...¹⁴⁶ One instigates
the choice after deliberation ...¹⁴⁷ Or else one instigates the choice
without deliberation ...

Ignorance is included in all these things. But when ignorance fades 14.1
away and ceases with no residue left behind, that body, that voice,
and that mind no longer exist dependent on which that pleasure and
pain arise in oneself.¹⁴⁸ That field does not exist, that ground does

144. This forms the first part of AN 4.171, there addressed to “mendicants”.

145. The tag *avijjāpaccayāva* (variant *-ca*), found also in the parallel at AN 4.171:1.3, appears tacked on to the completed sentence. Perhaps the purpose is to clarify that the mere presence of body, speech, and mind is not sufficient for kammic intentions, as arahants have body, speech, and mind but do not make kamma. The closing section of the discourse also addresses this topic.

146. This anticipates the Abhidhamma term *sasaṅkhārīka*, intentions that are prompted or instigated by another. For example, one might feel hungry and say, “Let’s eat”. Or someone else might say to you, “Let’s eat”. In both cases there is still moral responsibility for choices, but in the latter it is to some degree mitigated.

147. “Deliberate” (*sampajāna*) means one is aware before, during, and after (MN 61:12.1, Bu Pc 1:2.2.2). Compare the legal concept “pre-meditated”.

148. The sentence has a conditional structure which limits and specifies its application. It is not that the body *per se* has disappeared. Rather, it is *that* body, namely the one dependent on ignorance, which no longer exists to create kamma. The sentence exemplifies specific conditionality: *this* body ceases, and *that* pleasure and pain no longer arise. An arahant experiences pleasure and pain as a result of past life choices, but does not actively create new kammic feelings.

not exist, that dimension does not exist, that foundation does not exist, dependent on which that pleasure and pain arise in oneself.”¹⁴⁹

SN 12.26

With Upavāṇa

Upavāṇasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 Then Venerable Upavāṇa went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:¹⁵⁰

2.1 “Sir, there are some ascetics and brahmins who assert that suffering is made by oneself. There are some who assert that suffering is made by another. There are some who assert that suffering is made by both oneself and another. There are some who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another.

2.5 What does the Buddha say about this? How does he explain it? How should we answer so as to repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth? How should we explain in line with his teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?”

3.1 “Upavāṇa, I have said that suffering is dependently originated.¹⁵¹ Dependent on what? Dependent on contact. In speaking like this, you would repeat what I have said, and not misrepresent me with an untruth. You would explain in line with my teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.

4.1 In the case of those ascetics and brahmins who assert that suffering is made by oneself, that’s dependent on contact. ... In the case of those who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another, that’s also dependent on contact.

149. *Adhikaraṇa* as “foundation” or “substratum” is attested in Sanskrit (eg. *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1.7).

150. Upavāṇa was nursing the Buddha at SN 7.13:1.3.

151. Like the previous, this discourse only hints at the twelve links.

In the case of those ascetics and brahmins who assert that suffering is made by oneself, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact. ... In the case of those who assert that suffering arises anomalously, not made by oneself or another, it's impossible that they will experience that without contact.” 5.1

SN 12.27

Dependency

Paccayasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Ignorance is a requirement for choices. 1.2

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. 1.3

And what is old age and death? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age. The passing away, passing on, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death. Rebirth is the origin of old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death is simply this noble eightfold path,¹⁵² that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. 2.1

And what is rebirth? ...¹⁵³ And what is continued existence? ... And what is grasping? ... And what is craving? ... And what is 3.1

152. Normally the path leads to the cessation of “suffering”. This shows another way of integrating dependent origination with the path.

153. The remaining items are presumably to be expanded per SN 12.2.

feeling? ... And what is contact? ... And what are the six sense fields?
... And what are name and form? ... And what is consciousness? ...

4.1 And what are choices? There are three kinds of choices. Choices by way of body, speech, and mind. These are called choices. Ignorance is the origin of choices. When ignorance ceases, choices cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of choices is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

5.1 When a noble disciple thus understands dependency, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation,¹⁵⁴ that noble disciple is called: ‘one accomplished in view’, ‘one accomplished in vision’, ‘one who has come to the true teaching’, ‘one who sees this true teaching’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s insight’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s knowledge’, ‘one who has entered the stream of the teaching’, ‘a noble one with penetrative wisdom’, and also ‘one who stands pressing against the door to freedom from death.’¹⁵⁵

SN 12.28

A Mendicant

Bhikkhusutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “A mendicant understands old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... con-

154. One who knows the path and dependent origination is a stream-enterer, for which the next phrase supplies a series of synonyms.

155. The idiom *āhacca tiṭṭhati* is used for the river “pressing into” the ocean (MN 73:14.1), or the tongue “pressed against” the roof of the mouth (MN 100:17.2).

sciousness ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation.

And what is old age and death? The old age, decrepitude, broken 2.1
teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age. The passing away, passing on, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death. Rebirth is the origin of old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

And what is rebirth? ... And what is continued existence? ... 3.1
And what is grasping? ... And what is craving? ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ...

And what are choices? There are three kinds of choices. Choices 4.1
by way of body, speech, and mind. These are called choices. Ignorance is the origin of choices. When ignorance ceases, choices cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of choices is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

A mendicant understands old age and death, their origin, their 5.1
cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. This mendicant is called: 'one accomplished in view', 'one accomplished in vision', 'one who has come to the true teaching', 'one who sees this true teaching', 'one endowed with a trainee's insight', 'one endowed with a trainee's

knowledge,’ ‘one who has entered the stream of the teaching,’ ‘a noble one with penetrative wisdom,’ and also ‘one who stands pressing against the door to freedom from death.’”

SN 12.29

Ascetics and Brahmins

Samaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t completely understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They don’t completely understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They don’t completely understand choices,¹⁵⁶ their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I don’t deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight in this very life.

2.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who completely understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They completely understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They completely understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.”

156. The sequence does not go back to ignorance because this is assumed in the premise, those who do not understand.

SN 12.30

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. It’s impossible that they will abide having transcended old age and death.¹⁵⁷ They don’t understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They don’t understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. It’s impossible that they will abide having transcended choices.

1.2

There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. It’s possible that they will abide having transcended old age and death. They understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. It’s possible that they will abide having transcended choices.”

2.1

157. “They will abide having transcended” is a unique phrase, reminiscent of language more commonly associated with eternalism (DN 1:2.9.3). Here refers to the perfected one, who abides in this world for the remainder of their lifespan, but has transcended rebirth.

The Chapter with Kaḷāra the Aristocrat

SN 12.31

What Has Come to Be

Bhūtasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Then the Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta, “Sāriputta, this was said in ‘The Way to the Far Shore’, in ‘The Questions of Ajita’:¹⁵⁸
- 2.1 ‘There are those who have appraised the teaching,
and many kinds of trainees here.
Now you, being alert, are asked
to tell me their behavior, good fellow.’
- 3.1 How should we see the detailed meaning of this brief statement?”¹⁵⁹

158. Ajita was one of a group of contemplative brahmins from a school that identified the cosmic divinity with the state of purified formless consciousness experienced in deep meditation. Their story is recounted in “The Way to the Far Shore”, where Ajita was the first to question the Buddha (Snp 5.2). The title is given in the text itself (Snp 5.18:8.4, Snp 5.19:1.1), and it is cited also in AN 3.32, AN 3.33, AN 4.41, AN 7.53, and AN 6.61.

159. In reply to Ajita, the Buddha already answered the question: a mendicant without greed, skillful, would wander mindful. Here he asks for a detailed analysis, presumably as a teaching method: the dialogue was probably in front of an assembly.

- When he said this, Sāriputta kept silent.¹⁶⁰ 3.2
- For a second time ... 4.1
- For a third time ... 4.3
- Sāriputta kept silent. 6.1
- “Sāriputta, do you see that this has come to be?”¹⁶¹ 7.1
- “Sir, one truly sees with right wisdom that this has come to be. 7.2
- Seeing this, one is practicing for disillusionment, dispassion, and
cessation regarding what has come to be. One truly sees with right
wisdom that it came to be with that as fuel.¹⁶² Seeing this, one is
practicing for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding
the fuel for its origination. One truly sees with right wisdom that
when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease. Seeing
this, one is practicing for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation
regarding what is liable to cease. In this way one is a trainee.¹⁶³
- And how, sir, has one appraised the teaching? Sir, one truly sees 8.1
- with right wisdom that this has come to be. Seeing this, one is freed
by not grasping through disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation
regarding what has come to be.¹⁶⁴ One truly sees with right wis-
dom that it came to be with that as fuel. Seeing this, one is freed by
not grasping through disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation re-

160. Sāriputta hesitates, according to the commentary, because he is unsure of the mode of analysis that the Buddha wants him to pursue. This is typical of Sāriputta’s circumspection; he himself explains a similar hesitation in the next Sutta (SN 12.32:16.2).

161. See MN 38:9.1, where “this has come to be” refers to dependently originated consciousness. There, the Buddha is refuting Sāti, who believed consciousness is “the one who speaks, the one who knows, who experiences the results of good and bad deeds in all the different realms.” This is the Upaniṣadic view, which was apparently shared by both Ajita and Sāti, and against which the Buddha posited dependent origination.

162. “Originated with that as fuel” is also at MN 38:9.3, cementing the connection between these two texts.

163. Note that Sāriputta does not answer Ajita’s question on practice; rather, he analyzes the terms. This illustrates how analytical commentary developed from practical advice.

164. The stream-enterer sees the truth, the arahant is fully freed.

garding the fuel for its origination. One truly sees with right wisdom that when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease. Seeing this, one is freed by not grasping through disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding what is liable to cease. In this way one has appraised the teaching.

8.9 Sir, regarding what was said in ‘The Way to the Far Shore’, in ‘The Questions of Ajita’:

9.1 “There are those who have appraised the teaching,
and many kinds of trainees here.
Now you, being alert, are asked
to tell me their behavior, good fellow.”

10.1 This is how I understand the detailed meaning of what was said in brief.”

11.1 “Good, good, Sāriputta! (The Buddha repeated all of Sāriputta’s explanation, concluding:)

14.1 This is how to see the detailed meaning of what was said in brief.”

SN 12.32

With KaḬāra the Aristocrat

KaḬārasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

1.2 Then the mendicant KaḬāra the Aristocrat went up to Venerable Sāriputta and exchanged greetings with him.¹⁶⁵ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to him, “Reverend Sāriputta, the mendicant Phagguna of the Top-Knot has resigned the training and returned to a lesser life.”¹⁶⁶

1.5 “That venerable mustn’t have gained any solace in this teaching and training.”

165. KaḬāra the Aristocrat is otherwise unknown.

166. For Phagguna of the Top-Knot, see note on SN 12.12:2.1.

“Well then, has Venerable Sāriputta found solace in this teaching 2.1
and training?”

“Reverend, I have no uncertainty.” 3.1

“But what of the future?” 3.2

“I have no doubt.” 4.1

Then KaḬāra the Aristocrat went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat 5.1
down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, Venerable Sāriputta has de-
clared enlightenment: ‘I understand: “Rebirth is ended, the spiritual
journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done,
there is nothing further for this place.”’”

So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, “Please, monk, in my 6.1
name tell Sāriputta that the Teacher summons him.”

“Yes, sir,” that monk replied. He went to Sāriputta and said to him, 6.4
“Reverend Sāriputta, the Teacher summons you.”

“Yes, reverend,” replied Sāriputta. He went to the Buddha, bowed, 6.6
and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “Sāriputta, is
it really true that you have declared enlightenment: ‘I understand:
“Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had
to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place”’?”

“Sir, I did not state the matter in these words and phrases.” 6.9

“Sāriputta, no matter how a gentleman declares enlightenment, 6.10
what he has declared should be regarded as such.”

“Sir, did I not also say that I did not state the matter in these words 6.11
and phrases?”

“Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘But Reverend Sāriputta, 7.1
how have you known and seen so that you’ve declared enlighten-
ment: “I understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing
further for this place.”’” How would you answer?”

“Sir, if they were to ask me this, I would answer: ‘Reverends, when 8.1
the source of rebirth ended, I knew “it is ended.”¹⁶⁷ Knowing it is

167. Read *khīṇasmim khīṇam’iti* with PTS and BJT, paralleling the common phrase *vimuttasmim vimuttam’iti* (SN 12.61:6.2). | The syntax here is con-

ended, I understand: “Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.” That’s how I’d answer such a question.”

- 9.1 “But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘But what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of rebirth?’ How would you answer?”
- 9.4 “Sir, if they were to ask me this, I would answer: ‘Continued existence is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of rebirth.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.”
- 10.1 “But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘What is the source of continued existence?’ How would you answer?”
- 10.4 “Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer: ‘Grasping is the source of continued existence.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.”
- 11.1 “But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘What is the source of grasping?’ ... But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘What is the source of craving?’ How would you answer?”
- 11.6 “Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer: ‘Feeling is the source of craving.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.”
- 12.1 “But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘But how have you known and seen so that the relishing of feelings is no longer present?’¹⁶⁸ How would you answer?”
- 12.4 “Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer: ‘Reverends, there are three feelings. What three? Pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling. These three feelings are impermanent, and what’s impermanent is suffering. When I understood this, the relishing of feelings was no longer present.’ That’s how I’d answer such a question.”

voluted: “With the end of that source which is the source of rebirth, I knew regarding that ending, ‘it is ended.’”

168. The Buddha focuses in on the topic of feelings. The commentary explains this with reference to the Dīghanakhasutta (MN 74), which relates the occasion Sāriputta realized arahantship. The main topic, and the basis for Sāriputta’s insight, was feelings. The Buddha wanted to give Sāriputta the chance to highlight his special domain.

“Good, good, Sāriputta! The same point may also be briefly explained in this way: ‘Suffering includes whatever is felt.’ 13.1

But Sāriputta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘But Reverend, how have you been liberated that you declare enlightenment: “I understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”?’ How would you answer?’ 14.1

“Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer: ‘Because of an inner release with the ending of all grasping, I live mindfully so that defilements don’t defile me and I don’t look down on myself.’¹⁶⁹ That’s how I’d answer such a question.” 14.5

“Good, good, Sāriputta! The same point may also be briefly explained in this way: ‘I have no uncertainty regarding the defilements spoken of by the ascetic. I have no doubt that I’ve given them up.’”¹⁷⁰ 15.1

That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling. 15.4

Then, not long after the Buddha left, Venerable Sāriputta said to the mendicants, “Reverends, the Buddha asked me the first question without letting me know beforehand, so I hesitated.¹⁷¹ But when the Buddha agreed with my answer, I thought: ‘If the Buddha were to question me all day on this matter in different words and ways, I could answer all day with different words and ways. If he were to question me all night, all day and night, for two days and nights, for three, four, five, six, or seven days and nights, I could answer in different words and ways for seven days and nights.’” 16.1

Then KaḬāra the Aristocrat went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, Venerable Sāriputta has 17.1

169. Variants for *nānussavanti* are from the roots *sav* (“flow”) and *sī* (“lie”). Pali often couples verbs and nouns from the same root for emphasis, and this is probably the case here, “defilements don’t defile.”

170. “The ascetic” is the Buddha.

171. *Pubbe appaṭisaṃviditaṃ* is an idiom elsewhere used when visiting someone “without letting them know beforehand” (MN 91:26.4, AN 5.50:4.7).

roared his lion's roar!" (And he told the Buddha all that Sāriputta had said.)

- 18.1 "Mendicant, Sāriputta has clearly penetrated the principle of the teachings, so that he could answer any questions I might ask him in different words and ways up to the seventh day and night."

SN 12.33

Grounds for Knowledge

Ñānavatthusutta

1.1 At Sāvathī.

1.2 "Mendicants, I will teach forty-four grounds for knowledge.¹⁷² Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

1.4 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "And what are the forty-four grounds for knowledge? Knowledge of old age and death, knowledge of the origin of old age and death, knowledge of the cessation of old age and death, and knowledge of the practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death. Knowledge of rebirth ... Knowledge of continued existence ... Knowledge of grasping ... Knowledge of craving ... Knowledge of feeling ... Knowledge of contact ... Knowledge of the six sense fields ... Knowledge of name and form ... Knowledge of consciousness ... Knowledge of choices, knowledge of the origin of choices, knowledge of the cessation of choices, and knowledge of the practice that leads to the cessation of choices. These are called the forty-four grounds for knowledge.

3.1 And what is old age and death? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age. The passing away, passing on, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates,

172. "Grounds for knowledge" (*ñānavatthu*) are those things whose understanding leads to liberation.

and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death.

Rebirth is the origin of old age and death. When rebirth ceases, 4.1
old age and death cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

A noble disciple understands old age and death, their origin, their 5.1
cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. This is their knowledge of the teaching.¹⁷³ With this teaching that is seen, understood, immediately attained, and fathomed, they apply the method to the past and future.¹⁷⁴

Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past directly knew old age 6.1
and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation, all of them directly knew these things in exactly the same way that I do now.

Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the future will directly know 7.1
old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation, all of them will directly know these things in exactly the same way that I do now. This is their inferential knowledge.¹⁷⁵

173. *Dhamme ñāṇam* is the knowledge of the principles of the teaching that are apparent in the present life (cf. *diṭṭheva dhamme*). It contrasts with *anvaye ñāṇam*, knowledge inferred to the past and future. The pair, along with knowledge of others' minds and conventional knowledge, are also at DN 33:1.11.103, DN 34:1.5.35, and Vb 16:307.1. The two forms of knowledge are illustrated in the narrative of Vipassī (DN 14:1.36.1).

174. The same phrase is found in SN 42.11:2.9, which likewise discusses what is presently observable and what is inferred. Similar terms also describe one who realizes the Dhamma as a stream-enterer (MN 56:18.8). | *Akālikena pattena* is a single phrase ("immediately attained") referring to realization in the present.

175. This knowledge "inferred" from the principles of the teaching allows Sāriputta to state that there has never been, nor ever will be, anyone more enlightened than the Buddha, even though he cannot read the minds of all the Buddhas (SN 47.12:6.2, DN 16:1.17.8, DN 28:2.2). Pasenadi likewise "infers

- 8.1 A noble disciple has purified and cleansed these two knowledges—knowledge of the teaching and inferential knowledge. When a noble disciple has done this, they’re one who is called ‘one accomplished in view’, ‘one accomplished in vision’, ‘one who has come to the true teaching’, ‘one who sees this true teaching’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s insight’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s knowledge’, ‘one who has entered the stream of the teaching’, ‘a noble one with penetrative wisdom’, and also ‘one who stands pressing against the door to freedom from death’.
- 9.1 And what is rebirth? ... And what is continued existence? ... And what is grasping? ... And what is craving? ... And what is feeling? ... And what is contact? ... And what are the six sense fields? ... And what are name and form? ... And what is consciousness? ... And what are choices? There are three kinds of choices. Choices by way of body, speech, and mind. These are called choices.
- 10.1 Ignorance is the origin of choices. When ignorance ceases, choices cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of choices is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.
- 11.1 A noble disciple understands choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. This is their knowledge of the teaching. With this teaching that is seen, understood, immediately attained, and fathomed, they apply the method to the past and future.
- 12.1 Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past directly knew choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their ces-

from the teaching” that the Buddha is awakened due to his behavior and that of the Saṅgha; since Pasenadi was not enlightened, this is not a special faculty of awakening (MN 89:13.17). Nonetheless, a fool like Sunakkhatta cannot infer in this way (MN 12:5.1). In all of these cases, *dhamma* has the primary meaning of “teaching”, but in particular, the principles of the teaching that are observable (see especially DN 28:2.14). See too SN 42.11, where Bhadraka is led to infer from his present experience to the past and future.

sation, all of them directly knew these things in exactly the same way that I do now.

Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the future will directly know 13.1
choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to
their cessation, all of them will directly know these things in exactly
the same way that I do now. This is their inferential knowledge.

A noble disciple has purified and cleansed these two knowl- 14.1
edges—knowledge of the teaching and inferential knowledge. When
a noble disciple has done this, they're one who is called 'one accom-
plished in view', 'one accomplished in vision', 'one who has come to
the true teaching', 'one who sees this true teaching', 'one endowed
with a trainee's insight', 'one endowed with a trainee's knowledge',
'one who has entered the stream of the teaching', 'a noble one with
penetrative wisdom', and also 'one who stands pressing against the
door to freedom from death.'"

SN 12.34

Grounds for Knowledge (2nd)

Dutiyañāṇavatthusutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

"Mendicants, I will teach seventy-seven grounds for knowledge. 1.2
Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

"And what are the seventy-seven grounds for knowledge? The 2.1
knowledge that rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, and
the knowledge that when rebirth doesn't exist, there is no old age
and death. Also regarding the past: the knowledge that rebirth is a
requirement for old age and death, and the knowledge that when
rebirth doesn't exist, there is no old age and death. Also regarding
the future: the knowledge that rebirth is a requirement for old age
and death, and the knowledge that when rebirth doesn't exist, there
is no old age and death. And also their knowledge that even this

knowledge of the stability of natural principles is liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease.

- 3.1 The knowledge that continued existence is a requirement for re-birth ... The knowledge that ignorance is a requirement for choices, and the knowledge that when ignorance doesn't exist, there are no choices. Also regarding the past: the knowledge that ignorance is a requirement for choices, and the knowledge that when ignorance doesn't exist, there are no choices. Also regarding the future: the knowledge that ignorance is a requirement for choices, and the knowledge that when ignorance doesn't exist, there are no choices. And also their knowledge that even this knowledge of the stability of natural principles is liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease.¹⁷⁶ These are called the seventy-seven grounds for knowledge."

SN 12.35

Ignorance is a Requirement

Avijjāpaccayasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 "Ignorance is a requirement for choices.
- 1.3 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates."
- 1.5 When this was said, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, "What are old age and death, sir, and who do they belong to?"
- 1.7 "That's not a cogent question," said the Buddha. "You might say, 'What are old age and death, and who do they belong to?' Or you might say, 'Old age and death are one thing, who they belong to is another.' But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. Mendicant, if you have the view that the soul and the body

176. The natural principles themselves do not disappear, for it is always true to describe the world as suffering and impermanent. But the knowledge of that is impermanent, for it is a conscious state and will pass away when the enlightened being passes away.

are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.’”

“What is rebirth, sir, and who does it belong to?” 2.1

“That’s not a cogent question,” said the Buddha. “You might say, 2.2
 ‘What is rebirth, and who does it belong to?’ Or you might say, ‘Rebirth is one thing, who it belongs to is another.’ But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. Mendicant, if you have the view that the soul and the body are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.’”

“What is continued existence, sir, and who is it for?” 3.1

“That’s not a cogent question,” said the Buddha. “You might say, 3.2
 ‘What is continued existence, and who does it belong to?’ Or you might say, ‘Continued existence is one thing, who it belongs to is another.’ But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. Mendicant, if you have the view that the soul and the body are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Grasping is a requirement for continued existence.’ ... ‘Craving is a requirement for grasping.’ ... ‘Feeling is a requirement for craving.’ ... ‘Contact is a requirement for feeling.’ ... ‘The six sense fields are requirements for contact.’ ... ‘Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields.’ ... ‘Consciousness is a requirement for name and form.’ ... ‘Choices are a requirement for consciousness.’”

“What are choices, sir, and who do they belong to?” 4.1

“That’s not a cogent question,” said the Buddha. “You might say, 4.2
 ‘What are choices, and who do they belong to?’ Or you might say,

‘Choices are one thing, who they belong to is another.’ But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. Mendicant, if you have the view that the soul and the body are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.’

- 5.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up:¹⁷⁷ ‘What are old age and death, and who do they belong to?’ or ‘old age and death are one thing, who they belong to is another’, or ‘the soul and the body are one and the same’, or ‘the soul is one thing, the body another.’ These are all cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 6.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up: ‘What is rebirth, and who does it belong to?’ or ‘rebirth is one thing, who it belongs to is another’, or ‘the soul and the body are one and the same’, or ‘the soul is one thing, the body another.’ These are all cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 7.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up: ‘What is continued existence ...’ ‘What is grasping ...’ ‘What is craving ...’ ‘What is feeling ...’ ‘What is contact ...’ ‘What are the six sense fields ...’ ‘What are name and form ...’ ‘What is consciousness ...’
- 8.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up: ‘What are choices,

177. “Twist” (*visūka*) is used with “dodge” (*vipphandita*) and sometimes “duck” (*visevita*) for a horse fighting the bit (MN 65:33.2) or a crab escaping the torment of children (MN 35:23.9). *Visūka* is also used for a “show” of dance, etc., where the commentarial gloss *paṭṭāṇi* (“screw”) reinforces the sense “twist, gyrate”. As descriptions of views, they suggest the active process of denial and distortion through which views shape how we see the world.

and who do they belong to?’ or ‘choices are one thing, who they belong to is another’, or ‘the soul and the body are one and the same’, or ‘the soul is one thing, the body another.’ These are all cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.”

SN 12.36

Ignorance is a Requirement (2nd)

Dutiyaavijjāpaccayasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

1.2

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

2.1

Mendicants, you might say, ‘What are old age and death, and who do they belong to?’ Or you might say, ‘Old age and death are one thing, who they belong to is another.’ But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. If you have the view that the soul and the body are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.’

‘What is rebirth ...’ ‘What is continued existence ...’ ‘What is grasping ...’ ‘What is craving ...’ ‘What is feeling ...’ ‘What is contact ...’ ‘What are the six sense fields ...’ ‘What are name and form ...’ ‘What is consciousness ...’ You might say, ‘What are choices, and who do they belong to?’ Or you might say, ‘Choices are one thing, who they belong to is another.’ But both of these mean the same thing, only the phrasing differs. If you have the view that the soul and the body are one and the same, there is no living of the spiritual life. If you have the view that the soul is one thing, the body another, there is no living of the spiritual life. Avoiding these two extremes, the

Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.’

- 4.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up: ‘What are old age and death, and who do they belong to?’ or ‘old age and death are one thing, who they belong to is another’, or ‘the soul and the body are one and the same’, or ‘the soul is one thing, the body another’. These are all cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 5.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, then any twists, ducks, and dodges are given up: ‘What is rebirth ...’ ‘What is continued existence ...’ ‘What is grasping ...’ ‘What is craving ...’ ‘What is feeling ...’ ‘What is contact ...’ ‘What are the six sense fields ...’ ‘What are name and form ...’ ‘What is consciousness ...’ ‘What are choices, and who do they belong to?’ or ‘choices are one thing, who they belong to is another’, or ‘the soul and the body are one and the same’, or ‘the soul is one thing, the body another’. These are all cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.”

SN 12.37

Not Yours

Natumhasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, this body doesn’t belong to you or to anyone else. It’s old deeds, and should be seen as produced by choices and intentions, as something to be felt.¹⁷⁸
- 2.1 A learned noble disciple carefully and rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself: ‘So, when this exists, this comes to

178. That is to say, the body we bear in this life was created by our intentional deeds or moral choices in a past life, which we experience the result of in this life (see SN 12.19:1.2). Treated in more detail in SN 35.146.

be; due to the arising of this, this arises.¹⁷⁹ When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is:¹⁸⁰ Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.” 2.5

SN 12.38

Intention

Cetanāsutta

At Sāvattḥi.

1.1

“Mendicants, what you intend or plan, and what you have underlying tendencies for become a support for the continuation of 1.2

179. This abstract principle of dependent origination sometimes precedes or stands for the full set of twelve links. It supplies the verbs that are missing from the bare nouns in the standard sequence: *hoti* (“is” or “comes to be”) and *uppajjati* (“arises”). The two phrases use complementary ways of specifying a causal relationship: the first employs the locative absolute to emphasize the presence of the antecedent condition; the second the ablative to emphasize the derivation of the subsequent condition. These two linguistic forms are also used for the twelve links themselves: the normal sequence, as here, uses the ablative form; sometimes we find the locative absolute form (eg. SN 12.49); sometimes both (eg. SN 12.4:15.2). | Later, the abstract principle was sometimes referred to as “specific conditionality” in contrast to the twelve links which are “dependent origination”. While this is a handy distinction, it is not found in the Suttas, where the two terms are synonymous.

180. In translation, it is conventional to differentiate the pronouns for comprehensibility. However, while Pali can readily distinguish “this” from “that”, here we have different forms of the same pronoun *idam*, chosen to indicate something present. In Upaniṣadic language, the use of repeated demonstrative pronouns asserts absolute identity, which the Buddha subverts (see notes at SN 12.17:5.1, MN 22:15.10, MN 38:2.2, DN 6:15.5). “This”, it turns out, is a constant state of coming into being and disappearing, “arising as one thing and ceasing as another” (*aññadeva uppajjati aññam nirujjhati*, SN 12.61:4.1).

consciousness.¹⁸¹ When this support exists, consciousness becomes established.¹⁸² When consciousness is established and grows, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future.¹⁸³ When there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

- 2.1 If you don't intend or plan, but still have underlying tendencies, this becomes a support for the continuation of consciousness.¹⁸⁴ When this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When consciousness is established and grows, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. When there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

181. "Intend" (*ceteti*) and "plan" (*pakappeti*) play the role of "choices" (*saṅkhāra*), while "underlying tendencies" (*anuseti*) stand for "ignorance". | This Sutta illustrates the threefold pattern (*tivaṭṭa*) into which dependent origination was later analyzed. The twelve factors are grouped under three headings: ignorance, craving, and grasping are "defilements" (*kilesavaṭṭa*); choices and continued existence are "deeds" (*kammavaṭṭa*); the remainder are "results" (*vipākavaṭṭa*). Within these groups we find different synonyms or related terms are used in particular contexts (see eg. SN 12.19). The least fitting in this scheme is *bhava*, which includes all three, but is counted under "deeds" here as it connects grasping with rebirth. We find this pattern expressed in different ways elsewhere in the suttas; for example, SN 46.26:2.2 says that due to practicing the awakening factors, craving is given up (*kilesavaṭṭa*), then deeds (*kammavaṭṭa*), then suffering (*vipākavaṭṭa*).

182. That is, it takes rebirth in a new life.

183. It "grows" as the individual grows up and matures, leading to renewal of the cycle (see SN 12.64, SN 22.53, MN 38:28.1).

184. Underlying tendencies manifest as morally potent choices. But we usually don't make such choices continually; they only occur from time to time. Much of the time there is no active volition, for example, when we are asleep. But so long as the tendencies are still there, one is not freed.

If you don't intend or plan or have underlying tendencies, this 3.1
 doesn't become a support for the continuation of consciousness.
 With no support, consciousness is not established. When conscious-
 ness is not established and doesn't grow, there's no regeneration into
 a new state of existence in the future. When there is no regeneration
 into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and
 death cease, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.
 That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

SN 12.39

Intention (2nd)

Dutiyacetanāsutta

At Sāvathī.

1.1

"Mendicants, what you intend or plan, and what you have un- 1.2
 derlying tendencies for become a support for the continuation of
 consciousness. When this support exists, consciousness becomes
 established. When consciousness is established and grows, name
 and form are conceived.¹⁸⁵ Name and form are requirements for
 the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for con-
 tact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. ... craving ... grasping
 ... continued existence ... rebirth ... old age and death, sorrow,
 lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress come to be. That is how this
 entire mass of suffering originates.

If you don't intend or plan, but still have underlying tendencies, 2.1
 this becomes a support for the continuation of consciousness. When
 this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When con-
 sciousness is established and grows, name and form are conceived.
 Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. ... That is
 how this entire mass of suffering originates.

185. "Conceived" (*avakkanti*) is one of the synonyms of "rebirth" (SN 12.2:4.2).
 Without conception, name and form would not take shape (literally "coagulate")
 in the womb (DN 15:21.2).

- 3.1 If you don't intend or plan or have underlying tendencies, this doesn't become a support for the continuation of consciousness. With no support, consciousness is not established. When consciousness is not established and doesn't grow, name and form are not conceived. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

SN 12.40

Intention (3rd)

Tatiyacetanāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 "Mendicants, what you intend or plan, and what you have underlying tendencies for become a support for the continuation of consciousness. When this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When consciousness is established and grows, there is an inclination.¹⁸⁶ When there is an inclination, there is coming and going.¹⁸⁷ When there is coming and going, there is passing away and reappearing. When there is passing away and reappearing, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 2.1 If you don't intend or plan, but still have underlying tendencies, this becomes a support for the continuation of consciousness. When this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When consciousness is established and grows, there is an inclination. When there is an inclination, there is coming and going. When there is

186. This evocative passage is also at Ud 8.4:3.4, MN 144:11.6, and SN 35.87:11.6. | "Inclination" is *nati*, from a root meaning "to bend". Sometimes used in the sense of a "inclination of mind" (MN 19:6.1), here, as the following lines make clear, it refers to the mind inclining to rebirth; explained by the commentary as "craving". Compare the English idiom, "one is bent on destruction".

187. The phrase "coming and going" is often used in the context of rebirth (eg. AN 5.57:11.2).

coming and going, there is passing away and reappearing. When there is passing away and reappearing, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

If you don't intend or plan or have underlying tendencies, this 3.1 doesn't become a support for the continuation of consciousness. With no support, consciousness is not established. When consciousness is not established and doesn't grow, there's no inclination. When there's no inclination, there's no coming and going. When there's no coming and going, there's no passing away and reappearing. When there's no passing away and reappearing, future rebirth, old age, and death cease, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

The Chapter on Householders

SN 12.41

Fears and Enmities

Pañcaverabhaya sutta

1.1 At Sāvattṥi.

1.2 Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, the Buddha said to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika:

2.1 “Householder, when a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves:¹⁸⁸ ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I’m not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’

3.1 What are the five fears and enmities they have quelled? Anyone who kills living creatures brims with fear and enmity both in this life

188. “Fear” (*bhaya*) and “enmity” (*vera*) arise when living in a manner hostile or harmful to others. Refraining from harm is a gift of freedom from fear for countless creatures as well as oneself (AN 8.39:3.6). Kauṭilya says that spies can exploit such fears and enmities to create dissension (Arthaśāstra 9.6.69).

and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from killing living creatures.

Anyone who steals brims with fear and enmity both in this life 4.1
and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from stealing.

Anyone who commits sexual misconduct brims with fear and 5.1
enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from sexual misconduct.

Anyone who lies brims with fear and enmity both in this life and 6.1
in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from lying.

Anyone who consumes beer, wine, and liquor intoxicants brims 7.1
with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from beer, wine, and liquor intoxicants. These are the five fears and enmities they have quelled.

What are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess? 8.1
It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching 9.1
is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.'

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of 10.1
the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, direct, systematic, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individual persons. This is the Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples that is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of

a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world.’

11.1 And a noble disciple’s ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. These are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess.

12.1 And what is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom?¹⁸⁹ A noble disciple carefully and rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself: ‘So, when this exists, that comes to be; when this doesn’t exist, that is not. Due to the arising of this, that arises; due to the cessation of this, that ceases. Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

12.6 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’ This is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom.

13.1 When a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves: ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I’m not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’”

SN 12.42

Fears and Enmities (2nd)

Dutiyaapañcaverabhayasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

189. A *nāya* is a “system”, method, or way of practice that proceeds in line with cause and effect.

“Mendicants, when a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves: ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I’m not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’ 1.2

What are the five fears and enmities they have quelled? Killing living creatures ... stealing ... sexual misconduct ... lying ... consuming intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor ... These are the five fears and enmities they have quelled. 2.1

What are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... and their ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones. These are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess. 3.1

And what is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom? A noble disciple carefully and rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself ... This is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom. 4.1

When a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves: ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I’m not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’” 5.1

SN 12.43

Suffering

Dukkhasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the origin and disappearance of suffering. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

1.4 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 “And what, mendicants, is the origin of suffering? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact.¹⁹⁰ Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. ...¹⁹¹ This is the origin of suffering.

3.1 Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ...
Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ...
Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes.
... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches.
... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas.
The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. ... This is the origin of suffering.

4.1 And what is the disappearance of suffering? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases.¹⁹² When grasping ceases, con-

190. This discourse (and the next two) begin with consciousness in the process of sense stimulation. They offer a compressed sequence that focuses on the arising of suffering in the present life, and how by letting go of craving it is possible to not generate a future life.

191. The text jumps straight from craving to suffering, although the full sequence is stated in the cessation series. The next discourse, which is otherwise similar, lists all the factors, and the one after that goes to grasping, then indicates an abbreviation. I think the full sequence is meant in every case, and the sign of abbreviation in the Pali text is missing by mistake.

192. Craving can cease without leading to grasping for one practicing the path.

tinued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the disappearance of suffering.

Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ... 5.1
Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ...
Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes.
... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches.
... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas.
The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the disappearance of suffering.”

SN 12.44

The World

Lokasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you the origin and disappearance of the world. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.” 1.2

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

“And what, mendicants, is the origin of the world? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and 2.1

death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. This is the origin of the world.

- 3.1 Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ...
 Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ...
 Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes.
 ... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches.
 ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas.
 The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. ... Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. This is the origin of the world.

- 4.1 And what is the ending of the world? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the ending of the world.

- 5.1 Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ...
 Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ...
 Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes.
 ... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches.
 ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas.
 The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the ending of the world.”

At Ñātika

Ñātikasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying at Ñātika in the brick house.¹⁹³ Then while the Buddha was in private retreat he spoke this exposition of the teaching:

“Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ... Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ... Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. ... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, grasping ceases. When grasp-

193. Ñātika (also spelled *nātika*, or *nādika*; Sanskrit *jñātṛka*; Prākṛit *nāyika*) was the clan to which the Jain leader Mahāvīra (called Nāṭaputta, i.e. Ñātiputta) belonged. Here it is the name of their chief town.

ing ceases, continued existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

6.1 Now at that time a certain monk was standing listening in on the Buddha. The Buddha saw him and said, “Monk, did you hear that exposition of the teaching?”

6.5 “Yes, sir.”

6.6 “Learn that exposition of the teaching, memorize it, and remember it. That exposition of the teaching is beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life.”

SN 12.46

A Certain Brahmin

Aññatarabrāhmaṇasutta

1.1 At Sāvathī.

1.2 Then a certain brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

2.1 “Worthy Gotama, are he who does the deed and he who experiences the result one and the same?”¹⁹⁴

2.2 “‘He who does the deed and he who experiences the result are one and the same’: this is one extreme, brahmin.”

3.1 “Then is he who does the deed one and he who experiences the result another?”

3.2 “‘He who does the deed is one and he who experiences the result is another’: this is the second extreme.

3.3 Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

3.5 Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and

194. See comment at SN 12.17:5.1.

ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’”

When he said this, the brahmin said to the Buddha, “Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.” 4.1

SN 12.47

Jānussoṇi

Jānussoṇisutta

At Sāvattḥi. 1.1

Then the brahmin Jānussoṇi went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. Seated to one side he said to the Buddha:¹⁹⁵ 1.2

“Worthy Gotama, does all exist?” 2.1

“‘All exists’: this is one extreme, brahmin.” 2.2

“Then does all not exist?” 3.1

“‘All does not exist’: this is the second extreme. 3.2

Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the middle way: ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices. 3.3

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices 3.5

195. We meet Jānussoṇi many times in the Suttas as a prominent brahmin who converses with the Buddha on a number of topics, with a special interest in the afterlife. His name appears in Sanskrit as Jānaśruti or Jānaśruteya, which are patronymics of Janaśruti, “famed among the people”. The Pali commentary says it is a title awarded the family priest (*purohita*) of Kosala, which would make him one of the most powerful brahmins alive. However, I can find no confirmation of such a title, whereas the use of Jānaśruti as a patronymic by the descendants of Janaśruti is well attested. One such, perhaps the same individual we meet in the Suttas, features in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.1–3 as a generous seeker of the truth.

cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

- 4.1 When he said this, the brahmin Jānussoṇi said to the Buddha, “Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”¹⁹⁶

SN 12.48

A Cosmologist

Lokāyatikasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Then a brahmin cosmologist went up to the Buddha ...¹⁹⁷ Seated to one side he said to the Buddha:
- 2.1 “Worthy Gotama, does all exist?”
- 2.2 “‘All exists’: this is the oldest cosmology, brahmin.”¹⁹⁸
- 3.1 “Then does all not exist?”
- 3.2 “‘All does not exist’: this is the second cosmology.”
- 4.1 “Well, is all oneness?”
- 4.2 “‘All is oneness’: this is the third cosmology.”¹⁹⁹

196. Jānussoṇi goes for refuge so often in the suttas that it is almost a genre unto itself (MN 4, MN 27, AN 2.17:3.1, AN 3.55, AN 3.59, AN 4.184, AN 6.52, AN 7.47, AN 10.119, AN 10.167, AN 10.177). Such narrative accounts of conversion or enlightenment at the end of discourses are not very reliable, as they are not the Buddha’s words but were added by editors at some point.

197. “Cosmology” (*lokāyata*) was a branch of Vedic study concerned with the nature and extent of the world and how this may be known (AN 9.38, SN 12.48; cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.3.1). Vedic metaphysics posited “existence” as a primordial “oneness” from which the diversity of the world spread out.

198. The “oldest cosmology” is quite literal. The oldest Indian cosmology is found in a few late Rig Vedic hymns, especially the Nāsadiya Sūkta, which begins: “The nonexistent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time” (Rig Veda 10.129.1, Jamison/Brereton translation). RV 10.72.2 says that for the oldest gods, “what exists was born from what does not exist”.

199. After discussing existence for six lines, the seventh line of the Nāsadiya Sūkta begins, “That One breathed without wind by its independent will. There

“Then is all expansiveness?”²⁰⁰ 5.1

“All is expansiveness’: this is the fourth cosmology. 5.2

Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches by the 6.1
middle way: ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this 6.3
entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and
ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease,
consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering
ceases.’”

When he said this, the brahmin cosmologist said to the Buddha, 7.1
“Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may
the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for
refuge for life.”

existed nothing else beyond that.” Then, “that One was born by the power of heat”. Thus the one is the immortal Divinity, confirming the commentary’s identification of this with eternalism (and the following with annihilationism). Similarly, RV 10.121 speaks of the anonymous Creator who “existed alone”.

200. *Puthutta* is used elsewhere of a “spreading” poison, but only here in a philosophical sense. Throughout the Rig Veda, *prthu* is the broad expanse of earth or waters, spread out by Indra (eg. RV 10.113.4) and burned over by Agni (RV 10.156.3). It has sexual connotations, too: an ample womb (RV 10.99.2) or a fat ass (RV 10.86.8; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.2.5.16, 3.5.1.11). Thus while “oneness” suggests the Divinity that underlies all, “expansiveness” suggests the broad, pregnant world in which humans live. Thus the sacrificial cake should be spread expansively, but not too expansively, for that would make it human and therefore mortal (ŚB 1.2.2.9). In the Nāsadiya Sūkta instead of *prthu* we find *tiraścīna* (“stretched across”; the two terms are synonymous at ŚB 6.3.3.19) describing the searching minds of the sage-poets: “Their cord was stretched across: Did something exist below it? Did something exist above?” (RV 10.129.5). Moreover, Pali *puthu* stands for both Sanskrit *prthu* (“broad, wide, expansive”) and *prthak* (“separate, individual”). Both senses apply here, and indeed, they are not separate even in the Rig Veda, for things that proceed separately (*prthak*, rays of the sun, rivers, cows) spread out (*prthu*) across the broad earth (*prthivi*).

SN 12.49

A Noble Disciple

Ariyasāvakasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, a learned noble disciple doesn’t think: ‘When what exists, what is? Due to the arising of what, what arises? When what exists do name and form come to be? When what exists do the six sense fields ... contact ... feeling ... craving ... grasping ... continued existence ... rebirth ... old age and death come to be?’²⁰¹

2.1 Rather, a learned noble disciple has only knowledge about this that is independent of others: ‘When this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises.’²⁰² When ignorance exists choices come to be. When choices exist consciousness comes to be. When consciousness exists name and form come to be. When name and form exist the six sense fields come to be. When the six sense fields exist contact comes to be. When contact exists feeling comes to be. When feeling exists craving comes to be. When craving exists grasping comes to be. When grasping exists continued existence comes to be. When continued existence exists rebirth comes to be. When rebirth exists old age and death come to be.’ They understand: ‘That is how this world originates.’

3.1 A learned noble disciple doesn’t think: ‘When what doesn’t exist, what is not? Due to the cessation of what, what ceases? When what doesn’t exist do choices not come to be? When what doesn’t exist do name and form not come to be? When what doesn’t exist do the six sense fields ... contact ... feeling ... craving ... grasping ... continued existence ... rebirth ... old age and death not come to be?’

201. Choices and consciousness are included here in some editions, but the commentary clearly read them as absent, this being the only difference from the next discourse.

202. Each link is here expressed in the form of the *first half* of this formula, using the locative absolute construction (see note on SN 12.37:2.2).

Rather, a learned noble disciple has only knowledge about this 4.1
that is independent of others: ‘When this doesn’t exist, this doesn’t
come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. When ignorance
doesn’t exist choices don’t come to be. When choices don’t exist
consciousness doesn’t come to be. When consciousness doesn’t
exist name and form don’t come to be. When name and form don’t
exist the six sense fields don’t come to be. ... continued existence
doesn’t come to be ... rebirth doesn’t come to be ... When rebirth
doesn’t exist old age and death don’t come to be.’ They understand:
‘That is how this world ceases.’

A noble disciple comes to truly understand the origin and disap- 5.1
pearance of the world. Such a noble disciple is one who is called
‘one accomplished in view’, ‘one accomplished in vision’, ‘one who
has come to the true teaching’, ‘one who sees this true teaching’,
‘one endowed with a trainee’s insight’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s
knowledge’, ‘one who has entered the stream of the teaching’, ‘a noble
one with penetrative wisdom’, and also ‘one who stands knocking at
the door to freedom from death.’”

SN 12.50

A Noble Disciple (2nd)

Dutiyaariyasāvakasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, a learned noble disciple doesn’t think: ‘When what 1.2
exists, what is? Due to the arising of what, what arises? When what
exists do choices come to be? When what exists does consciousness
come to be? When what exists do name and form ... the six sense
fields ... contact ... feeling ... craving ... grasping ... continued
existence ... rebirth ... old age and death come to be?’

Rather, a learned noble disciple has only knowledge about this 2.1
that is independent of others: ‘When this exists, this comes to be;
due to the arising of this, this arises. When ignorance exists, choices

come to be. When choices exist consciousness comes to be. When consciousness exists name and form come to be. When name and form exist the six sense fields come to be. When the six sense fields exist contact comes to be. When contact exists feeling comes to be. When feeling exists craving comes to be. When craving exists grasping comes to be. When grasping exists continued existence comes to be. When continued existence exists rebirth comes to be. When rebirth exists old age and death come to be.’ They understand: ‘That is how this world originates.’

- 3.1 A learned noble disciple doesn’t think: ‘When what doesn’t exist, what is not? Due to the cessation of what, what ceases? When what doesn’t exist do choices not come to be? When what doesn’t exist does consciousness not come to be? When what doesn’t exist do name and form ... the six sense fields ... contact ... feeling ... craving ... grasping ... continued existence ... rebirth ... old age and death not come to be?’
- 4.1 Rather, a learned noble disciple has only knowledge about this that is independent of others: ‘When this doesn’t exist, this doesn’t come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is: When ignorance doesn’t exist, choices don’t come to be. When choices don’t exist consciousness doesn’t come to be. When consciousness doesn’t exist name and form don’t come to be. When name and form don’t exist the six sense fields don’t come to be. ... When rebirth doesn’t exist old age and death don’t come to be.’ They understand: ‘That is how this world ceases.’
- 5.1 A noble disciple comes to truly understand the origin and disappearance of the world. Such a noble disciple is one who is called ‘one accomplished in view’, ‘one accomplished in vision’, ‘one who has come to the true teaching’, ‘one who sees this true teaching’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s insight’, ‘one endowed with a trainee’s knowledge’, ‘one who has entered the stream of the teaching’, ‘a noble one with penetrative wisdom’, and also ‘one who stands pressing against the door to freedom from death.’”

The Chapter on Suffering

SN 12.51

An Inquiry

Parivīmamsanasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattṭhi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, when a mendicant is inquiring, how do you define when they are inquiring for the complete ending of suffering?" 2.1

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 2.2

"Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.3

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.4

"Mendicants, take a mendicant who makes an inquiry:²⁰³ 'The suffering that arises in the world starting with old age and death takes many and diverse forms. What is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of this suffering? When what exists do old age and death come to be? When what does not exist do old age and death 3.1

203. Pali is rich in expressions for inner reflection and investigation. Sometimes this process is called "inner self-examination" (SN 12.66:3.3, sometimes "rational application of mind" (SN 12.4:2.3).

not come to be?’ While making an inquiry they understand: ‘The suffering that arises in the world starting with old age and death takes many and diverse forms. The source of this suffering is rebirth. When rebirth exists, old age and death come to be. When rebirth doesn’t exist, old age and death don’t come to be.’

4.1 They understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the fitting practice for their cessation. And they practice in line with that path. This is called a mendicant who is practicing for the complete ending of suffering, for the cessation of old age and death.

5.1 Then they inquire further: ‘But what is the source of this rebirth? When what exists does rebirth come to be? And when what does not exist does rebirth not come to be?’ While making an inquiry they understand: ‘Continued existence is the source of rebirth. When continued existence exists, rebirth comes to be. When continued existence does not exist, rebirth doesn’t come to be.’

6.1 They understand rebirth, its origin, its cessation, and the fitting practice for its cessation. And they practice in line with that path. This is called a mendicant who is practicing for the complete ending of suffering, for the cessation of rebirth.

7.1 Then they inquire further: ‘But what is the source of this continued existence? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this grasping? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this craving? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this feeling? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this contact? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of these six sense fields? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this name and form? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of this consciousness? ...’ ... ‘But what is the source of these choices? When what exists do choices come to be? When what does not exist do choices not come to be?’ While making an inquiry they understand: ‘Ignorance is the source of choices. When ignorance exists, choices come to be. When ignorance does not exist, choices don’t come to be.’

8.1 They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the fitting practice for their cessation. And they practice in line with that

path. This is called a mendicant who is practicing for the complete ending of suffering, for the cessation of choices.

If an ignoramus makes a good choice, consciousness passes on 9.1 by means of goodness.²⁰⁴ If they make a bad choice, consciousness passes on by means of badness. If they make an imperturbable choice, consciousness passes on by means of imperturbability.²⁰⁵ When a mendicant has given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of knowledge they don't make a good choice, a bad choice, or an imperturbable choice.²⁰⁶ Not choosing or intending, they don't grasp at anything in the world. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished.²⁰⁷

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 9.7 been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

If they feel a pleasant feeling, they understand that it's imper- 10.1 manent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it.²⁰⁸ If they feel a painful feeling, they understand that it's impermanent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it. If they feel a neutral feeling, they understand

204. This is one of the passages showing that the primary sense of *saṅkhāra* is moral "choices" either good, bad, or "imperturbable". See also MN 57:9.2, AN 3.23, AN 4.233. | The suffix *-upaga* indicates "passing on" to rebirth in a new life. The compound *puññūpaga* parallels *kammupaga* and means "passes on by means of goodness" (resolve to *puññena upagataṃ*).

205. The fourth absorption and above are called "imperturbable" (*āneñja*) because they are associated with equanimous feeling. This is technically distinguished from "good" or "meritorious" (*puñña*) choices, whose outcome is pleasant feeling.

206. This shows that the sense of "choices" here is morally pregnant: they make no choice productive of future lives. They still make "choices" which are in line with the good, they just don't have any kammic effect.

207. Letting go is not just a conceptual matter, it has immediate emotional consequences. *Paritassati* conveys the twin senses of desire and agitation, for which "anxiety" seems the best fit.

208. This describes the reflective experience of the arahant.

that it's impermanent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it. If they feel a pleasant feeling, they feel it detached. If they feel a painful feeling, they feel it detached. If they feel a neutral feeling, they feel it detached.

11.1 Feeling the end of the body draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of the body draw close.' Feeling the end of life draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of life draw close.' They understand: 'When my body breaks up and my life has come to an end, everything that's felt, since I no longer take pleasure in it, will become cool right here. Only bodily remains will be left.'²⁰⁹

12.1 Suppose a person were to remove a hot clay pot from a potter's kiln and place it down on level ground. Its heat would dissipate right there, and the shards would be left behind.

12.3 In the same way, feeling the end of the body draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of the body draw close.' Feeling the end of life draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of life draw close.' They understand: 'When my body breaks up and my life has come to an end, everything that's felt, since I no longer take pleasure in it, will become cool right here. Only bodily remains will be left.'

13.1 What do you think, mendicants? Would a mendicant who has ended the defilements still make good choices, bad choices, or imperturbable choices?"

13.3 "No, sir."

14.1 "And when there are no choices at all, with the cessation of choices, would consciousness still be found?"

14.2 "No, sir."

15.1 "And when there's no consciousness at all, would name and form still be found?"

15.2 "No, sir."

16.1 "And when there are no name and form at all, would the six sense fields still be found?"

209. To "become cool" is, as the simile makes clear, to realize extinguishment (*nibbāna*).

- “No, sir.” 16.2
- “And when there are no six sense fields at all, would contact still be found?” 17.1
- “No, sir.” 17.2
- “And when there’s no contact at all, would feeling still be found?” 18.1
- “No, sir.” 18.2
- “And when there’s no feeling at all, would craving still be found?” 19.1
- “No, sir.” 19.2
- “And when there’s no craving at all, would grasping still be found?” 20.1
- “No, sir.” 20.2
- “And when there’s no grasping at all, would continued existence still be found?” 21.1
- “No, sir.” 21.2
- “And when there’s no continued existence at all, would rebirth still be found?” 22.1
- “No, sir.” 22.2
- “And when there’s no rebirth at all, would old age and death still be found?” 23.1
- “No, sir.” 23.2
- “Good, good, mendicants! That’s how it is, not otherwise. Trust me on this, mendicants; be convinced. Have no doubts or uncertainties in this matter. Just this is the end of suffering.” 24.1

SN 12.52

Grasping

Upādānasutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows.²¹⁰ Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement

210. *Upādāniya* is literally “graspable”. The simile evokes the secondary sense of *upādāna* as “fuel”, so I translate “(things that) fuel grasping”.

for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

2.1 Suppose a great mass of fire was burning with ten, twenty, thirty, or forty loads of wood. And from time to time someone would toss in dry grass, cow dung, or wood. Fed and fuelled by that, the great mass of fire would burn for a long time.

2.4 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

3.1 There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

4.1 Suppose a great mass of fire was burning with ten, twenty, thirty, or forty loads of wood. And no one would toss in dry grass, cow dung, or wood from time to time. As the original fuel is used up and no more is added, the great mass of fire would be extinguished due to not being fed.

4.4 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.53

Fetters

Samyojanasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

“There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate 1.2
on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows.²¹¹
Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement
for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for
rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow,
lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how
this entire mass of suffering originates.

Suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. And 2.1
from time to time someone would pour oil in and adjust the wick.
Fed and fuelled by that, the oil lamp would burn for a long time.

In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When 2.4
you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your
craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is
a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a
requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and
death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to
be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate 3.1
on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving
ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence
ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When
rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness,
and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

Suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. And no 4.1
one would pour oil in and adjust the wick from time to time. As the
original fuel is used up and no more is added, the oil lamp would be
extinguished due to not being fed.

In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you 4.4
concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases.
When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire
mass of suffering ceases.”

211. The fetters are desire and lust, the “things that tighten the fetters” (*samyo-janiya dhamma*) are the pleasures afforded by the senses (SN 35.122).

SN 12.54

Fetters (2nd)

Dutiyasamyojanasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. And from time to time someone would pour oil in and adjust the wick. Fed and fuelled by that, the oil lamp would burn for a long time.

1.5 In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

2.1 Suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. And no one would pour oil in and adjust the wick from time to time. As the original fuel is used up and no more is added, the oil lamp would be extinguished due to not being fed.

2.4 In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.55

A Great Tree

Mahārakkhasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

Suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards 2.1
and across all draw the sap upwards. Fed and fuelled by that, the
great tree would stand for a long time.

In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you 2.4
concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving
grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this
entire mass of suffering originates.

There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on 3.1
the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving
ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence
ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a 4.1
spade and basket. They'd cut the tree down at the roots, dig it up,
and pull the roots out, down to the fibers and stems. They'd cut the
tree apart, cut up the parts, and chop it into splinters. They'd dry the
splinters in the wind and sun, burn them with fire, and reduce them
to ashes. Then they'd winnow the ashes in a strong wind, or float
them away down a swift stream. In this way the great tree is cut off
at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise
in the future.

In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you 4.7
concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases.
When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued
existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering
ceases."

SN 12.56

A Great Tree (2nd)

Dutiyamahārukkhasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

- 1.2 “Mendicants, suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards and across all draw the sap upwards. Fed and fuelled by that, the great tree would stand for a long time.
- 1.5 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 2.1 Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a spade and basket. They’d cut the tree down at the roots, dig them up, and pull them out, down to the fibers and stems. They’d cut the tree apart, cut up the parts, and chop it into splinters. They’d dry the splinters in the wind and sun, burn them with fire, and reduce them to ashes. Then they’d winnow the ashes in a strong wind, or glide them down a swift stream. In this way the great tree is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 2.6 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.57

A Sapling

Taruṇarukkkhasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 2.1 Suppose there was a sapling. And from time to time someone would clear around the roots, supply soil, and water it. Fed and fuelled by that, the sapling would grow, increase, and mature.

In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. 2.4

There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. 3.1

Suppose there was a sapling. Then a person comes along with a spade and basket. ... They'd cut the sapling apart, cut up the parts, and chop it into splinters. They'd dry the splinters in the wind and sun, burn them with fire, and reduce them to ashes. Then they'd winnow the ashes in a strong wind, or glide them down a swift stream. In this way the sapling is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future. 4.1

In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases." 4.5

SN 12.58

Name and Form

Nāmarūpasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

"There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, name and form are conceived.²¹² Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. 1.2

212. See note on SN 12.39:1.4.

- 2.1 Suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards and across all draw the sap upwards. Fed and fuelled by that, the great tree would stand for a long time.
- 2.4 In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, name and form are conceived. ...
- 3.1 There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, name and form are not conceived. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.
- 4.1 Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a spade and basket. ... In this way the great tree is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 4.4 In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, name and form are not conceived. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.59

Consciousness

Viññānasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, consciousness is conceived.
- 1.3 Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 2.1 Suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards and across all draw the sap upwards. ...
- 2.3 In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, consciousness is conceived. ...

There are things that tighten the fetters. When you concentrate 3.1
on the drawbacks of these things, consciousness is not conceived.
When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. ... That is how
this entire mass of suffering ceases.

Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a 4.1
spade and basket. ... In this way the great tree is cut off at the root,
made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.

In the same way, there are things that tighten the fetters. When 4.4
you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, consciousness is
not conceived. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease.
... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

SN 12.60

Causation

Nidānasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near 1.1
the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma.²¹³ Then Venerable Ānanda
went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to
him:

“It’s incredible, sir! It’s amazing, in that this dependent origination 1.3
is deep and appears deep, yet to me it seems as plain as can be.”

“Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! This dependent origination is 2.1
deep and appears deep. It is because of not understanding and not
penetrating this teaching that this population has become tangled
like string, knotted like a ball of thread, and matted like rushes and

213. This Nidānasutta opens in a way practically identical to the Mahānidānasutta (DN 15). However, after the introduction it merely recapitulates the teachings from the previous discourses, unlike the Mahānidānasutta which introduces a dazzling range of unique perspectives. It is hardly possible that Ānanda would make the same mistake twice, so it seems likely that the present discourse is an artificial composite.

reeds, and it doesn't escape the places of loss, the bad places, the underworld, transmigration.

- 3.1 There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 4.1 Suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards and across all draw the sap upwards. Fed and fuelled by that, the great tree would stand for a long time.
- 4.4 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.
- 5.1 There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.
- 6.1 Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a spade and basket. They'd cut the tree down at the roots, dig them up, and pull them out, down to the fibers and stems. Then they'd split the tree apart, cut up the parts, and chop it into splinters. They'd dry the splinters in the wind and sun, burn them with fire, and reduce them to ashes. Then they'd winnow the ashes in a strong wind, or float them away down a swift stream. In this way the great tree is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.
- 6.8 In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth

ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

The Great Chapter

SN 12.61

Unlearned

Assutavāsutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. ...
- 1.3 “Mendicants, an unlearned ordinary person might become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed from this body made up of the four principal states.²¹⁴ Why is that? This body made up of the four principal states is seen to accumulate and disperse, to be taken up and laid to rest. That’s why an unlearned ordinary person might become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed from it.²¹⁵
- 2.1 But an unlearned ordinary person is unable to become disillusioned, dispassionate, or freed from that which is called ‘mind’ and also ‘sentience’ and also ‘consciousness.’²¹⁶ Why is that? Because for

214. The technical term “body made up of the four principal states” clarifies that it is the material body spoken of here, rather than, say, the *nāmakāya* (DN 15:20.2) or the *manomayakāya* (DN 2:86.11).

215. A number of non-Buddhist religious teachers were said to be “free of desire for sensual pleasures” through developing absorption meditation (AN 6.54:13.7, AN 7.66:11.1). This would probably include the Buddha’s former teachers. Such freedom is temporary, however, as without severing the root-level attachments the desire will eventually resurface.

216. The terms “mind” (*citta*), “sentience” (*mano*), and “consciousness” (*viññāṇa*) are broadly synonymous and in many cases may be substituted for one another. Nonetheless, they each have a particular context in which they pre-

a long time they've been attached to it, thought of it as their own, and mistaken it: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.'²¹⁷ That's why an unlearned ordinary person is unable to become disillusioned, dispassionate, or freed from it.

But an unlearned ordinary person would be better off taking this 3.1 body made up of the four principal states to be their self, rather than the mind. Why is that? This body made up of the four principal states is seen to last for a year, or for two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred years, or even longer.

But that which is called 'mind' and also 'sentience' and also 'con- 4.1 sciousness' arises as one thing and ceases as another all day and all night.²¹⁸ It's like a monkey moving through the forest. It grabs hold of one branch, lets it go, and grabs another; then it lets that go and grabs yet another.²¹⁹ In the same way, that which is called 'mind' and also 'sentience' and also 'consciousness' arises as one thing and ceases as another all day and all night.

In this case, a learned noble disciple carefully and rationally ap- 5.1 plies the mind to dependent origination itself: 'So, when this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is: Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. ... That is how this 5.5 entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease,

dominate. *Citta* is to be developed, in which respect it pertains to the fourth noble truth, the path. *Mano*, which I translate here as "sentience" for the sake of disambiguation, is often used in the active sense of the deeds done by the mind, pertaining to the second noble truth, the origin of suffering. *Viññāṇa* is the key factor in the experience of suffering, pertaining to the first noble truth.

217. This view is expressed at DN 1:2.13.4.

218. Note that impermanence is described as constantly changing during the day rather than in terms of momentariness, which is not found in the Suttas.

219. This is an early source for the idiom "monkey mind". See also Thag 2.3:2.1, Snp 4.4:4.3, and especially Thag 19.1:21.3.

consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’

6.1 Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

6.3 They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”

SN 12.62

Unlearned (2nd)

Dutiyaassutavāsutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, an unlearned ordinary person might become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed from this body made up of the four principal states. Why is that? This body made up of the four principal states is seen to accumulate and disperse, to be taken up and laid to rest. That’s why an unlearned ordinary person might become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed from it. But an unlearned ordinary person is unable to become disillusioned, dispassionate, or freed from that which is called ‘mind’ and also ‘sentience’ and also ‘consciousness’. Why is that? Because for a long time they’ve been attached to it, thought of it as their own, and mistaken it: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self.’ That’s why an unlearned ordinary person is unable to become disillusioned, dispassionate, or freed from it.

2.1 But an unlearned ordinary person would be better off taking this body made up of the four principal states to be their self, rather than the mind. Why is that? This body made up of the four principal states is seen to last for a year, or for two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred years, or even longer. But that which

is called ‘mind’ and also ‘sentience’ and also ‘consciousness’ arises as one thing and ceases as another all day and all night.

In this case, a learned noble disciple carefully and rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself:²²⁰ ‘So, when this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. When this doesn’t exist, this doesn’t come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases.’ Pleasant feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as pleasant.²²¹ With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as pleasant, the corresponding pleasant feeling ceases and stops. Painful feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as painful. With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as painful, the corresponding painful feeling ceases and stops. Neutral feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as neutral. With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as neutral, the corresponding neutral feeling ceases and stops. 3.1

When you rub two sticks together, heat is generated and fire is produced. But when you part the sticks and lay them aside, any corresponding heat ceases and stops. In the same way, pleasant feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as pleasant. With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as pleasant, the corresponding pleasant feeling ceases and stops. Painful feeling ... Neutral feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as neutral. With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as neutral, the corresponding neutral feeling ceases and stops. 4.1

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with contact, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.²²² Being disillusioned. 5.1

220. Here the abstract principle stands for the full set of links, which are not stated in this discourse.

221. That is to say, certain kinds of contact are prone to create pleasant feelings, such as the contact experienced with a delicious taste, or in absorption.

222. This sentence lists “contact” where, in the five aggregates, we would expect “form”. That’s because here it stands for the contact experienced through the senses, starting with the “eye”, which is included in “form”. A similar structure is found elsewhere, showing the linkage between these teaching frameworks (SN 35.121:15.1).

lusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

- 5.3 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

SN 12.63

A Child's Flesh

Puttamamsasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.
- 1.2 "Mendicants, these four fuels maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born.²²³ What four? Edible food, whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. These are the four fuels that maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born.
- 2.1 And how should you regard edible food? Suppose a couple who were husband and wife set out to cross a desert, taking limited supplies. They had an only child, dear and beloved. As the couple were crossing the desert their limited quantity of supplies would run out, and they'd still have the rest of the desert to cross. Then it would occur to that couple: 'Our limited quantity of supplies has run out, and we still have the rest of the desert to cross. Why don't we kill our only child, so dear and beloved, and prepare dried and spiced meat? Then we can make it across the desert by eating our child's flesh. Let not all three perish.'²²⁴ Then that couple would kill their only child,

223. On the four fuels see SN 12.11. Here the Buddha drives home the suffering of dependency with a series of unforgettable similes.

224. In the Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma forcefully condemned meat eating, saying, "The meat of other animals is like the flesh of one's child" (13.115.010c; cf. 13.148.017c). Some, however, believed a child's flesh had magic potency (Kathāsaritsāgara 29d).

so dear and beloved, and prepare dried and spiced meat. They'd make it across the desert by eating their child's flesh. And as they'd eat their child's flesh, they'd beat their breasts and cry: 'Where are you, our only child? Where are you, our only child?'

What do you think, mendicants? Would they eat that food for fun, indulgence, adornment, or decoration?" 3.1

"No, sir." 3.3

"Wouldn't they eat that food just so they could make it across the desert?" 3.4

"Yes, sir." 3.5

"I say that this is how you should regard edible food. When edible food is completely understood, desire for the five kinds of sensual stimulation is completely understood. When desire for the five kinds of sensual stimulation is completely understood, a noble disciple is bound by no fetter that might return them again to this world.²²⁵ 3.6

And how should you regard contact as fuel? Suppose there was a flayed cow. If she stands by a wall, the creatures on the wall bite her.²²⁶ If she stands under a tree, the creatures in the tree bite her. If she stands in some water, the creatures in the water bite her. If she stands in the open, the creatures in the open bite her. Wherever that flayed cow stands, the creatures there would bite her. I say that this is how you should regard contact as fuel. When contact as fuel is completely understood, the three feelings are completely understood. When the three feelings are completely understood, a noble disciple has nothing further to do, I say. 4.1

And how should you regard mental intention as fuel? Suppose there was a pit of glowing coals deeper than a man's height, filled 5.1

225. This reflection goes as far as non-return, because the focus is on the elimination of sense desire.

226. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.2.13–17 explains that the cow was once naked, so the gods flayed man and clothed the cow with it. Now a man bleeds when cut even by grass, whereas a cow endures rain and cold and heat.

with glowing coals that neither flamed nor smoked.²²⁷ Then a person would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. Two strong men would grab them by the arms and drag them toward the pit of glowing coals. Then that person's intention, aim, and wish would be to get far away. Why is that? Because that person would think: 'If I fall in that pit of glowing coals, that will result in my death or deadly pain.' I say that this is how you should regard mental intention as fuel. When mental intention as fuel is completely understood, the three cravings are completely understood. When the three cravings are completely understood, a noble disciple has nothing further to do, I say.

6.1 And how should you regard consciousness as fuel? Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to the king, saying: 'Your Majesty, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' The king would say: 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the morning with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told. Then at midday the king would say: 'Look here, how is that man?' 'He's still alive, Your Majesty.' The king would say: 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the middle of the day with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told. Then late in the afternoon the king would say: 'Look here, how is that man?' 'He's still alive, Your Majesty.' The king would say: 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the late afternoon with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told.

6.19 What do you think, mendicants? Would that man experience pain and distress from being struck with three hundred spears a day?"

6.21 "Sir, that man would experience pain and distress from being struck with one spear, let alone three hundred spears!"

227. Such pits are frequently mentioned in the suttas and must have been a common sight. Since fired bricks were not regularly produced, perhaps they were used for metals or pottery, although kilns are also mentioned. Falling in one is an apt simile for the pains of hell (AN 7.66:8.3, SN 12.51:12.1).

“I say that this is how you should regard consciousness as fuel.”²²⁸ 6.23
 When consciousness as fuel is completely understood, name and form are completely understood. When name and form are completely understood, a noble disciple has nothing further to do, I say.”

SN 12.64

If There is Desire

Atthirāgasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, these four fuels maintain sentient beings that have 1.2
 been born and help those about to be born. What four? Edible food, whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. These are the four fuels that maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born.

If there is desire, relishing, and craving for edible food, conscious- 2.1
 ness becomes established there and grows.²²⁹ Where consciousness is established and grows, name and form are conceived. Where name and form are conceived, there is the growth of choices.²³⁰ Where choices grow, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future.²³¹ Where there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say this is full of sorrow, anguish, and distress.

228. This too is in reference to the sufferings undergone by consciousness in transmigration, especially in the hells (MN 129:8.2, SN 56.35).

229. Consciousness is organic, established or planted like a seed, for which see also SN 22.54, AN 3.76, AN 3.77.

230. As an individual matures, they develop the capacity to make responsible moral decisions.

231. Here choices in this life directly beget rebirth, which is normally stated as “consciousness”.

- 3.1 If there is desire, relishing, and craving for contact as fuel ... If there is desire, relishing, and craving for mental intention as fuel ... If there is desire, relishing, and craving for consciousness as fuel, consciousness becomes established there and grows. Where consciousness is established and grows, name and form are conceived. Where name and form are conceived, there is the growth of choices. Where choices grow, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say this is full of sorrow, anguish, and distress.
- 4.1 Suppose an artist or painter had some dye, red lac, turmeric, indigo, or rose madder. And on a polished plank or a wall or a canvas they'd create the form of a woman or a man, whole in its major and minor limbs.
- 4.2 In the same way, if there is desire, relishing, and craving for edible food, consciousness becomes established there and grows. Where consciousness is established and grows, name and form are conceived. Where name and form are conceived, there is the growth of choices. Where choices grow, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say this is full of sorrow, anguish, and distress.
- 5.1 If there is desire, relishing, and craving for contact as fuel ... If there is desire, relishing, and craving for mental intention as fuel ... If there is desire, relishing, and craving for consciousness as fuel, consciousness becomes established there and grows. Where consciousness is established and grows, name and form are conceived. Where name and form are conceived, there is the growth of choices. Where choices grow, there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is rebirth, old age, and death in the

future. Where there is rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say this is full of sorrow, anguish, and distress.

If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for edible food, consciousness does not become established there and doesn't grow. 6.1
Where consciousness is not established and doesn't grow, name and form are not conceived. Where name and form are not conceived, there is no growth of choices. Where choices don't grow, there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say there's no sorrow, anguish, and distress.

If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for contact as fuel ... If 7.1
there is no desire, relishing, and craving for mental intention as fuel ... If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for consciousness as fuel, consciousness doesn't become established there and doesn't grow. Where consciousness is not established and doesn't grow, name and form are not conceived. Where name and form are not conceived, there is no growth of choices. Where choices don't grow, there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say there's no sorrow, anguish, and distress.

Suppose there was a bungalow or a hall with a peaked roof, with 8.1
windows on the northern, southern, or eastern side. When the sun rises and a ray of light enters through a window, where would it land?"

"On the western wall, sir." 8.2

"If there was no western wall, where would it land?" 8.3

"On the ground, sir." 8.4

"If there was no ground, where would it land?" 8.5

"In water, sir." 8.6

"If there was no water, where would it land?" 8.7

8.8 “It wouldn’t land, sir.”²³²

8.9 “In the same way, if there is no desire, relishing, and craving for edible food, consciousness does not become established there and doesn’t grow. . . .

9.1 If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for contact as fuel . . . If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for mental intention as fuel . . . If there is no desire, relishing, and craving for consciousness as fuel, consciousness doesn’t become established there and doesn’t grow. Where consciousness is not established and doesn’t grow, name and form are not conceived. Where name and form are not conceived, there is no growth of choices. Where choices don’t grow, there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future. Where there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future, there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future. Where there is no rebirth, old age, and death in the future, I say there’s no sorrow, anguish, and distress.”

SN 12.65

The City

Nagarasutta

1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.

1.2 “Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought:²³³ ‘Alas, this world has

232. If a beam of light does not land anywhere, it cannot perform its key function, namely to illuminate. Likewise, if consciousness is not established in craving, it cannot perform its key function of perpetuating the cycle of rebirth.

233. This process describes the Buddha’s reflection before his awakening. It is of particular interest because it seems to depict the precise moment when his insight broke away from that of his Upaniṣadic teachers. Bhikkhu Bodhi notes: “It is possible the Bodhisatta had been seeking a self of the Upaniṣadic type, a self-subsistent subject consisting of pure consciousness that requires nothing but itself in order to exist. His discovery that consciousness is invariably dependent on name-and-form would have disclosed to him the futility of such

fallen into trouble. It's born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn, yet it doesn't understand how to escape from this suffering, from old age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this suffering, from old age and death?' Then it occurred to me: 'When what exists is there old age and death? What is a requirement for old age and death?' Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: 'When rebirth exists there's old age and death. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.'

Then it occurred to me: 'When what exists is there rebirth? ... 2.1 continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... What is a requirement for name and form?' Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: 'When consciousness exists there are name and form. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form.'²³⁴ Then it occurred to me: 'When what exists is there consciousness? What is a requirement for consciousness?' Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: 'When name and form exist there's consciousness. Name and form are requirements for consciousness.'²³⁵

Then it occurred to me: This consciousness turns back from name 3.1 and form, and doesn't go beyond that.²³⁶ This is the extent to which

a quest and thereby shown that even consciousness, the subtlest basis for the sense of self (see SN 12.61), is conditioned and thus marked by impermanence, suffering, and selflessness."

234. This analysis agrees with Yājñavalkya, who says that the manifold appearances in the world arise from consciousness (*etebhyo bhūtebhyah samutthāya*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12).

235. Here the Buddha contradicts Yājñavalkya's view that individuated awareness (*saññā*) returns into "this great reality, infinite, unbounded, a sheer mass of consciousness" (*idaṃ mahadbhūtam anantam apāraṃ vijñānaghana eva*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12). Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is not a fundamental reality (*mahadbhūta*) underlying multiplicity, but rather a conditioned process that exists only together with name and form.

236. The same idea is found at DN 14:2.19.2, where it also describes the reflective process of a Bodhisatta. The mutual conditioning of consciousness with name and form is then further detailed at DN 15:21.1 and SN 12.67. It seems

one may be reborn, grow old, die, pass away, or reappear. That is: name and form are requirements for consciousness. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for contact. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. ‘Origination, origination.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

4.1 Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: ‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there is no old age and death. When rebirth ceases old age and death cease.’ Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... six sense fields ... name and form? When what ceases do name and form cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: ‘When consciousness doesn’t exist there is no name and form. When consciousness ceases name and form cease.’

5.1 Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no consciousness? When what ceases does consciousness cease?’ Then, through rational application of mind, I penetrated with wisdom: ‘When name and form don’t exist, there is no consciousness. When name and form cease, consciousness ceases.’

6.1 Then it occurred to me: I have discovered the path to awakening. That is:²³⁷ When name and form cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. ‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom,

that this distinctive presentation was the original form for describing a Bodhisatta’s thought process. It was subsequently applied to the full set of twelve links (SN 12.4).

237. This phrase is found only here and DN 14:2.21.2.

realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Suppose a person was walking through a forest. They'd see an 7.1
ancient path, an ancient route traveled by humans in the past.²³⁸
Following it along, they'd see an ancient city, an ancient capital, in-
habited by humans in the past. It was lovely, complete with parks,
groves, lotus ponds, and embankments.²³⁹ Then that person would
inform a king or their chief minister: 'Please sir, you should know
this. While walking through a forest I saw an ancient path, an ancient
route traveled by humans in the past. Following it along I saw an
ancient city, an ancient capital, inhabited by humans in the past. It
was lovely, complete with parks, groves, lotus ponds, and embank-
ments. Sir, you should rebuild that city!' Then that king or their chief
minister would have that city rebuilt. And after some time that city
was successful and prosperous, populous and full of people, attained
to growth and expansion. In the same way, I saw an ancient path, an
ancient route traveled by fully awakened Buddhas in the past.

And what is that ancient path, the ancient route traveled by fully 8.1
awakened Buddhas in the past? It is simply this noble eightfold path,
that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right

238. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.8 quotes an ancient verse to the effect: "I have reached the subtle, extensive, ancient road; it has been realized by me". | *Añjasa* is elsewhere in Pali used only in poetry (eg, *Thag* 1.35:1.3) or by brahmins (*DN* 13:4.2). It is an old Vedic term for the "direct route" to the right place as advised by *Pūṣan* (*Rig Veda* 6.54.1). In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the new and full moon offerings are made "directly and expressly" to Indra and Agni (2.4.17); one goes "directly to the truth" after a dispute over supremacy among the gods is resolved (3.4.2.14); the horse knows the "direct" way to heaven that humans do not, like one who knows the country (13.2.3–2); and *Yājñavalkya* explains how to go "directly" to complete the sacrifice (13.5.3.5). One beholds "directly" that the self is god (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.15).

239. The idea of such "lost cities" decaying in the jungle is probably sparked by the archaeological remains of the Indus Valley Civilization, whose extensive cities would have been over a thousand years old in the Buddha's day. One major site, *Rakhigarhi*, is a few day's walk from *Kammāsadamma*, where the Buddha taught several times. He could easily have seen it himself or else heard about it.

livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is that ancient path, the ancient route traveled by fully awakened Buddhas in the past.

8.5 Following it along, I directly knew old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. Following it along, I directly knew rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... Following it along, I directly knew choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation.

8.24 Having directly known this, I told the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. And that's how this spiritual life has become successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and fully revealed among gods and humans."

SN 12.66

Probing Within

Sammasasutta

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

1.7 "Mendicants, do you probe within?"²⁴⁰

1.8 When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, "Sir, I probe within."

1.10 "But mendicant, how do you probe within?" Then that mendicant answered, but the Buddha was not happy with the answer.

2.1 When he had spoken, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the

240. *Sammasa* only appears in one other case in early Pali, at Thag 1.23:1.3. The root is *mas* ("to rub"), suggesting the idea of examining with the fingers or "to probe".

Buddha speak of probing within. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

“Well then, Ānanda, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.” 2.4

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.5

“Take a mendicant who probes within: ‘The suffering that arises 3.1
in the world starting with old age and death takes many and diverse forms. But what is the source of this suffering? When what exists do old age and death come to be? And when what does not exist do old age and death not come to be?’ While probing they know: ‘The suffering that arises in the world starting with old age and death takes many and diverse forms. The source of this suffering is attachment. When attachments exist old age and death come to be. And when attachments do not exist old age and death don’t come to be.’²⁴¹ They understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the fitting practice for their cessation. And they practice in line with that path. This is called a mendicant who is practicing for the complete ending of suffering, for the cessation of old age and death.

They probe further within: ‘But what is the source of this attach- 4.1
ment? When what exists does attachment come to be? And when what does not exist does attachment not come to be?’ While probing they know: ‘The source of this attachment is craving. When craving exists attachments come to be. And when craving doesn’t exist attachments don’t come to be.’ They understand attachments, their origin, their cessation, and the fitting practice for their cessation. And they practice in line with that path. This is called a mendicant who is practicing for the complete ending of suffering, for the cessation of attachments.

They probe further within: ‘But where does that craving arise and 5.1
where does it settle?’ While probing they know: ‘That craving arises

241. “Attachment” is *upadhi*, which is both the things of the world to which we cling, and the inner clinging (see Snp 1.2, MN 105:28.2). The Jains defined *upadhi* similarly (Tattvārthasūtra 9.26). The dominant meaning in Sanskrit is “fraud”, which perhaps informs the Buddhist sense: the things we attach to give a false sense of security. Here it plays the role of “grasping” (*upādāna*).

and settles on whatever in the world seems nice and pleasant. And what in the world seems nice and pleasant? The eye in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles. The ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.’

6.1 There were ascetics and brahmins of the past who saw the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as permanent, as pleasurable, as self, as healthy, and as safe. Their craving grew. As their craving grew, their attachments grew. As their attachments grew, their suffering grew. And as their suffering grew, they were not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They were not freed from suffering, I say.

7.1 There will be ascetics and brahmins in the future who will see the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as permanent, as pleasurable, as self, as healthy, and as safe. Their craving will grow. As their craving grows, their attachments will grow. As their attachments grow, their suffering will grow. And as their suffering grows, they will not be freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They will not be freed from suffering, I say.

8.1 There are ascetics and brahmins in the present who see the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as permanent, as pleasurable, as self, as healthy, and as safe. Their craving grows. As their craving grows, their attachments grow. As their attachments grow, their suffering grows. And as their suffering grows, they are not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are not freed from suffering, I say.

9.1 Suppose there was a bronze goblet of beverage that had a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it was mixed with poison. Then along comes a man struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. They’d say to him: ‘Here, my man, this bronze goblet of beverage has a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it’s mixed with poison. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, the color, aroma, and flavor will be appetizing, but it will result in death or deadly pain.’

He wouldn't put that beverage down. Hastily, without reflection, he'd drink it, resulting in death or deadly pain.

In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins of the past ... 9.1.1
future ... There are ascetics and brahmins in the present who see the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as permanent, as pleasurable, as self, as healthy, and as safe. Their craving grows. As their craving grows, their attachments grow. As their attachments grow, their suffering grows. And as their suffering grows, they are not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are not freed from suffering, I say.

There were ascetics and brahmins of the past who saw the things 10.1
that seem nice and pleasant in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as not-self, as diseased, and as dangerous. They gave up craving. Giving up craving, they gave up attachments. Giving up attachments, they gave up suffering. Giving up suffering, they were freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They were freed from suffering, I say.

There will be ascetics and brahmins in the future who will see the 11.1
things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as not-self, as diseased, and as dangerous. They will give up craving. Giving up craving ... they will be freed from suffering, I say.

There are ascetics and brahmins in the present who see the things 12.1
that seem nice and pleasant in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as not-self, as diseased, and as dangerous. They give up craving. Giving up craving, they give up attachments. Giving up attachments, they give up suffering. Giving up suffering, they are freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are freed from suffering, I say.

Suppose there was a bronze goblet of beverage that had a nice 13.1
color, aroma, and flavor. But it was mixed with poison. Then along comes a man struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. They'd say to him: 'Here, my man, this bronze goblet of beverage has a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it's mixed with

poison. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, its nice color, aroma, and flavor will refresh you. But drinking it will result in death or deadly pain.’ Then that man might think: ‘I can allay my thirst with a fermented drink of beer, buttermilk, salt lassi, or salted infusion. But in any case, I shouldn’t drink that beverage, for it would be for my lasting harm and suffering.’²⁴² He’d put that beverage down. After appraisal, he wouldn’t drink it, and it wouldn’t result in death or deadly pain.

13.13 In the same way, there were ascetics and brahmins of the past who saw the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as not-self, as diseased, and as dangerous. They gave up craving. Giving up craving, they gave up attachments. Giving up attachments, they gave up suffering. Giving up suffering, they were freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They were freed from suffering, I say.

14.1 There will be ascetics and brahmins in the future ... There are ascetics and brahmins in the present who see the things that seem nice and pleasant in the world as impermanent, as suffering, as not-self, as diseased, and as dangerous. They give up craving. Giving up craving, they give up attachments. Giving up attachments, they give

242. The drinks are *surā* (beer), *dadhimaṇḍaka* (buttermilk or whey), *maṭṭhalonikā* (salted whey or sour cream, i.e. lassi), and *loṇasovīraka* (salted infusion of fermented barley and herbs). These correspond with drinks mentioned, along with others, in the Cārika Saṃhita as *surā*, *mastu* (Hindi *maṭṭhā*), *dadhimaṇḍa*, and *sauvīraka*. These were fermented drinks used as purgatives, and some or all were also recreational liquors. | *Ayaṃ surāpipāsītā pāṇīyena vā vinetuṃ* seems corrupt, read: *ayaṃ pipāsā surāpāṇīyena vā vinetuṃ* (“to dispel this thirst by a drink of beer”). | *Loṇasovīraka* is allowed as medicine (Bu Pj 3:5.33.14, Kd 6:16.3.1; preparation methods are given in Suśruta Saṃhita 1.44 and commentary to Pj 3). It probably originated in Sovīra (DN 19:36.6). Sanskrit just has *sauvīraka* but Cārika Saṃhita 3.1.18 says it can be drunk with salt; salted drinks are still popular in India. It was a great favorite of the hard-partying women of Madra, who, it was said, would sooner part with husband or son than a drop of *sauvīraka* (Mahābhārata 8.30). | The last phrase is corrupt, read *ahitāya dukkhāya* following PTS and Bodhi.

up suffering. Giving up suffering, they are freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are freed from suffering, I say.”

SN 12.67

Sheaves of Reeds

Naḷakalāpīsutta

At one time Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita were 1.1
staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana.²⁴³

Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita came out of 1.2
retreat, went to Venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with
him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat
down to one side and said to Sāriputta:

“Well, Reverend Sāriputta, are old age and death made by oneself? 1.4
Or by another? Or by both oneself and another? Or do they arise
anomalously, not made by oneself or another?”²⁴⁴

“No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, old age and death are not made by one- 1.5
self, nor by another, nor by both oneself and another, nor do they
arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, rebirth
is a requirement for old age and death.”

“Well, Reverend Sāriputta, is rebirth made by oneself? Or by an- 2.1
other? Or by both oneself and another? Or does it arise anomalously,
not made by oneself or another?”

“No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, rebirth is not made by oneself, nor by 2.2
another, nor by both oneself and another, nor does it arise anoma-

243. The two great arahants often engaged each other in erudite Dhamma discussions for their own enjoyment or the education of their students. | Mahākoṭṭhita was said to be foremost in the methods of textual analysis (AN 1.218:1.1), exemplified by such discussions as MN 43. His verse is at Thag 1.2:0.4.

244. This is a rare case where this set of four alternatives is *not* proposed by a non-Buddhist.

lously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.”

- 3.1 “Well, Reverend Sāriputta, is continued existence made by oneself? ...” ... “Is grasping made by oneself? ...” ... “Is craving made by oneself? ...” ... “Is feeling made by oneself? ...” ... “Is contact made by oneself? ...” ... “Are the six sense fields made by oneself? ...” ... “Well, Reverend Sāriputta, are name and form made by oneself? Or by another? Or by both oneself and another? Or do they arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another?”
- 3.8 “No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, name and form are not made by oneself, nor by another, nor by both oneself and another, nor do they arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, consciousness is a requirement for name and form.”
- 4.1 “Well, Reverend Sāriputta, is consciousness made by oneself? Or by another? Or by both oneself and another? Or does it arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another?”
- 4.2 “No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, consciousness is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor by both oneself and another, nor does it arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, name and form are requirements for consciousness.”²⁴⁵
- 5.1 “Just now I understood you to say:²⁴⁶ ‘No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, name and form are not made by oneself, nor by another, nor by both oneself and another, nor do they arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, consciousness is a requirement for name and form.’
- 6.1 But I also understood you to say: ‘No, Reverend Koṭṭhita, consciousness is not made by oneself, nor by another, nor by both oneself and another, nor does it arise anomalously, not made by oneself or another. Rather, name and form are requirements for consciousness.’

245. For the mutual conditioning of name and form with consciousness see SN 12.65:2.16 and notes there.

246. Koṭṭhita presses Sāriputta on this point, making sure that students understand the problem and its solution.

How then should we see the meaning of this statement?” 7.1

“Well then, reverend, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Suppose there were two sheaves of reeds leaning up against each other.²⁴⁷ 7.2

In the same way, name and form are requirements for consciousness. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for contact. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. If the first of those sheaves of reeds were to be pulled away, the other would collapse. And if the other were to be pulled away, the first would collapse. 7.5

In the same way, when name and form cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.” 7.12

“It’s incredible, Reverend Sāriputta, it’s amazing! How well spoken this was by Venerable Sāriputta! And we can express our agreement with Venerable Sāriputta’s statement on these thirty-six grounds.²⁴⁸ 8.1

If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who speaks on Dhamma’. If they practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who practices in line with the teaching’. If they’re freed by not grasping by disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding old age and death, they’re qualified to be called ‘a mendicant who has attained extinguishment in this very life’. If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment 9.1

247. *Niśraya* in the sense of “leaning” a ladder against a post is found at Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.2.1.9.

248. The three cases mentioned next, multiplied by each of the twelve links.

regarding rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... choices ... If a mendicant teaches Dhamma for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they're qualified to be called 'a mendicant who speaks on Dhamma'. If they practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they're qualified to be called 'a mendicant who practices in line with the teaching'. If they're freed by not grasping by disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding ignorance, they're qualified to be called 'a mendicant who has attained extinguishment in this very life.'"

SN 12.68

At Kosambī

Kosambisutta

- 1.1 At one time the venerables Musīla, Saviṭṭha, Nārada, and Ānanda were staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery.²⁴⁹ Then Venerable Saviṭṭha said to Venerable Musīla:
- 1.3 "Reverend Musīla, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that²⁵⁰ rebirth is a requirement for old age and death?"

249. Musīla is mentioned only here. | Saviṭṭha may also appear at AN 3.21, but it may be a different person, as that monk's name is also spelled Samiddha, and the time, place, and people are all different. | Nārada appears in AN 5.50. | This monastery was favored by Ānanda, who was the teacher of Ghosita, the monastery's donor (SN 35.129). He stayed there following the Buddha's passing and the First Council (SN 22.90:4.2). Many, perhaps all, of the discourses featuring Ānanda here were set in the period after the Buddha's death, including this one.

250. This is a standard set of grounds for belief, which play a limited role in supporting the search for truth, but do not yield any definitive answers (MN 95, MN 101, MN 102, SN 35.153, AN 3.65, AN 3.66, AN 4.193). | *Parivittakka* means "train of thought", as when the Buddha reads Kāpaṭika's thoughts (MN

“Reverend Savitṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.”²⁵¹ 1.5

“Reverend Musīla, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that continued existence is a requirement for rebirth ... grasping is a requirement for continued existence ... craving is a requirement for grasping ... feeling is a requirement for craving ... contact is a requirement for feeling ... the six sense fields are requirements for contact ... name and form are requirements for the six sense fields ... consciousness is a requirement for name and form ... choices are a requirement for consciousness ... ignorance is a requirement for choices?” 2.1

“Reverend Savitṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that ignorance is a requirement for choices.” 2.12

“Reverend Musīla, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that when rebirth ceases, old age and death cease?” 3.1

“Reverend Savitṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that when rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.” 3.3

“Reverend Musīla, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that when continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases ... when grasping ceases, continued existence ceases 4.1

95:12.6). *Ākāra* in this context means “reason”, as at MN 47:10.2. | *Khanti* is usually better rendered “acceptance” than the common “patience”.

251. This emphasizes that dependent origination is directly known through experience.

... when craving ceases, grasping ceases ... when feeling ceases, craving ceases ... when contact ceases, feeling ceases ... when the six sense fields cease, contact ceases ... when name and form cease, the six sense fields cease ... when consciousness ceases name and form cease ... when choices cease consciousness ceases ... when ignorance ceases, choices cease?”

- 4.12 “Reverend Savitṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that when ignorance ceases, choices cease.”
- 5.1 “Reverend Musīla, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment?”²⁵²
- 5.3 “Reverend Savitṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment.”
- 6.1 “Then Venerable Musīla is a perfected one, with defilements ended.”²⁵³ When he said this, Musīla kept silent.²⁵⁴
- 7.1 Then Venerable Nārada said to Venerable Savitṭha, “Reverend Savitṭha, please let me answer these questions. Ask me and I will answer them for you.”
- 7.5 “By all means, Venerable Nārada, try these questions. I’ll ask you and you can answer them for me.”
- 8.1 (Savitṭha repeats exactly the same series of questions, and Nārada answers just as Musīla did.)

252. This is a particularly blunt expression for Nibbāna.

253. The question of who, exactly, qualified as perfected became critical in the Saṅgha when the Buddha was no longer present to decide such matters. It was the decisive issue leading to the first schism between the ancestral Sthavira and Mahāsaṅghika schools, which happened after Ashoka, perhaps two centuries after the Buddha.

254. Silence is usually taken as assent, and the commentary says this is the case here: Musīla was in fact an arahant.

“Reverend Nārada, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, do you personally know that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment?” 12.1

“Reverend Saviṭṭha, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation, I know and see that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment.” 12.3

“Then Venerable Nārada is a perfected one, with defilements ended.” 13.1

“I have truly seen clearly with right wisdom that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment. Yet I am not a perfected one.²⁵⁵ Suppose there was a well on a desert road that had neither rope nor bucket. Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. They’d know that there was water, but they couldn’t physically touch it. 13.2

In the same way, I have truly seen clearly with right wisdom that the cessation of continued existence is extinguishment. Yet I am not a perfected one.” 13.6

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to Venerable Saviṭṭha,²⁵⁶ “Reverend Saviṭṭha, what do you have to say to Venerable Nārada when he speaks like this?” 14.1

“Reverend Ānanda, I have nothing to say to Venerable Nārada when he speaks like this, except what is good and wholesome.” 14.3

255. Saviṭṭha’s error lay in assuming that seeing cessation implies arahantship. To “truly see” and similar terms signify stream-entry (or above), while the end of grasping signifies perfection.

256. The question of who is an arahant has the potential to tear apart a community, as followers align with their preferred saint. Ānanda, aware of this, is swift to restore harmony.

SN 12.69

Surge

Upayantisutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.
- 1.4 "Mendicants, when the ocean surges it makes the rivers surge. When the rivers surge they make the streams surge. When the streams surge they make the lakes surge. When the lakes surge they make the ponds surge.
- 1.5 In the same way, when ignorance surges it makes choices surge. When choices surge they make consciousness surge. When consciousness surges it makes name and form surge. When name and form surge they make the six sense fields surge. When the six sense fields surge they make contact surge. When contact surges it makes feeling surge. When feeling surges it makes craving surge. When craving surges it makes grasping surge. When grasping surges it makes continued existence surge. When continued existence surges it makes rebirth surge. When rebirth surges it makes old age and death surge.²⁵⁷
- 2.1 When the ocean recedes it makes the rivers recede. When the rivers recede they make the streams recede. When the streams recede they make the lakes recede. When the lakes recede they make the ponds recede.
- 2.2 In the same way, when ignorance recedes it makes choices recede. When choices recede they make consciousness recede. When consciousness recedes it makes name and form recede. When name and form recede they make the six sense fields recede. When the six sense fields recede they make contact recede. When contact recedes it makes feeling recede. When feeling recedes it makes craving recede. When craving recedes it makes grasping recede. When grasp-

257. This phrasing emphasizes the active driving forward of dependent origination.

ing recedes it makes continued existence recede. When continued existence recedes it makes rebirth recede. When rebirth recedes it makes old age and death recede.”

SN 12.70

The Wanderer Susīma

Susimaparibbājakasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. 1.1

Now at that time the Buddha was honored, respected, revered, 1.3
venerated, and esteemed. And he received robes, almsfood, lodgings,
and medicines and supplies for the sick. And the mendicant Saṅgha
was also honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And
they received robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies
for the sick. But the wanderers who followed other religions were
not honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And they
didn’t receive robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies
for the sick.

Now at that time the wanderer Susīma was residing at Rājagaha 2.1
together with a large community of wanderers.²⁵⁸

Then his community said to Susīma, “Reverend Susīma, please 2.2
lead the spiritual life with the ascetic Gotama. Memorize that teach-
ing and have us recite it with you. When we’ve memorized it we’ll
recite it to the laity. In this way we too will be honored, respected,
revered, venerated, and esteemed. And we’ll receive robes, almsfood,
lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.”

“Yes, reverends,” replied Susīma to his own assembly. Then he 2.7
went to Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When
the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one

258. This Susīma appears only here, but we meet some deities of the same name (SN 2.29, SN 11.2).

side and said to Ānanda, “Reverend Ānanda, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.”

3.1 Then Ānanda took Susīma to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, this wanderer Susīma says that he wishes to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.”

3.4 “Well then, Ānanda, give Susīma the going forth.”²⁵⁹ And the wanderer Susīma received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s presence.

4.1 Now at that time several mendicants had declared their enlightenment in the Buddha’s presence: “We understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”

4.3 Venerable Susīma heard about this. He went up to those mendicants, and exchanged greetings with them. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to those mendicants, “Is it really true that the venerables have declared enlightenment in the Buddha’s presence?”

4.10 “Yes, reverend.”

5.1 “But knowing and seeing thus, do you wield the many kinds of psychic power? That is, multiplying yourselves and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. Do you control the body as far as the realm of divinity?”²⁶⁰

5.2 “No, reverend.”

259. There is no mention of the normal probationary period for renunciates who convert from another sect. Perhaps it is just a simple omission, or perhaps this event happened before the rule was laid down at Kd 1:38.1.1.

260. Susīma misunderstands the role of these attainments in the path. They are higher powers which can be realized through deep meditation, but which are not required for awakening, although they can be helpful in some cases.

“Well, knowing and seeing thus do you, with clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far?” 6.1

“No, reverend.” 6.2

“Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with your mind? Do you understand mind with greed as ‘mind with greed’, and mind without greed as ‘mind without greed’? Do you understand mind with hate as ‘mind with hate’, and mind without hate as ‘mind without hate’? Do you understand mind with delusion as ‘mind with delusion’, and mind without delusion as ‘mind without delusion’? Do you understand constricted mind as ‘constricted mind’, and scattered mind as ‘scattered mind’? Do you understand expansive mind as ‘expansive mind’, and unexpansive mind as ‘unexpansive mind’? Do you understand mind that is not supreme as ‘mind that is not supreme’, and mind that is supreme as ‘mind that is supreme’? Do you understand mind immersed in samādhi as ‘mind immersed in samādhi’, and mind not immersed in samādhi as ‘mind not immersed in samādhi’? Do you understand freed mind as ‘freed mind’, and unfreed mind as ‘unfreed mind’?” 7.1

“No, reverend.” 7.18

“Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you recollect many kinds of past lives? That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding? Do you remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.’ Do you recollect your many kinds of past lives, with features and details?” 8.1

8.2 “No, reverend.”

9.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place—and understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds? ‘These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, do you see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. And do you understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds?”

9.2 “No, reverend.”

10.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form?”

10.2 “No, reverend.”

11.1 “Well now, venerables, how could there be such a declaration when these things are not attained?”

11.2 “Reverend Susīma, we are freed by wisdom.”²⁶¹

12.1 “I don’t understand the detailed meaning of what you have said in brief. Please teach me this matter so I can understand the detailed meaning.”

261. One who is freed by wisdom develops the absorptions as a basis for insight (AN 9.44), but may not practice the formless meditations (MN 70:16.1).

“Reverend Susīma, whether you understand or not, we are freed by wisdom.”²⁶² 12.3

Then Susīma went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all he had discussed with those mendicants. 13.1

“Susīma, first comes knowledge of the stability of natural principles. Afterwards there is knowledge of extinguishment.”²⁶³ 13.3

“Sir, I don’t understand the detailed meaning of what you have said in brief. Please teach me this matter so I can understand the detailed meaning.” 14.1

“Susīma, whether you understand or not, first comes knowledge of the stability of natural principles. Afterwards there is knowledge of extinguishment. 14.3

What do you think, Susīma?²⁶⁴ Is form permanent or impermanent?” 15.1

“Impermanent, sir.” 15.3

“But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?” 15.4

“Suffering, sir.” 15.5

“But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?” 15.6

“No, sir.” 15.8

“Is feeling permanent or impermanent?” 15.9

“Impermanent, sir.” 15.10

“But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?” 15.11

“Suffering, sir.” 15.12

262. This reply appears unhelpful, but note that the Buddha replies the same way. The point is that humility is needed for wisdom. Susīma, with his dubious intentions and limited understanding, needs to recognize this before he can advance.

263. The Buddha emphasizes that insight into the “natural principle” (of dependent origination) is the key to liberation.

264. The Buddha goes on to establish Susīma in the fundamental wisdom teachings, starting with the five aggregates and three characteristics. This approach engages Susīma in question and answer, giving him confidence.

- 15.13 “But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”
- 15.15 “No, sir.”
- 15.16 “Is perception permanent or impermanent?”
- 15.17 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 15.18 “Are choices permanent or impermanent?”
- 15.19 “Impermanent, sir.”
- 15.20 “But if they’re impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?”
- 15.21 “Suffering, sir.”
- 15.22 “But if they’re impermanent, suffering, and perishable, are they fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”
- 15.24 “No, sir.”
- 15.25 “Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?”
- 15.26 “Impermanent, sir.”
- 15.27 “But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?”
- 15.28 “Suffering, sir.”
- 15.29 “But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”
- 15.31 “No, sir.”
- 16.1 “So, Susīma, you should truly see any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You should truly see any kind of feeling at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* feeling—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You should truly see any kind of perception at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* perception—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You should truly see any kind of choices at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* choices—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You should truly see any kind of consciousness at all—past, future,

or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, 17.1
feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned,
desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When
they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 17.3
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing
further for this place.’

Susīma, do you see that rebirth is a requirement for old age and 18.1
death?”²⁶⁵

“Yes, sir.” 18.2

“Do you see that continued existence is a requirement for rebirth?” 18.3

“Yes, sir.” 18.4

“Do you see that grasping is a requirement for continued ex- 18.5
istence?”

“Yes, sir.” 18.6

“Do you see that craving is a requirement for grasping?” 18.7

“Yes, sir.” 18.8

“Do you see that feeling is a requirement for craving ... contact is 18.9
a requirement for feeling ... the six sense fields are requirements for
contact ... name and form are requirements for the six sense fields
... consciousness is a requirement for name and form ... choices are
a requirement for consciousness ... ignorance is a requirement for
choices?”

“Yes, sir.” 18.16

“Do you see that when rebirth ceases old age and death cease?” 19.1

“Yes, sir.” 19.2

“Do you see that when continued existence ceases rebirth ceases?” 19.3

“Yes, sir.” 19.4

265. The teaching on the aggregates culminates in the ending of rebirth, which the Buddha uses to segue into dependent origination.

- 19.5 “Do you see that when grasping ceases continued existence ceases ... when craving ceases, grasping ceases ... when feeling ceases, craving ceases ... when contact ceases, feeling ceases ... when the six sense fields cease, contact ceases ... when name and form cease, the six sense fields cease ... when consciousness ceases name and form cease ... when choices cease consciousness ceases ... when ignorance ceases choices cease?”
- 19.14 “Yes, sir.”
- 20.1 “But knowing and seeing thus, do you wield the many kinds of psychic power? ...”
- 20.2 “No, sir.”
- 21.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus do you, with clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far?”
- 21.2 “No, sir.”
- 22.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with your mind? ...”
- 22.4 “No, sir.”
- 23.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you recollect many kinds of past lives, with features and details?”
- 23.2 “No, sir.”
- 24.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, see sentient beings passing away and being reborn ... according to their deeds?”²⁶⁶
- 24.2 “No, sir.”
- 25.1 “Well, knowing and seeing thus, do you have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form?”

266. Both dependent origination and the power of clairvoyance are related to knowledge of rebirth, but in quite different ways. Clairvoyance sees the details of particular lives as they play out, like watching a show on a TV screen, whereas dependent origination understands the principles underlying the process of rebirth, like taking the back off the TV and seeing how the device works.

“No, sir.”

25.2

“Well now, Susīma, how could there be such a declaration when these things are not attained?”

26.1

Then Venerable Susīma bowed with his head to the Buddha’s feet and said, “I made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me to go forth as a thief in such a well-explained teaching and training.²⁶⁷ Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future.”

27.1

“Indeed, Susīma, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of you to go forth as a thief of the teachings in such a well-explained teaching and training.²⁶⁸ Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to the king, saying: ‘Your Majesty, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.’ The king would say: ‘Go, my men, and tie this man’s arms tightly behind his back with a strong rope. Shave his head and march him from street to street and from square to square to the beating of a harsh drum. Then take him out the south gate and there, to the south of the city, chop off his head.’ The king’s men would do as they were told. What do you think, Susīma? Wouldn’t that man experience pain and distress because of that?”

28.1

“Yes, sir.”

28.9

“Although that man would experience pain and distress because of that, going forth as a thief of the teachings in such a well-explained teaching and training has a more painful and bitter result. And it even leads to the underworld. But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For

29.1

267. Despite his corrupt intent in ordaining, Susīma showed a genuine interest in understanding and came to his senses. The Buddha did not confront or condemn him, but nurtured his understanding until Susīma was ready to confess of his own volition. | “Thief of the teachings” (*dharmatthēna*) is a unique term, recalling Susīma’s initial plan to literally steal the teachings for profit. Unfortunately, such behavior is now common in the age of AI.

268. When someone genuinely confesses, the Buddha makes a point to acknowledge what they had done, without dismissing it and thereby discounting the inner work they had achieved to get to this point.

it is growth in the training of the Noble One to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future.”²⁶⁹

269. The commentary uses the discourse to argue for its theory of “dry insight” without the practice of absorption. If the Buddha had intended to teach such a radical departure from the normal path, however, he would surely have stated it clearly and not relegated it to an obscure discussion with a reformed heretic. As it stands, the discourse in no way supports the theory, nor is it found anywhere else in the early texts.

The Chapter on Ascetics and Brahmins

SN 12.71

Old Age and Death

Jarāmaraṇasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't under- 1.4
stand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice
that leads to their cessation. I don't deem them as true ascetics and
brahmins. Those venerables don't realize the goal of life as an ascetic
or brahmin, and don't live having realized it with their own insight
in this very life.

There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand old age and 2.1
death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to
their cessation. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those
venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live
having realized it with their own insight.”

A Set of Ten on Rebirth, Etc.

Jātisuttādidasaka

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥi.
- 1.2 “... they don’t understand rebirth ...”
- 2.1 “... continued existence ...”
- 3.1 “... grasping ...”
- 4.1 “... craving ...”
- 5.1 “... feeling ...”
- 6.1 “... contact ...”
- 7.1 “... the six sense fields ...”
- 8.1 “... name and form ...”
- 9.1 “... consciousness ...”
- 10.1 “... choices ...
- 10.2 ... they understand ...”

CONSECUTIVE REPETITIONS

The Teacher, etc.

SN 12.82

The Teacher

Satthusutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, one who does not truly know or see old age and death should seek the Teacher so as to truly know old age and death. One who does not truly know or see the origin of old age and death should seek the Teacher so as to truly know the origin of old age and death. One who does not truly know or see the cessation of old age and death should seek the Teacher so as to truly know the cessation of old age and death. One who does not truly know or see the practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death should seek the Teacher so as to truly know the practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death.”

*(One discourse.)*²⁷⁰

(All the abbreviated texts should be told in full.)

270. This note is found in the Pali of the Mahāsaṅgīti edition, indicating that this is one discourse, and presumably that the following are reckoned as one discourse each. Bodhi counts them all together as a whole, so from here the numbering is out of sync with his.

The Teacher (2nd)

Dutiyasatthusuttādidasaka

“Mendicants, one who does not truly know or see rebirth ...”	1.1
“... continued existence ...”	1.1
“... grasping ...”	1.1
“... craving ...”	1.1
“... feeling ...”	1.1
“... contact ...”	1.1
“... the six sense fields ...”	1.1
“... name and form ...”	1.1
“... consciousness ...”	1.1
“... choices ...”	1.1
<i>(All should be treated according to the four truths.)</i>	

Sets of Eleven on Training, Etc.

SN 12.93–213

Sets of Eleven on Training, Etc.

Sikkhāsuttādipeyyālaekādasaka

- 1.1 “Mendicants, one who does not truly know or see old age and death should train so as to truly know old age and death. ...”
- 1.1 “... practice meditation ...”
- 1.1 “... rouse up enthusiasm ...”
- 1.1 “... try vigorously ...”
- 1.1 “... persevere ...”
- 1.1 “... be keen ...”
- 1.1 “... rouse up energy ...”
- 1.1 “... persist ...”
- 1.1 “... be mindful ...”
- 1.1 “... use situational awareness ...”
- 1.1 “... be diligent ...”

The Linked Discourses on causality are complete.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON COMPREHENSION

The Chapter on Comprehension

SN 13.1

A Fingernail

Nakhasikhāsutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD.²⁷¹ At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, addressed the mendicants:²⁷² “What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”
- 2.1 “Sir, the great earth is far more. The little bit of dirt on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great earth, it’s not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”
- 2.4 “In the same way, for a noble disciple accomplished in view, an individual with comprehension, the suffering that’s over and done

271. Although this chapter does not mention dependent origination, it is thematically linked. It depicts the realization of stream-entry as insight into Dhamma (SN 12.27:5.1), so that future rebirths are minimized (SN 12.41:2.1). The similes are also found in the Linked Discourses on the Truths (SN 56).

272. The simile is used in the same application at SN 56.51; for the rareness of opportune rebirth at SN 20.2, SN 56.61, and SN 56.62; and for the absence of even a tiny bit of form that is permanent at SN 22.97.

with is more,²⁷³ what's left is tiny. Compared to the mass of suffering in the past that's over and done with, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part, since there are at most seven more lives.²⁷⁴ That's how very beneficial it is to comprehend the teaching²⁷⁵ and gain the vision of the teaching.”

SN 13.2

A Lotus Pond

Pokkharāṇīsutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, suppose there was a lotus pond that was fifty leagues 1.2
long, fifty leagues wide, and fifty leagues deep, full to the brim so
a crow could drink from it.²⁷⁶ Then a person would pick up some
water on the tip of a blade of grass.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the water on 1.4
the tip of the blade of grass, or the water in the lotus pond?”

“Sir, the water in the lotus pond is certainly more. The water 2.1
on the tip of a blade of grass is tiny. Compared to the water in the
lotus pond, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred
thousandth part.”

“In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble 3.1
disciple accomplished in view, the suffering that's over and done

273. The *diṭṭhisampanna* is the stream-enterer. They are “accomplished in view” because they have directly seen the four noble truths and need no longer rely on faith in another.

274. For a stream-enterer, countless future lives of suffering have ceased, and only seven rebirths at most remain.

275. The root sense of *abhisamaya* is “gathering”, as a group of brahmins for a congress (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1), or as breaths to a dying man (4.4.1), or as winnings to the victor of the game (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.1.4). In Buddhism, it acquires the technical sense of the “comprehension” of the Dhamma at least at stream-entry. The English word “gather” has a similar meaning: to reach a conclusion by intuitively putting two and two together.

276. Also at SN 56.52.

with is more, what's left is tiny. Compared to the mass of suffering in the past that's over and done with, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part, since there are at most seven more lives. That's how very beneficial it is to comprehend the teaching and gain the vision of the teaching.”

SN 13.3

Where the Waters Join Together

Sambhejjaudakasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, there are places where the great rivers—the Ganges, Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—join together and converge.²⁷⁷ Suppose a person was to draw two or three drops of water from such a place.
- 1.4 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the two or three drops drawn out or the water in the confluence?”
- 2.1 “Sir, the water in the confluence is certainly more. The two or three drops drawn out are tiny. Compared to the water in the confluence, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”
- 2.4 “In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that's over and done with is more ...”

277. The Ganges (Pali *gaṅgā*) is the greatest river of India. Arising far to the west in Uttarakhand, it flows 2,525 km, emptying into the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh. The other rivers mentioned here are all its tributaries. | Yamunā is a major southern tributary of the Ganges, joining it at Payāga. | Aciravatī is today the West Rapti, on whose banks Sāvattḥī was located. Winding down from Nepal, it joins the Sarabhū to the north west of the confluence with the Ganges, in or near the land of the Kālāmas. | Sarabhū (Sanskrit *sarayū*) is the modern Ghaghara, one of the largest northern tributaries of the Ganges, joining it west of Pāṭaliputta, modern Patna. | Mahī is the modern Kosi, which flows from Tibet through Nepal to join the Ganges in Aṅga, east of Pāṭaliputta around modern Kursela. | Also at SN 56.53.

SN 13.4

Where the Waters Join Together (2nd)

Dutiyasambhejjaudakasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are places where the great rivers—the Ganges, 1.2
Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—join together and con-
verge.²⁷⁸ Suppose that water dried up and evaporated except two or
three drops.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the water in 1.4
the confluence that has dried up and evaporated, or the two or three
drops left?”

“Sir, the water in the confluence that has dried up and evaporated 2.1
is certainly more. The two or three drops left are tiny. Compared to
the water in the confluence that has dried up and evaporated, it’s not
nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and 2.4
done with is more ...”

SN 13.5

The Earth

Pathavīsutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, suppose a person was to place seven clay balls the 1.2
size of jujube seeds on the great earth.²⁷⁹

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven clay 1.3
balls the size of jujube seeds, or the great earth?”

278. Also at SN 56.54.

279. Also at SN 56.55.

- 2.1 “Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds are tiny. Compared to the great earth, it’s not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”
- 2.4 “In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and done with is more ...”

SN 13.6

The Earth (2nd)

Dutiyaṣaṭṭhaṭṭha

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, suppose the great earth was worn away and eroded except seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds.²⁸⁰
- 1.3 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the great earth that has been worn away and eroded, or the seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds that are left?”
- 2.1 “Sir, the great earth that has been worn away and eroded is certainly more. The seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds are tiny. Compared to the great earth that has been worn away and eroded, it’s not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”
- 2.4 “In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and done with is more ...”

SN 13.7

The Ocean

Samuddasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.

280. Also at SN 56.56.

“Mendicants, suppose a man was to draw up two or three drops 1.2
of water from the ocean.²⁸¹

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the two or three 1.3
drops drawn out or the water in the ocean?”

“Sir, the water in the ocean is certainly more. The two or three 2.1
drops drawn out are tiny. Compared to the water in the ocean, it’s not
nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and 2.4
done with is more ...”

SN 13.8

The Ocean (2nd)

Dutiyasamuddasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, suppose the water in the ocean dried up and evapo- 1.2
rated except two or three drops.²⁸²

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the water in the 1.3
ocean that has dried up and evaporated, or the two or three drops
left?”

“Sir, the water in the ocean that has dried up and evaporated is 2.1
certainly more. The two or three drops left are tiny. Compared to the
water in the ocean that has dried up and evaporated, it’s not nearly a
hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and 2.4
done with is more ...”

281. Also at SN 56.57.

282. Also at SN 56.58.

SN 13.9

A Mountain

Pabbatasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose a person was to place seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds on the Himalayas, the king of mountains.²⁸³

1.3 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds, or the Himalayas, the king of mountains?”

2.1 “Sir, the Himalayas, the king of mountains, is certainly more. The seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds are tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, it’s not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part.”

2.4 “In the same way, for a noble disciple, the suffering that’s over and done with is more . . .”

SN 13.10

A Mountain (2nd)

Dutiyapabbatasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose the Himalayas, the king of mountains, was worn away and eroded except seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds.²⁸⁴

1.3 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the portion of the Himalayas, the king of mountains, that has been worn away and eroded, or the seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds that are left?”

2.1 “Sir, the portion of the Himalayas, the king of mountains, that has been worn away and eroded is certainly more. The seven pebbles the

283. Also at SN 56.59.

284. Also at SN 56.60.

size of mustard seeds are tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part."

"In the same way, for a noble disciple accomplished in view, an individual with comprehension, the suffering that's over and done with is more, what's left is tiny. Compared to the mass of suffering in the past that's over and done with, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part, since there are at most seven more lives. That's how very beneficial it is to comprehend the teaching and gain the vision of the teaching." 3.1

SN 13.11

A Mountain (3rd)

Tatiyapabbatasutta

At Sāvattthī.²⁸⁵

1.1

"Mendicants, suppose a person was to place on Sineru, the king of mountains, seven pebbles the size of mung beans.²⁸⁶ 1.2

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven pebbles the size of mung beans, or Sineru, the king of mountains?" 1.3

"Sir, Sineru, the king of mountains, is certainly more. The seven pebbles the size of mung beans are tiny. Compared to Sineru, it's not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part." 2.1

"In the same way, compared with the achievements of a noble disciple accomplished in view, the achievements of the ascetics, brahmins, and wanderers of other religions is not nearly a hundredth, a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth part. So great is the achieve- 3.1

285. Also at SN 56.49.

286. Sineru, also known as Neru (Ja 379:3.1), Meru (DN 32:7.2), or Sumeru (Thi Ap 17:53.2), is the *axis mundi*, the mountain around which the world revolves. The oldest reference is perhaps Taittiriya Āraṇyaka 1.7.1.3. Kaśyapa, the eighth above the seven Sūryas, dwells constantly on Meru, never leaving, while the other Suns illuminate different regions. Sages have gone as far as the regions around, but none reached the mountain itself.

ment of the individual accomplished in view, so great is their direct knowledge.”

The Linked Discourses on comprehension are complete.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON
THE ELEMENTS

The Chapter on Diversity

SN 14.1

Diversity of Elements

Dhātunānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the diversity of elements.²⁸⁷ Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

1.4 “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 “And what is the diversity of elements?²⁸⁸ The eye element, sight element, and eye consciousness element. The ear element, sound element, and ear consciousness element. The nose element, smell

287. The “elements” (*dhātu*) are the many different phenomena that can be observed in the world and in experience. These can be the various aspects of sense experience, diverse character types (SN 14.14–29), states of matter (SN 14.30–39), or other things. Vedic *dhātu* has a special affinity for the numbers three (as in worlds) and seven. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.5.1–3 discusses how food, water, and heat each break down into three elements.

288. For *nānatta* (“diversity”), compare *puṭhutta* (“expansiveness”) at SN 12.48:5.1 and *vemattatā* (“disparity”) at SN 48.13:1.6. At MN 1:24.1, the Buddha taught “diversity” as the opposite fallacy to “oneness”; based on the diversity of sense experience, it interprets the world as irreducibly manifold. An example would be the Jains, who believed the world was made up of countless separate entities, a view criticized in Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 3.13 (*nānātvaṃ nindyate*). Both these fallacies take a particular mode of perception which is true in certain respects and make it into an absolute. The Buddha treats diversity as a way of analyzing experience, not as a metaphysical postulate.

element, and nose consciousness element. The tongue element, taste element, and tongue consciousness element. The body element, touch element, and body consciousness element. The mind element, ideas element, and mind consciousness element.²⁸⁹ This is called the diversity of elements.”

SN 14.2

Diversity of Contacts

Phassanānattasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of con- 1.2
tacts.²⁹⁰ And what is the diversity of elements? The eye element, ear
element, nose element, tongue element, body element, and mind
element. This is called the diversity of elements.

And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of con- 2.1
tacts? The eye element gives rise to eye contact. The ear element ...
nose ... tongue ... body ... The mind element gives rise to mind
contact. That’s how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of
contacts.”

289. The chapter is structured in two “pentads” (*pañcaka*), a formalism that gained prominence in the Abhidhamma. The first discourse merely lists the eighteen elements. Subsequent discourses elaborate, each one introducing a new complexity. Discourses 2–5 treat the internal sense fields, while 6–10 treat the external sense fields. In this way the student is introduced to new concepts gradually, and can spend time contemplating each topic before the next is introduced. | For these eighteen elements, see MN 28:37.1, MN 115:4.8, and notes there.

290. The use of the word *paṭicca* here connects back to dependent origination. Narrowing in on the particulars of sense experience, the text shows that particular factors give rise to other correlated factors, i.e. “this gives rise to this” (SN 12.37:2.2).

SN 14.3

Not Diversity of Contacts

Nophassanānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of contacts. Diversity of contacts doesn’t give rise to diversity of elements.²⁹¹ And what is the diversity of elements? The eye element, ear element, nose element, tongue element, body element, and mind element. This is called the diversity of elements.

2.1 And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of contacts, while diversity of contacts doesn’t give rise to diversity of elements? The eye element gives rise to eye contact. Eye contact doesn’t give rise to the eye element. ... The mind element gives rise to mind contact. Mind contact doesn’t give rise to the mind element. That’s how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of contacts, while diversity of contacts doesn’t give rise to diversity of elements.”

SN 14.4

Diversity of Feelings

Vedanānānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of contacts, and diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings. And what is the diversity of elements? The eye element, ear element, nose element, tongue element, body element, and mind element. This is called the diversity of elements.

291. This discourse asserts that, in this case, conditionality is one way. This heads off the assumption that mutual condition applies to all the factors (SN 12.65:2.16).

And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of con- 2.1
tacts, and diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings? The
eye element gives rise to eye contact. Eye contact gives rise to the
feeling born of eye contact. ... The mind element gives rise to mind
contact. Mind contact gives rise to the feeling born of mind contact.
That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of contacts,
and diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings."

SN 14.5

Diversity of Feelings (2nd)

Dutiyavedanānānattasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

"Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of con- 1.2
tacts. Diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings. Diver-
sity of feelings doesn't give rise to diversity of contacts. Diversity of
contacts doesn't give rise to diversity of elements. And what is the
diversity of elements? The eye element, ear element, nose element,
tongue element, body element, and mind element. This is called the
diversity of elements.

And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of con- 2.1
tacts, and diversity of contacts give rise to diversity of feelings, while
diversity of feelings doesn't give rise to diversity of contacts, and
diversity of contacts doesn't give rise to diversity of elements? The
eye element gives rise to eye contact. Eye contact gives rise to feeling
born of eye contact. Feeling born of eye contact doesn't give rise to
eye contact. Eye contact doesn't give rise to the eye element. ... The
mind element gives rise to mind contact. Mind contact gives rise to
feeling born of mind contact. Feeling born of mind contact doesn't
give rise to mind contact. Mind contact doesn't give rise to the mind
element. That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of
contacts, and diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings,

while diversity of feelings doesn't give rise to diversity of contacts, and diversity of contacts doesn't give rise to diversity of elements."

SN 14.6

External Diversity of Elements

Bāhiradhātunānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 "Mendicants, I will teach you the diversity of elements. And what is the diversity of elements? The sight element, the sound element, the smell element, the taste element, the touch element, and the idea element. This is called the diversity of elements."

SN 14.7

Diversity of Perceptions

Saññānānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 "Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions. Diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of thoughts. Diversity of thoughts gives rise to diversity of desires. Diversity of desires gives rise to diversity of passions. Diversity of passions gives rise to diversity of searches.²⁹² And what is the diversity of elements? The sight element, the sound element, the smell element, the taste element, the touch element, and the idea element. This is called the diversity of elements.

2.1 And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of perceptions, and diversity of perceptions give rise to diversity of thoughts,

292. Whereas the first pentad grew gradually by adding one factor at a time, here we add a whole series right away. And the conditional series varies to suit each case: the internal senses give rise to contact and feelings, whereas the external sense field gives rise ultimately to an actual search for that thing in the external world.

and diversity of thoughts give rise to diversity of desires, and diversity of desires give rise to diversity of passions, and diversity of passions give rise to diversity of searches?²⁹³

The sight element gives rise to the perception of sights. The perception of sights gives rise to thoughts about sights. Thoughts about sights give rise to the desire for sights. The desire for sights gives rise to the passion for sights. The passion for sights gives rise to searching for sights. ...²⁹⁴ The idea element gives rise to the perception of ideas. The perception of ideas gives rise to thoughts about ideas. Thoughts about ideas give rise to the desire for ideas. The desire for ideas gives rise to the passion for ideas. The passion for ideas gives rise to searching for ideas.

That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions, and diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of thoughts, and diversity of thoughts gives rise to diversity of desires, and diversity of desires gives rise to diversity of passions, and diversity of passions gives rise to diversity of searches.”

SN 14.8

No Diversity of Searches

Nopariyesanānānattasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions. Diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of thoughts. Diversity of thoughts gives rise to diversity of desires. Diversity of desires gives rise to diversity of passions. Diversity of passions gives

1.2

293. One “searches” for what one wants. In particular, the three searches of SN 45.161.

294. In such sequences, *saṅkappa* occupies the same place as does *vitakka* in MN 18:16.1, and so must be “thought” rather than “intention”. When you see something arousing, you perceive it as such, and start thinking about it. Desire arises, which then gives rise to the search, and it is only then that the intention to get something comes in.

rise to diversity of searches.²⁹⁵ Diversity of searches doesn't give rise to diversity of passions. Diversity of passions doesn't give rise to diversity of desires. Diversity of desires doesn't give rise to diversity of thoughts. Diversity of thoughts doesn't give rise to diversity of perceptions. Diversity of perceptions doesn't give rise to diversity of elements. And what is the diversity of elements? The sight element, the sound element, the smell element, the taste element, the touch element, and the idea element. This is called the diversity of elements.

- 2.1 And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of perceptions ... diversity of perceptions doesn't give rise to diversity of elements?
- 3.1 The sight element gives rise to the perception of sights ... The idea element gives rise to the perception of ideas ... the search for ideas. The search for ideas doesn't give rise to the passion for ideas. The passion for ideas doesn't give rise to the desire for ideas. The desire for ideas doesn't give rise to thoughts about ideas. Thoughts about ideas don't give rise to perceptions of ideas. Perceptions of ideas don't give rise to the idea element.
- 4.1 That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions ... diversity of perceptions doesn't give rise to diversity of elements."

SN 14.9

Diversity of Gains

Bāhiraphassanānattasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattī.
- 1.2 "Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions. Diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of thoughts. Diversity of thoughts gives rise to diversity of contacts. Diversity of

295. One "searches" for what one wants. In particular, the three searches of SN 45.161.

contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings. Diversity of feelings gives rise to diversity of desires. Diversity of desires gives rise to diversity of passions. Diversity of passions gives rise to diversity of searches. Diversity of searches gives rise to diversity of gains.²⁹⁶ And what is the diversity of elements? The sight element, the sound element, the smell element, the taste element, the touch element, and the idea element. This is called the diversity of elements.

And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of perceptions ... diversity of searches give rise to diversity of gains? 2.1

The sight element gives rise to the perception of sights. The perception of sights gives rise to thoughts about sights. Thoughts about sights give rise to sight contact. Sight contact gives rise to feeling born of sight contact. Feeling born of sight contact gives rise to the desire for sights. The desire for sights gives rise to the passion for sights. The passion for sights gives rise to searching for sights. Searching for sights gives rise to gaining sights ... The idea element gives rise to the perception of ideas. The perception of ideas gives rise to thoughts about ideas. Thoughts about ideas give rise to idea contact. Idea contact gives rise to feeling born of idea contact. Feeling born of idea contact gives rise to the desire for ideas. The desire for ideas gives rise to the passion for ideas. The passion for ideas gives rise to searching for ideas. Searching for ideas gives rise to gaining ideas. 3.1

That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions ... diversity of searches gives rise to diversity of gains." 4.1

296. This integrates the factors feeling and contact from the internal pentad (SN 14.4). Compared with other presentations (such as MN 18:16.1), it appears to do so incorrectly; we would expect contact, then feeling, perception, thought, desire, passion, and gains. Another sequence at DN 21:2.2.2 also appears confused. DN 15:9.1 has name and form, then contact, feeling, craving, searching, and gaining.

SN 14.10

No Diversity of Gains

Dutiyabāhiraphassanānattasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of perceptions.²⁹⁷ Diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of thoughts. ... contacts ... feelings ... desires ... passions ... Diversity of searches gives rise to diversity of gains. Diversity of gains doesn’t give rise to diversity of searches. Diversity of searches doesn’t give rise to diversity of passions. ... desires ... feelings ... contacts ... thoughts ... Diversity of perceptions doesn’t give rise to diversity of elements. And what is the diversity of elements? The sight element, the sound element, the smell element, the taste element, the touch element, and the idea element. This is called the diversity of elements.

2.1 And how does diversity of elements give rise to diversity of perceptions, and diversity of perceptions give rise to diversity of thoughts? contacts ... feelings ... desires ... passions ... searches ... gains ... while diversity of gains doesn’t give rise to diversity of searches ... passions ... desires ... feelings ... contacts ... thoughts ... perceptions ... elements?

3.1 The sight element gives rise to the perception of sights ... The idea element gives rise to the perception of ideas ... The search for ideas gives rise to gaining ideas. The gaining of ideas doesn’t give rise to the search for ideas. The search for ideas doesn’t give rise to the passion for ideas. The passion for ideas doesn’t give rise to the desire for ideas. The desire for ideas doesn’t give rise to feeling born of idea contact. Feeling born of idea contact doesn’t give rise to idea contact. Idea contact doesn’t give rise to thoughts about

297. The final discourse in this sequence lists all the factors of the two pentads in both forward and reverse order. It ends the formal sequence of this chapter, but the ideas are developed further following the next discourse, which is unrelated.

ideas. Thoughts about ideas don't give rise to perceptions of ideas.
Perceptions of ideas don't give rise to the idea element.

That's how diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of percep- 4.1
tions ... diversity of perceptions doesn't give rise to diversity of
elements."

Chapter Two

SN 14.11

Seven Elements

Sattadhātusutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, there are these seven elements. What seven? The element of luminosity, the element of beauty, the element of the dimension of infinite space, the element of the dimension of infinite consciousness, the element of the dimension of nothingness, the element of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, and the element of the cessation of perception and feeling.²⁹⁸ These are the seven elements.”

2.1 When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha,²⁹⁹ “Sir, due to what does each of these elements appear?”

3.1 “Mendicant, the element of light appears due to the element of darkness.³⁰⁰ The element of beauty appears due to the element of ug-

298. This set of seven offers a unique perspective on familiar meditations. It appears out of sequence, unrelated to those before and after.

299. We see the reappearance of familiar tropes of the discourses such as questions and similes, rather than the strict formalism of the first chapter.

300. “Luminosity” (*ābhā*) is the radiance of the sun and moon in the darkness of space (MN 123:7.4), or the light cast by a flame (MN 43:22.18), but here it is the illumination that appears in deep meditation. Just as in the visual sense, light only manifests in contrast with darkness, in meditation the appearance of luminous radiance is a mode of perception by which the mind communicates to

liness.³⁰¹ The element of the dimension of infinite space appears due to the element of form.³⁰² The element of the dimension of infinite consciousness appears due to the element of the dimension of infinite space.³⁰³ The element of the dimension of nothingness appears due to the element of the dimension of infinite consciousness. The element of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception appears due to the element of the dimension of nothingness. The element of the cessation of perception and feeling appears due to the element of cessation.”

“Sir, how is each of these elements to be attained?” 4.1

“The elements of light, beauty, the dimension of infinite space, 5.1
the dimension of infinite consciousness, and the dimension of nothingness are attainments with perception. The element of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception is an attainment with

itself the ending of the hindrances and the arising of unclouded awareness. This is why this light came to be called a “sign” (*nimitta*). | The dependence of light on darkness was taken up for discussion by Nāgārjuna, perhaps inspired by this passage (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 7.8–12).

301. “Beauty” (*subha*) is the focus of wholly pure and exalted meditations, such as the meditation on love, or the sight of a pure brilliant color like the sky (MN 77:22.6). It contrasts with the meditation on “ugliness”, such as the parts of the body or a decomposing corpse. At AN 6.41:2.7, Sāriputta explains that an accomplished meditator could see a tree as nothing but beauty or nothing but ugliness, since both of those elements are present in it.

302. While “form” is not present in the formless meditations, it is only possible to develop them based on the prior development of “form” absorptions. These ultimately have a material basis in the body of the meditator and in the meditation subject such as the breath, or the luminous “form” that arises as a guide into absorption.

303. Likewise, each of the formless meditations depend on the one before; they are a step by step sequence of “progressive cessation” (AN 9.31).

residual conditioned phenomena.³⁰⁴ The element of the cessation of perception and feeling is an attainment of cessation.”³⁰⁵

SN 14.12

With a Cause

Sanidānasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts arise for a reason, not without reason.”³⁰⁶

2.1 And how do sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts arise for a reason, not without reason? The element of sensuality gives rise to sensual perceptions. Sensual perceptions give rise to sensual purposes. Sensual purposes give rise to sensual desires. Sensual desires give rise to sensual passions. Sensual passions give rise to searches for sensual pleasures. An unlearned ordinary person on a search for sensual pleasures behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

3.1 The element of malice gives rise to malicious perceptions. Malicious perceptions give rise to malicious thoughts. ... malicious desires ... malicious passions ... malicious searches ... An unlearned ordinary person on a malicious search behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

304. The Visuddhimagga explains that in such a state, perception (and by extension other factors) still exists in a latent state, but does not perform its decisive function. It is unable to distinguish subject and object, so cannot support liberating insight (337–38), just as tepid water is not entirely lacking heat, yet cannot perform the function of heating. | The phrase is adopted at Vb 12:165.1.

305. All meditations states are attained through cessation (of what is let go in the prior state), but they also manifest what is present in the new state. This is purely cessation and does not manifest anything new.

306. This discourse picks up from the first chapter, adding the further elaboration of the three thoughts.

The element of cruelty gives rise to cruel perceptions. Cruel perceptions give rise to cruel purposes. ... cruel desires ... cruel passions ... cruel searches ... An unlearned ordinary person on a cruel search behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. 4.1

Suppose a person was to drop a burning torch in a thicket of dry grass. If they don't quickly extinguish it with their hands and feet, the creatures living in the grass and wood would come to ruin. 5.1

In the same way, a corrupt perception might arise in an ascetic or brahmin. If they don't quickly give it up, dispel it, eliminate it, and obliterate it, they'll suffer in the present life, with distress, anguish, and fever. And when the body breaks up, after death, they can expect to be reborn in a bad place. 5.2

Thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness arise for a reason, not without reason. 6.1

And how do thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness arise for a reason, not without reason? The element of renunciation gives rise to perceptions of renunciation. Perceptions of renunciation give rise to thoughts of renunciation. The purpose of renunciation give rise to enthusiasm for renunciation. Enthusiasm for renunciation gives rise to passion for renunciation. Fervor for renunciation gives rise to the search for renunciation. A learned noble disciple on a search for renunciation behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. 7.1

The element of good will gives rise to perceptions of good will. Perceptions of good will give rise to thoughts of good will. ... enthusiasm for good will ... passion for good will ... the search for good will. A learned noble disciple on a search for good will behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. 8.1

The element of harmlessness gives rise to perceptions of harmlessness. Perceptions of harmlessness give rise to thoughts of harmlessness. ... enthusiasm for harmlessness ... passion for harmlessness ... the search for harmlessness. A learned noble disciple on a search for harmlessness behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind. 9.1

- 10.1 Suppose a person was to drop a burning torch in a thicket of dry grass. If they were to quickly extinguish it with their hands and feet, the creatures living in the grass and wood wouldn't come to ruin.
- 10.2 In the same way, a corrupt perception might arise in an ascetic or brahmin. If they quickly give it up, dispel it, eliminate it, and obliterate it, they'll be happy in the present life, free of distress, anguish, and fever. And when the body breaks up, after death, they can expect to be reborn in a good place."

SN 14.13

In the Brick Hall

Giñjakāvasathasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying at Nātika in the brick house. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"
- 1.4 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 "Mendicants, an element gives rise to a perception, a view, and a thought."
- 2.2 When he said this, Venerable Kaccāna said to the Buddha,³⁰⁷ "Sir, regarding those who are not fully awakened Buddhas, there is a view that they are in fact fully awakened Buddhas. Due to what does this view appear?"³⁰⁸
- 3.1 "It's a mighty thing, Kaccāna, the element of ignorance. An inferior element gives rise to inferior perception, inferior view, inferior thought, inferior intention, inferior aim, inferior wish, an inferior

307. The identity of this monk is uncertain. Most manuscripts, and the commentary, simply have Kaccāna here, which is probably not "Kaccāna the Great". Some manuscripts add a personal name, Saddha or Sandha, while the Chinese parallel at SA 457 has 婆迦利, evidently for Vakkali. He may be the Sabhiya Kaccāna who appears in the same location at SN 44.11.

308. The problem of false enlightened ones is discussed at DN 29:4.1, DN 33:1.6.5, MN 11:13.6, MN 49:30.9, MN 104:2.5, and SN 55:25:10.4.

person, and inferior speech.³⁰⁹ One explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses the inferior. I say that their rebirth is inferior.

A middling element gives rise to middling perception, middling view, middling thought, middling intention, middling aim, middling wish, a middling person, and middling speech. One explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses the middling. I say that their rebirth is middling. 4.1

A superior element gives rise to superior perception, superior view, superior thought, superior intention, superior aim, superior wish, a superior person, and superior speech. One explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses the superior. I say that their rebirth is superior.” 5.1

SN 14.14

Inferior Convictions

Hīnādhimuttikasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element.³¹⁰ Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions.³¹¹ Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions. 1.2

309. The appearance of “person” here anticipates the analysis of different kinds of person in the following discourses through to SN 14.29.

310. Here “element” means something like a “personality trait”.

311. *Adhimuttika* appears to be a Buddhist coinage. The key text is the Divine Net Discourse DN 1, where the Buddha’s ability to discern the different “convictions” of beings is illustrated with the examples of Suppiya who criticized the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, while his student Brahmadaṭṭa praised them. This speaks to a difference in faith, a quality closely associated with *adhimutta* (eg. AN 1.208:1.1). DN 1 goes on to discuss the various views, using the unique term *adhimuttipadāni* (“hypotheses”, “statements of conviction”), which clearly draws on *adhimutti* in the introduction.

- 2.1 In the past, too, sentient beings came together and converged because of an element. ...
- 3.1 In the future, too, sentient beings will join together and converge because of an element. ...
- 4.1 At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions.”

SN 14.15

Walking Together

Caṅkamasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain.³¹² Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was walking together with several mendicants not far from the Buddha. Venerable Mahāmoggallāna was doing likewise, as were Venerable Mahākassapa, Venerable Anuruddha, Venerable Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇi, Venerable Upāli, Venerable Ānanda, and Devadatta.
- 2.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Mendicants, do you see Sāriputta walking together with several mendicants?”
- 2.3 “Yes, sir.”
- 2.4 “All of those mendicants have great wisdom. Do you see Moggallāna walking together with several mendicants?”
- 2.6 “Yes, sir.”
- 2.7 “All of those mendicants have great psychic power. Do you see Kassapa walking together with several mendicants?”
- 2.9 “Yes, sir.”

312. The seven good monks here are among the Buddha’s greatest disciples, all of whom were regarded as possessing great qualities of character and spiritual prowess. They each had their own speciality, which attracted students of a similar character.

“All of those mendicants advocate austerities. Do you see Anuruddha walking together with several mendicants?” 2.10

“Yes, sir.” 2.12

“All of those mendicants have clairvoyance. Do you see Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇi walking together with several mendicants?” 2.13

“Yes, sir.” 2.15

“All of those mendicants are Dhamma speakers. Do you see Upāli walking together with several mendicants?” 2.16

“Yes, sir.” 2.18

“All of those mendicants are experts in monastic law. Do you see Ānanda walking together with several mendicants?” 2.19

“Yes, sir.” 2.21

“All of those mendicants are very learned. Do you see Devadatta walking together with several mendicants?”³¹³ 2.22

“Yes, sir.” 2.24

“All of those mendicants have corrupt wishes.” 2.25

Sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions. 3.1

In the past, in the future, and also in the present, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions.” 3.4

313. Devadatta was the Buddha’s cousin and nemesis. After going forth together with several other relatives of the Buddha (Kd 17:1.4.1), his initial success in meditation was corrupted by his desire for gains and fame (SN 17.35). He tried to take over the Saṅgha but was denounced by the Buddha. His attempt to create a schismatic faction failed and he died in disgrace.

SN 14.16

With Verses

Sagāthāsutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions. In the past ...

2.1 In the future ...

3.1 At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions.

4.1 It’s like how dung joins together with dung, urine with urine, spit with spit, pus with pus, and blood with blood. In the same way, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions. In the past ... In the future ... At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have inferior convictions join together and converge with those who have inferior convictions.

5.1 Sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions. In the past ...

6.1 In the future ... At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions.

7.1 It’s like how milk joins together with milk, oil with oil, ghee with ghee, honey with honey, and molasses with molasses. In the same way, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions. In the past ... In the future ... At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge be-

cause of an element. Those who have good convictions join together and converge with those who have good convictions.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 8.1
went on to say:

“Socializing creates a snarl;³¹⁴ 9.1
they’re cut off by being aloof.
If you’re lost in the middle of a great sea,
and you clamber up on a little log, you’ll sink.

So too, a person who lives well 10.1
sinks by relying on a lazy person.
Hence you should avoid such
a lazy person who lacks energy.

Dwell with the noble ones 11.1
who are secluded and determined
and always energetic;
the astute who practice absorption.”

SN 14.17

Faithless

Assaddhasamsandanasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: the faithless with the faithless, the unconscientious
with the unconscientious, the imprudent with the imprudent, the
unlearned with the unlearned, the lazy with the lazy, the unmindful
with the unmindful, and the witless with the witless.

In the past, too, sentient beings came together and converged 2.1
because of an element. ...

314. These verses appear in a similar context at Iti 78:6.1.

- 3.1 In the future, too, sentient beings will join together and converge because of an element. ...
- 4.1 At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. ...
- 5.1 Sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: the faithful with the faithful, the conscientious with the conscientious, the prudent with the prudent, the learned with the learned, the energetic with the energetic, the mindful with the mindful, and the wise with the wise. In the past ... In the future ... At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. ...”

SN 14.18

Beginning With the Faithless

Assaddhamūlakasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: the faithless with the faithless, the unconscientious with the unconscientious, the witless with the witless, the faithful with the faithful, the conscientious with the conscientious, and the wise with the wise. In the past ... In the future ...
- 2.1 At present, too, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element. ...
- 3.1 Sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: the faithless with the faithless, the imprudent with the imprudent, the witless with the witless, the faithful with the faithful, the prudent with the prudent, and the wise with the wise.
(*The following should be told in full like the first section.*)
- 4.1 Sentient beings come together because of an element: the faithless ... unlearned ... witless ... the faithful ...
- 5.1 Sentient beings come together because of an element: the faithless ... lazy ... witless. the faithful ... energetic ... wise.

Sentient beings come together because of an element: the faithless 6.1
... unmindful ... witless. the faithful ... mindful ... wise.”

SN 14.19

Beginning With the Shameless

Ahīrikamūlakasutta

At Sāvathī. 1.1
“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: the unconscientious with the unconscientious ...
imprudent ... witless. The conscientious with the conscientious ...
prudent ... wise.
... shameless ... unlearned ... witless. The conscientious with 2.1
the conscientious ... learned ... wise.
... shameless ... lazy ... witless. The conscientious with the con- 3.1
scientious ... energetic ... wise.
... shameless ... unmindful ... witless. The conscientious with 4.1
the conscientious ... mindful ... wise.”

SN 14.20

Beginning With Imprudence

Anottappamūlakasutta

At Sāvathī. 1.1
“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: the imprudent with the imprudent ... unlearned ...
witless. The prudent with the prudent ... learned ... wise.
... the imprudent with the imprudent ... lazy ... witless. The 2.1
prudent with the prudent ... energetic ... wise.
... the imprudent with the imprudent ... unmindful ... witless. 3.1
The prudent with the prudent ... mindful ... wise.”

SN 14.21

Beginning With the Unlearned

Appassutamūlakasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: the unlearned with the unlearned ... lazy ... witless. The learned with the learned ... energetic ... wise.

2.1 ... the unlearned with the unlearned ... unmindful ... witless. The learned with the learned ... mindful ... wise.”

SN 14.22

Beginning With the Lazy

Kusītamūlakasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: the lazy with the lazy ... unmindful ... witless ... energetic ... mindful ... wise ...”

(Tell all in full for the past, future, and present.)

The Chapter on Ways of Performing Deeds

SN 14.23

Lacking Immersion

Asamāhitasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: the faithless with the faithless ... shameless ... im-
prudent ... lacking immersion ... witless ...

The faithful with the faithful ... conscientious ... prudent ... 2.1
possessing immersion ... and the wise with the wise.”

SN 14.24

Unethical

Dussīlasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: the faithless with the faithless ... shameless ... im-
prudent ... unethical ... witless ...

The faithful with the faithful ... conscientious ... prudent ... 2.1
ethical ... and the wise with the wise.”

SN 14.25

The Five Precepts

Pañcasikkhāpadasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: those who kill living creatures with those who kill living creatures, those who steal ... commit sexual misconduct ... lie ... consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor ...

2.1 Those who refrain from killing living creatures ... who refrain from stealing ... who refrain from sexual misconduct ... who refrain from lying ... those who refrain from intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor with those who refrain from intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor.”

SN 14.26

Seven Ways of Performing Deeds

Sattakammāpathasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because of an element: those who kill living creatures with those who kill living creatures, those who steal ... commit sexual misconduct ... lie ... backbite ... speak harshly ... talk nonsense ...

2.1 Those who refrain from killing living creatures. ... who refrain from stealing ... who refrain from sexual misconduct ... who refrain from lying ... who refrain from backbiting ... who refrain from harsh speech ... who refrain from talking nonsense with those who refrain from talking nonsense.”

SN 14.27

Ten Ways of Performing Deeds

Dasakammapathasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: those who kill living creatures with those who kill
living creatures, those who steal ... commit sexual misconduct ...
lie ... backbite ... speak harshly ... talk nonsense ... are covetous
... are malicious ... have wrong view ...

Those who refrain from killing living creatures ... who refrain 2.1
from stealing ... who refrain from sexual misconduct ... who refrain
from lying ... who refrain from backbiting ... who refrain from harsh
speech ... who refrain from talking nonsense ... are not covetous
... are not malicious ... have right view with those who have right
view.”

SN 14.28

The Eightfold Path

Aṭṭhaṅgikasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, sentient beings join together and converge because 1.2
of an element: those of wrong view with those of wrong view ...
wrong purpose ... wrong speech ... wrong action ... wrong liveli-
hood ... wrong effort ... wrong mindfulness ... wrong immersion
...

Those who have right view ... right purpose ... right speech ... 2.1
right action ... right livelihood ... right effort ... right mindfulness
... right immersion with those who have right immersion.”

SN 14.29

Ten Factored Path

Dasaṅgasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, sentient beings come together and converge because of an element: those of wrong view with those of wrong view ... wrong purpose ... wrong speech ... wrong action ... wrong livelihood ... wrong effort ... wrong mindfulness ... wrong immersion ... wrong knowledge ... wrong freedom ...

2.1 Those who have right view ... right purpose ... right speech ... right action ... right livelihood ... right effort ... right mindfulness ... right immersion ... right knowledge ... right freedom with those who have right freedom.”

(Tell all in full for the past, future, and present.)

Chapter Four

SN 14.30

Four Elements

Catudhātusutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, 1.1
Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. ... “Mendicants, there are these four
elements.³¹⁵ What four? The elements of earth, water, fire, and air.³¹⁶
These are the four elements.”

SN 14.31

Before Awakening

Pubbесambodhasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1
“Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawak- 1.2
ened but intent on awakening—I thought:³¹⁷ ‘What’s the gratifi-
cation, the drawback, and the escape when it comes to the earth
element ... the water element ... the fire element ... and the air
element?’

315. Also called the “principle states” (*mahābhūta*). Discussed in detail at MN 28:4.1.

316. The properties of matter that dominate in solids, liquids, plasma, and gases.

317. This echoes SN 12.10:1.1 and SN 12.65:1.2.

- 2.1 Then it occurred to me: ‘The pleasure and happiness that arise from the earth element: this is its gratification. That the earth element is impermanent, suffering, and perishable: this is its drawback. Removing and giving up desire and greed for the earth element: this is its escape. The pleasure and happiness that arise from the water element ... The pleasure and happiness that arise from the fire element ... The pleasure and happiness that arise from the air element: this is its gratification. That the air element is impermanent, suffering, and perishable: this is its drawback. Removing and giving up desire and greed for the air element: this is its escape.’
- 3.1 As long as I didn’t truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are, I didn’t announce my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.³¹⁸
- 4.1 But when I did truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are, I announced my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.
- 4.2 Knowledge and vision arose in me: ‘My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there’ll be no more future lives.’”

SN 14.32

In Search of Gratification

Acarimsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I went in search of the earth element’s gratification, and I found it. I’ve seen clearly with wisdom the full extent of grati-

318. The four noble truths were similarly extolled in the first discourse (SN 56.11), and this was subsequently said of several major teaching frameworks. Seeing one part of the Dhamma implies seeing them all.

cation in the earth element.³¹⁹ I went in search of the earth element's drawback, and I found it. I've seen clearly with wisdom the full extent of the drawback in the earth element. I went in search of escape from the earth element, and I found it. I've seen clearly with wisdom the full extent of escape from the earth element.

I went in search of the water element's gratification ... I went in 2.1
search of the fire element's gratification ... I went in search of the air
element's gratification ...

As long as I didn't truly understand these four elements' gratifica- 3.1
tion, drawback, and escape for what they are, I didn't announce my
supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and
divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods
and humans.

But when I did truly understand the four elements' gratification, 4.1
drawback, and escape for what they are, I announced my supreme
perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities,
this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.

Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My freedom is unshakable; 4.2
this is my last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.'

SN 14.33

If There Were No

Nocedamsutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

"Mendicants, if there were no gratification in the earth element, 1.2
sentient beings wouldn't be aroused by it.³²⁰ But since there is grat-
ification in the earth element, sentient beings are aroused by it. If
the earth element had no drawback, sentient beings wouldn't grow

319. Said also of the world (AN 3.104), the aggregates (SN 22.27), and the senses (SN 35.15, 16).

320. Said also of the world (AN 3.105), the aggregates (SN 22.28), and the senses (SN 35.17, 18).

disillusioned with it. But since the earth element has a drawback, sentient beings do grow disillusioned with it. If there were no escape from the earth element, sentient beings wouldn't escape from it. But since there is an escape from the earth element, sentient beings do escape from it.

2.1 If there were no gratification in the water element ... If there were no gratification in the fire element ... If there were no gratification in the air element ...

3.1 As long as sentient beings don't truly understand these four elements' gratification, drawback, and escape for what they are, they haven't escaped from this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—and they don't live detached, liberated, with mind free of boundaries.

4.1 But when sentient beings truly understand these four elements' gratification, drawback, and escape for what they are, they've escaped from this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—and they live detached, liberated, with mind free of boundaries.”³²¹

SN 14.34

Absolutely Painful

Ekantadukkkhasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, if the earth element were absolutely painful—soaked and steeped in pain and not steeped in pleasure—sentient beings wouldn't be aroused by it.³²² But because the earth element is pleasurable—soaked and steeped in pleasure and not steeped in pain—sentient beings are aroused by it.

321. For “boundary” (*marīyādā*) see Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.1.17, where a river forms the “boundary” between Kosala and Videha.

322. Said also of the aggregates (SN 22.60).

If the water element ... If the fire element ... If the air element ... 2.1

If the earth element was absolutely pleasurable—soaked and steeped in pleasure and not steeped in pain—sentient beings wouldn’t grow disillusioned with it. But because the earth element is painful—soaked and steeped in pain and not steeped in pleasure—sentient beings do grow disillusioned with it. 3.1

If the water element ... If the fire element ... If the air element was absolutely pleasurable—soaked and steeped in pleasure and not steeped in pain—sentient beings wouldn’t grow disillusioned with it. But because the air element is painful—soaked and steeped in pain and not steeped in pleasure—sentient beings do grow disillusioned with it.” 4.1

SN 14.35

Taking Pleasure

Abhinandasutta

At Sāvattḥi. 1.1

“Mendicants, if you take pleasure in the earth element, you take pleasure in suffering.³²³ If you take pleasure in suffering, you’re not free from suffering, I say. If you take pleasure in the water element ... If you take pleasure in the fire element ... If you take pleasure in the air element, you take pleasure in suffering. If you take pleasure in suffering, you’re not free from suffering, I say. 1.2

If you don’t take pleasure in the earth element, you don’t take pleasure in suffering. If you don’t take pleasure in suffering, you’re free from suffering, I say. If you don’t take pleasure in the water element ... If you don’t take pleasure in the fire element ... If you don’t take pleasure in the air element, you don’t take pleasure in suffering. If you don’t take pleasure in suffering, you’re free from suffering, I say.” 2.1

323. Said also of the aggregates (SN 22.29) and the senses (SN 35.19, 20).

SN 14.36

Arising

Uppādasutta

1.1 At Sāvattī.

1.2 “Mendicants, the arising, continuation, and manifestation and regeneration of the earth element is the arising of suffering, the continuation of diseases, and the manifestation of old age and death.³²⁴ The arising, continuation, and manifestation and regeneration of the water element ... The arising, continuation, and manifestation and regeneration of the fire element ... The arising, continuation, and manifestation and regeneration of the air element is the arising of suffering, the continuation of diseases, and the manifestation of old age and death.

2.1 The cessation, settling, and disappearance of the earth element is the cessation of suffering, the settling of diseases, and the disappearance of old age and death. The cessation, settling, and disappearance of the water element ... The cessation, settling, and disappearance of the fire element ... The cessation, settling, and disappearance of the air element is the cessation of suffering, the settling of diseases, and the disappearance of old age and death.”

324. Said also of the aggregates (SN 22.30), and the senses (SN 35.21, 22), this template gets its own Saṃyutta (SN 26). | The first phrase in this template consistently has four terms, the final two of which (*abhinibbatti* and *pātubhāva*) are synonyms appearing together in the stock definition of “rebirth” (SN 12.2:4.2). The following phrase, however, only has three: arising (*uppāda*), continuing (*thiti*), and manifestation (*pātubhāva*). I take *abhinibbatti* and *pātubhāva* as reinforcing synonyms, the purpose of which is to clarify that the phrase does, in fact, mean a new rebirth. The three phases then correspond to the rebirth, continuation of life, and passing away to be reborn anew.

SN 14.37

Ascetics and Brahmins

Samaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are these four elements. What four? The elements of earth, water, fire, and air. There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape. I don’t deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight in this very life. 1.2

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.” 2.1

SN 14.38

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are these four elements. What four? The elements of earth, water, fire, and air. There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand these four elements’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape ... 1.2

(Tell all in full.)

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand these four elements’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape ...” 1.7

SN 14.39

Ascetics and Brahmins (3rd)

Tatīyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand the earth element, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They don’t understand the water element ... fire element ... air element ... Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight in this very life.

2.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand the earth element, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They do understand the water element ... the fire element ... the air element ... Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.”

The Linked Discourses on the elements are complete.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON
THE UNKNOWABLE
BEGINNING

Chapter One

SN 15.1

Grass and Sticks

Tiṇakattḥasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD.³²⁵ At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”
- 1.5 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 1.7 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning.³²⁶ No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving.³²⁷ Suppose a person was to strip all the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in the Black

325. This chapter links to the Nidānasamyutta through the concept of beginningless transmigration, in which beings are lost because of not understanding dependent origination (SN 12.60:2.3).

326. Resolve *anamatagga* as *ana’mat’agga*, where *ana* is a doubled negative: “no known beginning”. | The idea stems from the the Nāsadiya Sūkta, which twice mentions “in the beginning” (*agre*, Rig Veda 10.129.3, 4; see too 10.90.7, 10.121.1). There, from thought (*manaso*) evolved desire. It concludes, “This creation—from where it came to be, if it was produced or if not—he who is the overseer of this (world) in the furthest heaven, he surely knows. Or if he does not know ...?” (Rig Veda 10.129.7, Jamison/Brereton). Perhaps the Buddha picked up the phrase from his former teacher Uddaka Rāmaputta, who at Isibhāsiyāim 23 describes transmigration as *aṇādiyaṃ aṇavadaggaṃ* (“beginningless, without first point”).

327. We encountered a slight variation of this phrase at SN 12.19:1.2.

Plum Tree Land, gather them together into one pile, and chop them each into four inch pieces. They'd lay them down, saying:³²⁸ 'This is my mother, this is my grandmother.' The grass, sticks, branches, and leaves of the Black Plum Tree Land would run out before that person's mothers and grandmothers.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. No 1.11
first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. For such a long time you have undergone suffering, agony, and disaster, swelling the cemeteries. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions."

SN 15.2

The Earth

Pathavīsutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

"Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No 1.2
first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. Suppose a person was to make the whole earth into clay balls the size of jujube seeds. They'd lay them down, saying: 'This is my father, this is my grandfather.' The whole earth would run out before that person's fathers and grandfathers.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. No 1.6
first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. For such a long time you have undergone suffering, agony, and disaster, swelling the cemeteries. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions."

328. The "Black Plum Tree Land" is *jambudīpa*, the South Asian subcontinent, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

SN 15.3

Tears

Assusutta

1.1 At Sāvattī.

1.2 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. What do you think? Which is more: the flow of tears you’ve shed while roaming and transmigrating for such a very long time—weeping and wailing from being coupled with the unloved and separated from the loved—or the water in the four oceans?”³²⁹

1.5 “As we understand the Buddha’s teaching, the flow of tears we’ve shed while roaming and transmigrating is more than the water in the four oceans.”

2.1 “Good, good, mendicants! It’s good that you understand my teaching like this. The flow of tears you’ve shed while roaming and transmigrating is indeed more than the water in the four oceans. For a long time you’ve undergone the death of a mother ... father ... brother ... sister ... son ... daughter ... loss of relatives ... loss of wealth ... or loss through illness. From being coupled with the unloved and separated from the loved, the flow of tears you’ve shed while roaming and transmigrating is indeed more than the water in the four oceans.

329. Each world system—or as we would say, solar system—has four oceans (AN 3.80:4.2). These were proverbial for an abundance of wealth (Rig Veda 9.33.6, 10.47.2; Atharva Veda 19.27.3). There are eastern and western oceans (RV 10.136.5, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.6.3.11; eastern sea at ŚB 10.6.4.1, Bṛhādāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.1.2), and upper and lower (RV 7.6.7, 10.98.5). We can identify the eastern and western oceans as the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, while the lower is the Indian Ocean, into which water flows from the upper heavenly ocean in the Himalayas.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 2.13
 This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
 and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.4

Mother's Milk

Khīrasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No 1.2
 first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating,
 shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving.

What do you think? Which is more: the mother's milk you've 1.4
 drunk while roaming and transmigrating for such a very long time,
 or the water in the four oceans?”

“As we understand the Buddha's teaching, the mother's milk we've 1.5
 drunk while roaming and transmigrating is more than the water in
 the four oceans.”

“Good, good, mendicants! It's good that you understand my 2.1
 teaching like this. The mother's milk you've drunk while roaming
 and transmigrating for such a very long time is more than the water
 in the four oceans.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 2.3
 This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
 and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.5

A Mountain

Pabbatasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

- 1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and asked him, “Sir, how long is an eon?”³³⁰
- 1.4 “Mendicant, an eon is long. It’s not easy to calculate how many years, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of years it lasts.”
- 2.1 “But sir, is it possible to give a simile?”
- 2.2 “It’s possible,” said the Buddha.
- 2.3 “Suppose there was a big rocky mountain, a league long, a league wide, and a league high, with no cracks or holes, one solid mass. And as each century passed someone would stroke it once with a fine cloth from Kāsi. By this means the big rocky mountain would be worn away before the eon comes to an end. That’s how long an eon is. And we’ve transmigrated through many such eons, many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands.
- 2.8 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.6

A Mustard Seed

Sāsapāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, “Sir, how long is an eon?”
- 1.4 “Mendicant, an eon is long. It’s not easy to calculate how many years, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of years it lasts.”³³¹
- 2.1 “But sir, is it possible to give a simile?”

330. Indian cosmology assumes a cyclic universe, where an “eon” is the time for an entire universe to come into existence, evolve, decay, then disappear.

331. The purpose of these similes is to impress on the mind the incomprehensible vastness of existence. While it is doubtful they were ever meant to be literal

“It’s possible,” said the Buddha. 2.2

“Suppose there was an iron citadel, a league long, a league wide, 2.3
and a league high, full of mustard seeds pressed into balls. And
as each century passed someone would remove a single mustard
seed. By this means the big heap of mustard seeds would be used
up before the eon comes to an end.³³² That’s how long an eon is.
And we’ve transmigrated through many such eons, many hundreds,
many thousands, many hundreds of thousands.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 2.8
This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.7

Disciples

Sāvakasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha ... and asked 1.2
him, “Sir, how many eons have passed?”

“Mendicants, many eons have passed. It’s not easy to calculate 1.4
how many eons have passed, how many hundreds or thousands or
hundreds of thousands of eons.”

“But sir, is it possible to give a simile?” 2.1

“It’s possible,” said the Buddha. 2.2

“Suppose there were four disciples with a lifespan of a hundred 2.3
years. And each day they would each recollect a hundred thousand
eons.³³³ Those four disciples would pass away after a hundred years
and there would still be eons that they haven’t recollected. That’s

numbers, I have done the math in a few cases. By way of comparison, the age of
the universe in modern physical cosmology is around 13.9 billion years.

332. Assuming 2 mm per mustard seed, and 10 km per league, that’s about
 5×10^{22} years.

333. That’s 14,600,000,000 eons.

how many eons have passed. It's not easy to calculate how many eons have passed, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of eons.

- 2.9 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.8

The Ganges

Gaṅgāsutta

- 1.1 Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then a certain brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.
- 1.3 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and asked the Buddha, “Worthy Gotama, how many eons have passed?”
- 1.5 “Brahmin, many eons have passed. It's not easy to calculate how many eons have passed, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of eons.”
- 2.1 “But worthy Gotama, can you give a simile?”
- 2.2 “I can,” said the Buddha.
- 2.3 “Consider the Ganges River from where it originates to where it meets the ocean. Between these places it's not easy to calculate how many grains of sand there are, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of grains of sand. The eons that have passed are more than this. It's not easy to calculate how many eons have passed, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of eons.
- 2.8 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. For such a long time you have undergone suffering, agony, and disaster, swelling the

cemeteries. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

When he said this, the brahmin said to the Buddha, “Excellent, 3.1
worthy Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may the worthy
Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for
life.”

SN 15.9

A Stick

Daṇḍasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No 1.2
first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating,
shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. Suppose a stick was
tossed up in the air. Sometimes it’d fall on its bottom, sometimes the
middle, and sometimes the end.³³⁴ It’s the same for sentient beings
roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by
craving. Sometimes they go from this world to the other world, and
sometimes they come from the other world to this world.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 1.6
This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
and freed regarding all conditions.”

334. Simile also at SN 56.33:1.1.

SN 15.10

A Single Individual

Puggalasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain.³³⁵ There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"
- 1.4 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 "Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. ... One individual roaming and transmigrating for an eon would amass a heap of bones the size of this Mount Vepulla, if they were gathered together and not lost.³³⁶
- 2.3 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions."
- 3.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 4.1 "If the bones of a single individual
for a single eon were gathered up,
they'd make a pile the size of a mountain:
so said the great seer.
- 5.1 And this is declared to be
as big as Mount Vepulla,
higher than the Vulture's Peak
in the Mountainfold of the Magadhans.
- 6.1 But then, with right understanding,
one sees the noble truths—

335. This Sutta is also at Iti 24.

336. Mount Vepulla ("huge"; modern Vipula) lies immediately north of the Vulture's Peak. It was probably visible to the Buddha, hence he used the proximate pronoun *ima* ("this"). Today it is crowned with a Jain temple. Its past names are given at SN 15.20.

suffering, suffering's origin,
suffering's transcendence,
and the noble eightfold path
that leads to the stilling of suffering.

After roaming on seven times at most,
that individual
makes an end of suffering,
with the ending of all fetters.”

7.1

Chapter Two

SN 15.11

In a Sorry State

Duggatasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī.
- 1.3 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. When you see someone in a sorry state, in distress, you should conclude: ‘In all this long time, we too have undergone the same thing.’ Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.12

In a Good Way

Sukhitasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. ... When you see someone in a good way, in a happy state, you should conclude: ‘In all this long time, we too have undergone the same thing.’

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 1.5
This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.13

Thirty Mendicants

Timsamattasutta

Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then thirty mendicants from 1.1
Pāvā went to the Buddha. All of them lived in the wilderness, ate
only almsfood, wore rag robes, and owned just three robes; yet they
all still had fetters. They bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one
side.³³⁷

Then it occurred to the Buddha, “These thirty mendicants from 1.3
Pāvā live in the wilderness, eat only almsfood, wear rag robes, and
own just three robes; yet they all still have fetters.³³⁸ Why don’t I
teach them the Dhamma in such a way that their minds are freed
from defilements by not grasping while sitting in this very seat?”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.6

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.8

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No 2.1
first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating,
shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving.

337. The same thirty monks from Pāvā visited the Buddha on another occasion when he was at Sāvattthī, occasioning the allowance for the robe-making ceremony after the rains residence (Kd 7:1.1.1). | Pāvā, a town of the Mallas, was where Mahāvīra died, plunging the Jains into chaos. (The Jains, however, say this was another Pāvā east of Nālandā.) Perhaps because of this, Pāvā became associated with especially ascetic monks such as those in this discourse: Mahākassapa heard the news of the Buddha’s passing at Pāvā; and sixty monks from Pāvā allied with monks of “Avanti and the south” arguing for strict Vinaya in the Second Council (Kd 22:1.7.11.1).

338. See SN 16.5:2.1 for explanations of these strict observances.

- 2.3 What do you think? Which is more: the flow of blood you’ve shed when your head was chopped off while roaming and transmigrating for such a very long time, or the water in the four oceans?”
- 2.4 “As we understand the Buddha’s teaching, the flow of blood we’ve shed when our head was chopped off while roaming and transmigrating is more than the water in the four oceans.”
- 3.1 “Good, good, mendicants! It’s good that you understand my teaching like this. The flow of blood you’ve shed when your head was chopped off while roaming and transmigrating is indeed more than the water in the four oceans. For a long time you’ve been cows, and the flow of blood you’ve shed when your head was chopped off as a cow is more than the water in the four oceans. For a long time you’ve been buffalo ... sheep ... goats ... deer ... chickens ... pigs ... For a long time you’ve been bandits, arrested for raiding villages, highway robbery, or adultery. And the flow of blood you’ve shed when your head was chopped off as a bandit is more than the water in the four oceans.
- 3.13 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”
- 4.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of the thirty mendicants from Pāvā were freed from defilements by not grasping.

SN 15.14

Mother

Mātusutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. ... It’s not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time has not previously been your mother.

Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. ... 1.4
 This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate,
 and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.15

Father

Pitusutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. ... It’s 1.2
 not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time has not pre-
 viously been your father. ... This is quite enough for you to become
 disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.16

Brother

Bhātusutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“It’s not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time 1.2
 has not previously been your brother. ... This is quite enough for
 you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all
 conditions.”

SN 15.17

Sister

Bhaginisutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“It’s not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time 1.2
 has not previously been your sister. ... This is quite enough for

you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.18

Son

Puttasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “It’s not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time has not previously been your son. ... This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.19

Daughter

Dhītusutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. It’s not easy to find a sentient being who in all this long time has not previously been your daughter.

1.5 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. For such a long time you have undergone suffering, agony, and disaster, swelling the cemeteries. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

SN 15.20

Mount Vepulla

Vepullapabbatasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.1

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving. Once upon a time, mendicants, this Mount Vepulla was known as *Pācīnavamsa*.³³⁹ And at that time people were known as *Tivaras*.³⁴⁰ The lifespan of the *Tivaras* was 40,000 years.³⁴¹ It took them four days to climb Mount Vepulla, and four days to descend. At that time Kakusandha, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha arose in the world.³⁴² Kakusandha had a fine pair of chief disciples named Vidhura and Sañjīva.³⁴³ See, mendicants! This mountain’s name has vanished, those people have passed away, and that Buddha has become fully quenched. So impermanent are conditions, so unstable 2.1

339. For Vepulla, see SN 15.10:2.2. | A *pācīnavamsa* was a hall or shed built for the ritual, with bamboo (*vamsa*) beams running easterly (*pācīna*; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.1.6 and Eggeling’s note). Perhaps the mountain was noted as the site for the introduction of this ritual institution. In the Buddha’s day, there was a “Park of the East-Raftered Hall” in Cetī (MN 128:8.1, AN 8.30:1.2).

340. *Tivara* may be connected to Vedic *trivarūtha*, the “triple defence”. This may be connected with the fortifications for which Rājagaha is famous. But by Vedic times it acquired a religious sense, here suggesting the people who have the protection of the gods due to their correct performance of the ritual in their hall. The “triple defence” can be seen as a precursor of the Buddhist triple refuge.

341. For the long lifespans of humans in the past, see AN 7.74:9.1. Declining lifespans are charted at DN 26:14.2.

342. Kakusandha and the other Buddhas are mentioned at SN 12.7–10. His lifespan of 40,000 years is confirmed at DN 14:1.7.4.

343. The pairs of disciples are listed at DN 14:1.9.1. A story of Sañjīva is given at MN 50:9.2.

are conditions, so unreliable are conditions. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.

- 3.1 Once upon a time this Mount Vepulla was known as Vaṅkaka. And at that time people were known as Rohitassas.³⁴⁴ The lifespan of the Rohitassas was 30,000 years. It took them three days to climb Mount Vepulla, and three days to descend. At that time Koṇāgamana, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha arose in the world.³⁴⁵ Koṇāgamana had a fine pair of chief disciples named Bhiyyosa and Uttara. See, mendicants! This mountain's name has vanished, those people have passed away, and that Buddha has become fully quenched. So impermanent are conditions

...

- 4.1 Once upon a time this Mount Vepulla was known as Supassa.³⁴⁶ And at that time people were known as Suppiyas.³⁴⁷ The lifespan of the Suppiyas was 20,000 years. It took them two days to climb Mount Vepulla, and two days to descend. At that time Kassapa, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha arose in the world.³⁴⁸ Kassapa had a fine pair of chief disciples named Tissa and Bhāradvāja. See, mendicants! This mountain's name has vanished, those people have passed away, and that Buddha has become fully quenched. So impermanent are conditions ...

- 5.1 These days this Mount Vepulla is known as Vepulla. And these people are known as Magadhans. The lifespan of the Magadhans is

344. These two terms are found in Rīg Veda 4.6.9, “red horses going straight, going well” (*rohitāsa rjvaṅcaḥ svaṅcaḥ*), where *rohitassa* is the “red horse” of the sunbeams (SN 2.26), and Sanskrit *vaṅca* is evidently found in Pali *vaṅka* in the sense “going” (unless it is from *vaṅcati*, “fire”). Perhaps the mountain was named for the flashing beams of sunlight that broke over it at dawn.

345. His lifespan is confirmed at DN 14:1.7.5.

346. *Supassa* is “Fairslope”, a name used for several mountains, including one on the eastern side of mount Meru.

347. The “well-loved”.

348. Stories of Kassapa, the Buddha immediately preceding Gotama, are found at MN 81 and AN 5.180. His lifespan is given at DN 14:1.7.6.

short, brief, and fleeting. A long life is a hundred years or a little more. It takes the Magadhans an hour to climb Mount Vepulla, and an hour to descend.³⁴⁹ And now I am the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha who has arisen in the world. I have a fine pair of chief disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna. There will come a time when this mountain's name will vanish, those people will die, and I will be fully extinguished. So impermanent are conditions, so unstable are conditions, so unreliable are conditions. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 6.1
went on to say:

“For the Tivaras it was Pācīnavaṃsa, 7.1
for the Rohitassas, Vaṅkaka,
Supassa for the Suppiyas,
and Vepulla for the Magadhans.

Oh! Conditions are impermanent, 8.1
their nature is to rise and fall;
having arisen, they cease;
their settling is such bliss.”

**The Linked Discourses on the un-
known beginning are complete.**

349. Kauṭīlya says there are fifteen *muhuttas* (Sanskrit *muhūrta*) per day, and fifteen per night, making 48 minutes (Arthaśāstra 2.20.37).

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH KASSAPA

The Chapter with Kassapa

SN 16.1

Content

Santuṭṭhasutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “Mendicants, Kassapa is content with any kind of robe, and praises 1.2
such contentment.³⁵⁰ He doesn’t employ improper solicitation for
the sake of a robe. He doesn’t worry if he doesn’t get a robe. And
if he does get a robe, he uses it untied, uninfatuated, unattached,
seeing the drawback, and understanding the escape.³⁵¹
- Kassapa is content with any kind of almsfood ... 2.1
- Kassapa is content with any kind of lodging ... 3.1
- Kassapa is content with any kind of medicines and supplies for 4.1
the sick ...
- So you should train like this: ‘We will be content with any kind 5.1
of robe, and praise such contentment. We won’t employ improper
solicitation for the sake of a robe. We won’t worry if we don’t get
a robe. And if we do get a robe, we’ll use it untied, uninfatuated,
unattached, seeing the drawback, and understanding the escape.’

350. This is of course Mahākassapa, “Kassapa the Great”. This chapter paints an indelible personal picture of this great disciple, although I suspect he would have scorned the fame he achieved.

351. “Improper solicitation” such as hinting, flattery, cosying up to the wealthy, etc.

(All should be told in full the same way.)

- 6.1 ‘We will be content with any kind of almsfood ...’ ‘We will be content with any kind of lodging ...’ ‘We will be content with any kind of medicines and supplies for the sick ...’ That’s how you should train. I will exhort you with the example of Kassapa or someone like him. You should practice accordingly.”

SN 16.2

Imprudent

Anottappīśutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Mahākassapa and Venerable Sāriputta were staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana.
- 1.3 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Venerable Mahākassapa, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Mahākassapa:
- 1.5 “Reverend Kassapa, it’s said that without being keen and prudent you can’t achieve awakening, extinguishment, and the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.³⁵² But if you are keen and prudent you can achieve awakening, extinguishment, and the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.
- 2.1 To what extent is this the case?”³⁵³
- 2.3 “Reverend, take a mendicant who doesn’t foster keenness by thinking: ‘If unarisen unskillful qualities arise in me, they’ll lead to harm.’ ‘If I don’t give up arisen unskillful qualities, they’ll lead to harm.’ ‘If I don’t give rise to unarisen skillful qualities, they’ll lead to harm.’ ‘If

352. Both “keen” (*anātāpī*) and “prudent” (*anottappī*) stem from the same root *tap*, “to burn”. In conjunction, they distantly echo the idea of *tapas*, the ascetic fire.

353. Sāriputta is obviously giving Mahākassapa a prompt, not seeking the answer.

arisen skillful qualities cease in me, they'll lead to harm.' That's how you're not keen.

And how are you not prudent? Take a mendicant who doesn't 3.1
foster prudence by thinking: 'If unarisen unskillful qualities arise in me, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give up arisen unskillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give rise to unarisen skillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If arisen skillful qualities cease in me, they'll lead to harm.' That's how you're not prudent. That's how without being keen and prudent you can't achieve awakening, extinguishment, and the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

And how are you keen? Take a mendicant who fosters keenness 4.1
by thinking: 'If unarisen unskillful qualities arise in me, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give up arisen unskillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give rise to unarisen skillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If arisen skillful qualities cease in me, they'll lead to harm.' That's how you're keen.

And how are you prudent? Take a mendicant who fosters pru- 5.1
dence by thinking: 'If unarisen unskillful qualities arise in me, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give up arisen unskillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If I don't give rise to unarisen skillful qualities, they'll lead to harm.' 'If arisen skillful qualities cease in me, they'll lead to harm.' That's how you're prudent. That's how if you're keen and prudent you can achieve awakening, extinguishment, and the supreme sanctuary from the yoke."

SN 16.3

Like the Moon

Candūpamāsutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

"Mendicants, you should approach families like the moon: with- 1.2
drawn in body and mind, ever the newcomer, and never rude. Suppose a person were to look down at an old well, a rugged cliff, or

an inaccessible riverland. They'd withdraw their body and mind. In the same way, you should approach families like the moon:³⁵⁴ withdrawn in body and mind, always the newcomer, and never rude.

2.1 Kassapa approaches families like the moon: withdrawn in body and mind, ever the newcomer, and never rude.

2.3 What do you think, mendicants? What kind of mendicant is worthy of approaching families?"

2.5 "Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

3.1 Then the Buddha waved his hand in space.

3.2 "Mendicants, this hand is not stuck or held or caught in space.³⁵⁵

In the same way, when approaching families, a mendicant's mind is not stuck or held or caught, thinking: 'May those who want material things get them, and may those who want merit make merits!' They're just as pleased and happy when others get something as they are when they get something. This kind of mendicant is worthy of approaching families.

4.1 When Kassapa approaches families, his mind is not stuck or held or caught, thinking: 'May those who want material things get them, and may those who want merit make merits!' He's just as pleased and happy when others get something as he is when he gets something.

5.1 What do you think, mendicants? What kind of mendicant's teaching is pure, and what kind is impure?"

5.3 "Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

5.4 "Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

5.5 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

354. This passage is quoted in Mil 7.4.7:5.4. Otherwise, it is unique in the canon.

355. This is another unique image.

“Whoever teaches Dhamma to others with the thought: ‘Oh! 6.1
May they listen to the teaching from me. When they’ve heard it,
may they gain confidence in the teaching and demonstrate their
confidence to me.’³⁵⁶ Such a mendicant’s teaching is impure.

Whoever teaches Dhamma to others with the thought: ‘The teach- 7.1
ing is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life,
immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensi-
ble people can know it for themselves. Oh! May they listen to the
teaching from me. When they’ve heard it, may they understand the
teaching and practice accordingly.’ So they teach others because of
the clear rightness of the teaching, out of compassion, kindness, and
sympathy. Such a mendicant’s teaching is pure.

Kassapa teaches Dhamma to others with the thought: ‘The teach- 8.1
ing is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life,
immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensi-
ble people can know it for themselves. Oh! May they listen to the
teaching from me. When they’ve heard it, may they understand the
teaching and practice accordingly.’

Thus he teaches others because of the clear rightness of the teach- 8.4
ing, out of compassion, kindness, and sympathy. I will exhort you
with the example of Kassapa or someone like him. You should prac-
tice accordingly.”

SN 16.4

Visiting Families

Kulūpakasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“What do you think, mendicants? What kind of mendicant is 1.2
worthy of visiting families? And what kind of mendicant is not
worthy of visiting families?”

356. Compare MN 5:17.2.

- 1.4 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...” The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Whoever visits families with the thought: ‘May they give to me, may they not fail to give. May they give a lot, not a little. May they give me fine things, not coarse. May they give quickly, not slowly. May they give carefully, not carelessly.’ If a mendicant with such a thought approaches a family and they don’t give, the mendicant feels slighted. And they experience pain and sadness because of that. If they give only a little ... if they give coarse things ... if they give slowly ... if they give carelessly, the mendicant feels slighted. And they experience pain and sadness because of that. That kind of mendicant is not worthy of visiting families.
- 3.1 Whoever visits families with the thought: ‘When among other families, how could I possibly think:
- 3.3 “May they give to me, may they not fail to give. May they give a lot, not a little. May they give me fine things, not coarse. May they give quickly, not slowly. May they give carefully, not carelessly.” If a mendicant with such a thought approaches a family and they don’t give, the mendicant doesn’t feel slighted. And they don’t experience pain and sadness because of that. If they give only a little ... if they give coarse things ... if they give slowly ... if they give carelessly, the mendicant doesn’t feel slighted. And they don’t experience pain and sadness because of that. That kind of mendicant is worthy of visiting families.
- 4.1 Kassapa visits families with the thought: ‘When among other families, how could I possibly think:
- 4.3 “May they give to me, may they not fail to give. May they give a lot, not a little. May they give me fine things, not coarse. May they give quickly, not slowly. May they give carefully, not carelessly.” With such a thought, if he approaches a family and they don’t give, he doesn’t feel slighted. And he doesn’t experience pain and sadness because of that. If they give only a little ... if they give coarse things ... if they give slowly ... if they give carelessly, he doesn’t feel slighted. And he doesn’t experience pain and sadness because of that. I will

exhort you with the example of Kassapa or someone like him. You should practice accordingly.”

SN 16.5

Old Age

Jinṇasutta

So I have heard. Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then Venerable Mahākassapa went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“You’re old now, Kassapa. Those worn-out hempen rag robes must be a burden for you. So Kassapa, you should wear clothes given by householders, accept invitations for the meal, and stay in my presence.”³⁵⁷

“For a long time, sir, I’ve lived in the wilderness, eaten only almsfood, worn rag robes, and owned just three robes; and I’ve praised these things. I’ve been one of few wishes, content, secluded, aloof, and energetic; and I’ve praised these things.”³⁵⁸

“But seeing what benefit, Kassapa, have you long practiced these things?”

“Sir, seeing two benefits I have long practiced these things.”

I see happiness for myself in this life. And I have sympathy for future generations, thinking: ‘Hopefully those who come after might follow my example.’ For they may think: ‘It seems that the disciples

357. The Buddha is urging Kassapa to relax some of his strict observances, although this may have simply been a pretext to highlight Kassapa’s dedication.

358. “Living in the wilderness”: rejecting life in settled monasteries. | “Eating only almsfood”: rejecting invitations for meals in people’s houses, or organized meals served in the monastery, taking only what is received in the village. | “Wearing rag robes”: rejecting robes made from new cloth, and making robes only from discarded cloth, cleaned and patched together. | “Owning just three robes”: rejecting extra robes such as a bathing cloth, and wearing only the three main robes of a mendicant: the “lower robe” or “sarong” (*antarāvāsaka*); the “upper robe” (*uttarasāṅga*); and the double-layered “outer robe” or “cloak” (*saṅghāṭi*).

awakened after the Buddha for a long time lived in the wilderness, ate only almsfood, wore rag robes, and owned just three robes; and they praised these things. They were of few wishes, content, secluded, aloof, and energetic; and they praised these things.’ They’ll practice accordingly, which will be for their lasting welfare and happiness.

- 6.1 Seeing these two benefits I have long practiced these things.”
 7.1 “Good, good, Kassapa! You’re acting for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. So Kassapa, wear worn-out hempen rag robes, walk for alms, and stay in the wilderness.”

SN 16.6

Advice

Ovādasutta

- 1.1 Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then Venerable Mahākassapa went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:
 1.3 “Kassapa, advise the mendicants! Give them a Dhamma talk! Either you or I should advise the mendicants and give them a Dhamma talk.”
 2.1 “Sir, the mendicants these days are hard to admonish, having qualities that make them hard to admonish. They’re impatient, and don’t take instruction respectfully.³⁵⁹
 2.2 Take the monk named Bhaṇḍa, Ānanda’s protégé. He’s been competing in studies with the monk named Abhiñjika, Anuruddha’s protégé. They say:³⁶⁰ ‘Come on, monk, who can speak more? Who can speak better? Who can speak longer?’”
 3.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, “Please, monk, in my name tell the monk named Bhaṇḍa, Ānanda’s protégé, and the monk

359. A list of such qualities is given at MN 15:3.1.

360. Bhaṇḍa and Abhiñjika are mentioned only here.

named Abhiñjika, Anuruddha's protégé that the Teacher summons them."

"Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to those monks and said, 3.4
"Venerables, the Teacher summons you."

"Yes, reverend," those monks replied. They went to the Buddha, 4.1
bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to them:

"Is it really true, monks, that you've been competing in studies, 4.2
saying: 'Come on, monk, who can speak more? Who can speak better? Who can speak longer?'"

"Yes, sir." 4.4

"Have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma like this: 'Please 4.5
mendicants, compete in studies to see who can recite more and better and longer?'"

"No, sir." 4.8

"If you've never known me to teach the Dhamma like this, what 4.9
then do you know and see, you futile men, that after going forth in such a well explained teaching and training you'd compete in studies to see who can speak more and better and longer?"

Then those monks bowed with their heads to the Buddha's feet 5.1
and said, "We made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of us in that after going forth in such a well explained teaching and training we competed in studies to see who can speak more and better and longer. Please, sir, accept our mistake for what it is, so we will restrain ourselves in future."

"Indeed, monks, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and 6.1
unskillful of you to act in that way. But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For it is growth in the training of the Noble One to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future."

SN 16.7

Advice (2nd)

Dutiyaovādasutta

- 1.1 Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove. Then Venerable Mahākassapa went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side.
- 1.3 The Buddha said to him, “Kassapa, advise the mendicants! Give them a Dhamma talk! Either you or I should advise the mendicants and give them a Dhamma talk.”
- 2.1 “Sir, the mendicants these days are hard to admonish, having qualities that make them hard to admonish. They’re impatient, and don’t take instruction respectfully.
- 2.2 Sir, whoever has no faith, conscience, prudence, energy, and wisdom when it comes to skillful qualities can expect decline, not growth, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.³⁶¹
- 3.1 It’s like the moon in the waning fortnight. Whether by day or by night, its beauty, roundness, luminosity, and diameter and circumference only decline.
- 3.2 In the same way, whoever has no faith, conscience, prudence, energy, and wisdom when it comes to skillful qualities can expect decline, not growth, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.
- 4.1 A faithless individual is in decline. An individual with no conscience is in decline. An imprudent individual is in decline. A lazy individual is in decline. A witless individual is in decline. An irritable individual is in decline. An acrimonious individual is in decline. When there are no mendicant advisers there is decline.
- 5.1 Sir, whoever has faith, conscience, prudence, energy, and wisdom when it comes to skillful qualities can expect growth, not decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.
- 6.1 It’s like the moon in the waxing fortnight. Whether by day or by night, its beauty, roundness, luminosity, and diameter and circumference only grow.

361. See similar teachings at AN 10.67 and AN 10.68.

In the same way, whoever has faith, conscience, prudence, energy, 6.2
and wisdom when it comes to skillful qualities can expect growth,
not decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.

A faithful individual doesn't decline. An individual with a con- 7.1
science doesn't decline. A prudent individual doesn't decline. An
energetic individual doesn't decline. A wise individual doesn't de-
cline. A loving individual doesn't decline. A kind individual doesn't
decline. When there are mendicant advisers there is no decline."

"Good, good, Kassapa! Whoever has no faith, conscience, pru- 8.1
dence, energy, and wisdom when it comes to skillful qualities can
expect decline, not growth ...

When there are no mendicant advisers there is decline. 9.3

Whoever has faith, conscience, prudence, energy, and wisdom 10.1
when it comes to skillful qualities can expect growth, not decline ...

When there are mendicant advisers there is no decline." 12.1

SN 16.8

Advice (3rd)

Tatiyaovādasutta

Near Rājagaha, in the squirrels' feeding ground. Then Venerable 1.1
Mahākassapa went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one
side. The Buddha said to him:

"Kassapa, advise the mendicants! Give them a Dhamma talk! Ei- 1.3
ther you or I should advise the mendicants and give them a Dhamma
talk."

"Sir, the mendicants these days are hard to admonish, having 2.1
qualities that make them hard to admonish. They're impatient, and
don't take instruction respectfully."

"Kassapa, that's because formerly the senior mendicants lived 2.2
in the wilderness, ate only almsfood, wore rag robes, and owned
just three robes; and they praised these things. They were of few

wishes, content, secluded, aloof, and energetic; and they praised these things.

3.1 The senior mendicants invite such a mendicant to a seat, saying: ‘Welcome, mendicant! What is this mendicant’s name? This mendicant is good-natured; he really wants to train. Please, mendicant, here, take a seat.’

4.1 Then the junior mendicants think: ‘It seems that when a mendicant lives in the wilderness ... and is energetic, and praises these things, senior mendicants invite them to a seat ...’ They practice accordingly. That is for their lasting welfare and happiness.

5.1 But these days, Kassapa, the senior mendicants don’t live in the wilderness ... and aren’t energetic; and they don’t praise these things.

6.1 When a mendicant is well-known and famous, a recipient of robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, senior mendicants invite them to a seat: ‘Welcome, mendicant! What is this mendicant’s name? This mendicant is good-natured; he’s fond of his fellow monks. Please, mendicant, here, take a seat.’

7.1 Then the junior mendicants think: ‘It seems that when a mendicant is well-known and famous, a recipient of robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, senior mendicants invite them to a seat ...’ They practice accordingly. That is for their lasting harm and suffering. And if it could ever be rightly said that spiritual practitioners have been imperiled by the peril of a spiritual practitioner, and vanquished by the vanquishing of a spiritual practitioner, it is these days that this could be rightly said.”³⁶²

SN 16.9

Absorptions and Insights

Jhānābhiññasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

362. The “peril of a spiritual practitioner” is one of three perils explained at MN 122:21.1. | Read *abhibhavana*, “overcoming, vanquishing”.

“Mendicants, whenever I want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so does Kassapa. 1.2

Whenever I want, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, I enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so does Kassapa. 2.1

Whenever I want, with the fading away of rapture, I enter and remain in the third absorption, where I meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’ And so does Kassapa. 3.1

Whenever I want, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, I enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. And so does Kassapa. 4.1

Whenever I want, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, I enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. And so does Kassapa. 5.1

Whenever I want, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, I enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. And so does Kassapa. 6.1

Whenever I want, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, I enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. And so does Kassapa. 7.1

Whenever I want, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, I enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. And so does Kassapa. 8.1

- 9.1 Whenever I want, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, I enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. And so does Kassapa.
- 10.1 Whenever I want, I wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying myself and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. I control the body as far as the realm of divinity. And so does Kassapa.
- 11.1 Whenever I want, with clairaudience that is purified and super-human, I hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far. And so does Kassapa.
- 12.1 Whenever I want, I understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with my mind. I understand mind with greed as ‘mind with greed’, and mind without greed as ‘mind without greed’; mind with hate ... mind without hate ... mind with delusion ... mind without delusion ... constricted mind ... scattered mind ... expansive mind ... unexpansive mind ... mind that is not supreme ... mind that is supreme ... mind immersed in samādhi ... mind not immersed in samādhi ... freed mind ... unfreed mind ... And so does Kassapa.
- 13.1 Whenever I want, I recollect my many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. I remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was

reborn here.' And so I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details. And so does Kassapa.

Whenever I want, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. And so does Kassapa. 14.1

I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. And so does Kassapa." 15.1

SN 16.10

The Nuns' Quarters

Upassayasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Mahākassapa was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and 1.1

robe, went to Mahākassapa and said, “Come, Honorable Kassapa. Let’s go to one of the nuns’ quarters.”³⁶³

1.5 “You go, Reverend Ānanda. You’re the one with many duties and responsibilities.”³⁶⁴

1.6 And a second time ...

1.9 And a third time, Ānanda said, “Come, Honorable Kassapa. Let’s go to one of the nuns’ quarters.”

2.1 Then Venerable Mahākassapa robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Ānanda as his second monk to one of the nuns’ quarters, where he sat down on the seat spread out. And then several nuns went up to Mahākassapa, bowed, and sat down to one side. Mahākassapa educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired those nuns with a Dhamma talk, after which he rose from his seat and left.

3.1 But the nun Thullatissā was upset and blurted out,³⁶⁵ “What is the venerable Mahākassapa thinking, that he’d teach Dhamma in front

363. I render *bhante* as “sir” when used alone, “honorable” when used with a name. Ānanda’s use here suggests this took place after the Buddha’s passing (DN 16:6.2.3), which is normally the case when the Buddha is not mentioned in the introduction. Accordingly, Kassapa refers to his junior, Ānanda, with “reverend” (*āvuso*).

364. A certain tension arose between the strict Mahākassapa and the more open Ānanda after the Buddha’s passing. At the First Council, Ānanda was repeatedly admonished by senior monks apparently siding with Kassapa (Kd 21:1.10.2).

365. Thullatissā is only found here.

of the venerable Ānanda, the Videhan sage?³⁶⁶ He's like a needle peddler who thinks they can sell a needle to a needle maker!"

Mahākassapa heard Thullatissā say these words, and he said to 4.1
 Ānanda, "Is that right, Reverend Ānanda? Am I the needle peddler
 and you the needle maker? Or am I the needle maker and you the
 needle peddler?"

"Forgive her, sir. The lady's a fool."³⁶⁷ 4.5

"Hold on, Reverend Ānanda! Don't make the Saṅgha investigate 4.6
 you further!"³⁶⁸

What do you think, Reverend Ānanda? Was it you who the Bud- 5.1
 dha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: 'Men-
 dicants, whenever I want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures,
 secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and remain in the first
 absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while
 placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so does Ānanda?'

"No, sir." 5.5

"I was the one the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of men- 6.1
 dicants, saying: 'Mendicants, whenever I want, quite secluded from
 sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and re-
 main in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of
 seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so
 does Kassapa. ...'

366. Ānanda was from Sakya, not Videha, a problem that evidently vexed the commentators. The Pali commentaries explain *vedeha* as "learned", or say his mother was from Videha. The Mahāvastu, on the other hand, says that after the Buddha went forth, Ānanda went to Videha and undertook a vow of silence (*maunavrata*, Mvu 83; Senart 3.176). The Mūlasarvastivāda Vinaya says rather that it was on Mount Videha that the Buddha entrusted Ānanda with the design for the robes (Mu Kd 7; GBM 6.814). None of these are cogent. The point is that Thullatissā was such an idiot, she didn't even know where Ānanda came from. | In this discourse, with its full range of different honorifics, Thullatissā uses *ayya* ("the venerable") for Kassapa. Usually the masculine form is *āyasmā* ("Venerable") from the same root.

367. For "lady" (*mātugāma*), see note on SN 37.1:1.1.

368. Apparently he is referring to the admonition of Ānanda at the First Council.

(*The nine progressive meditations and the five insights should be told in full.*)³⁶⁹

7.1 What do you think, Reverend Ānanda? Was it you who the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: ‘I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. And so does Ānanda?’

7.5 “No, sir.”

8.1 “I was the one the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: ‘I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. And so does Kassapa.’

9.1 Reverend, you might as well think to hide a bull elephant that’s three or three and a half meters tall behind a palm leaf as to hide my six insights.”³⁷⁰

10.1 But the nun Thullatissā fell from the spiritual life.

SN 16.11

Robes

Cīvarasutta

1.1 At one time Venerable Mahākassapa was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. Now at that time Venerable Ānanda was wandering in the Southern Hills together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants.³⁷¹

2.1 And at that time thirty of Ānanda’s mendicant protégés resigned the training and returned to a lesser life. Most of them were youths.

369. This note referring to the previous Sutta is in the Pali text.

370. Text has *sattaratana*, seven “cubits”, i.e. the length from elbow to fingertips, or about 45 cm.

371. For the Southern Hills or “Deccan” see note on SN 7.11:1.2.

When Venerable Ānanda had wandered in the Southern Hills as long as he pleased, he set out for Rājagaha, to the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. He went up to Venerable Mahākassapa, bowed, and sat down to one side. Mahākassapa said to him: 2.2

"Reverend Ānanda, for how many reasons did the Buddha lay down a rule against eating in groups of more than three among families?"³⁷² 2.3

"Sir, the Buddha laid down that rule for three reasons. For keeping difficult individuals in check and for the comfort of good-hearted mendicants. To prevent those of corrupt wishes from taking sides and dividing the Saṅgha. And out of consideration for families.³⁷³ These are the three reasons why the Buddha laid down that rule." 3.1

"So what then are you doing, wandering together with these junior mendicants? They don't guard their sense doors, they eat too much, and they're not committed to wakefulness. It's like you're wandering about wrecking crops and ruining families! Your following is falling away, Reverend Ānanda, and those just getting started are falling apart. Yet this boy knows no limit!"³⁷⁴ 4.1

372. This is in reference to an event told in Kd 17:3.13.5.1, which refers to the rule on eating in groups at Bu Pc 32. Devadatta cultivated the support of then-Prince Ajātasattu and enjoyed lavish offerings. But with the failure of his attempts to assassinate the Buddha, his reputation disintegrated, so he and his cronies resorted to bugging families for invites for nice meals. The Buddha then banned eating in groups of four or more, except in certain cases. One of the exceptions is while traveling, which would seem to apply in this case. However, Kassapa is not exactly accusing them of breaking the rule, but reminding them of its purpose.

373. These reasons are stated at Kd 17:3.13.18 and Pvr 7:33.12. | Devadatta was aiming to create a schism in the Saṅgha, which requires a quorum of at least four mendicants. To succeed, a schism requires not just the Saṅgha, but enough lay support as well. This rule prevents Saṅgha conspiring with lay people.

374. Said of a monk sleeping in the Saṅgha (Thag 2.40:2.3) and of Māra (MN 50:21.4).

- 5.1 “Though there are grey hairs on my head,³⁷⁵ I still can’t escape being called a boy by Venerable Mahākassapa.”
- 5.3 “It’s because you wander with these junior mendicants. ... Your following is falling away, Reverend Ānanda, and those just getting started are falling apart. Yet this boy knows no limit!”
- 6.1 The nun Thullanandā heard a rumor that the venerable Mahākassapa had rebuked the venerable Ānanda the Videhan sage by calling him a boy.
- 7.1 She was upset and blurted out, “How can the venerable Mahākassapa, who formerly followed another religion, presume to rebuke the venerable Ānanda the Videhan sage by calling him a boy?”³⁷⁶
- 7.3 Mahākassapa heard Thullanandā say these words, and he said to Ānanda, “Indeed, Reverend Ānanda, the nun Thullanandā spoke rashly and without reflection.
- 8.3 Since I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness, I don’t recall acknowledging any other teacher apart from the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.
- 8.4 Formerly when I was still a layman, I thought: ‘Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It’s not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don’t I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?’³⁷⁷ After

375. Like the previous Sutta, these events probably took place shortly after the Buddha’s passing. The episode with Devadatta occurred only a few years before the Buddha passed away. Ānanda, though traditionally held to be the same age as the Buddha, must have been a generation younger. Here he’s probably around fifty or so, his hair greying, but still young compared with the grizzled ascetic Kassapa.

376. Not only do Thullanandā and Thullatissā mistakenly think Ānanda was Videhan, they think Kassapa was a convert. Perhaps they are confusing him with fellow brahmins Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who formerly followed the wanderer Sañjaya (Kd 1:23.1.1). As so often, bigotry is the handmaiden of falsehood.

377. He renounced independently, not following any school or teacher, much like the Buddha had. Another example is Pukkusāti (MN 140).

some time I made an outer robe of patches and, in the name of the perfected ones in the world, I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.³⁷⁸

When I had gone forth, I traveled along the road between Rājagaha and Nālandā, where I saw the Buddha sitting at the Many Sons Shrine.³⁷⁹ Seeing him, I thought: ‘Were I ever to see a Teacher, it would be this Blessed One! Were I ever to see a Holy One, it would be this Blessed One! Were I ever to see a fully awakened Buddha, it would be this Blessed One!’

Then I bowed with my head to the Buddha’s feet and said: ‘Sir, the Buddha is my Teacher, I am his disciple! The Buddha is my Teacher, I am his disciple!’

The Buddha said to me, ‘Kassapa, if anyone was to say to such a wholehearted disciple that they know when they don’t know, or that they see when they don’t see, their head would explode. But Kassapa, when I say that I know I really do know; and when I say that I see I really do see.

So you should train like this: “I will set up a keen sense of conscience and prudence for seniors, juniors, and those in the middle.” That’s how you should train.

And you should train like this: “Whenever I hear a teaching connected with what’s skillful, I will pay attention, apply the mind, concentrate wholeheartedly, and actively listen to that teaching.” That’s how you should train.

And you should train like this: “I will never neglect mindfulness of the body that is full of pleasure.”³⁸⁰ That’s how you should train.’

378. MS edition reads the causative *kāretvā* (“had it made”), but surely Kassapa would have sewn his own robe, so prefer the variant *kāritvā* found in PTS, BJT, and Thai editions.

379. There was another shrine of the same name near Vesālī (DN 16:3.46.3). They were, obviously, fertility shrines.

380. For meditation “full of pleasure” (*sātasahagata*) see AN 8.63 and MN 128:31.4.

- 13.1 And when the Buddha had given me this advice he rose from his seat and left. For seven days I ate the nation's almsfood as a debtor. On the eighth day I became enlightened.³⁸¹
- 14.1 And then the Buddha left the road and went to the root of a certain tree.³⁸² So I spread out my outer robe of patches folded in four and said to him, 'Sir, sit here. That would be for my lasting welfare and happiness.'
- 14.4 The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out and said to me, 'Kassapa, this outer robe of patches is soft.'
- 14.7 'Sir, please accept my outer robe of patches out of sympathy.'
- 14.8 'In that case, Kassapa, will you wear my worn-out hempen rag robe?'
- 14.9 'I will wear it, sir.'
- 14.10 And so I presented my outer robe of patches to the Buddha, and the Buddha presented me with his worn-out hempen rag robe.
- 15.1 For if anyone should be rightly called the Buddha's bosom son, born from his mouth, born of the teaching, created by the teaching, heir to the teaching, and receiver of his worn-out hempen rag robes, it's me.³⁸³
- 16.1 Whenever I want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. ...
(The nine progressive meditations and the five insights should be told in full.)
- 17.1 I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.
- 17.2 Reverend, you might as well think to hide a bull elephant that's three or three and a half meters tall behind a palm leaf as to hide my six insights."

381. Said by Bakkula at MN 124:38.1. See SN 6.1:8.2 and note.

382. The sequence of events is unclear in the text.

383. This singular honor took on a mythic significance, for which see Thag 18.1:11.4 and note.

But the nun Thullanandā fell from the spiritual life.

18.1

SN 16.12

The Realized One After Death

Parammarāṇasutta

At one time Venerable Mahākassapa and Venerable Sāriputta were 1.1
staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana.

Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Sāriputta came out of retreat, 1.2
went to Venerable Mahākassapa, and exchanged greetings with him.
When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down
to one side and said to Mahākassapa:³⁸⁴

“Reverend Kassapa, does a realized one still exist after death?”³⁸⁵ 1.4

“Reverend, this has not been declared by the Buddha.” 1.5

“Well then, does a realized one no longer exist after death?”³⁸⁶ 1.7

“This too has not been declared by the Buddha.” 1.8

“Well then, does a realized one both still exist and no longer exist 1.10
after death?”³⁸⁷

“This too has not been declared by the Buddha.” 1.11

384. This is a stock series of propositions by non-Buddhists, raised here as a teaching method.

385. An awakened one, whether the Buddha or anyone else, exists after death, for example in an eternal state of Nirvana. | Here “realized one” (*tathāgata*) pertains to any arahant, as at SN 54.12. The Pali commentary says that a “living being” (*satta*) is meant. However, *tathāgata* and *satta* are exact verbal parallels: *tathā* (“real”) + *gata* (“come to the state of”) and *sa* (“real”) + *tta* (“state of”). Thus it seems likely that this was originally intended as a mere verbal gloss to explain the compound. That it does not mean just any sentient being is established at SN 22.86:1.5.

386. A sage ceases to exist at the time of death. This assumes there is an enduring “self” that is done away with.

387. This kind of “both A and not A” statement is not meant to be paradoxical or mystical. Rather, they represent some state that combines elements of both. For example, their body does not exist but their mind does.

- 1.13 “Well then, does a realized one neither still exist nor no longer exist after death?”³⁸⁸
- 1.14 “This too has not been declared by the Buddha.”
- 1.16 “And why has this not been declared by the Buddha?”
- 1.17 “Because it’s not beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. It doesn’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why it has not been declared by the Buddha.”
- 2.1 “So what now has been declared by the Buddha?” “‘This is suffering’ has been declared by the Buddha. ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’ has been declared by the Buddha.”
- 2.6 “And why has this been declared by the Buddha?”
- 2.7 “Because it’s beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. It leads to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why it has been declared by the Buddha.”

SN 16.13

The Counterfeit of the True Teaching

Saddhammappatirūpakasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then Venerable Mahākassapa went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 1.4 “What is the cause, sir, what is the reason why there used to be fewer training rules but more enlightened mendicants?”³⁸⁹ And what

388. Likewise, “neither A nor not A” is not meant to be a paradox, but to indicate something that cannot be characterized by the original term. For example, a sage persists after death in a subtle state that is not what we normally consider existence.

389. Asked by Bhaddāli at MN 65:29.1. There, the Buddha said, as he did to Sāriputta at Bu Pj 1:3.4.6, that decline comes from defiling influences in the

is the cause, what is the reason why these days there are more training rules and fewer enlightened mendicants?”

“That’s how it is, Kassapa. When sentient beings are in decline and the true teaching is disappearing there are more training rules and fewer enlightened mendicants. The true teaching doesn’t disappear as long as the counterfeit of the true teaching hasn’t appeared in the world. But when the counterfeit of the true teaching appears in the world then the true teaching disappears.³⁹⁰ 1.6

It’s like native gold, which doesn’t disappear as long as counterfeit gold hasn’t appeared in the world.³⁹¹ But when counterfeit gold appears in the world then native gold disappears.³⁹² 2.1

In the same way, the true teaching doesn’t disappear as long as the counterfeit of the true teaching hasn’t appeared in the world. But when the counterfeit of the true teaching appears in the world then the true teaching disappears. 2.3

It’s not the elements of earth, water, fire, or air that make the true teaching disappear.³⁹³ Rather, it’s the futile people who appear right 3.1

Saṅgha. See too the account of the monk Subhadda, whose relief at the Buddha’s passing prompted Mahākassapa to organize the First Council (DN 16:6.20.1). 390. In an age of commercialized spirituality, counterfeit translations and fake Buddhas generated by AI, proliferation of sects and gurus, and collapse of moral authority of traditional Saṅgha under the weight of institutional corruption, this seems relevant.

391. *Jātarūpa* is the natural, unworked gold, for which the technical term is “native gold” (see AN 3.70:38.4, AN 3.101:1.1). I believe *jātarūpa* stems from the common Vedic sense of *rūpa* as “form” or “manifestation” of the gods. *Jāta* is what is “born” or what is part of the “natural” order. Thus *jātarūpa* is the manifestation of the divine form (of the sun) in nature. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.25 says that when a child is born, the father whispers “speech” in his ear, then feeds him butter and honey with a piece of *jātarūpa*. He brings into his child at birth the wisdom of the Vedas and the divine radiance. Compare *jātaveda*, which is the divine knowledge brought to mortals in nature in the form of “fire”. 392. Kauṭilya details the regulation of the various kinds of gold and its adulterants in Arthaśāstra 2.13 and 2.14.

393. Disruptions in the elements create runaway climate change that makes life, and religious practice, impossible on earth (MN 28, AN 7.66).

here that make the true teaching disappear. The true teaching doesn't disappear like a ship that sinks all at once.

4.1 There are five detrimental things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the true teaching. What five? It's when the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen lack respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the training, and immersion.³⁹⁴ These five detrimental things lead to the decline and disappearance of the true teaching.

5.1 There are five things that lead to the continuation, persistence, and enduring of the true teaching. What five? It's when the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen maintain respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the training, and immersion. These five things lead to the continuation, persistence, and enduring of the true teaching.”

The Linked Discourses with Kassapa are complete.

394. All four wings of the dispensation are essential. | Meditative immersion is already included in the threefold training of ethics, immersion, and wisdom, but is specially emphasized here. | Today, much of Buddhism is deficient in these factors. The order of nuns is rejected by some communities dominated by a male Saṅgha. The Buddha has become a supernatural icon to be worshiped, while study of his teaching in the Suttas is rarely pursued. Monastic discipline is honored more in the breach than the observance. The practice of meditation is popular in some circles, but much of it aims at therapeutic outcomes rather than deep immersion, while some schools reject immersion altogether.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON
GAINS AND HONOR

Chapter One

SN 17.1

Grim

Dāruṇasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvaththī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”
- 1.5 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim, bitter, and harsh. They’re an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.³⁹⁵
- 2.2 So you should train like this: ‘We will give up arisen possessions, honor, and popularity, and we won’t let them occupy our minds.’ That’s how you should train.”

SN 17.2

A Hook

Baḷisasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvaththī.

395. *Dāruṇa* is “grim”, fearful and unyielding as tough wood; *kaṭuka* is “bitter” like the taste, or like stabbing pain; *pharusa* is “harsh” like a prickly bush or abusive speech.

“Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim, bitter, and harsh. 1.2
They’re an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

Suppose an angler was to cast a baited hook into a deep lake. See- 1.3
ing the bait, a fish would swallow it. And so the fish that swallowed
the hook would meet with tragedy and disaster, and the angler can
do what he wants with it.

‘Angler’ is a term for Māra the Wicked. ‘Hook’ is a term for pos- 2.1
sessions, honor, and popularity. Whoever enjoys and likes arisen
possessions, honor, and popularity is called a mendicant who has
swallowed Māra’s hook. They’ve met with tragedy and disaster, and
the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity—bitter and harsh, 2.4
an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

So you should train like this: ‘We will give up arisen possessions, 2.5
honor, and popularity, and we won’t let them occupy our minds.’
That’s how you should train.”

SN 17.3

A Turtle

Kummasutta

At Sāvattḥi. 1.1

“Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2

Once upon a time, in a certain lake there was a large family of 1.3
turtles that had lived there for a long time. Then one of the turtles
said to another, ‘My dear turtle, don’t you go to that place.’

But that turtle did go to that place, and a hunter pierced her with 1.6
a harpoon.

Then that turtle went back to the other turtle. When the other 1.8
turtle saw her coming off in the distance, he said, ‘My dear turtle, I
hope you didn’t go to that place!’

‘I did.’ 1.12

‘But my dear turtle, I hope you’re not hurt or injured!’ 1.13

- 1.14 ‘I’m not hurt or injured. But this cord keeps dragging behind me.’
- 1.15 ‘Indeed, my dear turtle, you’re hurt and injured! Your father and grandfather met with tragedy and disaster because of such a cord. Go now, you are no longer one of us.’
- 2.1 ‘Hunter’ is a term for Māra the Wicked.
- 2.2 ‘Harpoon’ is a term for possessions, honor, and popularity.
- 2.3 ‘Cord’ is a term for greed and relishing.
- 2.4 Whoever enjoys and likes arisen possessions, honor, and popularity is called a mendicant who has been pierced with a harpoon. They’ve met with tragedy and disaster, and the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.
- 2.6 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.4

A Fleecy Sheep

Dīghalomikasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Suppose a fleecy sheep was to enter a briar patch. She’d get caught, snagged, and trapped at every turn, coming to ruin.
- 1.5 In the same way, take a certain mendicant whose mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity. They robe up in the morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter the village or town for alms. They get caught, snagged, and trapped at every turn, coming to ruin.
- 1.7 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.5

A Dung Beetle

Milhakasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...

1.2

Suppose there was a dung-eating beetle full of dung, stuffed with dung, and before her was a big pile of dung. She'd look down on other beetles, thinking: 'For I am a dung-eating beetle full of dung, stuffed with dung, and before me is a big pile of dung.'

1.3

In the same way, take a certain mendicant whose mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity. They robe up in the morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter the village or town for alms. There they eat as much as they like, get invited back tomorrow, and have plenty of almsfood. When they get back to the monastery, they boast in the middle of a group of mendicants: 'I ate as much as I liked, got invited back tomorrow, and had plenty of almsfood. I get robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. But these other mendicants have little merit or significance, so they don't get these things.' With a mind overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity, they look down on other good-hearted mendicants. This will be for their lasting harm and suffering.

1.6

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

1.12

SN 17.6

A Bolt of Lightning

Asanisutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...

1.2

- 1.3 Let forked lightning fall on whom? Let possessions, honor, and popularity come to a trainee who has not achieved their heart's desire.³⁹⁶
- 2.1 'Forked lightning' is a term for possessions, honor, and popularity.
- 2.2 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ..."

SN 17.7

A Poisoned Arrow

Diddhasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhī.
- 1.2 "Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Let whom be pierced by a poisoned arrow? Let possessions, honor, and popularity come to a trainee who has not achieved their heart's desire.³⁹⁷
- 2.1 'Arrow' is a term for possessions, honor, and popularity.
- 2.2 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ..."

396. The phrasing here is odd, but the regular syntax in the two phrases (object in accusative, subject in nominative, verb in imperative), as well as the parallel phrasing in the next Sutta, argue against it being corrupt (as posited by Bodhi). I think the Buddha is quoting a curse, then he substitutes the Dhammic meaning. Compare Atharva Veda 8.4.20: "Let Indra hurl his lightning at the sorcerers!"; where Sanskrit *aśani* = Pali *asani* ("lightning-bolt"). See the next Sutta and note. | For *asanivicakka* ("forked lightning") see Rig Veda 4.35.2, where *vicakra* means "divided". This phrase is only used in one other place in the canon, which is also about a decadent monk (DN 25:11.3).

397. The construction parallels the previous (except the opening sentence is passive). Again, I think the Buddha is quoting a well-known curse. Compare Atharva Veda 8.3.6, where Agni is called on to smear poison on his arrow-tip and loose it at the sorcerers. Pali *salla* = Sanskrit *śalya* ("arrow"), while Pali *diddha* = Sanskrit *dih* ("smear with poison"). Thus these two adjacent Suttas reinterpret curses in adjacent sections of the Atharva Veda that invoke Indra and Agni, the two most powerful Vedic gods.

A Jackal

Singālasutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2
- Mendicants, did you hear an old jackal howling at the crack of 1.3
dawn?”
- “Yes, sir.” 1.4
- “That old jackal has the disease called mange. He’s not happy in 1.5
his den, or at the root of a tree, or out in the open. Wherever he goes,
stands, sits, or lies down he meets with tragedy and disaster.
- In the same way, take a certain mendicant whose mind is over- 1.7
come and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.
They’re not happy in an empty hut, at the root of a tree, or out in the
open.³⁹⁸ Wherever they go, stand, sit, or lie down they meet with
tragedy and disaster.
- So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...” 1.9

Gale-force Winds

Verambhasutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2
- High in the atmosphere there are gale-force winds blowing. Any 1.3
bird that flies there is flung about by those gale-force winds. Their
feet go one way, their wings another, their head another, and their
body another.
- In the same way, take a certain monk whose mind is overcome 1.6
and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity. He robes

398. Devadatta.

up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, enters the village or town for alms without guarding body, speech, and mind, without establishing mindfulness, and without restraining the sense faculties. There he sees a lady scantily clad, with revealing clothes. Lust infects his mind. He resigns the training and returns to a lesser life. Some take his robe, others his bowl, others his sitting cloth, others his needle case, just like the bird flung about by the gale-force winds.

1.11 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.10

With Verses

Sagāthakasutta

1.1 At Sāvattī.

1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...

1.3 Take a case where I see a certain individual whose mind is overcome and overwhelmed by honor. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

1.4 Take another case where I see a certain individual whose mind is overcome and overwhelmed by lack of honor. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

1.5 And take another case where I see a certain individual whose mind is overcome and overwhelmed by both honor and lack of honor. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

1.6 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

2.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

3.1 “Whether they’re honored
or not honored, or both,
their immersion doesn’t waver

as they abide in the immeasurables.

They persistently meditate
with subtle view and discernment.
Rejoicing in the ending of grasping,
they're said to be a true person."

4.1

Chapter Two

SN 17.11

A Gold Cup

Suvaṇṇapātisutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...

1.3 When I’ve comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: ‘This venerable would not tell a deliberate lie even for the sake of a gold cup filled with silver powder.’ But some time later I see them tell a deliberate lie because their mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.

1.6 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.12

A Silver Pot

Rūpiyapātisutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...

1.3 When I’ve comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: ‘This venerable would not tell a deliberate lie even for the sake of a silver cup filled with gold powder.’ But some time later I

see them tell a deliberate lie because their mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...” 1.6

SN 17.13–20

A Gold Ingot, Etc.

Suvaṇṇanikkhasuttādiatṭhaka

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, when I’ve comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: ‘This venerable would not tell a deliberate lie even for the sake of a gold ingot.’ ...” 1.2

“‘... for the sake of a hundred gold ingots.’ ...” 1.4

“‘... for the sake of a mountain of gold.’ ...”³⁹⁹ 1.5

“‘... for the sake of a hundred mountains of gold.’ ...” 1.6

“‘... for the sake of the whole earth full of gold.’ ...” 1.7

“‘... for any kind of material reward.’ ...” 1.8

“‘... for the sake of life.’ ...” 1.9

“‘... for the sake of the finest lady in the land.’ But some time later I see them tell a deliberate lie because their mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...” 1.12

399. The Purāṇas list the *nikkha* (“ingot”) as the largest gold coin, but here a *siṅgīnikkha* must be much more than a hundred of the largest coins, and hence cannot be a coin at all. *Siṅgīsuvaṇṇa* means “mountain gold” (AN 3.70:38.3). Given that the next step is the entire earth, perhaps *siṅgīnikkha* means “golden mountain”. A “golden mountain” (*pabbatassa suvaṇṇassa*) appears in a similar context at SN 4.20:3.2.

Chapter Three

SN 17.21

A Lady

Mātugāmasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Even if you’re alone with a lady she might not occupy your mind,
but possessions, honor and popularity would still occupy your mind.
- 1.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.22

The Finest Lady in the Land

Kalyāṇīsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Even if you’re alone with the finest lady in the land she might not
occupy your mind, but possessions, honor and popularity would
still occupy your mind.
- 1.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.23

An Only Son

Ekaṇḍakassutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2
- A faithful laywoman with a dear and beloved only son would 1.3
rightly appeal to him, ‘My darling, please be like the householder
Citta and Hatthaka of Āḷavī.’⁴⁰⁰
- These are a standard and a measure for my male lay disciples, that 1.5
is, the householder Citta and Hatthaka of Āḷavī.
- ‘But my darling, if you go forth from the lay life to homelessness, 1.6
please be like Sāriputta and Moggallāna.’
- These are a standard and a measure for my monk disciples, that 1.8
is, Sāriputta and Moggallāna.
- ‘And my darling, may you not come into possessions, honor, and 1.9
popularity while you’re still a trainee and haven’t achieved your
heart’s desire.’
- If a trainee who hasn’t achieved their heart’s desire comes into 1.10
possessions, honor, and popularity it’s an obstacle for them.
- So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...” 1.11

SN 17.24

An Only Daughter

Ekadhītusutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2

400. Also at AN 2.132:1.3 and AN 4.176:3.2. | An entire Saṃyutta is devoted to Citta (SN 41), the foremost layman in teaching Dhamma (AN 1.250). | Hatthaka, the foremost in attracting a congregation (AN 1.251), is featured especially in AN 7.23 and AN 7.24.

- 1.3 A faithful laywoman with a dear and beloved only daughter would rightly appeal to her, ‘My darling, please be like the laywomen Khujjuttarā and Veḷukaṇṭakī, Nanda’s mother.’⁴⁰¹
- 1.5 These are a standard and a measure for my female lay disciples, that is, the laywomen Khujjuttarā and Veḷukaṇṭakī, Nanda’s mother.
- 1.6 ‘But my darling, if you go forth from the lay life to homelessness, please be like the nuns Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā.’⁴⁰²
- 1.8 These are a standard and a measure for my nun disciples, that is, the nuns Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā.
- 1.9 ‘And my darling, may you not come into possessions, honor, and popularity while you’re still a trainee and haven’t achieved your heart’s desire.’ If a trainee who hasn’t achieved their heart’s desire comes into possessions, honor, and popularity it’s an obstacle for them.
- 1.11 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.25

Ascetics and Brahmins

Samaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattihī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand the gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to possessions, honor, and popularity. I don’t deem them as true

401. Also at AN 2.133 and AN 4.176:4.2. | Khujjuttarā was the most learned of the laywomen (AN 1.260). | Veḷukaṇṭakī features as a meditator, reciter, and donor at AN 6.37 and AN 7.53. She is probably the same person as Uttarā Nanda’s mother who was the foremost laywoman jhana practitioner (AN 1.262).

402. Also at AN 2.131 and AN 4.176:2.2. | Uppalavaṇṇā was the foremost nun in psychic powers (AN 1.237), which kept her fearless when demolishing Māra (SN 5.5). Her verses are at Thig 11.1, and she was as a teacher of nuns (Thig 13.5:27.3, Kd 20:8.1.1). A Vinaya story shows her gratitude to the Buddha (Bu NP 5:1.1.1). She was a survivor of sexual assault (Bu Pj 1:10.5.1). | Khemā was extolled as the foremost nun in wisdom (AN 1.236); her verses are at Thig 6.3; and she teaches King Pasenadi in SN 44.1.

ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don't realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don't live having realized it with their own insight in this very life.

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand the gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to possessions, honor, and popularity. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.” 1.4

SN 17.26

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

“There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to possessions, honor, and popularity ... 1.2

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand ...” 1.3

SN 17.27

Ascetics and Brahmins (3rd)

Tatīyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

“There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand possessions, honor, and popularity, their origin, their cessation, and the path that leads to their cessation ... 1.2

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand ...” 1.3

SN 17.28

Skin

Chavisutta

- 1.1 At Sāvathī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 They cut through the outer skin, the inner skin, the flesh, sinews, and bones, until they reach the marrow and keep pressing.
- 1.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.29

A Rope

Rajjusutta

- 1.1 At Sāvathī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 They cut through the outer skin, the inner skin, the flesh, sinews, and bones, until they reach the marrow and keep pressing.
- 2.1 Suppose a strong man was to twist a strong horse-hair rope around your shin and tighten it. It would cut through the outer skin, the inner skin, the flesh, sinews, and bones, until it reached the marrow and kept pressing.
- 2.3 In the same way, possessions, honor, and popularity cut through the outer skin, the inner skin, the flesh, sinews, and bones, until they reach the marrow and keep pressing.
- 2.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.30

A Mendicant With Defilements Ended

Bhikkhusutta

- 1.1 At Sāvathī.

“Mendicants, possessions, honor, and popularity are an obstacle 1.2
even for a mendicant who is perfected, with defilements ended.”

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Sir, 1.3
what do possessions, honor, and popularity obstruct for a mendicant
with defilements ended?”

“Ānanda, I don’t say that possessions, honor, and popularity ob- 1.5
struct the unshakable freedom of heart. But I do say that possessions,
honor, and popularity obstruct the achievement of blissful medita-
tions in this life for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.⁴⁰³

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity—bitter and harsh, 1.7
an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

So you should train like this: ‘We will give up arisen possessions, 1.8
honor, and popularity, and we won’t let them occupy our minds.’
That’s how you should train.”

403. Even for an arahant, the burden of popularity and wealth takes them away from their meditation.

Chapter Four

SN 17.31

Schism

Bhindisutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Devadatta split the Saṅgha because his mind was overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.
- 1.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.32

Skillful Root

Kusalamūlasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ...
- 1.3 Devadatta cut off his skillful root because his mind was overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.⁴⁰⁴
- 1.4 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

404. Contentment, love, and understanding. Note, “skillful root” may be expressed in the singular even though it is threefold (MN 9:7.1).

SN 17.33

Skillful Quality

Kusaladhammasutta

- At Sāvattthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2
- Devadatta cut off his skillful quality because his mind was over- 1.3
- come and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity. 1.4
- So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.34

Bright Quality

Sukkadhammasutta

- At Sāvattthī. 1.1
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim ... 1.2
- Devadatta cut off his bright quality because his mind was over- 1.3
- come and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity. 1.4
- So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...”

SN 17.35

Shortly After He Left

Acirapakkantasutta

- At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s 1.1
- Peak Mountain, not long after Devadatta had left.⁴⁰⁵ There the Bud- 1.2
- dha spoke to the mendicants about Devadatta: 1.3
- “Possessions, honor, and popularity came to Devadatta for his 1.4
- own ruin and downfall.

405. This discourse is also at AN 4.68; the verse is at SN 6.12. This Sutta and the next (with sequence reversed) form part of the full story of Devadatta in the Vinaya (Kd 17:2.1.21).

- 2.1 It's like a banana plant ... or a bamboo ... or a reed, all of which bear fruit to their own ruin and downfall ...
- 5.1 It's like a mule, which becomes pregnant to its own ruin and downfall. In the same way, possessions, honor, and popularity came to Devadatta for his own ruin and downfall.
- 5.3 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. That's how you should train."
- 6.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 7.1 "The banana plant is destroyed by its own fruit,
as are the bamboo and the reed.
Honor destroys a reprobate,
as pregnancy destroys a mule."

SN 17.36

Five Hundred Carts

Pañcarathasatasutta

- 1.1 Near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.
- 1.2 Now at that time Prince Ajātasattu was going with five hundred carts at daybreak and dusk to attend on Devadatta, presenting him with an offering of five hundred servings of food.
- 1.3 Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, Prince Ajātasattu is going with five hundred carts at daybreak and dusk to attend on Devadatta, presenting him with an offering of five hundred servings of food."
- 1.5 "Mendicants, don't envy Devadatta's possessions, honor, and popularity. As long as Prince Ajātasattu goes with five hundred carts at daybreak and dusk to attend on Devadatta, presenting him with an offering of five hundred servings of food, Devadatta can expect decline, not growth, in skillful qualities.

If they were to lance a boil on a wild dog's nose, it would get even wilder.⁴⁰⁶ In the same way, as long as Prince Ajātasattu goes with five hundred carts at daybreak and dusk to attend on Devadatta, presenting him with an offering of five hundred servings of food, Devadatta can expect decline, not growth, in skillful qualities.

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity. ...” 2.3

SN 17.37

Mother

Mātusutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim, bitter, and harsh. They're an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This venerable would not tell a deliberate lie even for the sake of their mother.' But some time later I see them tell a deliberate lie because their mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.

So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity—bitter and harsh, an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

So you should train like this: 'We will give up arisen possessions, honor, and popularity, and we won't let them occupy our minds.' That's how you should train.” 1.7

SN 17.38–43

Father, Etc.

Pitusuttāḍichakka

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

406. Read *pitta* as “swelling” (from $\sqrt{pīṇ}$) rather than “bile”. Cf. Sanskrit *piḍaka*, “a small boil, pustule, or pimple”.

- 1.2 “Possessions, honor, and popularity are grim, bitter, and harsh. They’re an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. When I’ve comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: ‘This venerable would not tell a deliberate lie even for the sake of their father.’ ...”
(Tell in full as in SN 17.37.)
- 1.6 “... brother.’ ...”
- 1.7 “... sister.’ ...”
- 1.8 “... son.’ ...”
- 1.9 “... daughter.’ ...”
- 1.10 “... wife.’ But some time later I see them tell a deliberate lie because their mind is overcome and overwhelmed by possessions, honor, and popularity.
- 1.12 So grim are possessions, honor, and popularity—bitter and harsh, an obstacle to reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.
- 1.13 So you should train like this: ‘We will give up arisen possessions, honor, and popularity, and we won’t let them occupy our minds.’ That’s how you should train.”

**The Linked Discourses on possessions,
honor, and popularity are complete.**

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH
RĀHULA

Chapter One

SN 18.1

The Eye, Etc.

Cakkhusutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Then Venerable Rāhula went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him,⁴⁰⁷ “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.”
- 2.1 “What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?”
- 2.3 “Impermanent, sir.”
- 2.4 “But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?”
- 2.5 “Suffering, sir.”

407. Rāhula was the Buddha’s son to his wife Bhaddakaccānā (AN 1.245). Rāhula’s going forth is related at Kd 1:54.1.1, and other important discourses with him include MN 61, MN 62, and MN 147 = SN 35.121. In the latter he became an arahant, which he confirmed in his own words at Thag 4.8. Commentaries explain his name as meaning “bondage”, but it probably refers rather to being born under the influence of the dark star Rāhu (SN 2.8). The Buddha declared him the foremost of monks who desire training (AN 1.209). This is illustrated in this series of lessons through which Rāhula doggedly persists. His death is not noted in the early texts.

- “But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?” 2.6
- “No, sir.” 2.8
- “Is the ear permanent or impermanent?” 3.1
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 3.2
- “Is the nose permanent or impermanent?” 3.3
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 3.4
- “Is the tongue permanent or impermanent?” 3.5
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 3.6
- “Is the body permanent or impermanent?” 3.7
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 3.8
- “Is the mind permanent or impermanent?” 3.9
- “Impermanent, sir.” 3.10
- “But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?” 3.11
- “Suffering, sir.” 3.12
- “But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?” 3.13
- “No, sir.” 3.15
- “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind.⁴⁰⁸ Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.
- They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’” 4.3
- (The ten discourses of this series should be told in full the same way.)*

408. In this and similar passages, Mahāsaṅgīti edition inserts unnecessary ellipses.

SN 18.2

Sights, Etc.

Rūpasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Are sights permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ... “... sounds ... smells ... tastes ... touches ... Are ideas permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.10 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.11 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. ...”

SN 18.3

Consciousness

Vīññāṇasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Is eye consciousness permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.5 “... ear consciousness ... nose consciousness ... tongue consciousness ... body consciousness ... Is mind consciousness permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.10 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.11 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. ...”

Contact

Samphassasutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “What do you think, Rāhula? Is eye contact permanent or imper- 1.2
manent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.4
- “... ear contact ... nose contact ... tongue contact ... body contact 1.5
... Is mind contact permanent or impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.10
- “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with eye 1.11
contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact,
and mind contact. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. ...”

Feeling

Vedanāsutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “What do you think, Rāhula? Is feeling born of eye contact per- 1.2
manent or impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.4
- “... feeling born of ear contact ... feeling born of nose contact ... 1.5
feeling born of tongue contact ... feeling born of body contact ... Is
feeling born of mind contact permanent or impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.10
- “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with 1.11
feeling born of eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact,
body contact, and mind contact. ...”

SN 18.6

Perceptions

Saññāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Is perception of sights permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.5 “... perception of sounds ... perception of smells ... perception of tastes ... perception of touches ... Is perception of ideas permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.10 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.11 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the perception of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. ...”

SN 18.7

Intention

Sañcetanāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Is intention regarding sights permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.5 “... intention regarding sounds ... intention regarding smells ... intention regarding tastes ... intention regarding touches ... Is intention regarding ideas permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.10 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.11 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with intention regarding sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. ...”

SN 18.8

Craving

Taṇhāsutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “What do you think, Rāhula? Is craving for sights permanent or 1.2
impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.4
- “... craving for sounds ... craving for smells ... craving for tastes 1.5
... craving for touches ... Is craving for ideas permanent or imper-
manent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.10
- “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with 1.11
craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. ...”

SN 18.9

Elements

Dhātusutta

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- “What do you think, Rāhula? Is the earth element permanent or 1.2
impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.4
- “... the water element ... the fire element ... the air element ... 1.5
the space element ... Is the consciousness element permanent or
impermanent?”
- “Impermanent, sir.” ... 1.10
- “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with 1.11
the earth element, water element, fire element, air element, space
element, and consciousness element ...”

SN 18.10

The Aggregates

Khandhasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥi.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Is form permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.5 “... feeling ... perception ... choices ... Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.9 “Impermanent, sir.” ...
- 1.10 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.
- 1.12 They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”

Chapter Two

SN 18.11

The Eye, Etc.

Cakkhusutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattihī. Then Venerable Rāhula went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?” 1.4

“Impermanent, sir.” 1.6

“But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?” 1.7

“Suffering, sir.” 1.8

“But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?” 1.9

“No, sir.” 1.11

“... the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... Is the mind permanent or impermanent?” 1.12

“Impermanent, sir.” 1.17

“But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?” 1.18

“Suffering, sir.” 1.19

“But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?” 1.20

“No, sir.” 1.22

- 1.23 “Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.
- 1.25 They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”

(The ten discourses of this series should be told in full the same way.)

SN 18.12–20

The Nine Discourses on Sights, Etc.

Rūpādisuttanavaka

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “What do you think, Rāhula? Are sights permanent or impermanent?”
- 1.4 “Impermanent, sir.” ... “... sounds ... smells ... tastes ... touches ... ideas ...”
- 2.1 “... eye consciousness ... ear consciousness ... nose consciousness ... tongue consciousness ... body consciousness ... mind consciousness ...”
- 3.1 “... eye contact ... ear contact ... nose contact ... tongue contact ... body contact ... mind contact ...”
- 4.1 “... feeling born of eye contact ... feeling born of ear contact ... feeling born of nose contact ... feeling born of tongue contact ... feeling born of body contact ... feeling born of mind contact ...”
- 5.1 “... perception of sights ... perception of sounds ... perception of smells ... perception of tastes ... perception of touches ... perception of ideas ...”
- 6.1 “... intention regarding sights ... intention regarding sounds ... intention regarding smells ... intention regarding tastes ... intention regarding touches ... intention regarding ideas ...”

“... craving for sights ... craving for sounds ... craving for smells 7.1
 ... craving for tastes ... craving for touches ... craving for ideas ...”
 “... the earth element ... the water element ... the fire element ... 8.1
 the air element ... the space element ... the consciousness element
 ...”
 “... form ... feeling ... perception ... choices ... Is consciousness 9.1
 permanent or impermanent?”
 “Impermanent, sir.” ... 9.6
 “Seeing this ... They understand: ‘... there is nothing further for 9.7
 this place.’”

SN 18.21

Tendency

Anusayasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1
 Then Venerable Rāhula went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down 1.2
 to one side, and said to him:
 “Sir, how does one know and see so that there’s no I-making, mine- 1.3
 making, or underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body
 and externally for all signs?”⁴⁰⁹
 “Rāhula, one truly sees any kind of form at all—past, future, or 1.4
 present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior;
 far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine,
 I am not this, this is not my self.’ One truly sees any kind of feeling
 ... perception ... choices ... consciousness at all—past, future, or

409. “I-making” (*ahāṅkāra*) emphasizes the active role of the mind in creating a sense of self through its thoughts, habits, and desires. This is in contrast with the English notion of “ego”, which presents self as a given construct. | “Mine-making” (*mamaṅkāra*) is the propensity of the mind to appropriate things as possessions. | “Conscious body” (*saviññāṇake kāye*) echoes Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.2, where the dying man descends into a new life being “one with consciousness” (*saviññāno bhavati*). | “All signs” (*sabbanimitta*) are the “features” (also *nimitta*) that characterize sensory stimulation (eg. MN 112:15.1).

present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

- 1.9 That’s how to know and see so that there’s no I-making, mine-making, or underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs.”

SN 18.22

Rid of Conceit

Apagatasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.

- 1.2 Then Venerable Rāhula went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

- 1.3 “Sir, how does one know and see so that the heart is rid of I-making, mine-making, and conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs; and going beyond discrimination, it’s peaceful and well freed?”⁴¹⁰

- 1.4 “Rāhula, one truly sees any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self,’ one is freed by not grasping.

- 2.1 One truly sees any kind of feeling ... perception ... choices ... One truly sees any kind of consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self,’ one is freed by not grasping.

- 2.5 That’s how to know and see so that the heart is rid of I-making, mine-making, and conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs; and going beyond discrimination, it’s peaceful and well freed.”

410. Three kinds of discrimination, all based in conceit: “I’m better”, “I’m equal”, “I’m worse”.(SN 45.162).

The Linked Discourses with Rāhula are complete.

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH LAKKHANA

Chapter One

SN 19.1

A Skeleton

Aṭṭhisutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.⁴¹¹ At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground.

Now at that time Venerable Mark and Venerable Mahāmoggallāna 1.3
were staying on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain.⁴¹² Then Mahāmogga-
llāna robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to
Mark and said to him, “Come, Reverend Mark, let’s enter Rājagaha
for alms.”

“Yes, reverend,” Mark replied. 1.6

As Mahāmoggallāna was descending from Vulture’s Peak Moun- 1.7
tain he smiled at a certain spot. So Mark said to Mahāmoggallāna,
“What is the cause, Reverend Moggallāna, what is the reason you
smiled?”

411. In this collection, a monk with psychic power sees beings invisible to the normal eye who are suffering due to their bad deeds in past lives. The Buddha confirms the vision, and explains the reason why they are experiencing that particular form of suffering. In each case the punishment fits the crime, although it is not always obvious how, so I note the connections.

412. *Lakkhaṇa* (“Mark”) appears only here and in the corresponding passage at Bu Pj 4:9.1.1. He sees the “marks” by which the results of deeds are manifest, a topic elsewhere treated under the “marks” of a Great Man (DN 30). I translate the name to emphasize its artifice.

- 1.10 “Reverend Mark, it’s the wrong time for this question. Ask me when we’re in the Buddha’s presence.”
- 2.1 Then Mark and Mahāmoggallāna wandered for alms in Rājagaha. After the meal, on their return from almsround, they went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Mark said to Mahāmoggallāna:
- 2.2 “Just now, as Mahāmoggallāna was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain he smiled at a certain spot. What is the cause, Reverend Moggallāna, what is the reason you smiled?”
- 3.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a skeleton flying through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing it, pecking, clawing, and stabbing it in the ribs⁴¹³ as it screeched in pain. It occurred to me: ‘Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! That there can be such a sentient being, such a spirit,⁴¹⁴ such an incarnation!’”
- 4.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:
- 4.2 “Mendicants, there are disciples who live full of vision and knowledge, since a disciple knows, sees, and witnesses such a thing.
- 4.4 Formerly, I too saw that being, but I did not speak of it. For if I had spoken of it others would not have believed me, which would be for their lasting harm and suffering.
- 4.7 That being used to be a cattle butcher right here in Rājagaha.⁴¹⁵ As a result of that deed he burned in hell for many years, many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of years. Now he experiences the residual result of that deed in such an incarnation.”
- (Tell all these discourses in full like this.)*

413. The verbs here are uncertain and readings vary considerably. See MN 54:16.1, and compare Rig Veda 6.46.14 where horse-racers compete “like birds over raw flesh”.

414. Here *yakkha* is used as a generic term for “spirit”, “entity”.

415. As a butcher, he is treated like a piece of meat (MN 54:16.1). The same applies to the next three discourses.

SN 19.2

A Piece of Meat

Pesisutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a scrap of meat flying through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing it, pecking and clawing as it screeched in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That being used to be a cattle butcher right here in Rājagaha. ...” 1.4

SN 19.3

A Piece of Flesh

Piṇḍasutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a piece of flesh flying through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing it, pecking and clawing as it screeched in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That being used to be a bird hunter right here in Rājagaha. ...” 1.4

SN 19.4

A Flayed Man

Nicchavisutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a flayed man flying through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing it, pecking and clawing as he screamed in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That being used to be a sheep butcher right here in Rājagaha. ...” 1.4

SN 19.5

Sword Hairs

Asilomasutta

1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man whose body hairs were swords flying through the air. And those swords kept rising up and falling on his body as he screamed in pain. ...” ...

1.4 “That being used to be a pig butcher right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴¹⁶

SN 19.6

Spear Hairs

Sattisutta

1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man whose body hairs were spears flying through the air. And those spears kept rising up and falling on his body as he screamed in pain. ...” ...

1.4 “That being used to be a deer hunter right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴¹⁷

SN 19.7

Arrow Hairs

Usulomasutta

1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man whose body hairs were arrows flying through the air. And those arrows kept rising up and falling on his body as he screamed in pain. ...” ...

1.4 “That being used to be a punisher right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴¹⁸

416. He is stabbed like he used to stab his pigs.

417. Struck by spears like those he used to bring down his deer quarry.

418. His job is detailed at MN 13:14.3.

SN 19.8

Needle Hairs

Sūcilomasutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man whose body hairs were needles flying through the air. And those needles kept rising up and falling on his body as he screamed in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That being used to be an equerry right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴¹⁹ 1.4

SN 19.9

Needle Hairs (2nd)

Dutiyasūcilomasutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man whose body hairs were needles flying through the air. The needles bored into his head and out his mouth, into his mouth and out his chest, into his chest and out his belly, into his belly and out his thighs, into his thighs and out his calves, and into his calves and out his feet. And he screamed in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That being used to be an informant right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴²⁰ 1.9

419. The *sūta* (“equeries”) were members of the king’s guard (Atharva Veda 3.5.7, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.4.1.7, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.37) standing in seniority between the king’s brother and a village headman (ŚB 5.4.4.17). Later texts say they led the cavalry. They bore quivers of arrows (ŚB 13.4.2.4), which fits their punishment.

420. *Sūcaka* appears only here and Snp 2.2:8.1. His title echoes his punishment by needles (*sūci*) which worm their way in and out of his body just as he, as an “informant” (Arthaśāstra 2.8.29) wormed his way through society. Manu says his punishment was to be reborn with a stinking mouth (Manu 11.50). As noted in the next Sutta, the informant reported to the “village head”.

SN 19.10

Pot Balls

Kumbhaṇḍasutta

- 1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a man with testicles big as pots flying through the air.⁴²¹ When he was walking he had to lift his testicles on to his shoulder.⁴²² And when he sat down, he sat right on them. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing him, pecking and clawing as he screamed in pain. ...” ...
- 1.6 “That being used to be a corrupt village head right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴²³

421. The “gnomes” (*kumbhaṇḍa*, Sanskrit *kuṣmāṇḍa*, “pumpkin-belly”) were a race of lesser deities often depicted as pot-bellied, ugly and misshapen, though reckoned as subjects of the four great kings (DN 20:9.13). *Kumbha* also means “pot” and *aṇḍa* “testicle” (MN 56:25.4). Compare the fiendish *kumbhamuṣka* (“pot-scrotum”) of Atharva Veda 8.6.15, 11.9.17. Perhaps conflated with *kuṣumbha*, an insect’s venom-sack (Atharva Veda 2.32.6).

422. While the humorously painful imagery here is clear, it is less clear that the literal sense “pot-balls” was meant in general for the *kumbhaṇḍa* as a deity. Here it is used adjectivally of a man.

423. A *gāmakūṭa* is a “village head”, so *kūṭa* here means “summit” rather than its other sense of “fraud”, though the senses might be conflated. The commentary explains it as “an official who makes judgments”. The suffix *-ka* in the form here (*gāmakūṭaka*) must have its belittling sense like *muṇḍakā samaṇakā* (“shavelings, fake ascetics”). Kautīlya depicts the *grāmakūṭa* as acting on the whispers of an informant (Arthaśāstra 4.4.9). Perhaps his testicles are the size of the pots of gold he made through extortion and blackmail.

Chapter Two

SN 19.11

Over His Head

Sasīsakasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove 1.1

...

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak 1.3
Mountain I saw a man sunk over his head in a sewer. ...” ...

“That being used to be an adulterer right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴²⁴ 1.4

SN 19.12

A Dung Eater

Gūthakhādasutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Moun- 1.1
tain I saw a man sunk in a sewer, eating dung with both hands. ...”

...

“That being used to be a nasty brahmin right here in Rājagaha.”⁴²⁵ 1.2
In the time of the Buddha Kassapa’s dispensation he invited the

424. DN 23:9.1 tells how a man who has escaped a sewer and been provided with all sensual pleasures would not return. Thus the sewer is the inverse of the pleasures of the flesh.

425. Brahmins were obsessed with purity of food.

Saṅgha of mendicants for a meal. He filled a trough with dung and said:⁴²⁶ ‘My good men, eat as much as you like, and take what’s left.’
...

SN 19.13

A Flayed Woman

Nicchavittthisutta

- 1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a flayed woman flying through the air. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing her, pecking and clawing as she screamed in pain. ...” ...
- 1.4 “That woman used to be an adulteress right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴²⁷

SN 19.14

A Fishwife

Maṅgulitthisutta

- 1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a woman stinking and dingy as a catfish flying through the air.⁴²⁸ Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing her, pecking and clawing as she screamed in pain. ...” ...

426. *Doniya* (“trough”) is used for such things as a feeding trough for dogs or pigs (MN 93:11.7), or a casket for a corpse (DN 16:6.17.6).

427. Contact, or “touch”, is like a flayed cow (SN 12.63:4.2), so the touches she formerly experienced as pleasant are now excruciating.

428. *Maṅguli* is probably related to *maṅgura* (cf. Sanskrit *maṅgura*, *madgura*), a skin color, neither black nor brown, said by the commentary to be that of the common catfish *clarias magur* (MN 36:29.3). It has a dingy mud-green color for hiding in the mud on the riverbed. It is a pun: she is a seer of *maṅgalā* (“auspicious”), hence she is reborn ugly as a *maṅguli* (“catfish”). Like the catfish, she has to disguise her true nature. The idea approaches the modern sense of “catfishing”, both usages stemming from the idea of camouflage.

“That woman used to be a sorceress right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴²⁹ 1.4

SN 19.15

A Sweltering Woman

Okilinīsutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a scorched woman, sooty and sweaty, flying through the air, as she screamed in pain. ...” ... 1.1

“That woman used to be the king of Kalinga’s chief queen. She was of jealous nature, and poured a brazier of hot coals over her co-wife. ...” ... 1.3

SN 19.16

A Headless Trunk

Asīsakasutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a headless trunk flying through the air. Its eyes and mouth 1.1

429. *Ikkhaṇikā* (Sanskrit *ikṣaṇikā*) is literally a “seeress”, but her putative powers extend beyond mere visions of the future. Such sorceresses were considered a “thorn” to society alongside dissemblers, cheats, gamblers, and palmists (Manu 9.258). Medhātithi comments that they would con wealthy men out of money by promising them the favors of the gods or casting spells. Jain texts say a sorceress would jingle a small bell under her ear, at the sound of which her familiar, a malevolent entity, would approach and whisper secrets. The Pali commentary concurs: “It seems they do the work of an enslaved spirit, saying, ‘When such and such an offering ritual is performed, you will certainly prosper.’” Perhaps it was this spirit who caused her foul smell (Atharva Veda 8.6.12, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.2.2). The background story to Ja 126 tells how such a sorceress was enlisted by a prince to ensure he would end up with his princess, who was also his cousin. Her powers—all fake—included divination of possession, exorcism, and revivifying a corpse with a malevolent spirit. Kauṭilya, ever the pragmatist, is not above enlisting sorceresses in the services of the state for the dissemination of fake news (Arthaśāstra 13.1.7).

were on its chest. Vultures, crows, and hawks kept chasing it, pecking and clawing as it screamed in pain. ...” ...

- 1.5 “That being used to be an executioner named Taker right here in Rājagaha. ...”⁴³⁰

SN 19.17

A Bad Monk

Pāpabhikkhusutta

- 1.1 “Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Mountain I saw a monk flying through the air. His outer robe, bowl, belt, and body were burning, blazing, and glowing as he screamed in pain. ...” ...
- 1.4 “That monk used to be a bad monk in the time of Buddha Kassapa’s dispensation. ...”⁴³¹

SN 19.18

A Bad Nun

Pāpabhikkhunīsutta

- 1.1 “I saw a nun flying through the air. Her outer robe was burning ...”
- ...
- 1.3 “She used to be a bad nun ...”

430. He would, obviously, decapitate his victims. For his name *hārīka*, compare the suicide weapon (*satthahāraka*) which according to the commentary is a “taker of life” MN 145:5.32.

431. The bad monastics are tormented by the requisites that are the signs of their monastic commitment, offered to them out of faith by the lay community.

SN 19.19

A Bad Trainee Nun

Pāpasikkhamānasutta

“I saw a trainee nun flying through the air. Her outer robe was burning 1.1
...” ...

“She used to be a bad trainee nun ...” 1.3

SN 19.20

A Bad Novice Monk

Pāpasāmañerasutta

“I saw a novice monk flying through the air. His outer robe was 1.1
burning ...” ...⁴³²

“He used to be a bad novice monk ...” 1.3

SN 19.21

A Bad Novice Nun

Pāpasāmañerīsutta

“Just now, reverend, as I was descending from Vulture’s Peak Moun- 1.1
tain I saw a novice nun flying through the air. Her outer robe, bowl,
belt, and body were burning, blazing, and glowing as she screamed
in pain. It occurred to me: ‘Oh lord, how incredible, how amaz-
ing! That there can be such a sentient being, such a spirit, such an
incarnation!’”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: 2.1

“Mendicants, there are disciples who live full of vision and knowl- 2.2
edge, since a disciple knows, sees, and witnesses such a thing.

432. This seems to be editorial sloppiness, as novices don’t have a *saṅghāṭi*.

- 2.4 Formerly, I too saw that novice nun, but I did not speak of it. For if I had spoken of it others would not have believed me, which would be for their lasting harm and suffering.
- 2.8 That female novice used to be a bad novice nun in the time of the Buddha Kassapa's dispensation. As a result of that deed she burned in hell for many years, many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of years. Now she experiences the residual result of that deed in such an incarnation."

The Linked Discourses with Mark are complete.

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH SIMILES

The Chapter on the Similes

SN 20.1

A Roof Peak

Kūṭasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.
- 1.3 There the Buddha ... said:
- 1.4 "Mendicants, the rafters of a bungalow all lean to the peak and meet at the peak, and when the peak is demolished they're all demolished too.⁴³³ In the same way all unskillful qualities are rooted in ignorance and meet in ignorance, and when ignorance is demolished they're all demolished too.
- 1.6 So you should train like this: 'We will stay diligent.' That's how you should train."

SN 20.2

A Fingernail

Nakhasikhasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

433. While there are several similes elsewhere invoking a roof peak with its rafters, none apply it quite like this.

Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, 1.2
addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? Which
is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”⁴³⁴

“Sir, the great earth is far more. The little bit of dirt on your fin- 1.5
gernail is tiny. Compared to the great earth, it doesn’t count, there’s
no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way the sentient beings reborn as humans are few, 1.8
while those not reborn as humans are many.

So you should train like this: ‘We will stay diligent.’ That’s how 1.10
you should train.”

SN 20.3

Families

Kulasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, those families with many women and few men are 1.2
easy prey for bandits and grain-jar thieves.⁴³⁵ In the same way any
mendicant who has not developed and cultivated the heart’s release
by love is easy prey for non-humans. Those families with few women
and many men are hard prey for bandits and grain-jar thieves. In the
same way a mendicant who has developed and cultivated the heart’s
release by love is hard prey for non-humans.

So you should train like this: ‘We will develop the heart’s release 1.6
by love. We’ll cultivate it, make it our vehicle and our basis, keep it
up, consolidate it, and properly implement it.’ That’s how you should
train.”

434. SN 13.1, SN 56.51, SN 56.61, SN 56.62.

435. AN 8.51:27.1, Kd 20:1.6.7. | Few men and many women is said to be a
sign of the end of the world (Harivaṃśa 116.23, Brahma Purāṇa 231.24, Liṅga
Purāṇa 1.40.19, Narasiṃha Purāṇa 54.22). | The *kumbha* (“jar”) was a measure
of grain by which the severity of theft was measured (Manu 8.320). Perhaps the
implication is that these are house-thieves plundering domestic goods, rather
than highway robbers.

SN 20.4

Cauldrons

Okkhāsutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose one person was to give a gift of a hundred cauldrons of rice in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. And someone else was to develop a heart of love, even just as long as it takes to pull a cow’s udder. The latter would be more fruitful.⁴³⁶

1.3 So you should train like this: ‘We will develop the heart’s release by love. We’ll cultivate it, make it our vehicle and our basis, keep it up, consolidate it, and properly implement it.’ That’s how you should train.”

SN 20.5

A Spear

Sattisutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose there was a sharp-pointed spear. And a man came along and thought, ‘With my hand or fist I’ll fold this sharp spear over, crumple it, and bend it back!’

1.5 What do you think, mendicants? Is that man capable of doing so?”

1.7 “No, sir. Why not? Because it’s not easy to fold that sharp spear over, crumple it, and bend it back with the hand or fist. That man will eventually get weary and frustrated.”

2.1 “In the same way, suppose a mendicant has developed the heart’s release by love, has cultivated it, made it a vehicle and a basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Should any non-

436. Compare AN 9.20:8.9.

human think to overthrow their mind, they'll eventually get weary and frustrated.

So you should train like this: 'We will develop the heart's release by love. We'll cultivate it, make it our vehicle and our basis, keep it up, consolidate it, and properly implement it.' That's how you should train."

SN 20.6

The Archers

Dhanuggahasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

"Mendicants, suppose there were four well-trained expert archers with strong bows standing in the four quarters.⁴³⁷ And a man came along and thought, 'When these four well-trained expert archers shoot arrows in four quarters, I'll catch them before they reach the ground, and then I'll bring them back.' 1.2

What do you think, mendicants? Are they qualified to be called 'a speedster endowed with super-speed'? 1.5

"If he could catch an arrow shot by just one well-trained expert archer before it reaches the ground and bring it back, he'd be qualified to be called 'a speedster endowed with super-speed'. How much more so arrows shot by four archers!" 2.1

"As fast as that man is, the sun and moon are faster. As fast as that man is, as fast as the sun and moon are, and as fast as the deities that run before the sun and moon are, the waning of the life forces is faster.⁴³⁸ 3.1

So you should train like this: 'We will stay diligent.' That's how you should train." 3.3

437. In Ja 476, the Bodhisatta performs this feat.

438. One of the "deities who runs before the Sun" was Rohitassa, the "red horse" of the morning sunbeams who drew the Sun's chariot (SN 2.26).

The Drum Called Plugger

Āṇisutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Once upon a time, mendicants, the Dasārahas had a *mridangam* drum called the Plugger.⁴³⁹ When the Plugger cracked, the Dasārahas patched it with another plug. Eventually, there came a time when the old wooden shell for the drumskin disappeared⁴⁴⁰ and all that was left of the *mridangam* Plugger was a mass of plugs.

1.6 In the same way, in a future time there will be mendicants who won’t want to listen when discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited. They won’t actively listen or try to understand, nor will they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing.

2.1 But when discourses composed by poets—poetry, with fancy words and phrases, composed by outsiders or spoken by disciples—are being recited they will want to listen. They’ll actively listen and try to understand, and they’ll think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. And that is how the discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—will disappear.

439. The Dasārahas were probably the people known in Sanskrit as the Daśārṇa of the western Vindhya mountains. | The *mudīṅga* is a double-headed drum known today as *mridangam*, which is still widely used in southern India. It is named for the paste (“mud”, today called the *karanai*) applied to one of the heads that gives it its distinctive snare-like tone (*chapu*). The skin is attached with a wooden rim tightened with leather straps. | *Āṇaka* is another name for what is said to be a large military drum, which might be named after *āṇi* in the sense of “tuning peg”, a feature of the modern *mardala*. However, in this case, the context requires that the *āṇi* be a plug for patching the shell, after which the drum was named “Plugger”.

440. The *pokkhara* is the “drumskin”. The *phalaka* is the “wooden shell”, a single hollowed-out log from which the *mridangam* is constructed.

So you should train like this: ‘When discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited we will want to listen. We will actively listen and try to understand, and we will think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing.’ That’s how you should train.” 2.3

SN 20.8

Wood Blocks

Kalingarasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.1

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

“Mendicants, these days the Licchavis live using wood blocks as pillows, and they exercise diligently and keenly. King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha, finds no vulnerability, he’s got no opportunity.⁴⁴¹ But in the future the Licchavis will become delicate, with soft and tender hands and feet. They’ll sleep on soft beds with down pillows until the sun comes up. King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha, will find a vulnerability and get an opportunity. 2.1

These days the mendicants live using wood blocks as pillows, and they meditate diligently and keenly. Māra the Wicked finds no vulnerability, he’s got no opportunity. But in the future the mendicants will become delicate, with soft and tender hands and feet. They’ll sleep on soft beds with down pillows until the sun comes up. Māra the Wicked will find a vulnerability and get an opportunity. 3.1

So you should train like this: ‘We will live using wood blocks as pillows, and we will meditate diligently and keenly.’ That’s how you should train.” 3.6

441. For Ajātasau’s avowed wish to invade the Vajjis see DN 16:1.1.1.

A Bull Elephant

Nāgasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time a certain junior mendicant went to visit families too often.⁴⁴²
- 1.4 The mendicants said to him, "Venerable, don't go to visit families too often."
- 1.6 But that mendicant, when spoken to by the mendicants, said this, "But these senior mendicants think they can go to visit families, so why can't I?"
- 2.1 And then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said:
- 3.1 "Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a great lake in the jungle,⁴⁴³ with bull elephants living nearby. They'd plunge into the lake and pull up lotus bulbs with their trunks. They'd wash them thoroughly until they were free of mud before chewing and swallowing them. That was good for their appearance and strength, and wouldn't result in death or deadly pain.
- 3.5 The young calves, following the example of the great bull elephants, plunged into the lake and pulled up lotus bulbs with their trunks. But they didn't wash them thoroughly, and while they were still muddy they chewed and swallowed them. That was not good for their appearance and strength, and resulted in death or deadly pain.
- 4.1 In the same way, there are senior mendicants who robe up in the morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter the town or village for alms. There they speak on the teachings, and lay people demon-

442. For this Sutta and the next see the five dangers of fraternizing too much with families (AN 5.226 = Pv 7:67.11).

443. The same parable is given of Devadatta at Kd 17:4.5.1.

strate their confidence in them. And when they get things, they use them untied, uninfatuated, unattached, seeing the drawbacks, and understanding the escape. That's good for their appearance and strength, and doesn't result in death or deadly pain.

Junior mendicants, following the example of the senior mendicants, robe up in the morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter the town or village for alms. There they speak on the teachings, and lay people demonstrate their confidence in them. But when they get things, they use them tied, infatuated, attached, blind to the drawbacks, not understanding the escape. That's not good for their appearance and strength, and results in death or deadly pain. 4.6

So you should train like this: 'When we get things, we will use them untied, uninfatuated, unattached, seeing the drawbacks, and understanding the escape.' That's how you should train. 4.11

SN 20.10

A Cat

Biḷārasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Now at that time a certain mendicant had relations with families too often. 1.2

The mendicants said to him, "Venerable, don't have relations with families too often." 1.3

But that mendicant, when spoken to by the mendicants, did not stop. 1.5

And then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said: 1.6

"Once upon a time, mendicants, a cat was standing by an alley or a drain or a dustbin hunting a little mouse, thinking,⁴⁴⁴ 'When 2.1

444. Compare MN 50:13.7.

that little mouse comes out to feed, I'll catch it right there and eat it!' And then that little mouse came out to feed. The cat caught it and hastily swallowed it without chewing. But that little mouse ate its intestines and mesentery, resulting in death and deadly pain.

3.1 In the same way, take a certain monk who robes up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, enters the village or town for alms without guarding body, speech, and mind, without establishing mindfulness, and without restraining the sense faculties. There he sees a lady scantily clad, with revealing clothes. Lust infects his mind, resulting in death or deadly pain.

3.5 For it is death in the training of the Noble One to resign the training and return to a lesser life. And it is deadly pain to commit one of the corrupt offenses⁴⁴⁵ for which rehabilitation is possible.

3.8 So you should train like this: 'We will enter the village or town for alms guarding body, speech, and mind, establishing mindfulness, and restraining the sense faculties.' That's how you should train."

SN 20.11

A Jackal

Sīṅgālasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 "Mendicants, did you hear an old jackal howling at the crack of dawn?"⁴⁴⁶

1.3 "Yes, sir."

1.4 "That old jackal has the disease called mange. Yet it still goes where it wants, stands where it wants, sits where it wants, and lies down where it wants. And the cool breeze still blows on it. A certain person

445. This is in reference to *saṅghādisesa* offenses such as masturbation, flirting, or sensual touching.

446. Similar to SN 17.8, but somehow even more brutal in its application.

here who claims to follow the Sakyan would be lucky to experience even such an incarnation.⁴⁴⁷

So you should train like this: ‘We will stay diligent.’ That’s how you should train.” 1.11

SN 20.12

A Jackal (2nd)

Dutiyasiṅgālasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, did you hear an old jackal howling at the crack of dawn?” 1.2

“Yes, sir.” 1.3

“There might be some gratitude and thankfulness in that old jackal, but there is none in a certain person here who claims to follow the Sakyan. 1.4

So you should train like this: ‘We will be grateful and thankful. We won’t forget even a small thing done for us.’ That’s how you should train.” 1.5

The Linked Discourses with similes are complete.

447. Devadatta.

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH MONKS

The Chapter on Monks

SN 21.1

With Kolita

Kolitasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattṭhi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There Venerable Mahāmoggallāna addressed the mendicants:⁴⁴⁸ “Reverends, mendicants!”

“Reverend,” they replied. 1.5

Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said this: 2.1

“Just now, reverends, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘They speak of this thing called “noble silence”. What then is this noble silence?’ 2.2

It occurred to me: ‘As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called noble silence.’⁴⁴⁹ 2.5

And so, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I was entering and remaining in the second absorption, which 2.8

448. Kolita was his personal name, Moggallāna his clan name.

449. So-called because of the absence of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, which are the precursors of speech (SN 41.6:2.4, MN 44:15.3).

has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.⁴⁵⁰

2.9 While I was in that meditation, perception and focus accompanied by placing the mind beset me.⁴⁵¹

3.1 Then the Buddha came up to me with his psychic power and said, ‘Moggallāna, Moggallāna! Don’t neglect noble silence, brahmin! Settle your mind in noble silence; unify your mind and bring it to immersion in noble silence.’

3.3 And so, after some time, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption ...

3.4 So if anyone should be rightly called a disciple who attained to great direct knowledge with help from the Teacher, it’s me.”⁴⁵²

SN 21.2

With Upatissa

Upatissasutta

1.1 At Sāvathī.

1.2 There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants:⁴⁵³ “Reverends, mendicants!”

1.4 “Reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:

2.1 “Just now, reverends, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘Is there anything in the world whose decay and perishing would give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in me?’ It occurred to me: ‘There is nothing in the world whose decay

450. The verb *viharati* here and below, and in the parallel passages at SN 40.1ff., uses the aorist and present tenses inconsistently. I take the first passage as historical present, the second as aorist in simple past tense.

451. In the Suttas, *saññāmanasikārā* is only used in negative contexts, but later texts use it in a positive way as well (Ps 1.1:171.5, Pe 8:3.3).

452. A series of similar conversations on different states of meditation is found in the Moggallānasamyutta (SN 40).

453. Upatissa was his personal name, and he was the “son of Sāri”.

and perishing would give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in me.’”

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to him, “Even if the Teacher were to decay and perish? Wouldn’t that give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in you?” 3.1

“Even if the Teacher were to decay and perish, that wouldn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in me. Still, I would think: ‘Oh lord, the illustrious Teacher, so mighty and powerful, has vanished! If the Buddha was to remain for a long time, that would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.’”⁴⁵⁴ 3.3

“That must be because Venerable Sāriputta has long ago totally eradicated I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit.⁴⁵⁵ So even if the Teacher were to decay and perish, it wouldn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in him.” 3.6

SN 21.3

A Mound of Salt

Ghaṭasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. 1.1

At that time the venerables Sāriputta and Moggallāna were staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. 1.3
Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Venerable Moggallāna, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, Sāriputta sat down to one side, and said to Mahāmoggallāna:

454. See also DN 19:14.3.

455. Sāriputta became enlightened shortly after ordination (MN 74:14.4).

- 2.1 “Reverend Moggallāna, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. Have you spent the day in a peaceful meditation?”
- 2.3 “Reverend, I’ve spent the day in a coarse meditation. But I have had some Dhamma talk.”
- 2.5 “Who did you have a Dhamma talk with?”
- 2.6 “With the Buddha.”
- 2.7 “But Reverend, the Buddha is far away. He’s staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Did you go to him with your psychic power, or did he come to you?”
- 2.10 “No reverend, I didn’t go to him with my psychic power, nor did he come to me. Rather, the Buddha cleared his clairvoyance and clairauidience toward me, and I cleared my clairvoyance and clairauidience toward him.”
- 2.14 “But what manner of Dhamma talk did you have together?”
- 3.1 “Well, reverend, I said to the Buddha, ‘Sir, they speak of one who is energetic. How is an energetic person defined?’
- 3.4 When I said this, the Buddha said, ‘Moggallāna, it’s when a mendicant lives with energy roused up: “Gladly, let only skin, sinews, and bones remain! Let the flesh and blood waste away in my body! I will not stop trying until I have achieved what is possible by human strength, energy, and vigor.”⁴⁵⁶ That’s how an individual is energetic.’
- 3.8 That’s the Dhamma talk I had together with the Buddha.”
- 4.1 “Reverend, next to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna I’m like a few pieces of gravel next to the Himalayas, the king of mountains. Venerable Mahāmoggallāna is so mighty and powerful he could, if he wished, live on for the proper lifespan.”⁴⁵⁷

456. See SN 12.22:2.3 and note.

457. Compare the famous episode at SN 51.10:3.2.

“Reverend, next to Venerable Sāriputta I’m like a few grains of salt next to a mound of salt.⁴⁵⁸ Venerable Sāriputta has been commended, complimented, and praised by the Buddha: 5.1

‘Sāriputta is full of wisdom,⁴⁵⁹ 6.1
ethics, and peace.
Even a mendicant who has crossed over
might at best equal him.’”

And so these two spiritual giants agreed with each other’s fine words. 7.1

SN 21.4

A Junior Mendicant

Navasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time a certain junior monk, after his meal, on his return from almsround, entered his dwelling, where he adhered to passivity and silence. And he didn’t help the mendicants out when it was time to sew robes.⁴⁶⁰ Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. 1.2

So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, “Please, monk, in my name tell that monk that the Teacher summons him.” 2.1

“Yes, sir,” that monk replied. He went to that monk and said to him, “Reverend, the Teacher summons you.” 2.3

458. *Ghaṭṭā* means either “pot” or “mass”. As a measure it is estimated variously at around 10 kg, 20 kg, or 200 kg. Given the context, I think it was a mound of salt such as would be seen at a salt mine.

459. This verse also found at SN 1.48:4.1, MN 143:17.15, and Thag 20.1:43.1.

460. The rare verb *saṅkasāyati* is used alongside *alliyissanti* (Kd 3:1.2.3) suggesting the sense “adhere” and a derivation from *kasāya* (“gum, resin”). | The time for sewing robes was the *kathina* season after the rains residence (MN 122:2.15).

- 2.5 “Yes, reverend,” that monk replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:
- 2.6 “Is it really true, monk, that after your meal, on your return from almsround, you entered your dwelling, where you adhered to passivity and silence, and you didn’t help the mendicants out when it was time to sew robes?”
- 2.7 “Sir, I am doing my own work.”
- 3.1 Then the Buddha, knowing that monk’s train of thought, addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, don’t complain about this monk. This monk gets the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when he wants, without trouble or difficulty. He has realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and lives having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”
- 4.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 5.1 “Not by being slack,
or with little strength
may this be realized—extinguishment,
the release from all suffering.
- 6.1 This young monk,
this best of men,
bears his final body,
having vanquished Māra with his legions.”⁴⁶¹

461. The ten armies of Māra are detailed in Snp 3.2.

SN 21.5

With Sujāta

Sujātasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then Venerable Sujāta went to the Buddha.

1.2

The Buddha saw him coming off in the distance, and addressed the mendicants: “This gentleman shines in both ways. He’s attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. And he has realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lives having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

1.3

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

1.7

“This mendicant truly shines.

2.1

His heart is upright,

he’s unfettered, detached,

quenched by not grasping.

He bears his final body,

having vanquished Māra with his legions.”

SN 21.6

With Bhaddiya the Dwarf

Lakuṇḍakabhaddiyasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then Venerable Bhaddiya the Dwarf went to the Buddha.⁴⁶²

1.2

462. Bhaddiya’s enlightenment came when being taught by Sāriputta (Ud 7.1), who, however, underestimated him and kept teaching anyway (Ud 7.2). His verses are at Thag 7.2. He was declared as the monk with the most charming voice (AN 1.194). This discourse, with different verses, is also at Ud 7.5

- 1.3 The Buddha saw him coming off in the distance, and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, do you see this monk coming—ugly, unsightly, deformed, and despised by the mendicants?”
- 1.6 “Yes, sir.”
- 1.7 “That mendicant is very mighty and powerful. It’s not easy to find an attainment that he has not already attained. And he has realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lives having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”
- 1.9 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 2.1 “Geese, herons, and peacocks,
elephants and spotted deer—⁴⁶³
though their bodies are not equal,
they all fear the lion.
- 3.1 So it is for humans—
if a little person is wise,
they’re the truly great one,
not the fool with a good body.”⁴⁶⁴

SN 21.7

With Visākha, Pañcālī’s Son

Visākhassutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

463. Read *pasatamigā*, where *pasata* is Sanskrit *prṣata*, “spotted”.

464. It is this verse that establishes Bhaddiya as a small person, hence the commentaries say *lakuṇṭaka* means “dwarf”. I follow the tradition, but it is weakly attested. It does not appear elsewhere and has no Sanskrit cognate (unless it is *lākuṭika*, “staff-bearer”). Sanskrit texts rather have *lavaṇabhadrika* (“Handsome Bhadda”), which might not be a mistake, but rather a reformed epithet indicating his true beauty.

Now at that time Venerable Visākha, Pañcālī's son, was educating, 1.3
encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants in the assembly
hall with a Dhamma talk. His words were polished, clear, articulate,
expressing the meaning, comprehensive, and independent.⁴⁶⁵

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and 2.1
went to the assembly hall. He sat down on the seat spread out,
and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, who was educating,
encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants in the assembly
hall with a Dhamma talk?"

"Sir, it was Venerable Visākha, Pañcālī's son." 2.4

Then the Buddha said to Visākha: 3.1

"Good, good, Visākha! It's good that you educate, encourage, fire 3.2
up, and inspire the mendicants in the assembly hall with a Dhamma
talk, with words that are polished, clear, articulate, expressing the
meaning, comprehensive, and independent."

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 4.1
went on to say:

"Though an astute person is mixed up with fools, 5.1
they don't know unless he speaks.

But when he speaks they know,
he's teaching the state free of death.

He should speak and illustrate the teaching, 6.1
holding up the banner of the seers.

Words well spoken are the seers' banner,
for the teaching is the banner of the seers."

465. This event was also recorded at AN 4.48, and his verses at Thag 2.45.

With Nanda

Nandasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 Then Venerable Nanda—the Buddha’s cousin on his mother’s side—dressed in nicely pressed and ironed robes, applied eye-shadow, and took a glazed bowl. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:⁴⁶⁶

1.3 “Nanda, as a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, it’s not appropriate for you to dress in nicely pressed and ironed robes, apply eyeshadow, and carry a glazed bowl. It’s appropriate for you to stay in the wilderness, eat only almsfood, wear rag robes, and live without concern for sensual pleasures.”

1.5 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

2.1 “When will I see Nanda
in the wilderness, wearing rag robes,
feeding on scraps offered by strangers,
unconcerned for sensual pleasures?”

3.1 Then some time later Venerable Nanda stayed in the wilderness, ate only almsfood, wore rag robes, and lived without concern for sensual pleasures.

466. Nanda was the son of Suddhodana with Mahāpajāpati, and thus the Buddha’s half-brother and maternal cousin. His struggles with desire are related at Ud 3.2. His verses are at Thag 2.19. | *Accha* normally means “transparent”, but here it refers to a glossy glaze. The archeology of Northern India around the time of the Buddha is characterized by a fine pottery called Northern Black Polished Ware, which retains its sheen to this day.

SN 21.9

With Tissa

Tissasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then Venerable Tissa—the Buddha’s cousin on his father’s side— 1.2
went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. He was
miserable and sad, with tears flowing. Then the Buddha said to
him:⁴⁶⁷

“Tissa, why are you sitting there so miserable and sad, with tears 1.3
flowing?”

“Sir, it’s because the mendicants beset me on all sides with sneer- 1.4
ing and jeering.”

“That’s because you admonish others, but don’t accept admoni- 1.5
tion yourself.⁴⁶⁸ As a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from
the lay life to homelessness, it’s not appropriate for you to admonish
others without accepting admonition yourself. It’s appropriate for
you to admonish others and accept admonition yourself.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 2.1
went on to say:

“Why are you angry? Don’t be angry! 3.1

It’s better to not be angry, Tissa.

For this spiritual life is lived

in order to remove anger, conceit, and denigration.”

467. Tissa’s further struggles are at SN 22.84. He is maintaining the tradition of the Buddha’s family members causing issues: Devadatta, Nanda, Upananda, Mahāpajāpati, Daṇḍapāṇi, Channa.

468. This misconduct is addressed in the Vinaya with Bu Ss 12.

SN 21.10

Senior In Name Only

Theranāmakasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.
- 1.2 Now at that time there was a certain mendicant who was Senior in name only. He lived alone and praised living alone.⁴⁶⁹ He entered the village for alms alone, returned alone, sat in private alone, and focussed on walking mindfully alone.
- 1.4 Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, there's a certain mendicant who is Senior in name only. He lives alone and praises living alone."
- 2.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell the mendicant Senior that⁴⁷⁰ the Teacher summons him."
- 2.4 "Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Venerable Senior and said to him, "Reverend Senior, the Teacher summons you."
- 2.6 "Yes, reverend," that monk replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:
- 2.7 "Is it really true, Senior, that you live alone and praise living alone?"
- 2.8 "Yes, sir."
- 2.9 "But in what way do you live alone and praise living alone?"
- 2.10 "Well, sir, I enter the village for alms alone, return alone, sit in private alone, and focus on walking mindfully alone. That's how I live alone and praise living alone."
- 3.1 "That is a kind of living alone, I don't deny it. But as to how living alone is fulfilled in detail, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."
- 3.4 "Yes, sir," he replied.

469. The suffix *-nāmaka* is a slight; see SN 10.2:1.2.

470. The Buddha avoids *-nāmaka* and politely calls him "Senior".

“And how, Senior, is living alone fulfilled in detail? It’s when what’s 3.5
in the past is given up, what’s in the future is relinquished, and desire
and greed for present incarnations is eliminated.⁴⁷¹ That’s how living
alone is fulfilled in detail.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 4.1
went on to say:

“The vanquisher of all, knower of all, so very intelligent, 5.1
is unsullied in the midst of all things.
He’s given up all, freed in the ending of craving:
I declare that man to be one who lives alone.”

SN 21.11

With Mahākappina

Mahākappinasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then Venerable Mahākappina went to the Buddha.⁴⁷² 1.2

The Buddha saw him coming off in the distance, and addressed the 1.3
mendicants: “Mendicants, do you see that monk coming—white,
thin, with a pointy nose?”⁴⁷³

“Yes, sir.” 1.6

“That mendicant is very mighty and powerful. It’s not easy to 1.7
find an attainment that he has not already attained. And he has
realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very
life. He lives having achieved with his own insight the goal for which
gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

471. Desire for “present incarnations” is in plural: desire for one’s own body and the bodies of others.

472. One of the great disciples, said to be foremost in advising monks (AN 1.231), as shown in the next discourse. He is seen meditating at SN 54.7, and his verses are at Thag 10.3.

473. As a Western monk, I feel seen.

2.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

3.1 “The aristocrat is best among people
who take clan as the standard.
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct
is best among gods and humans.

4.1 The sun blazes by day,
the moon radiates at night,
the aristocrat shines in armor,
and the brahmin shines in absorption.
But all day and all night,
the Buddha blazes with glory.”

SN 21.12

Companions

Sahāyakasutta

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 Then two mendicants who were companions, protégés of Venerable Mahākappina, went to the Buddha.

1.3 The Buddha saw them coming off in the distance, and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, do you see those monks coming who are companions, protégés of Venerable Mahākappina?”

1.6 “Yes, sir.”

1.7 “Those mendicants are very mighty and powerful. It’s not easy to find an attainment that they have not already attained. And they’ve realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. They live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

2.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

3.1 “These companion mendicants

have been together for a long time.
The true teaching has brought them together,
the teaching proclaimed by the Buddha.

They've been well trained by Kappina
in the teaching proclaimed by the Noble One.
They bear their final body,
having vanquished Māra with his legions.”

4.1

The Linked Discourses on monks are complete.

THE BOOK OF CAUSALITY IS FINISHED.

Colophon

The Translator

Bhikkhu Sujato was born as Anthony Aidan Best on 4/11/1966 in Perth, Western Australia. He grew up in the pleasant suburbs of Mt Lawley and Attadale alongside his sister Nicola, who was the good child. His mother, Margaret Lorraine Huntsman née Pinder, said “he’ll either be a priest or a poet”, while his father, Anthony Thomas Best, advised him to “never do anything for money”. He attended Aquinas College, a Catholic school, where he decided to become an atheist. At the University of WA he studied philosophy, aiming to learn what he wanted to do with his life. Finding that what he wanted to do was play guitar, he dropped out. His main band was named Martha’s Vineyard, which achieved modest success in the indie circuit.

A seemingly random encounter with a roadside joey took him to Thailand, where he entered his first meditation retreat at Wat Ram Poeng, Chiang Mai in 1992. Feeling the call to the Buddha’s path, he took full ordination in Wat Pa Nanachat in 1994, where his teachers were Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Jayasaro. In 1997 he returned to Perth to study with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery.

He spent several years practicing in seclusion in Malaysia and Thailand before establishing Santi Forest Monastery in Bundanoon, NSW, in 2003. There he was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Theravada bhikkhuni order in Australia and advocating for women’s rights. He continues to teach in Australia and globally,

with a special concern for the moral implications of climate change and other forms of environmental destruction. He has published a series of books of original and groundbreaking research on early Buddhism.

In 2005 he founded SuttaCentral together with Rod Bucknell and John Kelly. In 2015, seeing the need for a complete, accurate, plain English translation of the Pali texts, he undertook the task, spending nearly three years in isolation on the isle of Qi Mei off the coast of the nation of Taiwan. He completed the four main Nikāyas in 2018, and the early books of the Khuddaka Nikāya were complete by 2021. All this work is dedicated to the public domain and is entirely free of copyright encumbrance.

In 2019 he returned to Sydney where he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

Creation Process

Primary source was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tīpiṭaka. Translated from the Pali, with reference to several English translations, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Translation

This translation was part of a project to translate the four Pali Nikāyas with the following aims: plain, approachable English; consistent terminology; accurate rendition of the Pali; free of copyright. It was made during 2016–2018 while Bhikkhu Sujato was staying in Qimei, Taiwan.

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