

Linked Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato

LINKED DISCOURSES

A plain translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya



translated and introduced by

BHIKKHU SUJATO

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SN 45–56

THE GROUP OF LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE
PATH

MAHĀVAGGASĀMYUTTA

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The Group of Linked Discourses on the Path

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Chapter on Ignorance

SN 45.1

Ignorance

Avijjāsutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.¹ At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvaththi 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, ignorance precedes the attainment of unskillful qualities, with lack of conscience and prudence following along.² 2.1
An ignoramus, sunk in ignorance, produces wrong view.³ Wrong view produces wrong purpose.⁴ Wrong purpose produces wrong speech. Wrong speech produces wrong action. Wrong action produces wrong livelihood. Wrong livelihood produces wrong effort.

1. Detailed explanations for the factors are given in the "Analysis" discourse at SN 45.8.

2. Ignorance begins the sequence of dependent origination, which is said to be the "wrong practice" (SN 12.3).

3. Ignorance is the lack of understanding of how the world is, namely the four noble truths. Wrong view crystallizes ignorance in a specific and persistent set of beliefs and ideas.

4. This discourse stresses the linear dependence of each factor on the previous. Of course, causality is not so clear cut, and other contexts show the factors working together in various ways (eg. MN 117).

Wrong effort produces wrong mindfulness. Wrong mindfulness produces wrong immersion.

- 3.1 Knowledge precedes the attainment of skillful qualities, with conscience and prudence following along.⁵ A knowing one, firm in knowledge, produces right view. Right view produces right purpose. Right purpose produces right speech. Right speech produces right action. Right action produces right livelihood. Right livelihood produces right effort. Right effort produces right mindfulness. Right mindfulness produces right immersion.”

SN 45.2

Half the Spiritual Life

Upaḍḍhasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD.⁶ At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, where they have a town named Townsville. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 1.4 “Sir, good friends, companions, and associates are half the spiritual life.”
- 2.1 “Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life. A mendicant with good friends, companions, and associates can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.
- 3.1 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go.⁷ They develop right purpose ... right speech ...

5. This knowledge originates in learning the Dhamma, reflecting on it, and internalizing the belief.

6. This incident is relayed by the Buddha to Pasenadi at SN 3.18:3.1. Placed so prominently, it emphasizes the role of friendship in the path.

7. This formula is highly characteristic of the Mahāvagga. In the rare cases it appears outside the Saṃyutta it is in passages identical to here. The four terms

right action ... right livelihood ... right effort ... right mindfulness ... right immersion, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go. That's how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.

And here's another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life. For, by relying on me as a good friend, sentient beings who are liable to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are freed from all these things. This is another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life.” 4.1

SN 45.3

Sāriputta

Sāriputtasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

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

can be understood both as a sequential deepening of practice toward realization, and as synonyms for awakening or Nibbāna. The meaning depends on context, so here it means “seclusion” from wrong view; the “fading away”, “cessation”, and “letting go” of wrong view. | *Viveka* (“seclusion”) means to distinguish or differentiate (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.9.2). In Buddhism it can mean physical separation, but often means separation from defilements, especially through the practice of absorption. | *Virāga* has a dual sense in Pali: a state of “dispassion” 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). | The mention of “cessation” (*nirodha*) further links the path to dependent origination (SN 12.2:15.4). | *Vossagga* is one of many words in Pali having the sense “letting go”. For Jains, it meant giving up the body (Uttarādhyaṇasūtra 30.6), for Vedists, dismissing the deities at the completion of the sacrifice (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.9.2.27). In the Suttas, it is a word for generosity (SN 11.11:1.8), and for giving up defilements on entering absorption (SN 48.9:4.2).

- 1.3 “Sir, good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life.”⁸
- 2.1 “Good, good, Sāriputta! Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life. A mendicant with good friends, companions, and associates can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path. And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path?
- 3.1 It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.
- 4.1 And here’s another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life. For, by relying on me as a good friend, sentient beings who are liable to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are freed from all these things. This is another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life.”

SN 45.4

Regarding the Brahmin Jānussoṇi

Jānussoṇibrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. He saw the brahmin Jānussoṇi driving out of Sāvattḥī in an all-white chariot drawn by mares.⁹ The yoked horses were pure white, as were the ornaments,

8. Sāriputta, unlike Ānanda, does not need schooling on this point.

9. For Jānussoṇi, see SN 12.47:1.2 and note. | A chariot drawn by mares was the preferred vehicle of Jānussoṇi (MN 99:30.1, MN 27:2.1), as well as the brahmin student Ambaṭṭha DN 3:1.6.1. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.2.1 depicts Jānaśruti’s wealth as including cows, gold, and a chariot drawn by mules.

chariot, upholstery, reins, goad, and canopy. And his turban, robes, sandals were white, as was the chowry fanning him.

When people saw it they exclaimed, “Wow! That’s a divine vehicle! It’s a vehicle fit for divinity!” 1.5

Then Ānanda wandered for alms in Sāvattḥī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened, adding, “Sir, can you point out a divine vehicle in this teaching and training?” 2.1

“I can, Ānanda,” said the Buddha. 4.1

“These are all terms for the noble eightfold path: ‘divine vehicle’, or else ‘vehicle of truth’, or else ‘supreme victory in battle’. 4.2

When right view is developed and cultivated it culminates with the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. When right purpose ... right speech ... right action ... right livelihood ... right effort ... right mindfulness ... right immersion is developed and cultivated it culminates with the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. 5.1

This is a way to understand how these are all terms for the noble eightfold path: ‘divine vehicle’, or else ‘vehicle of truth’, or else ‘supreme victory in battle.’ 6.1

That is what the Buddha said. 6.3

Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:¹⁰ 7.1

“Of which the qualities of faith and wisdom¹¹ are always yoked to the shaft; 8.1

10. Verses connecting parts of the Dhamma to a chariot are also found at SN 1.46 and SN 41.5.

11. The *yassa* (“of which ...”) with which the verses open is not answered until *etad* (“this”) in the final verse. This creates a suspension over the entire text, like an unresolved note in a chord sequence. The suspense is further heightened by the absence of active verbs, drawing out the moment when movement finally starts; and it is literal movement, as the chariot “rolls” right into the resolution of “this” in the final verse. Only then is the true nature of the “divine vehicle” revealed. Such elaborate literary conceits, rare in the Suttas, are common in the Vedas. It is employed here to evoke the sophistication of Vedic verse, paralleling the luxury of the chariot. While I normally do not attempt to mimic Pali syntax so literally, here I feel the poetic effect is dramatic enough that it’s worth trying.

- conscience its draft-pole, mind its strap,¹²
mindfulness its careful driver;
- 9.1 the chariot equipped with ethics,¹³
its axle absorption, energy its wheel;
equanimity and immersion its draft-pole,¹⁴
desirelessness its upholstery;¹⁵
- 10.1 of which good will, harmlessness,
and seclusion are its weaponry;
endurance, its shield and armor:¹⁶
to sanctuary from the yoke it rolls—
- 11.1 this, originating in oneself,¹⁷
is the supreme divine vehicle.
The attentive leave the world in it,
sure of winning the victory.”

SN 45.5

What’s the Goal?

Kimatthiyasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

12. It is not easy to differentiate the *dhura* (“shaft”) from the *īsā* (“draft-pole”). The *īsā* is like the tusks of an elephant (MN 61.7.1, Ud 6.4:24.2), a forepart that might collide (SN 11.6:2.2), and which a colt might shake off (AN 8.14:12.4). Certain ancient images, such as the Indus Valley Daimabad toy chariot, clearly show a second part, a thicker “shaft” with a cylindrical end into which the draft-pole was fitted, which is perhaps the load-bearing *dhura*.

13. Here at the start of the second verse is a partial resolution as the subject, left implicit in the first verse, is revealed.

14. The Chinese parallel at SA 769 is helpful: 捨三昧為轅.

15. Elaborate “upholstery” is described at DN 17:2.5.7.

16. As the soma “endures” the blows of the pressing stone (Rig Veda 2.13.3).

17. The text plays with Vedic expressions, but the intent is purely Buddhist—the path rolls onwards due to one’s own practice.

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha ... and said to him: 1.2

“Sir, sometimes wanderers of other religions ask us: ‘Reverends, 2.1
what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?’
We answer them like this: ‘The goal of leading the spiritual life under
the Buddha is to completely understand suffering.’¹⁸

Answering this way, we trust that we repeat what the Buddha 2.5
has said, and don’t misrepresent him with an untruth. We trust
our explanation is in line with the teaching, and that there are no
legitimate grounds for rebuttal or criticism.”

“Indeed, in answering this way you repeat what I’ve said, and 3.1
don’t misrepresent me with an untruth. Your explanation is in line
with the teaching, and there are no legitimate grounds for rebuttal
or criticism. For the goal of leading the spiritual life under me is to
completely understand suffering.

If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: ‘Is there a path 3.3
and a practice for completely understanding that suffering?’ You
should answer them like this: ‘There is.’

And what is that path? It is simply this noble eightfold path, 4.1
that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right
livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This
is the path and the practice for completely understanding suffering.
When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that’s how you
should answer them.”

SN 45.6

A Mendicant (1st)

Paṭhamaaññatarabhikkhusutta

At Sāvattḥi.

1.1

18. One of the four functions regarding the four noble truths (SN 56.12:1.2, SN 56.29:1.5).

- 1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, “Sir, they speak of this thing called the ‘spiritual path.’ What is the spiritual path? And what is the culmination of the spiritual path?”
- 2.1 “Mendicant, the spiritual path 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. The ending of greed, hate, and delusion. This is the culmination of the spiritual path.”

SN 45.7

A Mendicant (2nd)

Dutiyaaññātarabhiikkhusutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattī.
- 1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and said to him:
- 2.1 “Sir, they speak of ‘the removal of greed, hate, and delusion.’ What is this a term for?”
- 2.4 “Mendicant, the removal of greed, hate, and delusion is a term for an element of extinguishment.¹⁹ It’s used to speak of the ending of defilements.”
- 3.1 When he said this, the mendicant said to the Buddha:
- 3.2 “Sir, they speak of ‘freedom from death.’ What is freedom from death? And what is the path that leads to freedom from death?”
- 3.4 “The ending of greed, hate, and delusion. This is called freedom from death. The path that leads to freedom from 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.”

19. Of the two “elements of extinguishment”, this is the one “with residue” (Iti 44:3.1).

SN 45.8

Analysis

Vibhaṅgasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach and analyze for you the noble eightfold path.²⁰ Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.” 1.2

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

1.4

“And what is the noble eightfold path? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. 2.1

And what is right view?²¹ Knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.²² This is called right view. 3.1

And what is right purpose?²³ The purpose of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness.²⁴ This is called right purpose. 4.1

20. See note on SN 12.2:1.2 for a discussion of “analysis” discourses. | The same definitions are found at DN 22:21.1 and MN 141:24.1.

21. “View” (*diṭṭhi*, Sanskrit *dṛṣṭi*) is “seeing” and hence a term for “understanding” (Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.2). In Buddhism, it means a particular way of seeing or perspective, a theory or view through which one makes sense of the world. By itself it is neutral, although “views” in plural sometimes stands for the thicket of wrong views.

22. The fourth noble truth is the path, while the first path factor is the noble truths. These two teachings are different perspectives on the same *dhamma*. | Ignorance is described in the opposite way (MN 9:64.1–66.7, SN 12.2:14.2).

23. *saṅkappa* is normally a synonym of *vitakka* in the suttas, hence it may be rendered “thought” (SN 14.8:3.3, MN 60:24.2). It is, however, not just verbalized thought, but the direction in which one applies the mind, hence “intention” (MN 41:14.3), “resolve”, or “purpose”. It has a directionality to it: in Rig Veda 10.164.5 it is the “evil intent” wished upon those who we hate, whereas in Atharva Veda 3.25.2 it is a quality of the arrow of love. For this reason, I usually render it as “purpose”. This factor is the emotional counterpart of right view, ensuring that the path is motivated by love and compassion.

24. *Abyāpāda* is “non-ill-will” or simply “good will”.

- 5.1 And what is right speech?²⁵ Refraining from speech that’s false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. This is called right speech.
- 6.1 And what is right action? Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and unchastity.²⁶ This is called right action.
- 7.1 And what is right livelihood? It’s when a noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and earns a living by right livelihood.²⁷ This is called right livelihood.
- 8.1 And what is right effort?²⁸ It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed.²⁹ This is called right effort.

25. The factors of speech and action are defined in detail under the gradual training at MN 27:13.4, and under the ten pathways of skillful deeds at MN 41:12.4.

26. The first three of the five precepts. | We would expect “sexual misconduct”, which is the betrayal of trust or otherwise causing harm in a sexual relationship (MN 141:27.2). However, the text has *abrahmacariyā* (“unchastity”), which normally applies to renunciates only (MN 96:13.1, AN 3.121:1.5). Bodhi (*Connected Discourses*) emends under the assumption that the SN reading is probably a scribal error introduced after the time of the commentary, which is silent. The parallel at SA 784 has 姪 (“fornication”) which literally supports *abrahmacariyā*, but apparently can be used for both versions. “Sexual misconduct” and “unchastity” both work here; it is just a matter of the audience. Since there is no strong reason to emend, I translate according to the text.

27. Wrong livelihood is defined at MN 117:29.2 and AN 5.177:1.3, and in detail for renunciates at DN 2:56.1.

28. Expanded to a full *sammutta* at SN 49.

29. The phrase *bhāvanāya pāripūriyā* could be literally rendered as either “for the development and fulfillment” or “for the fulfillment by development”. The commentary explains as the latter (*pāripūriyāti bhāvanāya paripūraṇattham*). I opt for the more idiomatic rendering, “fully developed”.

And what is right mindfulness?³⁰ It's when a mendicant meditates 9.1
by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful,
rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate
observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of
covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing
an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness
and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect
of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and
displeasure for the world. This is called right mindfulness.

And what is right immersion?³¹ It's when a mendicant, quite 10.1
secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities,
enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture
and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it
connected.³² As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected
are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which

30. Detailed especially in SN 47 and MN 10.

31. "Immersion" (*samādhī*) is treated in SN 53 and throughout the Suttas, eg. SN 12.23:2.15, MN 44:12.2 and notes. The primary sense is the mind "collected" or "immersed" inside itself, with a secondary connotation of radiant illumination. | Before the Buddha, we find *samādhī* and related terms in the sense of gathering kindling for the fire. The past participle *samāhita* occurs in the sense "collected, contained", as the essence of waters are "contained" in the Sun (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.1.2.7). Certain Upaniṣadic usages presage the Buddhist sense, though expressed in a mystical form designed to be as obscure as possible. A realized sage, being "collected", sees only the self in the self and is free from evil, having become one with Divinity (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.24). For such a one, the whole world is "contained" in the space within the heart—earth and sky, fire and wind, sun and moon, all beings and all desires (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.3–5). The hidden Self, finer than the finest, larger than the largest, may only be discerned by one who is peaceful and "collected" (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.24).

32. *Jhāna* is a state of "elevated consciousness" (*adhicitta*), so all the terms have an elevated sense. | The plural form indicates that "sensual pleasures" includes sense experience, which the meditator can turn away from since they no longer have any desire for it. | The "unskillful qualities" are the five hindrances. | The "rapture and bliss born of seclusion" is the happiness of abandoning the hindrances and freedom from sense impingement. | "Placing the mind and keeping it connected" (*vitakka, vicāra*) uses terms that mean "thought" in coarse

has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.³³ And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’³⁴ With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.³⁵ This is called right immersion.”

SN 45.9

A Spike

Sūkasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, suppose a spike of rice or barley was pointing the wrong way. If you trod on it with hand or foot, it is impossible for it to break the skin and produce blood. Why is that? Because the spike is pointing the wrong way.

1.5 In the same way, a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the wrong way cannot break ignorance, produce

consciousness, but which in “elevated consciousness” refer to the subtle function of applying the mind to the meditation.

33. Each *jhāna* begins as the least refined aspect of the previous *jhāna* ends. This is not consciously directed, but describes the natural process of settling. The meditator is now fully confident and no longer needs to apply their mind: it is simply still and fully unified.

34. The emotional response to bliss matures from the subtle thrill of rapture to the poise of equanimity. Mindfulness is present in all states of deep meditation, but with equanimity it becomes prominent.

35. The emotional poise of equanimity leads to the feeling of pleasure settling into the more subtle neutral feeling. Pain and sadness have been abandoned long before, but are emphasized here as they are subtle counterpart of pleasure.

knowledge, and realize extinguishment. Why is that? Because their view is pointing the wrong way.

Suppose a spike of rice or barley was pointing the right way. If you trod on it with hand or foot, it's possible it may break the skin and produce blood. Why is that? Because the spike is pointing the right way. 2.1

In the same way, a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way may well break ignorance, produce knowledge, and realize extinguishment. Why is that? Because their view is pointing the right way. 2.4

And how does a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way break ignorance, give rise to knowledge, and realize extinguishment? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way breaks ignorance, gives rise to knowledge, and realizes extinguishment." 3.1

SN 45.10

With Nandiya

Nandiyasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then the wanderer Nandiya went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.³⁶ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha: 1.2

"Worthy Gotama, how many things, when developed and cultivated, have extinguishment as their target, destination, and culmination?" 1.4

36. This wanderer Nandiya does not appear elsewhere.

- 2.1 “These eight things, when developed and cultivated, have extinguishment as their target, destination, and culmination. What eight? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These eight things, when developed and cultivated, have extinguishment as their target, destination, and culmination.”
- 2.5 When he said this, the wanderer Nandiya 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.”

The Chapter on Meditation

SN 45.11

Meditation (1st)

Paṭhamavihārasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for a fortnight.³⁷ No-one 1.2
should approach me, except the one who brings my almsfood.”

“Yes, sir,” replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, 1.4
except the one who brought the almsfood.

Then after a fortnight had passed, the Buddha came out of retreat 2.1
and addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, I’ve been practicing part of the meditation I prac- 2.2
ticed when I was first awakened.³⁸ I understand that there’s feeling
conditioned by wrong view³⁹ and feeling conditioned by right view.

37. The Buddha also goes on retreat at SN 45.12, SN 54.9, SN 54.11, SN 54.12, Bu NP 15:1.1.2, and Bu Pj 3:1.1.4.

38. In these reflections, the Buddha links the eightfold path with dependent origination, which he practiced after awakening (Ud 1.1–3). Compare DN 1:3.45.1, where he points out that wrong views are “conditioned by contact”, which is the immediately prior link of dependent origination.

39. We can apply this insight at multiple levels. For example, one with wrong view can get angry when right view is taught, which creates certain unpleasant feelings. More subtly, every mental state is associated with feeling, so when one is entertaining wrong view there is some kind of feeling there, perhaps a pleasant feeling arising from the idea that one knows the truth (Snp 4.13). But the link with dependent origination also suggests something more long term: wrong

...⁴⁰ There's feeling conditioned by wrong immersion,⁴¹ and feeling conditioned by right immersion.

- 2.8 There's feeling conditioned by desire.⁴² There's feeling conditioned by thought.⁴³ There's feeling conditioned by perception.⁴⁴ As long as desire, thought, and perception are not stilled, there is feeling conditioned by that.⁴⁵ When desire, thought, and perception are stilled, there is feeling conditioned by that.⁴⁶

view conditions rebirth. For pernicious wrong view—for example, the idea that there is no such thing as right and wrong—rebirth will be in lower realms, in which one will experience painful feelings (SN 42.2:2.14).

40. Right view is likewise associated with feeling in multiple ways. In addition, because it supports the arising of the subsequent path factors, it is a condition for the feelings associated with those.

41. The Pali text abbreviates the path factors.

42. Desire here is not “craving” (*taṇhā*) but *chanda*, which may be unwholesome sensual desire or a wholesome factor of the path. In fact, all three items—desire, thought, and perception—are normal functions of the mind that, in the unawakened, may be morally good or bad. For the sake of the path, they are developed in a wholesome way. After arahantship, they continue to exercise their function, but without kammic effect.

43. “Thought” is *vitakka*. This can refer generally to the relation between thoughts and feelings, or in the course of meditation, more specifically to the feelings associated with the first absorption.

44. Likewise, “perception” affects feeling in general, as when one recognizes a puppy and feels happy. In the context of advanced meditation, it can refer any of the stages of immersion short of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Perception and feeling in the process of deep meditation are further discussed in MN 44 and SN 41.6.

45. Following this, the BJT edition has a passage depicting the gradual stilling of these elements: desire is stilled, but not thought or perception; then desire and thought but not perception. This is absent from Burmese editions; Bodhi suggests it may have been interpolated from the commentary (*Connected Discourses*, note 21 to this sutta).

46. Normally perception and feeling go together. Perhaps this is in reference to the feeling conditioned upon emergence from the meditative attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling (MN 44:20.1).

There is effort to attain the unattained. When that state has been attained, there is also feeling conditioned by that.”⁴⁷ 2.13

SN 45.12

Meditation (2nd)

Dutiyavihārasutta

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for three months. No-one should approach me, except the one who brings my almsfood.” 1.2

“Yes, sir,” replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, except the one who brought the almsfood. 1.4

Then after three months had passed, the Buddha came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants: 2.1

“Mendicants, I’ve been practicing part of the meditation I practiced when I was first awakened. 2.2

I understand that there’s feeling conditioned by wrong view and by the settling of wrong view, by right view and by the settling of right view. ... There’s feeling conditioned by wrong immersion and by the settling of wrong immersion, by right immersion and by the settling of right immersion. 2.3

There’s feeling conditioned by desire and by the settling of desire. There’s feeling conditioned by thought, and by the settling of thought. There’s feeling conditioned by perception, and by the settling of perception. As long as desire, thought, and perception are not stilled, there is feeling conditioned by that. When desire, thought, and perception are stilled, there is feeling conditioned by that. 2.11

There is effort to attain the unattained. When that state has been attained, there is also feeling conditioned by that.” 2.19

47. This refers to the arahant, who still experiences feelings so long as their body survives.

SN 45.13

A Trainee

Sekkhassutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, “Sir, they speak of the one called ‘a trainee’. How is a trainee defined?”

2.1 “Mendicant, it’s someone who has a trainee’s right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.⁴⁸ That’s how a trainee is defined.”

SN 45.14

Arising (1st)

Paṭhamauppādasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, these eight things don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared.⁴⁹ What eight? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These eight things don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared.”

48. One is said to be a trainee, that is, one who is at least a stream-enterer, because one has developed all eight factors of the path.

49. This contrasts with the principles of dependent origination, which are present regardless of whether a Buddha has arisen (SN 12.20). Note that the text is not saying that the factors do not exist, but that they are not practiced.

SN 45.15

Arising (2nd)

Dutiyauppādasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, these eight things don’t arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One’s training.⁵⁰ What eight? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These are the eight things that don’t arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One’s training.”

1.2

SN 45.16

Purified (1st)

Paṭhamaparisuddhasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, these eight things don’t arise to be purified, bright, flawless, and rid of corruptions except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared. What eight? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These eight things don’t arise to be purified, bright, flawless, and rid of corruptions except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared.”

1.2

50. This is also claimed elsewhere by the Buddha (DN 16:5.27.1). The path factors must come as a whole in order to be “right”, i.e. to lead to awakening. The Buddha is obviously not claiming that every aspect of the path is only found in Buddhism, but that the full range of qualities, and the exclusion of the wrong factors, is unique. For example, other religions may also teach moral behavior, but assert the existence of God or the efficacy of rituals.

SN 45.17

Purified (2nd)

Dutiya-parisuddhasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥi.

1.2 “Mendicants, these eight things don’t arise to be purified, bright, flawless, and rid of corruptions apart from the Holy One’s training. What eight? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These eight things don’t arise to be purified, bright, flawless, and rid of corruptions apart from the Holy One’s training.”

SN 45.18

At the Chicken Monastery (1st)

Paṭhamakukkuṭārāmasutta

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the venerables Ānanda and Bhadda were staying near Pāṭaliputta, in the Chicken Monastery.⁵¹ Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Bhadda came out of retreat, went to Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Ānanda:

2.1 “Reverend, they speak of this thing called ‘not the spiritual path.’⁵² What is not the spiritual path?”

2.3 “Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence are excellent, and it’s a good question. For you asked: ‘They speak

51. This pair feature up until SN 45.20. | With the rise of Pāṭaliputta, the “Chicken Monastery” (*kukkuṭārāma*) became an important center after the Buddha’s passing. Malalasekera (*Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*) suggests it was the same monastery later renowned as Aśokārāma. It seems that all the discourses set here are after the Parinibbana.

52. Notice that they refer to each other as “reverend”, in apparent violation of one of the Buddha’s final instructions (DN 16:6.2.1).

of this thing called “not the spiritual path”. What is not the spiritual path?”

“Yes, reverend.”

2.8

“What is not the spiritual path is simply the wrong eightfold path, that is: wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion.”

SN 45.19

At the Chicken Monastery (2nd)

Dutiyakukkuṭārāmasutta

At Pāṭaliputta.

1.1

“Reverend, they speak of this thing called the ‘spiritual path’. What is the spiritual path? And what is the culmination of the spiritual path?”

“Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence are excellent, and it’s a good question. For you asked: ‘They speak of this thing called “the spiritual path”. What is the spiritual path? And what is the culmination of the spiritual path?’”

“Yes, reverend.”

1.9

“The spiritual path 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.

The ending of greed, hate, and delusion: this is the culmination of the spiritual path.”

SN 45.20

At the Chicken Monastery (3rd)

Tatīyakukkuṭārāmasutta

At Pāṭaliputta.

1.1

- 1.2 “Reverend, they speak of this thing called the ‘spiritual path’. What is the spiritual path? Who is someone on the spiritual path? And what is the culmination of the spiritual path?”
- 1.4 “Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence are excellent, and it’s a good question. . . .
- 1.10 The spiritual path 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.
- 1.12 Someone who possesses this noble eightfold path is called someone on the spiritual path.
- 1.14 The ending of greed, hate, and delusion: this is the culmination of the spiritual path.”

The Chapter on the Wrong Way

SN 45.21

The Wrong Way

Micchattasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you the wrong way and the right way.”⁵³

1.2

Listen ...

And what is the wrong way? It is wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called the wrong way.

1.4

And what is the right way? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called the right way.”

1.7

53. “Wrong way” is *micchattā*, literally “wrongness”. | The roots of both *sammā* (Sanskrit *samyak*) and *micchā* (Sanskrit *mithyā*) convey a similar sense of “together”, but *sammā* implied harmonious union (Rig Veda 4.58.6, 5.9.5, 9.73.2), while *micchā* was associated with contention or clashing (1.119.3, 1.144.3, 6.25.2). Over time, *micchā* came to convey “wrong, false, vain, mistaken”, while *sammā* was “right, harmonious, integrated”.

SN 45.22

Unskillful Qualities

Akusaladhammasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you skillful and unskillful qualities. Listen ...
- 1.4 And what are unskillful qualities? They are wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. These are called unskillful qualities.
- 1.7 And what are skillful qualities? They are right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. These are called skillful qualities.”

SN 45.23

Practice (1st)

Paṭhamapaṭipadāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the wrong practice and the right practice.⁵⁴ Listen ...
- 1.4 And what’s the wrong practice? It is wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called the wrong practice.
- 1.7 And what’s the right practice? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called the right practice.”

54. Applied to dependent origination at SN 12.3.

SN 45.24

Practice (2nd)

Dutiyapaṭipadāsutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I don’t praise wrong practice for laypeople or renunciates.⁵⁵ Because of wrong practice, neither laypeople nor renunciates succeed in the system of the skillful teaching. 1.2

And what’s the wrong practice? It is wrong view, wrong purpose, 2.1
wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong
mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called the wrong prac-
tice. I don’t praise wrong practice for lay people or renunciates.
Because of wrong practice, neither laypeople nor renunciates suc-
ceed in the system of the skillful teaching.

I praise right practice for laypeople and renunciates. Because of 3.1
right practice, both laypeople and renunciates succeed in the system
of the skillful teaching. And what’s the right practice? It is right
view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right
effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called the
right practice. I praise right practice for laypeople and renunciates.

Because of right practice, both laypeople and renunciates succeed 3.7
in the system of the skillful teaching.”

SN 45.25

An Untrue Person (1st)

Paṭhamaasappurisasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you an untrue person and a true person. 1.2
Listen ...

55. While the paths of renunciates and layfolk differ in certain details of ethics, such as right livelihood, the fundamental principles are the same for everyone.

- 1.4 And what is an untrue person? It's someone who has wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called an untrue person.
- 2.1 And what is a true person? It's someone who has right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called a true person."

SN 45.26

An Untrue Person (2nd)

Dutiyaasappurisasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 "Mendicants, I will teach you an untrue person and an even more untrue person, a true person and an even truer person. Listen ...
- 1.5 And what is an untrue person? It's someone who has wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called an untrue person.
- 2.1 And what is an even more untrue person? It's someone who has wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong immersion, wrong knowledge, and wrong freedom.⁵⁶ This is called an even more untrue person.

56. "Wrong knowledge" and "wrong freedom" and their "right" equivalents are sometimes added to the eightfold path to make ten (eg. DN 18:27.8, MN 117:35.13, AN 11.10:4.3). They are not formally defined, but it would seem that "right knowledge" is the understanding that arises when all eight path factors are complete, namely the knowledge of stream-entry; while "right freedom" is the liberation of the perfected one (however, see SN 55.26 for a counterexample). "Wrong knowledge" and "wrong freedom" fall short of that, and in particular would include cases of people who falsely believe they are enlightened and liberated.

And what is a true person? It's someone who has right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called a true person. 3.1

And what is an even truer person? It's someone who has right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right immersion, right knowledge, and right freedom. This is called an even truer person." 4.1

SN 45.27

Pots

Kumbhasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

"A pot without a stand is easy to overturn, but if it has a stand it's hard to overturn. In the same way, a mind without a stand is easy to overturn, but if it has a stand it's hard to overturn. 1.2

And what's the stand for the mind? It 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. This is the stand for the mind. 1.4

A pot without a stand is easy to overturn, but if it has a stand it's hard to overturn. In the same way, a mind without a stand is easy to overturn, but if it has a stand it's hard to overturn."⁵⁷ 1.8

SN 45.28

Immersion

Samādhisutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

57. Compare the (8th century?) Chinese text the *Platform Sutra*, which contains the line, "The mind is like a bright mirror's stand."

- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you noble right immersion with its vital conditions and its prerequisites.”⁵⁸ Listen ...
- 1.4 And what is noble right immersion with its vital conditions and its prerequisites? There are right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness.
- 1.6 Unification of mind with these seven factors as prerequisites is called noble right immersion ‘with its vital conditions’ and also ‘with its prerequisites.’”

SN 45.29

Feeling

Vedanāsutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, there are these three feelings. What three? Pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling. These are the three feelings.
- 1.6 The noble eightfold path should be developed to completely understand these three feelings. What is the noble eightfold path? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.
- 1.9 This noble eightfold path should be developed to completely understand these three feelings.”

SN 45.30

With Uttiya

Uttiyasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.

58. This teaching is repeated and expanded at MN 117. Also see AN 7.45, and for “vital conditions”, SN 12.23.

Then Venerable Uttiya went up to the Buddha ... and asked him,⁵⁹ 1.2
 “Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind.
 “The Buddha has spoken of the five kinds of sensual stimulation.
 What are they?”

“Good, good, Uttiya! I have spoken of these five kinds of sensual 1.6
 stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable,
 desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known
 by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the
 tongue ... Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable,
 agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds
 of sensual stimulation that I’ve spoken of.

The noble eightfold path should be developed to give up these five 1.15
 kinds of sensual stimulation. What is the noble eightfold path? It is
 right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood,
 right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is the noble
 eightfold path that should be developed to give up these five kinds
 of sensual stimulation.”

59. A wanderer named Uttiya appears in AN 10.95, while a mendicant of the same name becomes an arahant in SN 47.16. One might imagine these are the same person, were it not that verses are attributed to Uttiyas at Thag 1.30, Thag 1.54, and Thag 1.99.

The Chapter on Practice

SN 45.31

Practice (1st)

Paṭhamapaṭipattisutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the wrong practice and the right practice. Listen ...

1.4 And what’s the wrong practice? It is wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called the wrong practice.

1.7 And what’s the right practice? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called the right practice.”

SN 45.32

Practice (2nd)

Dutiyapaṭipattisutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you one practicing wrongly and one practicing rightly. Listen ...

And who is practicing wrongly? It's someone who has wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. This is called one practicing wrongly. 1.4

And who is practicing rightly? It's someone who has right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is called one practicing rightly." 1.7

SN 45.33

Missed Out

Viraddhasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

"Mendicants, whoever has missed out on the noble eightfold path has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.⁶⁰ Whoever has undertaken the noble eightfold path has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. 1.2

And what is the noble eightfold path? It is right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. 1.4

Whoever has missed out on the noble eightfold path has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken the noble eightfold path has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering." 1.6

60. The Pali qualifies the noble path as "eightfold" both times. I follow Bodhi's suggestion (note 28 in *Connected Discourses*) to omit the second, in line with similar passages at SN 46.18:1.1, SN 47.33:1.1], [SN 51.2:1.1], AND [SN 52.1:1.4.

SN 45.34

Going to the Far Shore

Pāraṅgamasutta

1.1 At Sāvattī.

1.2 “Mendicants, when these eight things are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore. What eight? They are right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. When these eight things are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.”

2.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

3.1 “Few are those among humans⁶¹
who cross to the far shore.
The rest just run
around on the near shore.

4.1 When the teaching is well explained,
the people who practice accordingly
will cross over
Death’s dominion so hard to pass.

5.1 Rid of dark qualities,⁶²
an astute person would develop the bright.⁶³

61. These verses also occur in the context of the seven awakening factors (SN 46.17:2.1), the tenfold path (AN 10.117:2.1, AN 10.118:3.1), the ten ways of skillful deeds (AN 10.169:3.1, AN 10.170:2.1), and as independent verses (Dhp 85–89).

62. While the text has the singular *dhamma* here, the commentary explains it by way of the contrast between “dark” qualities and “bright” qualities, which are typically in plural. And indeed, the Sanskrit parallels of this verse have the plural form. See Norman’s note on Dhp 87 in his *The Word of the Doctrine*.

63. *Bhāvetha* here is a rare reflexive form for the third person optative singular, agreeing with *pariyodapeyya* below.

Having left home for homelessness⁶⁴
in seclusion, where joy is hard,

they'd long for satisfaction there.

6.1

Forsaking sensual pleasures, owning nothing,
an astute person would cleanse themselves
of mental corruptions.

And those whose minds are rightly developed
in the awakening factors;⁶⁵
who, letting go of attachments,
delight in not grasping—
with defilements ended, brilliant,
they are quenched in this world.”

7.1

SN 45.35

The Ascetic Life (1st)

Paṭhamasāmaññasutta

At Sāvattḥi.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you the ascetic life and the fruits of the
ascetic life. Listen ...

1.2

And what is the ascetic life? It 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. This
is called the ascetic life.

1.4

And what are the fruits of the ascetic life? The fruits of stream-
entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection. These are called the
fruits of the ascetic life.”

1.8

64. The Pali for “home” is *oka*, which I elsewhere disambiguate by rendering as “bastion”.

65. For “awakening factors” the Pali has *sambodhiyaṅga*, which is a different spelling of *sambojjhaṅga*, familiar from the “seven awakening factors”.

SN 45.36

The Ascetic Life (2nd)

Dutiyasāmaññasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the ascetic life and the goal of the ascetic life. Listen ...
- 1.4 And what is the ascetic life? It 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. This is called the ascetic life.
- 1.8 And what is the goal of the ascetic life? The ending of greed, hate, and delusion. This is called the goal of the ascetic life.”

SN 45.37

The Brahmin Life (1st)

Paṭhamabrahmaññasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you life as a brahmin and the fruits of life as a brahmin. Listen ...
- 1.4 And what is life as a brahmin? It 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. This is called life as a brahmin.
- 1.8 And what are the fruits of life as a brahmin? The fruits of stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection. These are called the fruits of life as a brahmin.”

SN 45.38

The Brahmin Life (2nd)

Dutiyabrahmaññasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you life as a brahmin and the goal of life as a brahmin. Listen ... 1.2

And what is life as a brahmin? It 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. This is called life as a brahmin. 1.4

And what is the goal of life as a brahmin? The ending of greed, hate, and delusion. This is called the goal of life as a brahmin.” 1.8

SN 45.39

The Spiritual Path (1st)

Paṭhamabrahmacariyasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, I will teach you the spiritual path and the fruits of the spiritual path. Listen ... 1.2

And what is the spiritual path? It 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. This is called the spiritual path. 1.4

And what are the fruits of the spiritual path? The fruits of stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection. These are called the fruits of the spiritual path.” 1.8

SN 45.40

The Spiritual Path (2nd)

Dutiya brahmacariyasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you the spiritual path and the goal of the spiritual path. Listen ...
- 1.4 And what is the spiritual path? It 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. This is called the spiritual path.
- 1.8 And what is the goal of the spiritual path? The ending of greed, hate, and delusion. This is called the goal of the spiritual path.”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Followers of Other Paths

SN 45.41

The Fading Away of Greed

Rāgavirāgasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?’ You should answer them like this: ‘The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is the fading away of greed.’”

1.2

If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: ‘Is there a path and a practice for the fading away of greed?’ You should answer them like this: ‘There is a path and a practice for the fading away of greed.’”

1.5

And what is that path, what is that practice for the fading away of greed? It 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. This is the path, this is the practice for the fading away of greed.

1.8

When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that’s how you should answer them.”

1.12

SN 45.42–47

Six Discourses on Giving Up Fetters, Etc.

Samyojanappahānādisuttachakka

- 1.1 “Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?’ You should answer them like this:
- 1.3 ‘The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to give up the fetters.’ ...⁶⁶
- 1.4 ‘... to uproot the underlying tendencies.’ ...
- 1.5 ‘... to completely understand the course of time.’ ...⁶⁷
- 1.6 ‘... to end the defilements.’ ...
- 1.7 ‘... to realize the fruit of knowledge and freedom.’ ...
- 1.8 ‘... for knowledge and vision.’ ...”

SN 45.48

Extinguishment With No Fuel For Grasping

Anupādāparinibbānasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?’ You should answer them like this: ‘The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping.’

66. For the series listing the fetters, underlying tendencies, course of time, and end of defilements, see SN 48.64 and notes.

67. *Addhāna* (“course of time”) is a word for “transmigration” (*saṃsāra*), usually expressed as the “past (course)” and “future (course)” (SN 12.20:5.2). It is rooted in the metaphor of a journey, especially the long, dark road of the stars, sun and moon in the sky (eg. Rig Veda 1.113.3, 6.12.3, 6.29.2). Contrast the “first beginning” and “final end” (MN 79:7.5).

If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: ‘Is there a path and a practice for complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping?’ You should answer them like this: ‘There is a path and a practice for complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping.’ 1.5

And what is that path, what is that practice for complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping? It 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. This is the path, this is the practice for complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping. 1.8

When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that’s how you should answer them.” 1.12

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Sun

SN 45.49

Good Friends (1st)

Kalyāṇamittasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way good friendship is the forerunner and harbinger of the noble eightfold path for a mendicant. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

1.5 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.50–54

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics, Etc. (1st)

Sīlasampadādisuttapañcaka

“Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way accomplishment in ethics is the forerunner and harbinger of the arising of the noble eightfold path for a mendicant. A mendicant accomplished in ethics can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path. ...” ... 1.1

“... accomplishment in enthusiasm ...”⁶⁸ 1.4

“... accomplishment in self-development ...”⁶⁹ 1.5

“... accomplishment in view ...”⁷⁰ 1.6

“... accomplishment in diligence ...” 1.7

SN 45.55

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind (1st)

Yonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

“Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way accomplishment in rational application of mind is the forerunner and harbinger of the noble eightfold path for a mendicant. A mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path. 1.1

68. “Enthusiasm” (*chanda*) is the desire to achieve the wholesome, especially liberation from transmigration. It is one of the bases of psychic power (SN 51).

69. “Accomplishment in self-development” (*attasampadā*) is found only here and in parallel passages. In similar contexts we find *cittasampadā* (“accomplishment in mental development”), i.e. *samādhi* (AN 3.117:4.3). Hence the commentary glosses *attā* with *citta* here.

70. Normally one “accomplished in view” is a stream-enterer (SN 13.10:3.1).

- 1.4 And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path."

SN 45.56

Good Friends (2nd)

Dutiyakalyāṇamittasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way good friendship is the forerunner and harbinger of the noble eightfold path for a mendicant. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.
- 1.4 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That's how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path."

SN 45.57–61

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics, Etc. (2nd)

Dutiyasīlasampadādisuttapañcaka

- 1.1 "Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way accomplishment in ethics is the forerunner and harbinger of the noble eightfold path for a mendicant. ..."
- 1.3 "... accomplishment in enthusiasm ..."

“... accomplishment in self-development ...”	1.4
“... accomplishment in view ...”	1.5
“... accomplishment in diligence ...”	1.6

SN 45.62

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind (2nd)

Dutiyayonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

“... accomplishment in rational application of mind. A mendicant 1.1
accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop
and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application 1.3
of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when
a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right
action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right
immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delu-
sion. That’s how a mendicant accomplished in rational application
of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on One Thing

SN 45.63

Good Friends (1st)

Kalyāṇamittasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, one thing helps give rise to the noble eightfold path. What one thing? It’s good friendship. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

1.6 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.64–68

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics, Etc. (1st)

Sīlasampadādisuttapañcaka

- “Mendicants, one thing helps give rise to the noble eightfold path. 1.1
What one thing? It’s accomplishment in ethics. ...”
- “... accomplishment in enthusiasm ...” 1.4
- “... accomplishment in self-development ...” 1.5
- “... accomplishment in view ...” 1.6
- “... accomplishment in diligence ...” 1.7

SN 45.69

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind (1st)

Yonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

- “... accomplishment in rational application of mind. A mendicant 1.1
accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop
and cultivate the noble eightfold path.
- And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application 1.3
of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when
a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right
action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right
immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and
ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant accomplished in rational
application of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.70

Good Friends (2nd)

Dutiyakalyāṇamittasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, one thing helps give rise to the noble eightfold path. What one thing? It’s good friendship. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

1.6 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.71–75

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics,
Etc. (2nd)*Dutiyasīlasampadādisuttapañcaka*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, one thing helps give rise to the noble eightfold path. What one thing? It’s accomplishment in ethics. ...”

1.5 “... accomplishment in enthusiasm ...”

1.6 “... accomplishment in self-development ...”

1.7 “... accomplishment in view ...”

1.8 “... accomplishment in diligence ...”

SN 45.76

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind (2nd)

Dutiyayonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

“... accomplishment in rational application of mind. A mendicant 1.1
accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop
and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application 1.3
of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when
a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right
action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right
immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delu-
sion. That’s how a mendicant accomplished in rational application
of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on One Thing

SN 45.77

Good Friends

Kalyāṇamittasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I do not see a single thing that gives rise to the noble eightfold path, or, if it’s already arisen, fully develops it like good friendship. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.
- 1.4 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.78–82

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics, Etc.

Sīlasampadādisuttapañcaka

“Mendicants, I do not see a single thing that gives rise to the noble eightfold path, or, if it’s already arisen, fully develops it like accomplishment in ethics. ...” 1.1

“... accomplishment in enthusiasm ...” 1.2

“... accomplishment in self-development ...” 1.3

“... accomplishment in view ...” 1.4

“... accomplishment in diligence ...” 1.5

SN 45.83

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind

Yonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

“... accomplishment in rational application of mind. A mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path. 1.1

And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.” 1.3

SN 45.84

Good Friends (2nd)

Dutiyakalyāṇamittasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I do not see a single thing that gives rise to the noble eightfold path, or, if it’s already arisen, fully develops it like good friendship. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

SN 45.85–89

Five Discourses on Accomplishment in Ethics,
Etc.*Dutiyasīlasampadādisuttapañcaka*

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I do not see a single thing that gives rise to the noble eightfold path, or, if it’s already arisen, fully develops it like accomplishment in ethics. ...”
- 1.2 “... accomplishment in enthusiasm ...”
- 1.3 “... accomplishment in self-development ...”
- 1.4 “... accomplishment in view ...”
- 1.5 “... accomplishment in diligence ...”

SN 45.90

Accomplishment in Rational Application of Mind (2nd)

Dutiyayonisomanasikārasampadāsutta

“... accomplishment in rational application of mind. A mendicant 1.1
accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop
and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

And how does a mendicant accomplished in rational application 1.3
of mind develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when
a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right
action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right
immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delu-
sion. That’s how a mendicant accomplished in rational application
of mind develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 45.91

Slanting East

Paṭhamapācīnaninnasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

1.4 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.92–95

Four Discourses on Slanting East

Dutiyā dipācīnaninnasuttacatukka

- “Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
 ...”
 “... the Aciravatī River ...” 1.3
 “... the Sarabhū River ...” 1.5
 “... the Mahī River ...” 1.7

SN 45.96

Sixth Discourse on Slanting East

Chaṭṭhapācīnaninnasutta

- “Mendicants, all the great rivers—that is, the Ganges, Yamunā, Acira- 1.1
 vatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—slant, slope, and incline toward the east.
 In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble
 eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold 1.4
 path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendi-
 cant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action,
 right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion,
 which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as
 letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the
 noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.97

Slanting to the Ocean

Paṭhamasamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. In the same way, a mendicant who develops the noble eight-fold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment. ...”

SN 45.98–102

Five Discourses on Slanting to the Ocean

Dutiyādisamuddaninnasuttapañcaka

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. ...”
- 1.3 “... the Aciravatī River ...”
- 1.5 “... the Sarabhū River ...”
- 1.7 “... the Mahī River ...”
- 1.9 “... all the great rivers ...”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 45.103

Slanting East

Paṭhamapācīnaninnasutta

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble
eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold 1.3
path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendi-
cant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action,
right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion,
which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That’s
how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold
path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.104–108

Five Discourses on Sloping to the East

Dutiyāḍipācīnaninnasuttapañcaka

“Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
...”

- 1.1 “... the Aciravatī River ...”
- 1.1 “... the Sarabhū River ...”
- 1.1 “... the Mahī River ...”
- 1.1 “... all the great rivers ...”

SN 45.109

Slanting to the Ocean

Paṭhamasamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.110–114

Slanting to the Ocean

Dutiyādisamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. ...”
- 1.1 “... the Aciravatī River ...”
- 1.1 “... the Sarabhū River ...”
- 1.1 “... the Mahī River ...”
- 1.1 “... all the great rivers ...”

SN 45.115

Slanting East

Paṭhamapācīnaninnasutta

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold 1.3
path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.116–120

Slanting East

Dutiyāḍipācīnaninnasutta

“Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
...”

“... the Aciravatī River ...” 1.1

“... the Sarabhū River ...” 1.1

“... the Mahī River ...” 1.1

“... all the great rivers ...” 1.1

SN 45.121

Slanting to the Ocean

Paṭhamasamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.122–126

Sloping to the Ocean

Dutiyādisamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. ...”
- 1.3 “... the Aciravatī River ...”
- 1.5 “... the Sarabhū River ...”
- 1.7 “... the Mahī River ...”
- 1.9 “... all the great rivers ...”

SN 45.127

Slanting East

Paṭhamapācīnaninnasutta

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold 1.3
path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.128–132

Slanting East

Dutiyāḍipācīnaninnasutta

“Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
...”

“... the Aciravatī River ...” 1.3

“... the Sarabhū River ...” 1.5

“... the Mahī River ...” 1.7

“... all the great rivers ...” 1.9

SN 45.133

Slanting to the Ocean

Paṭhamasamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

SN 45.134–138

Slanting to the Ocean

Dutiyādisamuddaninnasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Yamunā River slants, slopes, and inclines to the ocean. ...”
- 1.3 “... the Aciravatī River ...”
- 1.5 “... the Sarabhū River ...”
- 1.7 “... the Mahī River ...”
- 1.9 “... all the great rivers ...”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Diligence

SN 45.139

The Realized One

Tathāgatasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet; with form or formless; with perception or without perception or with neither perception nor non-perception. In the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path. 1.2

And how does a mendicant who is diligent develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant who is diligent develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path. 1.6

Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they 2.1

footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet; with form or formless; with perception or without perception or with neither perception nor non-perception. In the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

2.4 And how does a mendicant who is diligent develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That's how a mendicant who is diligent develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.

3.1 Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet; with form or formless; with perception or without perception or with neither perception nor non-perception. In the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

3.4 And how does a mendicant who is diligent develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death. That's how a mendicant who is diligent develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.

4.1 Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet; with form or formless; with perception or without perception or with neither perception nor non-perception. In the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.

And how does a mendicant who is diligent develop and cultivate 4.5
the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view,
right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort,
right mindfulness, and right immersion, which slants, slopes, and
inclines to extinguishment. That's how a mendicant who is diligent
develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path."

SN 45.140

Footprints

Padasutta

"The footprints of all creatures that walk can fit inside an elephant's 1.1
footprint. So an elephant's footprint is said to be the biggest of them
all. In the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in diligence and
meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A
mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the
noble eightfold path.

And how does a mendicant who is diligent develop and cultivate 1.5
the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendicant develops right view,
right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort,
right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion,
fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. ... That's how a
mendicant who is diligent develops and cultivates the noble eightfold
path."

SN 45.141–145

A Roof Peak

Kūṭādisutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the rafters of a bungalow all lean to the peak, slope to the peak, and meet at the peak, so the peak is said to be the topmost of them all.⁷¹ In the same way ...”

(Tell in full as in the previous discourse.)

- 2.1 “Of all kinds of fragrant root, spikenard is said to be the best. ...”
 3.1 “Of all kinds of fragrant heartwood, red sandalwood is said to be the best. ...”
 4.1 “Of all kinds of fragrant flower, jasmine is said to be the best. ...”
 5.1 “All lesser kings are vassals of a wheel-turning monarch, so the wheel-turning monarch is said to be the foremost of them all. ...”

SN 45.146–148

The Moon, Etc.

Candimādisutta

- 1.1 “The radiance of all the stars is not worth a sixteenth part of the moon’s radiance, so the moon’s radiance is said to be the best of them all. ...”
 2.1 “In the autumn, the heavens are sunny and cloudless. And as the sun is rising to the firmament, having dispelled all the darkness of space, it shines and glows and radiates. ...”
 3.1 “Mendicants, cloth from Kāsi is said to be the best kind of woven cloth. ...”

(Tell these in full as in the section on the Realized One.)

71. For these similes, see SN 22.102.

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 45.149

Hard Work

Balasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, all the hard work that gets done depends on the earth and is grounded on the earth. In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics.

1.2

And how does a mendicant grounded on ethics develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant grounded on ethics develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path.”

1.4

“... which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion ...”

3.3

“... which have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination ...”

4.3

“... slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment ...”

5.3

SN 45.150

Seeds

Bījasutta

- 1.1 “All the plants and seeds that achieve growth, increase, and maturity do so depending on the earth and grounded on the earth. In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, achieving growth, increase, and maturity in good qualities.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant develop the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, achieving growth, increase, and maturity in good qualities? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, achieving growth, increase, and maturity in good qualities.”

SN 45.151

Dragons

Nāgasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, dragons grow and wax strong supported by the Himalayas, the king of mountains. When they’re strong they dive into the pools. Then they dive into the lakes, the streams, the rivers, and finally the ocean. There they acquire a great and abundant body. In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities.
- 1.4 And how does a mendicant develop the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right pur-

pose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities."

SN 45.152

Trees

Rukkhasutta

"Mendicants, suppose a tree slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. If 1.1
it was cut off at the root, where would it fall?"

"Sir, it would fall in the direction that it slants, slopes, and inclines." 1.3

"In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the 1.4
noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold 1.5
path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment."

SN 45.153

Pots

Kumbhasutta

"Mendicants, suppose a pot full of water is tipped over, so the water 1.1
drains out and doesn't go back in. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path expels bad, unskillful qualities and doesn't let them back in.

- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path expel bad, unskillful qualities and not let them back in? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path expels bad, unskillful qualities and doesn't let them back in."

SN 45.154

A Spike

Sūkasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, suppose a spike of rice or barley was pointing the right way. If you trod on it with hand or foot, it's possible it may break the skin and produce blood. Why is that? Because the spike is pointing the right way.
- 1.4 In the same way, a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way may well break ignorance, produce knowledge, and realize extinguishment. Why is that? Because their view is pointing the right way.
- 1.7 And how does a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way break ignorance, give rise to knowledge, and realize extinguishment? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant whose view and development of the path is pointing the right way breaks ignorance, gives rise to knowledge, and realizes extinguishment."

SN 45.155

The Sky

Ākāśasutta

“Mendicants, various winds blow in the sky. Winds blow from the east, the west, the north, and the south. There are winds that are dusty and dustless, cool and warm, weak and strong.⁷² In the same way, when the noble eightfold path is developed and cultivated the following are fully developed: the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, and the seven awakening factors. 1.1

And how are they fully developed? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how they’re fully developed.” 1.4

SN 45.156

Storms (1st)

Paṭhamameghasutta

“Mendicants, in the last month of summer, when the dust and dirt is stirred up, a large storm out of season disperses and settles it on the spot. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path disperses and stills bad, unskillful qualities on the spot. 1.1

How does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path disperse and still bad, unskillful qualities on the spot? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, 1.3

72. Also at SN 36.12.

and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path disperses and stills bad, unskillful qualities on the spot."

SN 45.157

Storms (2nd)

Dutiameghasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, when a large storm has blown up, a strong wind disperses and settles it as it proceeds. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path disperses and stills bad, unskillful qualities as they proceed.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path disperse and still bad, unskillful qualities as they proceed? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path disperses and stills bad, unskillful qualities as they proceed."

SN 45.158

A Ship

Nāvāsutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, suppose there was a sea-faring ship bound together with ropes. For six months they deteriorated in the water. Then in the cold season it was hauled up on dry land, where the ropes were weathered by wind and sun. When the monsoon clouds soaked it with rain, the ropes would readily collapse and rot away.⁷³ In the same way, when

73. Also at SN 22.101.

a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path their fetters readily collapse and rot away.

And how do they develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path 1.3 so that their fetters readily collapse and rot away? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how they develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path so that their fetters readily collapse and rot away."

SN 45.159

A Guest House

Āgantukasutta

"Mendicants, suppose there was a guest house. Lodgers come from 1.1 the east, west, north, and south. Aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials all stay there.⁷⁴ In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path completely understands by direct knowledge the things that should be completely understood by direct knowledge. They give up by direct knowledge the things that should be given up by direct knowledge. They realize by direct knowledge the things that should be realized by direct knowledge. They develop by direct knowledge the things that should be developed by direct knowledge.

And what are the things that should be completely understood 2.1 by direct knowledge? It should be said: the five grasping aggregates. What five? That is: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. These are the things that should be completely understood by direct knowledge. And what are the things that should be given up by direct knowledge? Ignorance and craving for continued existence. These are the things that should be given up by direct knowledge.

74. Also at SN 36.14.

And what are the things that should be realized by direct knowledge? Knowledge and freedom. These are the things that should be realized by direct knowledge. And what are the things that should be developed by direct knowledge? Serenity and discernment. These are the things that should be developed by direct knowledge.

- 2.15 And how does a mendicant develop the noble eightfold path in this way? It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant develops and cultivates the eightfold path in this way."

SN 45.160

A River

Nadīsutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, suppose that, although the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east,⁷⁵ a large crowd were to come along with a spade and basket, saying: 'We'll make this Ganges River slant, slope, and incline to the west!'
- 1.4 What do you think, mendicants? Would they succeed?"
- 1.6 "No, sir. Why is that? The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. It's not easy to make it slant, slope, and incline to the west. That large crowd will eventually get weary and frustrated."
- 1.11 "In the same way, while a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path, if rulers or their chief ministers, friends or colleagues, relatives or kin should invite them to accept wealth, saying: 'Please, my man, why let these ocher robes torment you? Why follow the practice of shaving your head and carrying an alms bowl? Come, return to a lesser life, enjoy wealth, and make merit!' It is quite impossible for a mendicant who develops and cultivates the

75. Also at SN 35.244.

noble eightfold path to resign the training and return to a lesser life. Why is that? Because for a long time that mendicant's mind has slanted, sloped, and inclined to seclusion. So it's impossible for them to return to a lesser life.

And how does a mendicant develop the noble eightfold path? It's 1.18 when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path."

The Chapter on Searches

SN 45.161

Searches

Esanāsutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path.⁷⁶ These are the three searches.

1.6 The noble eightfold path should be developed to directly know these three searches. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.

1.9 This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed to directly know these three searches.”

2.1 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches.

2.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed to directly know these three searches. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right

76. A seeker begins with a “search for a spiritual path” (*brahmacariyesanā*), but upon realizing the Dhamma is no longer seeking.

action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed to directly know these three searches.” 2.8

“Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches. 3.1

The noble eightfold path should be developed to directly know these three searches. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death. 3.5

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed to directly know these three searches.” 3.8

“Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches. 4.1

The noble eightfold path should be developed to directly know these three searches. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment. 4.5

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed to directly know these three searches.” 4.8

“Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches. 5.1

The noble eightfold path should be developed to completely understand ...” 5.5

(Tell in full with “completely understand” instead of “directly know”).

- 6.1 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches.
- 6.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed to finish ...”
(Tell in full with “finish” instead of “directly know”).
- 7.1 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches.
- 7.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed to give up ...”
(Tell in full with “give up” instead of “directly know”).

SN 45.162

Discriminations

Vidhāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are three kinds of discrimination. What three? One discriminates, thinking that ‘I’m better’ or ‘I’m equal’ or ‘I’m worse.’ These are the three kinds of discrimination.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three kinds of discrimination. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three kinds of discrimination.”
(Tell in full as in the section on searches.)

SN 45.163

Defilements

Āsavaṣutta

“Mendicants, there are these three defilements. What three? The 1.1
defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These
are the three defilements.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
defilements.”

SN 45.164

States of Existence

Bhavaṣutta

“There are these three states of existence. What three? Existence 1.1
in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous form, and the formless
realm. These are the three states of existence.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
states of existence.”

SN 45.165

Forms of Suffering

Dukkhatāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three forms of suffering.⁷⁷ What three?
The suffering inherent in painful feeling; the suffering inherent in

77. Also found in early Pali at DN 33:1.10.57 and SN 38.14:1.4; in late canonical Pali texts Niddesa (Cnd 8:28.5), Netti (Ne 5:15.6), and Peṭakopadesa (Pe 1:141.8); and extensively in later literature. These three became a staple breakdown of suffering, but are only occasionally mentioned and never explained in the Suttas.

conditions; and the suffering inherent in perishing.⁷⁸ These are the three forms of suffering.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three forms of suffering.”

78. Perhaps the earliest analysis of this passage in Pali is found in the Vimuttimagga: “Here, physical and mental suffering—this is called ‘the suffering inherent in painful feeling’ (*dukkhadukkhatā*). The change of the basis of pleasant feeling that is subject to contaminations—this is called ‘the suffering inherent in perishing’ (*vipariṇāmadukkhatā*). The five aggregates subject to clinging—this is called ‘the suffering inherent in conditions’ (*saṅkhāradukkhatā*)” (adapted from Ñāṇatusita’s translation, *Path to Freedom* 11.61). Here, the canonical sequence is altered, with *saṅkhāra* shifted to follow *vipariṇāma*. This altered sequence is widely found (eg. Visuddhimagga, *Path of Purification* 16:34–35, Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya 44, 49). The canonical Pali sequence, however, is shared with such Sanskrit texts as the Saṅgītisūtra (Waldschmidt 3.18), Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra (Vaidya 76), Bodhisattvabhūmi (Dutt 167), and Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (329). The alteration perhaps stems from the feeling that “conditions” should have the broadest scope, since it includes everything except Nibbāna, and hence belongs at the end. This much is suggested by the late canonical exegetical text, the Netti: “On occasions the world, within limits, is freed from the suffering inherent in painful feeling, and likewise with the suffering inherent in perishing. Why is that? There are those in the world of little affliction and long life. But the world is freed from the suffering inherent in conditions only by the element of extinguishment with no residue” (Ne 5:15.8). The variation in sequence notwithstanding, the explanations of the terms are broadly similar in the traditions. In each case, the suffering is “inherent in” pain, conditions, or perishing, not “due to” them. If, say, pleasant feeling perishes and *gives rise to* painful feeling, that is the “suffering of painful feeling”; as say someone who eats too much ice-cream and gets a stomachache. The suffering of perishing, rather, refers to cases where a pleasant feeling perishes and another pleasant feeling is experienced. Take, say, someone eating a dish of ice cream; by the fourth or fifth spoonful it’s still delicious, but not quite as good as the first. For a more spiritual example, if someone in the third jhāna goes to the second jhāna, they experience no pain, but their experience of pleasure is less refined. But all conditioned phenomena, even the most subtle and stable of meditations, are characterized by the suffering of conditions, since they are not as peaceful as Nibbāna.

SN 45.166

Kinds of Barrenness

Khilasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three kinds of barrenness. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. These are the three kinds of barrenness.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three kinds of barrenness.”

SN 45.167

Stains

Malasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three stains. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. These are the three stains.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three stains.”

SN 45.168

Troubles

Nighasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three troubles. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. These are the three troubles.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three troubles.”

SN 45.169

Feelings

Vedanāsutta

“Mendicants, there are these three feelings: What three? Pleasant, 1.1
painful, and neutral feeling. These are the three feelings.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
feelings.”

SN 45.170

Craving

Taṇhāsutta

“Mendicants, there are these three cravings. What three? Craving for 1.1
sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving for
nonexistence. These are the three cravings.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
cravings. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant de-
velops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right liveli-
hood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which
rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the 1.8
direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up
of these three cravings.”

Thirst⁷⁹

- 2.1 “Mendicants, there are these three thirsts. What three? Thirst for sensual pleasures, thirst to continue existence, and thirst to end existence.
- 2.4 For the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three thirsts which culminates in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. . . . whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death. . . . which slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 2.8 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three thirsts.”

79. This text merely repeats the previous, substituting a different form of the same word (*tasina* for *tañhā*). It is not found in Sinhalese manuscripts. In Burmese editions, including the *Mahāsaṅgīti*, it is included as a separate sutta. Bhikkhu Bodhi and the PTS include it but do not assign it a separate number. We follow this approach.

The Chapter on Floods

SN 45.171

Floods

Oghasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are these four floods. What four? The floods 1.2
of sensuality, desire to be reborn, views, and ignorance. These are
the four floods.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.6
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these four
floods.”

(Tell in full as in the section on searches.)

SN 45.172

Yokes

Yogasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four yokes. What four? The yokes of 1.1
sensual pleasures, future lives, views, and ignorance. These are the
four yokes.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these four
yokes.”

SN 45.173

Grasping

Upādānasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of grasping. What four? Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self. These are the four kinds of grasping.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these four kinds of grasping.”

SN 45.174

Personal Ties

Ganhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four ties. What four? The personal ties to covetousness, ill will, misapprehension of precepts and observances, and the insistence that this is the only truth. These are the four ties.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these four ties.”

SN 45.175

Tendencies

Anusayasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these seven underlying tendencies. What seven? The underlying tendencies of sensual desire, aversion, views, doubt, conceit, desire for continued existence, and ignorance. These are the seven underlying tendencies.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these seven underlying tendencies.” 1.5

SN 45.176

Kinds of Sensual Stimulation

Kāmaguṇasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the tongue ... Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. 1.1

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five kinds of sensual stimulation.” 1.8

SN 45.177

Hindrances

Nīvaraṇasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five hindrances. What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five hindrances. 1.1

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five hindrances.” 1.5

SN 45.178

Grasping Aggregates

Upādānakkhandhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five grasping aggregates. What five? The grasping aggregates of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. These are the five grasping aggregates.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five grasping aggregates.”

SN 45.179

Lower Fetters

Orambhāgiyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are five lower fetters.⁸⁰ What five? Substantialist view, doubt, misapprehension of precepts and observances, sensual desire, and ill will. These are the five lower fetters.
- 1.5 The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five lower fetters.”

SN 45.180

Higher Fetters

Uddhambhāgiyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.

80. The fetters are abandoned through the progressive stages of the path (eg. SN 55.8).

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five
higher fetters. What is the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendi-
cant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action,
right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion,
which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as
letting go.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the 1.8
direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up
of these five higher fetters.”

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire 2.1
for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the
formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the
five higher fetters.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowl- 2.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five
higher fetters. What is the noble eightfold path? It's when a mendi-
cant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action,
right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion,
which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion ...” “...
whose objective, destination, and culmination is freedom from death
...” “... which slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the 2.10
direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up
of these five higher fetters.”

The Linked Discourses on the Path, the first section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE AWAKENING FACTORS

The Chapter on Mountains

SN 46.1

The Himalaya

Himavantasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, dragons grow and wax strong supported by the Himalayas, the king of mountains.⁸¹ When they’re strong they dive into the pools. Then they dive into the lakes, the streams, the rivers, and finally the ocean. There they acquire a great and abundant body.

1.2

In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities.⁸² And how does a mendicant

1.4

81. For the “dragon” (*nāga*) see SN 29.1:1.1 and notes. | The etymological root of *nāga* seems to be “naked” (Pali *nagga*), from where it was applied to hairless animals such as the “snake”, especially the cobra, and the elephant. It is also connected with that naked feature of the earth, the mountain (*naga*). That which belongs to the mountain is the *nāga*, the “dragon”; the primordial serpent Vṛtra coiled around the mountain (SN 2.3:3.4). *Nāga* is also a term for hill tribes. The snake, elephant, and mountain are all powerful, and their nakedness emphasizes their independence. This, it seems, informed the cluster of meanings behind applying *nāga* to the shaven-headed and spiritually mighty “giants”, the arahants.

82. The seven awakening factors especially emphasize the emotional and holistic dimension of meditative growth. Unlike the eightfold path, they do not explicitly include the factor of ethics, but this passage shows that ethics is their foundation. See also, eg. SN 46.6.

develop the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities?

- 1.6 It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factor of mindfulness, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go.⁸³
- 1.7 They develop the awakening factor of investigation of principles ...⁸⁴
- 1.8 They develop the awakening factor of energy ...
- 1.9 They develop the awakening factor of rapture ...⁸⁵
- 1.10 They develop the awakening factor of tranquility ...⁸⁶
- 1.11 They develop the awakening factor of immersion ...
- 1.12 They develop the awakening factor of equanimity, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go.⁸⁷
- 1.13 That's how a mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics, acquiring great and abundant good qualities."

SN 46.2

The Body

Kāyasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

83. The factors of mindfulness and investigation of principles both have a dual meaning in this context. They can refer to "bringing to mind" and "investigating" the principles or phenomena experienced in meditation. But they can also refer to recalling the "teaching" and reflecting on it (SN 46.3).

84. *Dhamma* means the "principle" of cause and effect, as in "observation of principles" (*dhammānupassanā*), "investigation of principles" (*dhammavicaya*), or "discernment of principles" (*dhammavipassanā*).

85. "Rapture" (*pīti*) is a joyous emotional response to pleasure, usually a spiritual sense of elevation or uplift in meditation.

86. "Tranquility" (*passaddhi*) is a settled and serene body and mind, as activities or energies become stilled through the process of meditation.

87. "Equanimity" (*upekkhā*) of the fourth absorption and above, or else the equanimity of insight (MN 152).

“Mendicants, this body is sustained by food. It depends on food 1.2
to continue, and without food it doesn’t continue.⁸⁸ In the same
way, the five hindrances are sustained by fuel. They depend on fuel
to continue, and without fuel they don’t continue.⁸⁹

And what fuels the arising of sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, 2.1
makes it increase and grow? There is the feature of beauty.⁹⁰ Fre-
quent irrational application of mind to that⁹¹ fuels the arising of
sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow.

And what fuels the arising of ill will, or, when it has arisen, makes 3.1
it increase and grow? There is the feature of aversion. Frequent
irrational application of mind to that fuels the arising of ill will, or,
when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow.

And what fuels the arising of dullness and drowsiness, or, when 4.1
they have arisen, makes them increase and grow? There is discon-
tent, sloth, yawning, sleepiness after eating, and mental sluggishness.
Frequent irrational application of mind to them fuels the arising of
dullness and drowsiness, or, when they have arisen, makes them
increase and grow.

And what fuels the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when 5.1
they have arisen, makes them increase and grow? There is the un-
settled mind.⁹² Frequent irrational application of mind to that fuels

88. For the phrase “sustained by food” see DN 33:1.8.2, AN 10.27:10.5, AN 10.28:4.5, Kp 4:1.2 and notes. The word *āhāra*, literally “intake”, may be translated as “food” or “fuel” depending on context.

89. This passage can be seen as an expansion of the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna*, “observation of principles”, where the “principles” underlying the rise and fall of the hindrances and awakening factors are investigated. Similar teachings recur throughout this section, for example SN 46.51.

90. “Feature of beauty” is *subhanimitta*. In early Pali, *nimitta* is used for a feature or quality of the mind that, when focused on, promotes the growth of similar or related qualities. Thus focusing on beauty fosters the desire for that beauty. (See MN 5:6.1).

91. “Irrational” attention sees the beauty as something to be held on to and appropriated. The flaw lies not in the object, but in the response.

92. Worrying about anxiety makes the mind even more anxious.

the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when they have arisen, makes them increase and grow.

6.1 And what fuels the arising of doubt, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow? There are things that are grounds for doubt.⁹³ Frequent irrational application of mind to them fuels the arising of doubt, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow.

7.1 This body is sustained by food. It depends on food to continue, and without food it doesn't continue. In the same way, the five hindrances are sustained by fuel. They depend on fuel to continue, and without fuel they don't continue.

8.1 This body is sustained by food. It depends on food to continue, and without food it doesn't continue. In the same way, the seven awakening factors are sustained by fuel. They depend on fuel to continue, and without fuel they don't continue.

9.1 And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of mindfulness, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of mindfulness.⁹⁴ Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of mindfulness, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

10.1 And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of investigation of principles, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are qualities that are skillful and unskillful, blameworthy and blameless, inferior and superior, and those with a portion of dark or bright.⁹⁵

93. Such as what the nature of the correct path (AN 3.65:3.8), the various wrong views (SN 24.1:5.1), the status of a saint after death (SN 44.9:5.2), or the reality of kamma (SN 42.13:21.2).

94. These include the meditations listed in the Satipaṭṭhana Sutta (MN 10).

95. Discrimination between good and evil is the foundation of wisdom. | The phrase *sappaṭibhāgā*, which appears here in a stock phrase, is given three mutually exclusive explanations in the commentary (see Bodhi's note on this sutta). I think the commentary is influenced by the later sense of *paṭibhāgā* as a technical meditation term meaning "counterpart". This sense is, however, absent from Sanskrit, where *pratibhāga* means "portion, share" (Rig Veda 8.99.3, Manu 8.307). The sense would then refer to individuals "with a portion" of dark or bright qualities. This is, in fact, the theme of the only other passage in Pali that uses this term (AN 6.62:10.2).

Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of investigation of principles, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of energy, or, 11.1
when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are the elements of initiative, persistence, and exertion. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of energy, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of rapture, 12.1
or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of rapture.⁹⁶ Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of rapture, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, 13.1
or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There is tranquility of the body and of the mind. Frequent rational application of mind to that fuels the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, 14.1
or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are the basis of serenity and freedom from distraction.⁹⁷ Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, 15.1
or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of equanimity.⁹⁸ Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

96. These are the things that bring wholesome joy to the mind, in and out of meditation.

97. This includes peaceful meditations such as mindfulness of breathing.

98. This includes the development of absorption, which is the basis for the equanimity of the fourth absorption, as well as the development of insight into attraction and repulsion (see MN 152).

- 16.1 This body is sustained by food. It depends on food to continue, and without food it doesn't continue. In the same way, the seven awakening factors are sustained by fuel. They depend on fuel to continue, and without fuel they don't continue."

SN 46.3

Ethics

Sīlasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, when a mendicant is accomplished in ethics, immersion, knowledge, freedom, or the knowledge and vision of freedom, even the sight of them is very helpful, I say.⁹⁹ Even to hear them, approach them, pay homage to them, recollect them, or go forth following them is very helpful, I say. Why is that? Because after hearing the teaching of such mendicants, a mendicant will live withdrawn in both body and mind, as they recollect and think about that teaching.¹⁰⁰
- 2.1 At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of mindfulness; they develop it and perfect it. As they live mindfully in this way they investigate, explore, and inquire into that teaching with wisdom.¹⁰¹
- 3.1 At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of investigation of principles; they develop it and perfect it. As they

99. The "sight of ascetics" was held to be an inspiration that can set one on the path. In the absence of written books, it was also a prerequisite for hearing the teachings (DN 14:2.14.1, MN 81:6.5, SN 46.3:1.1, AN 6.30, Snp 2.4:10.2, Snp 4.4:1.1).

100. In this discourse, the role of mindfulness as "recollection" of the teachings is emphasized (SN 48.9:3.2).

101. Accordingly, the text emphasizes the investigation into the "teachings" that one has heard. The previous discourse emphasized the discernment between right and wrong. Of course, these are never really separate, as the Buddha teaches us to discern what is right and what is wrong (DN 19:7.1).

investigate principles with wisdom in this way their energy is roused up and unflagging.

At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of energy; they develop it and perfect it. When they're energetic, rapture not of the flesh arises. 4.1

At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of rapture; they develop it and perfect it. When the mind is full of rapture, the body and mind become tranquil. 5.1

At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of tranquility; they develop it and perfect it. When the body is tranquil and one feels bliss, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi.¹⁰² 6.1

At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of immersion; they develop it and perfect it. They closely watch over that mind immersed in samādhi. 7.1

At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of equanimity; they develop it and perfect it. 8.1

When the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated in this way they can expect seven fruits and benefits. What seven? They attain enlightenment early on in this very life. If not, they attain enlightenment at the time of death. If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters, they're extinguished between one life and the next.¹⁰³ If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters they're extinguished upon landing.¹⁰⁴ If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters they're extinguished without extra effort.¹⁰⁵ If not, with the ending 9.1

102. This line shows the close relationship between "tranquillity" and "bliss" in the development of meditation.

103. From here we see the standard five-fold classification of non-returners, graded by the swiftness of their insight. | The first is an individual who dies as a non-returner, but their insight is so swift that they abandon all defilements before taking rebirth in the Pure Abodes. See SN 44.9:6.4 and note.

104. That is, at the moment of being reborn in the Pure Abodes.

105. Their past practice sustains their further development so that remaining defilements are shed easily.

of the five lower fetters they're extinguished with extra effort.¹⁰⁶ If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters they head upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm.¹⁰⁷ When the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated in this way these are the seven fruits and benefits they can expect.”

SN 46.4

Clothes

Vatthasutta

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants: “Reverends, mendicants!”
- 1.4 “Reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:
- 2.1 “There are these seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors.
- 2.5 In the morning, I meditate on whichever of these seven awakening factors I want.¹⁰⁸ At midday, and in the evening, I meditate on whichever of these seven awakening factors I want. If it's the awakening factor of mindfulness, I know that it's limitless and that it's properly implemented. While it remains I understand that it remains. And if it subsides in me I understand the specific reason it subsides. ... If it's the awakening factor of equanimity, I know that it's limitless and that it's properly implemented. While it remains

106. They must practice further after rebirth in the Pure Abodes in order to realize arahantship in that life.

107. They pass from one Pure Abode to another, still as non-returners.

108. This discourse shows a method of development by focusing on each individual factor. Sāriputta is not contradicting the idea that they arise in mutual dependence; rather, it is because he understands their relationship that he can evoke them at will.

I understand that it remains. And if it subsides I understand the specific reason it subsides.

Suppose that a ruler or their chief minister had a chest full of garments of different colors. In the morning, they'd don whatever pair of garments they wanted. At midday, and in the evening, they'd don whatever pair of garments they wanted. 3.1

In the same way, in the morning, at midday, and in the evening, I meditate on whichever of these seven awakening factors I want. 3.5
If it's the awakening factor of mindfulness, I know that it's limitless and that it's properly implemented. While it remains I understand that it remains. And if it subsides I understand the specific reason it subsides. ... If it's the awakening factor of equanimity, I know that it's limitless and that it's properly implemented. While it remains I understand that it remains. And if it subsides I understand the specific reason it subsides."

SN 46.5

A Monk

Bhikkhusutta

At Sāvattī. 1.1

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, "Sir, they speak of the 'awakening factors'. How are the awakening factors defined?" 1.2

"Mendicant, they're called awakening factors because they lead to awakening.¹⁰⁹ 1.5

A mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. As they develop the seven awakening factors, 1.6

109. This is the consistent position of the Suttas: the awakening factors "lead to awakening". The commentarial tradition redefines them as factors present at the moment of awakening, but this idea is not found in the Suttas.

their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. 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.'

- 1.11 They're called awakening factors because they lead to awakening."

SN 46.6

Kuṇḍaliya

Kuṇḍaliyasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāketa in the deer park at the Añjana Wood.¹¹⁰ Then the wanderer Kuṇḍaliya went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.¹¹¹ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

- 1.4 "Worthy Gotama, I like to hang around the monasteries and visit the assemblies. When I've finished breakfast, it's my habit to wander from monastery to monastery, from park to park. There I see some ascetics and brahmins speaking for the sake of winning debates and finding fault. But what benefit does the worthy Gotama live for?"

- 1.9 "The benefit the Realized One lives for, Kuṇḍaliya, is the fruit of knowledge and freedom."

- 2.1 "But what things must be developed and cultivated in order to fulfill knowledge and freedom?"

- 2.2 "The seven awakening factors."

- 2.3 "But what things must be developed and cultivated in order to fulfill the seven awakening factors?"

- 2.4 "The four kinds of mindfulness meditation."

- 2.5 "But what things must be developed and cultivated in order to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation?"

110. See note on SN 2.18:1.2 for this location.

111. Kuṇḍaliya ("the ear-ringed") is not known elsewhere.

“The three kinds of good conduct.” 2.6

“But what things must be developed and cultivated in order to fulfill the three kinds of good conduct?” 2.7

“Sense restraint. 2.8

And Kuṇḍaliya, how is sense restraint developed and cultivated 3.1
so as to fulfill the three kinds of good conduct? A mendicant sees
an agreeable sight with their eyes. They don’t desire it or enjoy it,
and they don’t give rise to greed. Their mind and body are steady
internally, well settled and well freed. But if they see a disagreeable
sight they’re undismayed, with mind unirritated, spirit undaunted,
and heart unangered.¹¹² Their mind and body are steady internally,
well settled and well freed.

Furthermore, a mendicant hears an agreeable sound with their 4.1
ears ... smells an agreeable odor with their nose ... tastes an agree-
able flavor with their tongue ... encounters an agreeable touch with
their body ... knows an agreeable idea with their mind. They don’t
desire it or enjoy it, and they don’t give rise to greed. Their mind
and body are steady internally, well settled and well freed. But if they
know a disagreeable idea they’re undismayed, with mind unirritated,
spirit undaunted, and heart unangered. Their mind and body are
steady internally, well settled and well freed.

When a mendicant’s mind and body are steady internally, they’re 5.1
well settled and well freed when it comes to both agreeable and

112. The text uses three synonyms: *citta* (“mind”), *mānasa* (“spirit”), and *cetasa* (“heart”). | Read *apatitṭhinacitto* (“mind unirritated”) per BJT, and the Thai and PTS variants for the parallel passage at Mnd 10:92.7. The verb form *patitṭhiyati* appears in Pvr 17:172.3 with a list of terms for anger. | “Undaunted spirit” (*adīnamanasa*) is also at Thag 3.9:1.4 and Thag 15.1:11.4. However, the texts waver between reading *adīna* (“undaunted”) and *alīna* (“not sluggish”, for which the meaning is established at Snp 1.3:34.2). The parallel to this passage at Mnd 10:92.7 reads *alīna* in MS, but *adīna* in Thai and PTS editions. The confusion extends to the commentaries, which for the present passage glosses, “mind not daunted (*adīnacitta*) by the power of displeasure”, while at Thag 3.9:1.4 they have, “non-overthrown by laziness, etc., not sluggish mind (*alīnacitta*), not living lazily”. See too *dīnamana* (“disheartened”) at DN 18:4.17.

disagreeable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. That's how sense restraint is developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the three kinds of good conduct.

6.1 And how are the three kinds of good conduct developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? A mendicant gives up bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and develops good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. That's how the three kinds of good conduct are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

7.1 And how are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the seven awakening factors? A mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That's how the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the seven awakening factors.

8.1 And how are the seven awakening factors developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom? A mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom.”

9.1 When he said this, the wanderer Kuṇḍaliya said to the Buddha, “Excellent, worthy Gotama! 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, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. 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.”

SN 46.7

A Bungalow

Kūṭāgārasutta

“Mendicants, the rafters of a bungalow all slant, slope, and incline 1.1
to the peak. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cul-
tivates the seven awakening factors slants, slopes, and inclines to
extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the seven awakening 2.1
factors slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a men-
dicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation
of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanim-
ity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as
letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the
seven awakening factors slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguish-
ment.”

SN 46.8

With Upavāṇa

Upavāṇasutta

At one time the venerables Upavāṇa and Sāriputta were staying near 1.1
Kosambī in Ghosita’s monastery. Then in the late afternoon, Ven-
erable Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Venerable Upavāṇa
and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite
conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Upavāṇa:

“Reverend Upavāṇa, can a mendicant know that by investigating 2.1
inside themselves, the seven awakening factors have been properly
implemented so that they lead to living at ease?”¹¹³

“They can, Reverend Sāriputta.

2.2

113. *Paccattaṃ yonisomanasikārā* also occurs at MN 50:3.1, where it means
“investigate inside oneself”. At DN 28:13.3 it is applied to another.

- 3.1 As a mendicant rouses up the awakening factor of mindfulness, they understand: ‘My mind is well freed. I’ve eradicated dullness and drowsiness, and eliminated restlessness and remorse. My energy is roused up, and my mind is sharply focused, not sluggish.’ ...
- 3.2 As they rouse up the awakening factor of equanimity, they understand: ‘My mind is well freed. I’ve eradicated dullness and drowsiness, and eliminated restlessness and remorse. My energy is roused up, and my mind is sharply focused, not sluggish.’
- 3.3 That’s how a mendicant can know that by investigating inside themselves, the seven awakening factors are properly implemented so that they lead to living at ease.”

SN 46.9

Arisen (1st)

Paṭhamauppannasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, these seven awakening factors don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared.”

SN 46.10

Arisen (2nd)

Dutiyauppannasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, these seven awakening factors don’t arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One’s training. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven

awakening factors don't arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One's training."

The Chapter on Sick

SN 46.11

Living Creatures

Pāṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever living creatures engage in the four postures—sometimes walking, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying down—all do so depending on the earth and grounded on the earth. In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics.
- 2.1 And how does a mendicant develop the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics? It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors depending on and grounded on ethics.”

SN 46.12

The Simile of the Sun (1st)

Paṭhamasūriyūpamasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. In the same way, for a mendicant good friendship is the forerunner

and harbinger of the arising of the seven awakening factors. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.

And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.” 2.1

SN 46.13

The Simile of the Sun (2nd)

Dutiyasūriyūpamasutta

“Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. 1.1
In the same way, for a mendicant rational application of mind is the forerunner and harbinger of the arising of the seven awakening factors. A mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.

And how does a mendicant with rational application of mind 2.1
develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant with rational application of mind develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.14

Sick (1st)

Paṭhamagilānasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time Venerable Mahākassapa was staying in the Pippali cave, and he was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat, went to Venerable Mahākassapa, sat down on the seat spread out, and said to him:
- 2.1 "I hope you're keeping well, Kassapa, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing."
- 2.2 "Sir, I'm not keeping well, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading."¹¹⁴
- 3.1 "Kassapa, I've rightly explained these seven awakening factors. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors that I've rightly explained. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment."
- 3.5 "Indeed, Blessed One, these are awakening factors! Indeed, Holy One, these are awakening factors!"
- 4.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahākassapa approved what the Buddha said. And that's how he recovered from that illness.¹¹⁵

114. Accurately reporting symptoms is a characteristic of a good patient (AN 5.123).

115. This discourse and the next two are included in the Sinhalese *Maha Pirit Pota*. Monks often recite them for recovery from illness. In Thailand, a set of verses known as the Bojjhaṅga-paritta are recited.

Sick (2nd)

Dutiyagilānasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time Venerable Mahāmoggallāna was staying on the Vulture's Peak Mountain, and he was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat, went to Venerable Moggallāna, sat down on the seat spread out, and said to him: 1.1

"I hope you're keeping well, Moggallāna, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing." 2.1

"Sir, I'm not keeping well, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading." 2.2

"Moggallāna, I've rightly explained these seven awakening factors. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors that I've rightly explained. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment." 3.1

"Indeed, Blessed One, these are awakening factors! Indeed, Holy One, these are awakening factors!" 3.5

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna approved what the Buddha said. And that's how he recovered from that illness. 4.1

SN 46.16

Sick (3rd)

Tatiyagilānasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time he was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then Venerable Mahācunda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:
- 1.4 “Cunda, express your understanding of the awakening factors.”
- 2.1 “Sir, the Buddha has rightly explained these seven awakening factors. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors that the Buddha has rightly explained. When developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to awakening, and to extinguishment.”
- 2.5 “Indeed, Cunda, these are awakening factors! Indeed, Cunda, these are awakening factors!”
- 3.1 That is what Cunda said, and the Teacher concurred. And that's how the Buddha recovered from that illness.

SN 46.17

Going to the Far Shore

Pāraṅgamasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when these seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.

Few are those among humans¹¹⁶ 2.1
 who cross to the far shore.
 The rest just run
 around on the near shore.

When the teaching is well explained, 3.1
 the people who practice accordingly
 will cross over
 Death's dominion so hard to pass.

Rid of dark qualities, 4.1
 an astute person would develop the bright.
 Having left home for homelessness
 in seclusion, where joy is hard,

they'd long for satisfaction there. 5.1
 Forsaking sensual pleasures, owning nothing,
 an astute person would cleanse themselves
 of mental corruptions.

And those whose minds are rightly developed 6.1
 in the awakening factors;
 who, letting go of attachments,
 delight in not grasping—
 with defilements ended, brilliant,
 they are quenched in this world.”

SN 46.18

Missed Out

Viraddhasutta

“Mendicants, whoever has missed out on the seven awakening fac- 1.1
 tors has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of

116. See SN 45.34:3.1 and notes.

suffering. Whoever has undertaken the seven awakening factors has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Whoever has missed out on these seven awakening factors has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken these seven awakening factors has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 46.19

Noble

Ariyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when these seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who practices them to the complete ending of suffering. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. When these seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who practices them to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 46.20

Disillusionment

Nibbidāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disil-

lusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.”

The Chapter with Udāyī

SN 46.21

To Awakening

Bodhāyasutta

- 1.1 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and said to him:
- 2.1 “Sir, they speak of the ‘awakening factors.’ How are the awakening factors defined?”
- 2.3 “Mendicant, they’re called awakening factors because they lead to awakening. A mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. They’re called awakening factors because they lead to awakening.”

SN 46.22

A Teaching on the Awakening Factors

Bojjhaṅgadesanāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I will teach you the seven awakening factors. Listen ...
- 1.3 And what are the seven awakening factors? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.23

Grounds

Thāṇiyasutta

“Mendicants, when you frequently apply the mind to things that are 1.1
grounds for sensual greed, sensual desire arises, and once arisen it
increases and grows. When you frequently apply the mind to things
that are grounds for ill will, ill will arises, and once arisen it increases
and grows. When you frequently apply the mind to things that are
grounds for dullness and drowsiness, dullness and drowsiness arise,
and once arisen they increase and grow. When you frequently apply
the mind to things that are grounds for restlessness and remorse,
restlessness and remorse arise, and once arisen they increase and
grow. When you frequently apply the mind to things that are grounds
for doubt, doubt arises, and once arisen it increases and grows.

When you frequently apply the mind to things that are grounds 2.1
for the awakening factor of mindfulness, the awakening factor of
mindfulness arises, and once arisen it’s fully developed. . . . When
you frequently apply the mind to things that are grounds for the
awakening factor of equanimity, the awakening factor of equanimity
arises, and once arisen it’s fully developed.”

SN 46.24

Irrational Application of Mind

Ayonisomanasikārasutta

“Mendicants, when you apply the mind irrationally, sensual desire, ill 1.1
will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt
arise, and once arisen they increase and grow. And the awakening
factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture,
tranquility, immersion, and equanimity don’t arise, or if they’ve
already arisen, they cease.

- 2.1 When you apply the mind rationally, sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt don't arise, or if they've already arisen they're given up.
- 3.1 And the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity arise, and once they've arisen, they're fully developed."

SN 46.25

Non-decline

Aparihānīyasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, I will teach you seven principles that prevent decline.¹¹⁷
Listen ...
- 1.3 And what are the seven principles that prevent decline? They are the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven principles that prevent decline."

SN 46.26

The Ending of Craving

Taṇhakkhayasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, you should develop the path and the practice that leads to the ending of craving. And what is the path and the practice that leads to the ending of craving? It is the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity." When he said this, Udāyī said to him:

117. Included along with several other "principles that prevent decline" at DN 16:1.8.11 and AN 7.26.

“Sir, how are the seven awakening factors developed and cultivated 1.8
so as to lead to the ending of craving?”

“Udāyī, it’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factor of 2.1
mindfulness, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation,
and ripens as letting go. And it is abundant, expansive, limitless, and
free of ill will.¹¹⁸ As they do so, craving is given up.¹¹⁹ When craving
is given up, deeds are given up. When deeds are given up, suffering
is given up. ...

A mendicant develops the awakening factor of equanimity, which 2.5
relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting
go. And it is abundant, expansive, limitless, and free of ill will. As
they do so, craving is given up. When craving is given up, deeds are
given up. When deeds are given up, suffering is given up.

And so, Udāyī, when craving ends, deeds end; when deeds end 2.9
suffering ends.”

SN 46.27

The Cessation of Craving

Taṇhānirodhasutta

“Mendicants, you should develop the path and the practice that leads 1.1
to the cessation of craving. And what is the path and the practice that
leads to the cessation of craving? It is the seven awakening factors.
What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of
principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity.
And how are the seven awakening factors developed and cultivated
so as to lead to the cessation of craving?

118. Here (and at SN 46.28:2.1) the terms beginning with “abundant” are added to the usual formula; they are more familiar from the divine meditations (SN 42.8:12.1).

119. Here we find a succinct presentation of the three “rounds” of dependent origination: defilements, deeds, and results. See SN 12.38:1.2 and note for discussion.

- 2.1 It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion,
- 2.2 and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. This is how the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to lead to the cessation of craving."

SN 46.28

Helping Penetration

Nibbedhabhāgiyasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, I will teach you a path that helps penetration. Listen ...
- 1.3 And what is the path that helps penetration? It is the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity." When he said this, Udāyī said to him:
- 1.9 "Sir, how are the seven awakening factors developed and cultivated so as to lead to penetration?"
- 2.1 "Udāyī, it's when a mendicant develops the awakening factor of mindfulness, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go. And it is abundant, expansive, limitless, and free of ill will. With a mind that has developed the awakening factor of mindfulness, they penetrate and shatter the mass of greed, the mass of hate, and the mass of delusion for the first time. ...
- 2.5 A mendicant develops the awakening factor of equanimity, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go. And it is abundant, expansive, limitless, and free of ill will. With a mind that has developed the awakening factor of equanimity, they penetrate and shatter the mass of greed, the mass of hate, and the mass of delusion for the first time.
- 2.9 This is how are the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to lead to penetration."

One Thing

Ekadhammasutta

“Mendicants, I do not see a single thing that, when it is developed 1.1
and cultivated like this, leads to giving up the things that tighten the
fetters like the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening
factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture,
tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. And how are the seven
awakening factors developed and cultivated so as to lead to giving
up the things that tighten the fetters?

It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mind- 2.1
fulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, im-
mersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and
cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how the seven awakening
factors are developed and cultivated so as to lead to giving up the
things that tighten the fetters.¹²⁰

And what are the things that tighten the fetters? The eye is some- 3.1
thing that tightens the fetters. This is where these fetters, shackles,
and attachments arise. The ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind
is something that tightens the fetters. This is where these fetters,
shackles, and attachments arise. These are called the things that
tighten the fetters.”

120. The fetters are desire and lust, the “things that tighten the fetters” (*sam-
yojaniya dhamma*) are the pleasures afforded by the senses (SN 35.122, SN
41.1).

SN 46.30

With Udāyī

Udāyisutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sumbhas, near the town of the Sumbhas named Sedaka. Then Venerable Udāyī went up to the Buddha ... and said to him:
- 2.1 “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! How helpful my fondness and respect for the Buddha have been, and my sense of conscience and prudence. For when I was still a layman, I wasn’t helped much by the teaching or the Saṅgha. But when I considered my fondness and respect for the Buddha, and my sense of conscience and prudence, I went forth from the lay life to homelessness. The Buddha taught me the Dhamma: ‘Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling ... Such is perception ... Such are choices ... Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.’
- 3.1 Then, while staying in an empty hut, I followed the churning of the five grasping aggregates. I truly understood: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’¹²¹ I comprehended the teaching, sir, I acquired the path.¹²² This, when developed and cultivated by me meditating in just such a way, will bring me to such a state that I will 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.’
- 4.1 I acquired the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Each of these, when developed and cultivated by me meditating in just such a way, will bring me to such a state that I will understand:

121. *Ukkujjāvakuja* (“churning”) is a unique term, literally “turning up and turning over”.

122. This indicates the attaining of stream-entry.

‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’ This is the path that I acquired which, when developed and cultivated by me meditating in just such a way, will bring me to such a state that I will 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.’”

“Good, good, Udāyī! For that is indeed the path that you acquired s.1 which, when developed and cultivated by you meditating in just such a way, will bring you to such a state that you will 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 Chapter on Hindrances

SN 46.31

Skillful (1st)

Paṭhamakusālasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever qualities are skillful, part of the skillful, on the side of the skillful, all of them are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.
- 2.1 And how does a diligent mendicant develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a diligent mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.32

Skillful (2nd)

Dutiyakusālasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever qualities are skillful, part of the skillful, on the side of the skillful, all of them are rooted in rational applica-

tion of mind and meet at rational application of mind, and rational application of mind is said to be the best of them. A mendicant accomplished in rational application of mind can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.

And how does a mendicant with rational application of mind 2.1 develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how a mendicant with rational application of mind develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.33

Corruptions

Upakkilesasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five corruptions of native gold. When 1.1 native gold is corrupted by these it's not pliable, workable, or radiant, but is brittle and not completely ready for working.¹²³ What five? Iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver. When native gold is corrupted by these five corruptions it's not pliable, workable, or radiant, but is brittle and not completely ready for working.

In the same way, there are these five corruptions of the mind. 2.1 When the mind is corrupted by these it's not pliable, workable, or radiant. It's brittle, and not rightly immersed in samādhi for the ending of defilements. What five? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness

123. This discourse mentions the hindrances but not the awakening-factors, while the next discourse says that the awakening factors are “not hindrances” but does not mention the hindrances. It seems these were originally two parts of the same discourse. The parallel at SA 707 does indeed include both teachings, as well as a set of verses on the same theme. | This is the first of several cases in this chapter where the discourse boundaries vary between editions, apparently a result of editorial oversight.

and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.¹²⁴ These are the five corruptions of the mind. When the mind is corrupted by these it's not pliable, workable, or radiant. It's brittle, and not rightly immersed in samādhi for the ending of defilements.”

SN 46.34

Not Corruptions

Anupakkilesasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, these seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or corruptions of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or corruptions of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom.”

SN 46.35

Irrational Application of Mind

Yonisomanasikārasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when you apply the mind irrationally, sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt arise, and once arisen they increase and grow.”¹²⁵
- 2.1 “Mendicants, when you apply the mind rationally, the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rap-

124. Only the first hindrance is mentioned in the MS text. The others are left out, presumably by accidental omission, but are included in BJT, and in the parallel at AN 5.23:2.1.

125. MS and PTS editions reckon this as two separate discourses. BJT has them as a single discourse, which I follow.

ture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity arise, and once they've arisen, they're fully developed."

SN 46.36

Growth

Buddhisutta

"Mendicants, when the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated they lead to growth and progress. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. When these seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated they lead to growth and progress." 1.1

SN 46.37

Obstacles

Āvaraṇanīvaraṇasutta

"Mendicants, there are these five obstacles and hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom.¹²⁶ What five? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five obstacles and hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom." 1.1

There are these seven awakening factors that are not obstacles, hindrances, or corruptions of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or cor- 2.1

126. In MS and PTS editions, this discourse is presented as one with the next. Once again, the more coherent presentation is found in BJT, which lists them as separate discourses with distinct titles.

ruptions of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom.”

SN 46.38

Without Obstacles

Anīvaraṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, sometimes a noble disciple pays attention, applies the mind, concentrates wholeheartedly, and actively listens to the teaching. At such a time the five hindrances are absent, and the seven awakening factors are fully developed.
- 2.1 What are the five hindrances that are absent? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five hindrances that are absent.
- 3.1 And what are the seven awakening factors that are fully developed? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These are the seven awakening factors that are fully developed. Sometimes a noble disciple pays attention, applies the mind, concentrates wholeheartedly, and actively listens to the teaching. At such a time the five hindrances are absent, and the seven awakening factors are fully developed.”

SN 46.39

Trees

Rukkhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are large trees with tiny seeds and big bodies, which grow up and around other trees as parasites. The trees they engulf break apart, collapse, and fall.¹²⁷ And what are those large

127. These trees are all “strangling figs”. They are proverbial in folklore for showing the threat of even the slightest evil (Ja 370, Ja 412). | E.J.H. Corner

trees with tiny seeds and big bodies? The peepal, banyan, wavy leaf fig, cluster fig, Moreton Bay fig, and white fig.¹²⁸ These are the large trees with tiny seeds and big bodies, which grow up and around other trees as parasites. The trees they engulf break apart, collapse, and fall.

In the same way, take a certain gentleman who has gone forth 1.5
from the lay life to homelessness, abandoning sensual pleasures. But beset by sensual pleasures that are similar, or even worse, he breaks apart, collapses, and falls.

There are these five obstacles and hindrances, parasites of the mind 2.1
that weaken wisdom. What five? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five obstacles and hindrances, parasites of the mind that weaken wisdom.

These seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or 3.1
parasites of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or parasites of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom.”

describes them in delicious detail in his *Wayside Trees of Malaya* (1940), vol. 1, pp. 664–5 (cited by Bodhi in his note on this discourse).

128. *Kacchaka* here is described as a parasitic strangler, which agrees with Bu Pc 11:2.1.6, where it is said to propagate from the trunk. It is sometimes identified with *Toona ciliata*, the “red cedar”, but that cannot be correct, as it is not a strangler. I translate as “Moreton bay fig” in homage to these magnificent trees that flourish throughout eastern Australia. | *Kapitthana* is Sanskrit *kapitana*, which Sanskrit sources identify with a bewildering variety of trees. One such, the *Ficus virens* or “white fig”, fits the description here.

SN 46.40

Hindrances

Nīvaraṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, these five hindrances are destroyers of sight, vision, and knowledge. They block wisdom, they’re on the side of distress, and they don’t lead to extinguishment. What five? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These five hindrances are destroyers of sight, vision, and knowledge. They block wisdom, they’re on the side of distress, and they don’t lead to extinguishment.
- 2.1 These seven awakening factors are creators of vision and knowledge. They grow wisdom, they’re on the side of solace, and they lead to extinguishment. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven awakening factors are creators of vision and knowledge. They grow wisdom, they’re on the side of solace, and they lead to extinguishment.”

The Chapter on the Wheel-Turning Monarch

SN 46.41

Discriminations

Vidhāsutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past who have given up the three discriminations have done so by developing and cultivating the seven awakening factors.¹²⁹ All the ascetics and brahmins in the future who will give up the three discriminations will do so by developing and cultivating the seven awakening factors. All the ascetics and brahmins in the present who are giving up the three discriminations do so by developing and cultivating the seven awakening factors.

1.2

What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. All the ascetics and brahmins in the past . . . future . . . and present who give up the three discriminations do so by developing and cultivating the seven awakening factors.”

1.5

129. For the three discriminations (*vidha*) see SN 45.162.

SN 46.42

A Wheel-Turning Monarch

Cakkavattisutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when a Wheel-Turning Monarch appears seven treasures appear.¹³⁰ What seven? The wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander. When a Wheel-Turning Monarch appears these seven treasures appear.
- 2.1 When a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha appears the seven treasures of the awakening factors appear. What seven? The treasures of the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. When a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha appears these seven treasures of the awakening factors appear.”

SN 46.43

About Māra

Mārasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I will teach you a path for crushing Māra’s army.¹³¹ Listen ...
- 1.3 And what is that path? It is the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. This is the path for crushing Māra’s army.”

130. Detailed at DN 17:1.7.1.1.

131. The nature of “Māra’s army” is detailed at Snp 3.2.

SN 46.44

Witless

Duppaññasutta

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, “Sir, 1.1
they speak of ‘a witless idiot’. How is a witless idiot defined?”

“Mendicant, they’re called a witless idiot because they haven’t 1.4
developed and cultivated the seven awakening factors. What seven?
The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles,
energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. They’re
called a witless idiot because they haven’t developed and cultivated
these seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.45

Wise

Paññavantasutta

“Sir, they speak of a one ‘wise and clever’. How is a person who is wise 1.1
and clever defined?”

“Mendicant, they’re called wise and clever because they’ve devel- 1.3
oped and cultivated the seven awakening factors. What seven? The
awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy,
rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. They’re called wise
and clever because they’ve developed and cultivated these seven
awakening factors.”

SN 46.46

Poor

Daliddasutta

“Sir, they speak of someone who is ‘poor’. How is a poor person 1.1
defined?”

- 1.3 “Mendicant, they’re called poor because they haven’t developed and cultivated the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. They’re called poor because they haven’t developed and cultivated these seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.47

Prosperous

Adaliddasutta

- 1.1 “Sir, they speak of someone who is ‘prosperous’. How is a prosperous person defined?”
- 1.3 “Mendicant, they’re called prosperous because they’ve developed and cultivated the seven awakening factors. What seven? The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. They’re called prosperous because they’ve developed and cultivated these seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.48

The Sun

Ādiccasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise.
- 1.2 In the same way, for a mendicant good friendship is the forerunner and harbinger of the arising of the seven awakening factors. A mendicant with good friends can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.
- 1.4 And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles,

energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.”

SN 46.49

Interior

Ajjhattikaṅgasutta

“Taking into account interior factors, mendicants, I do not see a sin- 1.1
gle one that gives rise to the seven awakening factors like rational
application of mind. ...”

SN 46.50

Exterior

Bāhiraṅgasutta

“Taking into account exterior factors, mendicants, I do not see a 1.1
single one that gives rise to the seven awakening factors like good
friendship. ...”

The Chapter on Discussion

SN 46.51

Nourishing

Āhārasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, I will teach you what fuels and what starves the five hindrances and the seven awakening factors.¹³² Listen . . .
- 1.4 And what fuels the arising of sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow? There is the feature of beauty. Frequent irrational application of mind to that fuels the arising of sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow.
- 2.1 And what fuels the arising of ill will, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow? There is the feature of aversion. Frequent irrational application of mind to that fuels the arising of ill will, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow.
- 3.1 And what fuels the arising of dullness and drowsiness, or, when they have arisen, makes them increase and grow? There is discontent, sloth, yawning, sleepiness after eating, and mental sluggishness. Frequent irrational application of mind to that fuels the arising of dullness and drowsiness, or, when they have arisen, makes them increase and grow.

132. The commentaries supply an extensive range of other factors that serve these roles; Bodhi summarizes them in his notes on this discourse.

And what fuels the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when they have arisen, makes them increase and grow? There is the unsettled mind. Frequent irrational application of mind to that fuels the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when they have arisen, makes them increase and grow. 4.1

And what fuels the arising of doubt, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow? There are things that are grounds for doubt. Frequent irrational application of mind to them fuels the arising of doubt, or, when it has arisen, makes it increase and grow. 5.1

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of mindfulness, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of mindfulness. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of mindfulness, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it. 6.1

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of investigation of principles, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are qualities that are skillful and unskillful, blameworthy and blameless, inferior and superior, and those with a portion of dark or bright. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of investigation of principles, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it. 7.1

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of energy, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are the elements of initiative, persistence, and exertion. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of energy, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it. 8.1

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of rapture, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of rapture. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of rapture, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it. 9.1

And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There is tranquility of the body and of the mind. Frequent rational application of mind to that 10.1

fuels the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

11.1 And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are the basis of serenity and freedom from distraction. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.

12.1 And what fuels the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of equanimity. Frequent rational application of mind to them fuels the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, or, when it has arisen, fully develops it.¹³³

13.1 And what starves the arising of sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, starves its increase and growth? There is the feature of ugliness. Frequent rational application of mind to that starves the arising of sensual desire, or, when it has arisen, starves its increase and growth.

14.1 And what starves the arising of ill will, or, when it has arisen, starves its increase and growth? There is the heart's release by love. Frequent rational application of mind to that starves the arising of ill will, or, when it has arisen, starves its increase and growth.

15.1 And what starves the arising of dullness and drowsiness, or, when they have arisen, starves their increase and growth? There are the elements of initiative, persistence, and exertion. Frequent rational application of mind to them starves the arising of dullness and drowsiness, or, when they have arisen, starves their increase and growth.

16.1 And what starves the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when they have arisen, starves their increase and growth? There is the settled mind. Frequent rational application of mind to that starves the arising of restlessness and remorse, or, when they have arisen, starves their increase and growth.

133. Up until this point, the discourse is identical with SN 46.2.

And what starves the arising of doubt, or, when it has arisen, 17.1
starves its increase and growth? There are qualities that are skillful
and unskillful, blameworthy and blameless, inferior and superior,
and those with a portion of dark or bright. Frequent rational appli-
cation of mind to them starves the arising of doubt, or, when it has
arisen, starves its increase and growth.

And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of mindful- 18.1
ness, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There are
things that are grounds for the awakening factor of mindfulness.
Not frequently applying the mind to that starves the arising of the
awakening factor of mindfulness, or, when it has arisen, starves its
full development.

And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of in- 19.1
vestigation of principles, or, when it has arisen, starves its full devel-
opment? There are qualities that are skillful and unskillful, blame-
worthy and blameless, inferior and superior, and those with a portion
of dark or bright. Not frequently applying the mind to that starves
the arising of the awakening factor of investigation of principles, or,
when it has arisen, starves its full development.

And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of energy, 20.1
or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There are the
elements of initiative, persistence, and exertion. Not frequently
applying the mind to that starves the arising of the awakening factor
of energy, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development.

And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of rapture, 21.1
or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There are things
that are grounds for the awakening factor of rapture. Not frequently
applying the mind to that starves the arising of the awakening factor
of rapture, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development.

And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, 22.1
or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There is tranquil-
ity of the body and of the mind. Not frequently applying the mind
to that starves the arising of the awakening factor of tranquility, or,
when it has arisen, starves its full development.

- 23.1 And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There are things that are the basis of serenity and freedom from distraction. Not frequently applying the mind to that starves the arising of the awakening factor of immersion, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development.
- 24.1 And what starves the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development? There are things that are grounds for the awakening factor of equanimity. Not frequently applying the mind to that starves the arising of the awakening factor of equanimity, or, when it has arisen, starves its full development.”

SN 46.52

Is There a Way?

Pariyāyasutta

- 1.1 Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. Then it occurred to him, “It’s too early to wander for alms in Sāvattḥī. Why don’t we visit the monastery for the wanderers of other religions?”
- 2.1 Then they went to the monastery for the wanderers of other religions and exchanged greetings with the wanderers there. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. The wanderers said to them:
- 3.1 “Reverends, the ascetic Gotama teaches his disciples like this: ‘Mendicants, please give up the five hindrances—corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom—and truly develop the seven awakening factors.’ We too teach our disciples: ‘Reverends, please give up the five hindrances—corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom—

and truly develop the seven awakening factors.’¹³⁴ What, then, is the difference between the ascetic Gotama’s teaching and instruction and ours?”

Those mendicants neither approved nor rejected that statement of the wanderers of other religions. They rose from their seats, thinking: 4.1

“We will learn the meaning of this statement from the Buddha 4.3 himself.” Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

“Mendicants, when wanderers of other religions say this, you 8.1 should say to them: ‘But reverends, is there a way in which the five hindrances become ten and the seven awakening factors become fourteen?’ Questioned like this, the wanderers of other religions would be stumped, and, in addition, would get frustrated.¹³⁵ Why is that? Because they’re out of their element. I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could provide a satisfying answer to these questions except the Realized One or his disciple or someone who has heard it from them.

And what is the way in which the five hindrances become ten? 9.1 Sensual desire for what is internal is a hindrance; and sensual desire for what is external is also a hindrance. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the hindrance of sensual desire’ becomes twofold. Ill will for what is internal is a hindrance; and ill will for what is external is also a hindrance. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the hindrance of ill will’ becomes twofold. Dullness is a hindrance; and drowsiness is also a hindrance. That’s how what is concisely referred

134. I have not been able to identify either the hindrances or the awakening factors in any pre-Buddhist texts as sets, although several of the items are mentioned.

135. When the Buddha emphasizes his analytical method as a distinguishing point, it is not merely an intellectual exercise. Rather, a comprehensive analysis lays the groundwork for a comprehensive development, not neglecting any aspect. Pre-Buddhist texts such as the Upaniṣads lack such clear analytical treatment, relying on mystery and hidden truths to evoke understanding.

to as ‘the hindrance of dullness and drowsiness’ becomes twofold. Restlessness is a hindrance; and remorse is also a hindrance. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the hindrance of restlessness and remorse’ becomes twofold. Doubt about internal things is a hindrance; and doubt about external things is also a hindrance. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the hindrance of doubt’ becomes twofold. This is the way in which the five hindrances become ten.

10.1 And what is the way in which the seven awakening factors become fourteen? Mindfulness of internal things is the awakening factor of mindfulness; and mindfulness of external things is also the awakening factor of mindfulness. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the awakening factor of mindfulness’ becomes twofold.

11.1 Investigating, exploring, and inquiring into internal things with wisdom is the awakening factor of investigation of principles; and investigating, exploring, and inquiring into external things with wisdom is also the awakening factor of investigation of principles. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the awakening factor of investigation of principles’ becomes twofold.

12.1 Physical energy is the awakening factor of energy; and mental energy is also the awakening factor of energy. That’s how what is concisely referred to as ‘the awakening factor of energy’ becomes twofold.

13.1 Rapture while placing the mind and keeping it connected is the awakening factor of rapture; and rapture without placing the mind and keeping it connected is also the awakening factor of rapture.¹³⁶ In this way what is concisely referred to as ‘the awakening factor of rapture’ becomes twofold.

14.1 Physical tranquility is the awakening factor of tranquility; and mental tranquility is also the awakening factor of tranquility. In this way what is concisely referred to as ‘the awakening factor of tranquility’ becomes twofold.

136. This refers to the first and second absorptions respectively.

Immersion while placing the mind and keeping it connected is 15.1
the awakening factor of immersion; and immersion without plac-
ing the mind and keeping it connected is also the awakening factor
of immersion.¹³⁷ In this way what is concisely referred to as ‘the
awakening factor of immersion’ becomes twofold.

Equanimity for internal things is the awakening factor of equa- 16.1
nimity; and equanimity for external things is also the awakening
factor of equanimity. In this way what is concisely referred to as ‘the
awakening factor of equanimity’ becomes twofold. This is the way
in which the seven awakening factors become fourteen.”

SN 46.53

Fire

Aggisutta

Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their 1.1
bowls and robes, entered Sāvattṭhī for alms.

(The same as the previous discourse.)

“Mendicants, when wanderers of other religions say this, you 2.1
should say to them: ‘Reverends, which awakening factors should
not be developed when the mind is sluggish? And which awakening
factors should be developed at that time?’¹³⁸ Which awakening fac-
tors should not be developed when the mind is restless? And which
awakening factors should be developed at that time?’ Questioned
like this, the wanderers of other religions would be stumped, and, in
addition, would get frustrated. Why is that? Because they’re out of
their element.

I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and di- 3.1
vinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and
humans—who could provide a satisfying answer to these questions

137. This refers to the first absorption and all higher absorptions respectively.

138. Compare the famous simile of tuning a harp (AN 6.55:4.1, Kd 5:1.15.11).

except the Realized One or his disciple or someone who has heard it from them.

4.1 When the mind is sluggish, it's the wrong time to develop the awakening factors of tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Why is that? Because it's hard to stimulate a sluggish mind with these things.

5.1 Suppose someone wanted to make a small fire flare up. If they toss wet grass, cow-dung, and timber on it, spray it with water, and scatter dirt on it, could they make it flare up?"

5.4 "No, sir."

6.1 "In the same way, when the mind is sluggish, it's the wrong time to develop the awakening factors of tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Why is that? Because it's hard to stimulate a sluggish mind with these things.

7.1 When the mind is sluggish, it's the right time to develop the awakening factors of investigation of principles, energy, and rapture. Why is that? Because it's easy to stimulate a sluggish mind with these things.

8.1 Suppose someone wanted to make a small fire flare up. If they toss dry grass, cow-dung, and timber on it, blow on it, and don't scatter dirt on it, could they make it flare up?"

8.4 "Yes, sir."

9.1 "In the same way, when the mind is sluggish, it's the right time to develop the awakening factors of investigation of principles, energy, and rapture. Why is that? Because it's easy to stimulate a sluggish mind with these things.

10.1 When the mind is restless, it's the wrong time to develop the awakening factors of investigation of principles, energy, and rapture. Why is that? Because it's hard to settle a restless mind with these things.

11.1 Suppose someone wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire. If they toss dry grass, cow-dung, and timber on it, blow on it, and don't scatter dirt on it, could they extinguish it?"

11.4 "No, sir."

“In the same way, when the mind is restless, it’s the wrong time to develop the awakening factors of investigation of principles, energy, and rapture. Why is that? Because it’s hard to settle a restless mind with these things. 12.1

When the mind is restless, it’s the right time to develop the awakening factors of tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Why is that? Because it’s easy to settle a restless mind with these things. 13.1

Suppose someone wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire. If they toss wet grass, cow-dung, and timber on it, spray it with water, and scatter dirt on it, could they extinguish it?” 14.1

“Yes, sir.” 14.4

“In the same way, when the mind is restless, it’s the right time to develop the awakening factors of tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. Why is that? Because it’s easy to settle a restless mind with these things. But mindfulness is always useful, I say.”¹³⁹ 15.1

SN 46.54

Full of Love

Mettāsahagatasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Koliyans, where they have a town named Haliddavasana.¹⁴⁰ Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Haliddavasana for alms. Then it occurred to them, “It’s too early to wander for alms in Haliddavasana. Why don’t we visit the monastery for the wanderers of other religions?” 1.1

Then they went to the monastery for the wanderers of other religions and exchanged greetings with the wanderers there. When 2.1

139. It is through mindfulness that one recognizes the imbalances.

140. The Koliyans were south-eastern neighbors of the Sakyans, with whom they had close ties in marriage and customs. | Haliddavasana (“yellow-clothes”) is also the scene of MN 57, which also discusses similarities and differences between Buddhism and wanderers when it comes to practice.

the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. The wanderers said to them:

- 3.1 “Reverends, the ascetic Gotama teaches his disciples like this: ‘Come, mendicants, give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom, and meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. Meditate spreading a heart full of compassion to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, spread a heart full of compassion to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. Meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, spread a heart full of rejoicing to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. Meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.’

- 4.1 We too teach our disciples in just the same way.¹⁴¹ What, then, is the difference between the ascetic Gotama’s teaching and instruction and ours?”

- 5.1 Those mendicants neither approved nor rejected that statement of the wanderers of other religions. They rose from their seats, thinking:

- 5.3 “We will learn the meaning of this statement from the Buddha himself.” Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround,

141. The divine meditations have not been traced as a group in pre-Buddhist texts. However, they are shared with later non-Buddhist texts such as *Yogasūtra* 1.33 and the Jain *Tattvārthasūtra* 7.11. See too the description in *Ācārāṅgāsūtra* 1.8.4.14 of Mahāvīra meditating “above, below, around”, a phrase associated with non-violence to all creatures.

they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

“Mendicants, when wanderers of other religions say this, you 11.1 should say to them: ‘But reverends, how is the heart’s release by love developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and culmination? How is the heart’s release by compassion developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and end? How is the heart’s release by rejoicing developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and end? How is the heart’s release by equanimity developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and end?’ Questioned like this, the wanderers of other religions would be stumped, and, in addition, would get frustrated. Why is that? Because they’re out of their element. I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could provide a satisfying answer to these questions except the Realized One or his disciple or someone who has heard it from them.

And how is the heart’s release by love developed? What is its 12.1 destination, apex, fruit, and end? It’s when a mendicant develops the heart’s release by love together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,’ that’s what they do. The apex of

the heart's release by love is the beautiful, I say, for a wise mendicant here who has not penetrated to a higher freedom.¹⁴²

- 13.1 And how is the heart's release by compassion developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and end? It's when a mendicant develops the heart's release by compassion together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. ...¹⁴³ If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. Or else, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. The apex of the heart's release by compassion is the dimension of infinite space, I say, for a wise mendicant here who has not penetrated to a higher freedom.

- 14.1 And how is the heart's release by rejoicing developed? What is its destination, apex, fruit, and end? It's when a mendicant develops the heart's release by rejoicing together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. ... If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware,

142. Regarding the "apexes" of the divine meditations in this discourse, Bodhi (*Connected Discourses*) says they are "puzzling"; his note to this passage gives the commentarial explanation, which he describes as "laboured". It seems this question was discussed in other traditions too, for Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra 33 says that the highest potential of the release by love is rebirth as one of the gods of universal beauty (*subhakiṇha*), who are reborn in that realm due to the practice of the third absorption.

143. Also at DN 28:18.9, MN 152:11–15.3, AN 5.144:2.2, SN 52.1:4.2, SN 54.8:7.1.

shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. Or else, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. The apex of the heart's release by rejoicing is the dimension of infinite consciousness, I say, for a wise mendicant here who has not penetrated to a higher freedom.

And how is the heart's release by equanimity developed? What 15.1 is its destination, apex, fruit, and end? It's when a mendicant develops the heart's release by equanimity together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. Or else, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. The apex of the heart's release by equanimity is the dimension of nothingness, I say, for a wise mendicant here who has not penetrated to a higher freedom."

SN 46.55

With Saṅgārava

Saṅgāravasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

- 1.2 Then Saṅgārava the brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.¹⁴⁴ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:
- 2.1 “What is the cause, Worthy Gotama, what is the reason why sometimes even hymns that are long-rehearsed don’t spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed?¹⁴⁵ And why is it that sometimes even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed?”¹⁴⁶
- 3.1 “Brahmin, there’s a time when your heart is overcome and mired in sensual desire and you don’t truly understand the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. At that time you don’t truly know or see what is good for yourself, good for another, or good for both. Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don’t spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed.
- 4.1 Suppose there was a bowl of water that was mixed with dye such as red lac, turmeric, indigo, or rose madder. Even a person with clear eyes checking their own reflection wouldn’t truly know it or see it.
- 4.3 In the same way, when your heart is overcome and mired in sensual desire ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don’t spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed.
- 5.1 Furthermore, when your heart is overcome and mired in ill will ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don’t spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed.

144. For Saṅgārava, see note on SN 7.21:1.2. | This discourse, without the final section on the awakening-factors, is also at AN 5.193.

145. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.7 describes an experiment in fasting. After not eating for fifteen days, the mantras are forgotten.

146. Saṅgārava seems to be a corrupted form of Sanskrit Śāṅgarava. A sage of that name features in the Mahābhārata and Kalidasa’s Śakuntalā as a student of the Vedic sage Kaṇva. Further, the Rig Veda Anukramaṇī identifies four “Śāṅgas” as the author of Rig Veda 10.142, an identification based on the four birds of that name in Mahābhārata 1.220–25. While we cannot identify this brahmin with any confidence, we can say it was a name current among Vedic sages. The root meaning of *śāṅga* is “horn”, from where it is applied to birds as possessing a horn, i.e. a beak. Since *rava* is an animal’s cry, this suggests the meaning “bird-cry”, an apt name for a poet.

Suppose there was a bowl of water that was heated by fire, boiling and bubbling. Even a person with clear eyes checking their own reflection wouldn't truly know it or see it. 6.1

In the same way, when your heart is overcome and mired in ill will ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 6.3

Furthermore, when your heart is overcome and mired in dullness and drowsiness ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 7.1

Suppose there was a bowl of water enveloped with moss and aquatic plants. Even a person with clear eyes checking their own reflection wouldn't truly know it or see it. 8.1

In the same way, when your heart is overcome and mired in dullness and drowsiness ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 8.3

Furthermore, when your heart is overcome and mired in restlessness and remorse ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 9.1

Suppose there was a bowl of water stirred by the wind, churning, swirling, and rippling. Even a person with clear eyes checking their own reflection wouldn't truly know it or see it. 10.1

In the same way, when your heart is overcome and mired in restlessness and remorse ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 10.3

Furthermore, when your heart is overcome and mired in doubt ... Even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. 11.1

Suppose there was a bowl of water that was cloudy, murky, and muddy, hidden in the darkness. Even a person with clear eyes checking their own reflection wouldn't truly know it or see it. 12.1

In the same way, there's a time when your heart is overcome and mired in doubt and you don't truly understand the escape from doubt that has arisen. At that time you don't truly know or see what is good for yourself, good for another, or good for both. Even hymns 12.3

that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed. This is the cause, brahmin, this is the reason why sometimes even hymns that are long-rehearsed don't spring to mind, let alone those that are not rehearsed.

13.1 There's a time when your heart is not overcome and mired in sensual desire and you truly understand the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. At that time you truly know and see what is good for yourself, good for another, and good for both. Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

14.1 Suppose there was a bowl of water that was not mixed with dye such as red lac, turmeric, indigo, or rose madder. A person with clear eyes checking their own reflection would truly know it and see it.

14.3 In the same way, when your heart is not overcome and mired in sensual desire ... Even hymns that are long-unpracticed spring to mind, let alone those that are practiced.

15.1 Furthermore, when your heart is not overcome and mired in ill will ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

16.1 Suppose there is a bowl of water that is not heated by a fire, boiling and bubbling. A person with clear eyes checking their own reflection would truly know it and see it.

16.3 In the same way, when your heart is not overcome and mired in ill will ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

17.1 Furthermore, when your heart is not overcome and mired in dullness and drowsiness ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

18.1 Suppose there is a bowl of water that is not enveloped with moss and aquatic plants. A person with clear eyes checking their own reflection would truly know it and see it.

18.3 In the same way, when your heart is not overcome and mired in dullness and drowsiness ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

Furthermore, when your heart is not overcome and mired in 19.1
restlessness and remorse ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed
spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

Suppose there is a bowl of water that is not stirred by the wind, 20.1
churning, swirling, and rippling. A person with clear eyes checking
their own reflection would truly know it and see it.

In the same way, when your heart is not overcome and mired in 20.3
restlessness and remorse ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed
spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.

Furthermore, when your heart is not overcome and mired in 21.1
doubt ... Even hymns that are long-unrehearsed spring to mind,
let alone those that are rehearsed.

Suppose there was a bowl of water that was transparent, clear, and 22.1
unclouded, brought into the light. A person with clear eyes checking
their own reflection would truly know it and see it.

In the same way, there's a time when your heart is not overcome 22.3
and mired in doubt and you truly understand the escape from doubt
that has arisen. At that time you truly know and see what is good for
yourself, good for another, and good for both. Even hymns that are
long-unrehearsed spring to mind, let alone those that are rehearsed.
This is the cause, brahmin, this is the reason why sometimes even
hymns that are long-unrehearsed do spring to mind, let alone those
that are rehearsed.

These seven awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or 23.1
corruptions of the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead
to the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom. What seven?
The awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles,
energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. These seven
awakening factors are not obstacles, hindrances, or corruptions of
the mind. When developed and cultivated they lead to the realization
of the fruit of knowledge and freedom."

When he said this, Saṅgāraṇa said to the Buddha, "Excellent, 24.1
worthy Gotama! ... From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama
remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

SN 46.56

With Prince Abhaya

Abhayasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. Then Prince Abhaya went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:¹⁴⁷
- 1.4 “Sir, Pūraṇa Kassapa says this: ‘There is no cause or reason for not knowing and not seeing.’¹⁴⁸ Not knowing and not seeing have no cause or reason. There is no cause or reason for knowing and seeing. Knowing and seeing have no cause or reason.’ What does the Buddha say about this?”
- 1.10 “Prince, there are causes and reasons for not knowing and not seeing. Not knowing and not seeing have causes and reasons. There are causes and reasons for knowing and seeing. Knowing and seeing have causes and reasons.”

147. Prince Abhaya (“fearless”) raised Jīvaka after discovering him abandoned Kd 8:1.4.5. In this sutta he asks the Buddha about Pūraṇa Kassapa, whereas in MN 58 he appears as an acolyte of Mahāvīra. Apart from these details he is unknown in the early texts. Commentaries say he was the son of King Bimbisāra by one of his queens, Padumavatī of Ujjeni, making him half-brother to Ajātasattu. They also say that following Bimbisāra’s death, Abhaya went forth and spoke the verse at Thag 1.26. | Not to be confused with Abhaya the Licchavi of AN 3.74 and AN 4.196; nor with the author of Thag 1.98; nor is Thig 2.8 addressed to his mother, but that of the nun Abhayā (Thig 2.9).

148. In DN 2, Pūraṇa Kassapa posits the view that there are no results of deeds. There, Makkhali argues that there is no cause for the purification of beings, but the same view is attributed to Pūraṇa as well (SN 22.60:2.1). The exact view stated here does not appear elsewhere in the Pali canon, but does not contradict Pūraṇa’s other views. If action has no consequence, then there is nothing we can do to gain wisdom. This view also explains why his own students did not respect his understanding (MN 77:6.22). Nonetheless, he claimed to be omniscient (AN 9.38:2.1). His doctrine of “six classes” (AN 6.57) is shared with Makkhali (DN 2:20.6). This suggests that, like Makkhali, he believed in a predestined course of rebirths, culminating in the highest rebirth as an omniscient one, per the “rolling out of a ball of string” (DN 2:20.10).

“But sir, what is the cause and reason for not knowing and not seeing? How do not knowing and not seeing have causes and reasons?” 2.1

“There’s a time when the heart is overcome and mired in sensual desire, without truly knowing and seeing the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. This is a cause and reason for not knowing and not seeing. And this is how not knowing and not seeing have causes and reasons. 2.3

Furthermore, there’s a time when the heart is overcome and mired in ill will ... dullness and drowsiness ... restlessness and remorse ... doubt, without truly knowing and seeing the escape from doubt that has arisen. This is a cause and reason for not knowing and not seeing. And this is how not knowing and not seeing have causes and reasons.” 3.1

“Sir, what is the name of this exposition of the teaching?” 4.1

“These are called the ‘hindrances’, prince.” 4.2

“Indeed, Blessed One, these are hindrances! Indeed, Holy One, these are hindrances! Overcome by even a single hindrance you wouldn’t truly know or see, let alone all five hindrances. 4.3

But sir, what is the cause and reason for knowing and seeing? How do knowing and seeing have causes and reasons?” 5.1

“It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factor of mindfulness, which relies on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripens as letting go. They truly know and see with a mind that has developed the awakening factor of mindfulness. This is a cause and reason for knowing and seeing. And this is how knowing and seeing have causes and reasons. 5.3

Furthermore, a mendicant develops the awakening factor of investigation of principles ... energy ... rapture ... tranquility ... immersion ... equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. They truly know and see with a mind that has developed the awakening factor of equanimity. This is a cause and reason for knowing and seeing. And this is how knowing and seeing have causes and reasons.” 6.1

“Sir, what is the name of this exposition of the teaching?” 7.1

7.2 “These are called the ‘awakening factors’, prince.”

7.3 “Indeed, Blessed One, these are awakening factors! Indeed, Holy One, these are awakening factors! Endowed with even a single awakening factor you would truly know and see, let alone all seven awakening factors. When climbing Mount Vulture’s Peak I became fatigued in body and mind. But this has now faded away. And I’ve comprehended the teaching.”¹⁴⁹

149. With this he declares stream-entry.

The Chapter on Breathing

SN 46.57

A Skeleton

Aṭṭhikamahapphalasutta

At Sāvattḥi.

1.1

“Mendicants, when the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial.¹⁵⁰ How so? It’s when a mendicant develops the perception of a skeleton together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how the perception of a skeleton, when developed and cultivated, is very fruitful and beneficial.” 1.2

“When the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated you can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life, or if there’s residue left behind, non-return. How so? ...” 2.1

“Mendicants, when the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated it leads to great benefit. How so? ...” 3.1

“Mendicants, when the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated it leads to great sanctuary from the yoke. How so? ...” 4.1

150. The meditation on the skeleton, and the corpse meditations to follow, are detailed in MN 10:14.1. They work by freeing the mind from attachment to the body.

- 5.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated it leads to great inspiration. How so? ...”
- 6.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of a skeleton is developed and cultivated it leads to dwelling in great ease. How so? ...”

SN 46.58

Worm-Infested

Pulavakasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of a worm-infested corpse is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.59

Livid

Vinilakasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of a livid corpse is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.60

Split Open

Vicchiddakasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of a split open corpse is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

BLOATED

SN 46.61

Bloated

Uddhumātakasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of a bloated corpse is developed 1.1
and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.62

Love

Mettāsutta

“Mendicants, when love is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful 1.1
and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.63

Compassion

Karuṇāsutta

“Mendicants, when compassion is developed and cultivated it’s very 1.1
fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.64

Rejoicing

Muditāsutta

“Mendicants, when rejoicing is developed and cultivated it’s very 1.1
fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.65

Equanimity

Upekkhāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when equanimity is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.66

Breathing

Ānāpānasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”¹⁵¹

151. This meditation, along with most of those in the next chapter, is expanded in the *Girimānandasutta* (AN 10.60).

The Chapter on Cessation

SN 46.67

Ugliness

Asubhasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of ugliness is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”¹⁵²

SN 46.68

Death

Maraṇasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of death is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”¹⁵³

SN 46.69

Repulsiveness of Food

Āhārepaṭikūlasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of repulsiveness of food is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

152. This is the meditation on the parts of the body.

153. The fruit is freedom from the desire to be reborn (AN 7.49:4.2).

SN 46.70

Dissatisfaction

Anabhiratisutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of dissatisfaction with the whole world is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”¹⁵⁴

SN 46.71

Impermanence

Aniccasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.72

Suffering in Impermanence

Dukkhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of suffering in impermanence is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.73

Not-Self in Suffering

Anattasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the perception of not-self in suffering is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

154. Defined at AN 10.60:11.1 as non-attachment.

SN 46.74

Giving Up

Pahānasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of giving up is developed and 1.1
cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.75

Dispassion

Virāgasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of dispassion is developed and 1.1
cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. ...”

SN 46.76

Cessation

Nirodhasutta

“Mendicants, when the perception of cessation is developed and culti- 1.1
vated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. How so? It’s when a mendicant
develops the perception of cessation together with the awakening
factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture,
tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading
away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how, when the
perception of cessation is developed and cultivated, it’s very fruitful
and beneficial.

When the perception of cessation is developed and cultivated 2.1
you can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life,
or if there’s residue left behind, non-return. How so? It’s when
a mendicant develops the perception of cessation together with
the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles,
energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely

on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. When the perception of cessation is developed and cultivated in this way you can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life, or if there's residue left behind, non-return."

- 3.1 "The perception of cessation, when developed and cultivated, leads to great benefit ... great sanctuary from the yoke ... great inspiration ... great ease. How so? It's when a mendicant develops the perception of cessation together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That's how the perception of cessation, when developed and cultivated, leads to great benefit ... great sanctuary from the yoke ... great inspiration ... great ease."

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 46.77–88

The Ganges River, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the seven
awakening factors slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the seven awakening 1.3
factors slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a men-
dicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation
of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanim-
ity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as
letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the
seven awakening factors slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguish-
ment.”

(Tell in full for each of the different rivers as in SN 45.91–102.)

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 46.89–98

A Realized One, Etc.

Appamādavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148.)

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 46.99–110

Hard Work, Etc.

Balakaraṇīyavagga

“Mendicants, all the hard work that gets done depends on the earth 1.1
and is grounded on the earth. ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160.)

The Chapter on Searches

SN 46.111–120

Searches, Etc.

Esanāvagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170.)

The Chapter on Floods

SN 46.121–129

Floods

Oghādisutta

“Mendicants, there are these four floods. What four? The floods of sensuality, desire to be reborn, views, and ignorance.” 1.1

(Tell in full as in SN 45.171–179.)

SN 46.130

Higher Fetters

Uddhambhāgiyasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters. The seven awakening factors should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.” 1.2

What seven? It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. ...” 1.7

- 1.10 “... which have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination ...”
- 1.11 “... which slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment ...
- 1.12 The seven awakening factors should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”

Another Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 46.131–142

More on the Ganges River, Etc.

Punagaṅgāpeyyālavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.103–114, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Diligence

SN 46.143–152

Another Series on a Realized One, Etc.

Punaappamādavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Hard Work

SN 46.153–164

Hard Work, Etc.

Punabalakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Searches

SN 46.165–174

Another Series on Searches, Etc.

Punaesanāvagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170.)

Another Chapter on Floods

SN 46.175–184

Another Series on Floods, Etc.

Punaoghavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.171–180.)

(Tell in full as in the chapter on removal of greed, hate, and delusion.)

(The Linked Discourses on Awakening Factors should be told in full just as the Linked Discourses on the Path.)

The Linked Discourses on the Awakening Factors, the second section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON
MINDFULNESS
MEDITATION

The Chapter on Ambapālī the Courtesan

SN 47.1

In Ambapālī's Mango Grove

Ambapālisutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.¹⁵⁵ At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Vesālī in Ambapālī's Mango Grove.¹⁵⁶ There the Buddha addressed
the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

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

"Mendicants, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the 2.1
path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to
get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to
discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.¹⁵⁷ What four?

155. The Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta lacks a detailed set of meditation practices such as those found in the great meditation compilations the Satipaṭṭhānasutta (MN 10, DN 22) and the Kāyagatāsatisutta (MN 119). It offers instead a range of contexts and illustrations broadening our understanding of mindfulness.

156. Ambapālī was a courtesan who offered this land to the Saṅgha. She later went forth as a *bhikkhunī*; her verses are at Thig 13.1. This seems to be presented as an excerpt from the Mahāparinibbānasutta narrative when the Buddha was staying at her place, but, unlike the next Sutta, it is not, in fact, found there.

157. See SN 47.18 for notes on *ekāyana*. | A *ñāya* is a "system", method, or way of practice that proceeds in line with cause and effect. It refers to the pattern of the Buddha's teaching, especially dependent origination (SN 12.41:12.1, AN 10.92:6.1; see too AN 4.35:3.5).

- 2.3 It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.¹⁵⁸
- 2.4 They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.¹⁵⁹
- 2.5 They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.¹⁶⁰
- 2.6 They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.¹⁶¹
- 2.7 The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.”
- 3.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

158. The idiom *kāye kāyānupassī*, literally “one who observes a body in the body” refers to focusing on a specific aspect of embodied experience, such as the breath, the postures, etc. | “Keen” (or “ardent”, *ātāpi*) implies effort, while “aware” (*sampajāno*) is the wisdom of understanding situation and context. | “Covetousness and displeasure” (*abhijjhādomanassam*) are the strong forms of desire and aversion that are overcome by sense restraint in preparation for meditation.

159. “Feelings” (*vedanā*) are the basic tones of pleasant, painful, or neutral, not the complexes we call “emotions”.

160. “Mind” (*citta*) is simple awareness. In meditation contexts, “mind” is often similar in meaning to *samādhi*.

161. “Principles” (*dhammā*) are the natural “systems” of cause and effect that underlie the “teachings”. The renderings “mind objects” or “mental qualities” are incorrect, as many of the things spoken of in this section are neither mind objects nor mental qualities. “Phenomena” is a possible translation, but the emphasis is not on the “appearance” of things, but on the “principles” governing their conditional relations.

SN 47.2

Mindful

Satisutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī in Ambapālī's Mango Grove.¹⁶² There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.1

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

“Mendicants, a mendicant should live mindful and aware.¹⁶³ This is my instruction to you. 2.1

And how is a mendicant mindful? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That's how a mendicant is mindful. 2.3

And how is a mendicant aware? It's when a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.¹⁶⁴ That's how 3.1

162. This is an excerpt from the narrative at DN 16:2.11.5; see too SN 36.7.

163. *Sampajāna* (“aware”, rendered in its noun form as “situational awareness”) is linguistically similar to *paññā* (“wisdom”). However it is used in context as a pragmatic understanding, not liberating insight (see also DN 9:17.9, MN 122:9.5).

164. “Situational awareness” (*sampajañña*) understands the context and purpose of activities. The main examples here illustrate the activities of daily monastic life: leaving the monastery on almsround, restraint while in the town, care wearing the robes, then mindfully eating and going to the toilet. Situational awareness is, alternatively, described as the meditative practice of being aware of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (SN 47.35). | This passage was included in the Satipaṭṭhānasutta at MN 10:8.1.

a mendicant acts with situational awareness.¹⁶⁵ A mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.”

SN 47.3

A Monk

Bhikkhusutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattṥi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.2 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.”
- 1.4 “This is exactly how some futile people ask me for something. But when the teaching has been explained they think only of following me around.”¹⁶⁶
- 1.5 “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief! May the Holy One teach me the Dhamma in brief! Hopefully I can understand the meaning of what the Buddha says! Hopefully I can be an heir of the Buddha’s teaching!”
- 1.6 “Well then, mendicant, you should purify the starting point of skillful qualities. What is the starting point of skillful qualities? Well purified ethics and correct view.¹⁶⁷ When your ethics are well purified and your view is correct, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation in three ways, depending on and grounded on ethics.
- 2.1 What four?

165. Rather unusually, in this trope there is a different phrasing for the opening, where they are “aware” (*sampajāno*) and closing, where they are an “aware-actor” (*sampajānakārī*).

166. *Evameva pan’* is an adversarial idiom, expressing skepticism or challenge.

167. As was the case with the awakening factors (SN 46.1:1.4), the text takes pains to show that, while mindfulness meditation as such does not include all the path factors, they are nonetheless essential.

Meditate observing an aspect of the body internally—keen, aware, 2.2
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.¹⁶⁸ Or
meditate observing an aspect of the body externally—keen, aware,
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Or
meditate observing an aspect of the body internally and externally—
keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for
the world.

Or meditate observing an aspect of feelings internally ... ex- 2.5
ternally ... internally and externally—keen, aware, and mindful,
rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

Or meditate observing an aspect of the mind internally ... ex- 2.8
ternally ... internally and externally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid
of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

Or meditate observing an aspect of principles internally ... ex- 2.11
ternally ... internally and externally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid
of covetousness and displeasure for the world. When you develop
the four kinds of mindfulness meditation in these three ways, de-
pending on and grounded on ethics, you can expect growth, not
decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.”

And then that mendicant approved and agreed with what the 3.1
Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled
the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Then that mendicant, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, 3.2
and resolute, 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
homelessness.

168. “Internally” is one’s own body, “externally” the bodies of others, or external physical phenomena. This distinction is applied broadly in Buddhist meditation, but it is more relevant in some contexts than others. In the case of the breath, one is focusing on one’s own breath, but when contemplating, say, a dead body, or the material elements, there is more of an external dimension. Starting with “me” in here and the “world” out there, this practice dissolves this distinction so that we see we are of the same nature as everything else. | This passage was added to the Satipaṭṭhānasutta at MN 10:5.1.

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

SN 47.4

At Sālā

Sālasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans near the brahmin village of Sālā.¹⁶⁹ There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:
- 2.1 “Mendicants, those mendicants who are junior—recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training—should be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.¹⁷⁰ What four? Please, reverends, meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to truly know the body. Meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to truly know feelings. Meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to truly know the mind. Meditate observing an

169. This village is possibly connected to the Śālagrāma famed in later years as the origin of the ammonite stones found on the Gaṇḍaki river and worshiped as aniconic forms of Vishnu. Against this theory is that Śālagrāma is too far to the north-east, although in truth we do not know the exact extent of Kosala. The feminine ending of the Pali form suggests that the name means “hall”, but Sanskrit sources trace Śālagrāma to the sal trees that grow abundantly in the Himalayan foothills. | The same framing narrative recurs at MN 60, where the topic of rebirth is also discussed.

170. Traditionally, new monastics are taught the meditation on parts of the body (MN 10:10.1, Kp 3:1.1). See too AN 5.114.

aspect of principles—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to truly know principles.

Those mendicants who are trainees—who haven’t achieved their heart’s desire, but live aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from the yoke—also meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to fully understand the body.¹⁷¹ They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to fully understand feelings. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to fully understand the mind. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, so as to fully understand principles. 3.1

Those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—also meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, detached from the body.¹⁷² They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, detached from feelings. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, detached from the mind. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, at one, with minds that are clear, immersed and unified in samādhi, detached from principles. 4.1

Those mendicants who are junior—recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training—should be encouraged, sup- 5.1

171. Through the practice of mindfulness meditation they have attained *jhāna* and now seek to deepen understanding.

172. The arahants continue to meditate, not in order to achieve anything, but simply because it is a pure and blissful abiding.

ported, and established by you in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 47.5

A Heap of the Unskillful

Akusalarāsisutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 There the Buddha said:

1.3 “Rightly speaking, mendicants, you’d call the five hindrances a ‘heap of the unskillful’.¹⁷³ For these five hindrances are entirely a heap of the unskillful. What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. Rightly speaking, you’d call these five hindrances a ‘heap of the unskillful’. For these five hindrances are entirely a heap of the unskillful.

2.1 Rightly speaking, you’d call these four kinds of mindfulness meditation a ‘heap of the skillful’.¹⁷⁴ For these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are entirely a heap of the skillful. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... They meditate observing an aspect of the mind ... They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Rightly speaking, you’d call these four kinds of mindfulness meditation a ‘heap of the skillful’. For these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are entirely a heap of the skillful.”

173. Also at AN 5.52.

174. Also at SN 47.45.

SN 47.6

A Hawk

Sakuṇagghisutta

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a hawk suddenly swooped down 1.1
and grabbed a quail.¹⁷⁵ And as the quail was being carried off he
wailed,¹⁷⁶ ‘I’m so unlucky, of so little merit, to have roamed out of
my territory into the domain of others. If today I’d roamed within
my own territory, the domain of my fathers, this hawk wouldn’t have
stood a chance against me in a fight.’¹⁷⁷

‘So, quail, what is your own territory, the domain of your fathers?’ 1.5

‘It’s a ploughed field covered with clods of earth.’ 1.6

Confident in her own strength, the hawk was not daunted or 1.7
intimidated. She released the quail, saying, ‘Go now, quail. But even
there you won’t escape me!’

Then the quail went to a ploughed field covered with clods of 2.1
earth. He climbed up a big clod, and standing there, he said to the
hawk: ‘Come get me, hawk! Come get me, hawk!’

Confident in her own strength, the hawk was not daunted or 2.3
intimidated. She folded her wings and suddenly swooped down on

175. This parable is expanded at Ja 168. See Bodhi’s notes in *Connected Discourses* for grammatical notes. | Hesiod’s *Works and Days* vv. 202–12, a Greek text of around 700 BCE, includes a short parable similar to the first part of the Sutta. There, when the little bird protests, the hawk insists that the powerful will always vanquish the weak. Hesiod uses this to illustrate how far humanity has fallen into violence, saying, “But you, Perses, listen to right and do not foster violence; for violence is bad for a poor man. Even the prosperous cannot easily bear its burden, but is weighed down under it when he has fallen into delusion. The better path is to go by on the other side toward justice; for Justice beats Outrage when she comes at length to the end of the race” (Evelyn-White translation). Perhaps he would have enjoyed the Buddhist version, which shows, rather, that the wise triumph over the strong.

176. The quail (*sakuṇa*) is masculine in Pali, the hawk (*sakuṇagghī*) feminine.

177. The construction here is unusual; I adopt Bodhi’s idiomatic rendering. More literally, the hawk “wouldn’t have been able to do this to me, that is, in battle”. The sense is clear from below.

the quail. When the quail knew that the hawk was nearly there, he slipped under that clod. But the hawk crashed chest-first right there.

2.6 That's what happens when you roam out of your territory into the domain of others.

3.1 So, mendicants, don't roam out of your own territory into the domain of others. If you roam out of your own territory into the domain of others, Māra will find a vulnerability and get an opportunity.

3.3 And what is not a mendicant's own territory but the domain of others? It's the five kinds of sensual stimulation.¹⁷⁸ What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the tongue ... Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. This is not a mendicant's own territory but the domain of others.

4.1 You should roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers. If you roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers, Māra won't find a vulnerability or get an opportunity.

4.3 And what is a mendicant's own territory, the domain of the fathers? It's the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is a mendicant's own territory, the domain of the fathers.”

178. In the gradual training, sense restraint is a precondition for mindfulness meditation.

SN 47.7

A Monkey

Makkaṭasutta

“Mendicants, in the Himalayas there are regions that are rugged and 1.1
impassable. In some such regions, neither monkeys nor humans
can go,¹⁷⁹ while in others, monkeys can go but not humans. There
are also level, pleasant places where both monkeys and humans can
go. There hunters set snares of tar on the monkey trails to catch the
monkeys.¹⁸⁰

The monkeys who are not foolhardy and reckless see the tar and 2.1
avoid it from afar. But a foolish and reckless monkey goes up to
the tar and grabs it with a hand. He gets stuck there. Thinking to
free his hand, he grabs it with his other hand. He gets stuck there.
Thinking to free both hands, he grabs it with a foot. He gets stuck
there. Thinking to free both hands and foot, he grabs it with his other
foot. He gets stuck there. Thinking to free both hands and feet, he
grabs it with his snout. He gets stuck there.

And so the monkey, trapped at five points, just lies there screech- 2.12
ing. He’d meet with tragedy and disaster, and the hunter can do what

179. This parable tells of a foolish monkey who gets stuck in a tar trap, reminiscent of “The Tarbaby and the Rabbit” story type. This has many instances worldwide. “Br’er Rabbit and the Tarbaby” was collected from stories told among black slaves in the US, and originates from Africa. Ja 55 tells of a warrior whose five weapons serve only to stick him to the coat of a *yakkha*. The Phillipine folk-tale Masoy and the Ape tells of an ape getting stuck in tar in the shape of a man. The current case is a little different, as there is no doll or mannikin.

180. The tar (*lepa*) was made from the sap of the banyan tree. | For *oḍḍenti* (“set snare”) see SN 1.67:1.1, SN 3.6:3.4, Ja 484:3.1. | I feel the text is deficient here: we do not know on what the tar was smeared, nor why the monkey would grab it. When, later, we are told it is a banana tree (though the reading is uncertain), these questions are answered. There, the pronoun *tasmīṇyeva* (“on that very”) implies that the banana tree had been mentioned before. I suspect it was mentioned here but has been lost.

he wants with him.¹⁸¹ The hunter spears him on that very banana tree, pries him off, and goes wherever he wants.¹⁸²

2.14 That's what happens when you roam out of your territory into the domain of others.

3.1 So, mendicants, don't roam out of your own territory into the domain of others. If you roam out of your own territory into the domain of others, Māra will find a vulnerability and get an opportunity.

3.3 And what is not a mendicant's own territory but the domain of others? It's the five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the tongue ... Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. This is not a mendicant's own territory but the domain of others.

4.1 You should roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers. If you roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers, Māra won't find a vulnerability and get an opportunity.

181. The five points on which the monkey is stuck represent the five senses, trapping the monkey with greed.

182. In his note on this Sutta, Bodhi acknowledges the difficult reading *kaṭṭha-kataṅgāre* and proposes the emendation *kaṭṭha-kaliṅgare* based on the Buddhist Sanskrit *kāṣṭha-kaḍambara*. He then takes it to mean a block of wood, to which the hunter fastens the monkey before leaving with both monkey and block. This, however, creates several problems. Since both *kaṭṭha* and *kaliṅgare* mean "block of wood", why the compound? Why does the hunter secure the monkey to the wood, when the whole point of the simile was that the monkey was stuck? Why read the verb *avassajjetvā* as "having fastened" when the normal meaning of *avassajati* is "release", confirmed by the BJT reading *uddharitvā*, and agreeing with other occurrences of *yena kāmam pakkamati*, which are preceded by someone being released (MN 66:10.1, AN 5.75:14.4, AN 8.14:7.1)? And why would the hunter carry a log of wood out from such a remote region? I propose that *kaṭṭha-kataṅgāre* is a corrupted form related to the Sanskrit *kāṣṭha-kadalī*, the wild plantain; perhaps the *Musa mannii*, a rare species found today in Arunchal Pradesh and sometimes known as the Indian Dwarf Banana. The hunter spears the trapped monkey while it is stuck to its favorite fruit tree, killing it, then pries it off and goes on his way.

And what is a mendicant's own territory, the domain of the fathers? It's the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is a mendicant's own territory, the domain of the fathers.” 4.3

SN 47.8

Cooks

Sūdasutta

“Mendicants, suppose a foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook was to serve a ruler or their chief minister with an excessive variety of curries:¹⁸³ chiefly sour, bitter, pungent, and sweet; hot and mild, and salty and bland.¹⁸⁴ 1.1

But that cook didn't take their master's hint:¹⁸⁵ ‘Today my master preferred this sauce, or he reached for it, or he took a lot of it, or he praised it. Today my master preferred the chiefly sour or bitter or pungent or sweet or hot or mild or salty sauce. Or he preferred the bland sauce, or he reached for the bland one, or he took a lot of it, or he praised it.’ 2.1

183. *Nānāccaya* appears only here. I take it as *nānā* + *accaya*, “excessive variety”, which suits the context. The commentary takes it as a variant of *nānācaya*, “consisting of various mixtures”.

184. Elsewhere *madhuragga* means a “sweet tip” (SN 1.71:3.4) or the “superbly sweet” mango (Ja 511:6.4). | Sour, sweet, and bitter flavors are remembered at Thag 16.2:8.1.

185. “Hint” here is *nimitta*, found in the same sense at AN 5.80:6.3 and DN 16:3.4.1. As usual in early Pali, *nimitta* is used in the sense of a feature or quality that, when focused on, promotes the growth of similar or related qualities. If the Master's hint were taken, the cook would serve more of what he likes and less of what he dislikes. Similarly, a meditator who takes the mind's hint will experience a growth of wholesome and decline of unwholesome qualities.

- 3.1 That foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook doesn't get presented with clothes, wages, or bonuses. Why is that? Because they don't take their master's hint.
- 3.4 In the same way, a foolish, incompetent, unskillful mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of the body, their mind doesn't enter immersion, and their corruptions aren't given up.¹⁸⁶ But they don't take the hint. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of principles, the mind doesn't enter immersion, and the corruptions aren't given up. But they don't take the hint.
- 4.1 That foolish, incompetent, unskillful mendicant doesn't get blissful meditations in this very life, nor do they get mindfulness and situational awareness. Why is that? Because they don't take their mind's hint.
- 5.1 Suppose an astute, competent, skillful cook was to serve a ruler or their chief minister with an extravagant variety of curries: chiefly sour, bitter, pungent, and sweet; hot and mild, and salty and bland.
- 6.1 And that cook took their master's hint: 'Today my master preferred this sauce, or he reached for it, or he took a lot of it, or he praised it. Today my master preferred the chiefly sour or bitter or pungent or sweet or hot or mild or salty sauce. Or he preferred the bland sauce, or he reached for the bland one, or he took a lot of it, or he praised it.'
- 7.1 That astute, competent, skillful cook gets presented with clothes, wages, and bonuses. Why is that? Because they take their master's hint.
- 7.4 In the same way, an astute, competent, skillful mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful,

186. Here we see the primary purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna*, namely, as the basis for *samādhi* (MN 44:12.3).

rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of the body, their mind enters immersion, and their corruptions are given up. They take the hint. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of principles, their mind enters immersion, and their corruptions are given up. They take the hint.

That astute, competent, skillful mendicant gets blissful meditations in this very life, and they get mindfulness and situational awareness. Why is that? Because they take their mind's hint." 8.1

SN 47.9

Sick

Gilānasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, 1.1 at the little village of Beluva.¹⁸⁷ There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, please enter the rainy season residence with whatever friends or acquaintances you have around Vesālī.¹⁸⁸ I’ll commence the rainy season residence right here in the little village of Beluva.”

“Yes, sir,” those mendicants replied. They did as the Buddha said, 1.6 while the Buddha commenced the rainy season residence right there in the little village of Beluva.

After the Buddha had commenced the rainy season residence, 2.1 he fell severely ill, struck by dreadful pains, close to death. But he

187. This picks up the narrative from SN 47.2; the Buddha has just arrived at Beluva from Ambapālī’s mango grove (DN 16:2.21.4). | Pali texts waver between *beluva* (“wood-apple”) and *veluva* (from *veluvant*, “full of bamboo”).

188. The Buddha was travelling with a large retinue, which could become burdensome on a small village if they were to stay the three months of the rains residence. The texts note several monasteries and places to stay around Vesālī.

endured unbothered, with mindfulness and situational awareness. Then it occurred to the Buddha:

- 2.4 “It would not be appropriate for me to be fully extinguished before informing my supporters and taking leave of the mendicant Saṅgha.¹⁸⁹ Why don’t I forcefully suppress this illness, stabilize the life force, and live on?”¹⁹⁰ So that is what he did. Then the Buddha’s illness died down.
- 3.1 Soon after the Buddha had recovered from that sickness, he left his dwelling and sat in the shade of the porch on the seat spread out. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 3.3 “Sir, it’s fantastic that the Buddha is comfortable,¹⁹¹ that he’s keeping well, and that he’s getting by. Because when the Buddha was sick, my body felt like it was drugged. I was disorientated, and the teachings didn’t spring to mind. Still, at least I was consoled by the thought that the Buddha won’t be fully extinguished without bringing something up regarding the Saṅgha of mendicants.”¹⁹²

189. Here *upaṭṭhāka* refers to the lay devotees, who the Buddha informs before his passing. | *Apaloketi* (“take leave”) also has a literal sense of “glance back”; both senses are found in this narrative (see DN 16:4.1.2).

190. “Life force” is *jīvitasaṅkhāra* whereas below we find *āyusaṅkhāra* (DN 16:3.10.1). They are evidently synonyms; Ps 1.6:4.3 refers to the three *jīvitasaṅkhāras* from MN 43:24.2, but there the text has *āyusaṅkhāra*. The sense is not “will to live” but “life force”, i.e. the vital energy that sustains life (SN 20.6:3.2, MN 43:23.1). This leans on the old use of Sanskrit *samas kurva* or *saṁskāra* 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*).

191. This is the first indication of Ānanda’s fragile emotional state in the days to come. | Read *diṭṭhā* (Sanskrit *diṣṭyā*), “fantastic, how fortunate”, per DN 26:21.9 and Ja 81:1.4.

192. Previously the Buddha had spoken of “taking leave” of the Saṅgha, but here something more specific is meant. *Udāharati* is typically used when a previously-mentioned matter (often unpleasant) is “brought up”, as at the monastic procedures for confession or invitation to admonish (Kd 1:16.2.5, Kd 1:2.1.9). Ānanda is implying that there is some unfinished disciplinary business that

“But what could the mendicant Saṅgha expect from me now, 4.1
 Ānanda?¹⁹³ I’ve taught the Dhamma without making any distinction
 between secret and public teachings.¹⁹⁴ The Realized One doesn’t
 have the closed fist of a tutor when it comes to the teachings.¹⁹⁵

If there’s anyone who thinks: ‘I shall lead the mendicant Saṅgha,’ 4.4
 or ‘the Saṅgha of mendicants is meant for me,’ let them bring some-
 thing up regarding the Saṅgha.¹⁹⁶ But the Realized One doesn’t
 think like this, so why should he bring something up regarding the
 Saṅgha?

Now I am old, elderly and senior. I’m advanced in years and have 4.9
 reached the final stage of life. I’m currently eighty years old. Just as
 a decrepit old cart is kept going by a rope,¹⁹⁷ in the same way, the
 Realized One’s body is kept going as if by a rope.¹⁹⁸

needs attention. Despite the Buddha’s response, he did in fact go on to make a
 number of statements and rulings.

193. For forty-five years he had been teaching and supporting the community.

194. A principle not followed by some contemporary Buddhist schools that
 harbor “secret teachings”.

195. “Closed fist of a tutor” is *ācariyamuṭṭhi*. Compare Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
 6.2.4: “I have taught you all that I know.”

196. *Pariharissāmi* (“lead”) needs careful parsing with regard to tenses. The gen-
 eral meaning is to “carry about” or “maintain, nurture”. The Buddha elsewhere
 said that he “leads” the Saṅgha (DN 26:25.6: *pariharāmi*). When the Buddha
 was about to go on retreat, Moggallāna said that he and Sāriputta “shall lead”
 (*pariharissāmi*), to which the Buddha said they “should lead” (MN 67:13.7:
parihareyyam). Devadatta, on the other hand, ensured his downfall when he
 determined that he “shall lead” the Saṅgha, having taken over from the Buddha
 (AN 5.100:2.3, Kd 1:2.1.23). Thus the future tense indicates the determination
 to lead. But at this point, the Buddha’s mind is already set on letting go. He is
 not saying that no one should lead the Saṅgha, but that it is up to whoever leads
 it to address the issues.

197. The reading and derivation of *veṭhamissakena* are unclear. As a form of
 violence we find *veṭhamissena* at Thag 2.12:1.1, notably also in instrumental.
Veṭha means “twist, strap, turban”. *Missa* means “mixed” or “plaited” (Bu Ss
 2:2.1.21). Thus it probably refers to a kind of strong twisted material used to tie
 or bind, i.e. rope.

198. Compare Rig Veda 8.48.5: “As leather binds a chariot, soma knits my joints
 together.” Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.35 compares the labored breathing of

- 5.1 Sometimes the Realized One, not focusing on any signs, and with the cessation of certain feelings, enters and remains in the signless immersion of the heart. Only then does the Realized One's body become more comfortable.
- 5.2 So Ānanda, live as your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge.¹⁹⁹
- 6.1 And how does a mendicant do this? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That's how a mendicant lives with themselves as island and refuge, without other refuge; with the teachings as island and refuge, without other refuge.
- 6.7 Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge—those mendicants of mine who want to train shall be among the best of the best.”²⁰⁰

one near death with the creaking of a heavily-laden cart. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.2.7.8 says a handsome cart is well-finished with ropes. Indian carts were bound with ropes down to modern times. See too SN 41.5:5.5 and note.

199. This central theme of the Buddha's teaching—that each of us is responsible for our own salvation—becomes even more important as the Buddha's days grow short.

200. Read *tama(t)agge* with *tama* as superlative, literally “at the peak of the best”.

SN 47.10

The Nuns' Quarters

Bhikkhunupassayasutta

Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the nuns' quarters, and sat down on the seat spread out. Then several nuns went up to Venerable Ānanda bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: 1.1

"Honorable Ānanda, several nuns meditate with their minds firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They have realized a higher distinction than they had before."²⁰¹ 2.1

"That's how it is, sisters! That's how it is, sisters! Any monk or nun who meditates with their mind firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation can expect to realize a higher distinction than they had before." 2.2

Then Ānanda educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired those nuns with a Dhamma talk, after which he rose from his seat and left. Then Ānanda wandered for alms in Sāvattthī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. 3.1

"That's so true, Ānanda! That's so true! Any monk or nun who meditates with their mind firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation can expect to realize a higher distinction than they had before. 5.1

What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.²⁰² As they meditate observing an 6.1

201. The sense of *pubbenāpara* as "than they had before" (literally, "after than before") is established at DN 26:9.6, where subjects do not prosper as they had before under a righteous king.

202. The Buddha was speaking of "monks" (*bhikkhu*) and "nuns" (*bhikkhunī*) and now returns to the default masculine form *bhikkhu*, which is inclusive of both monks and nuns, and thus rendered with the literal and gender-neutral "mendicant".

aspect of the body, based on the body there arises sweltering in the body, or mental sluggishness, or the mind is externally scattered.²⁰³ That mendicant should direct their mind toward an inspiring subject as a basis for meditation.²⁰⁴ As they do so, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed in *samādhi*. Then they reflect:²⁰⁵ ‘I have accomplished the goal for which I directed my mind.’²⁰⁶ Let me now relax.’²⁰⁷ They relax, and neither place the mind nor keep it connected. They understand: ‘I’m neither placing the mind nor keeping it connected. Mindful within myself, I’m happy.’²⁰⁸

- 7.1 Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of principles, based on principles there arises sweltering in

203. *Pariḷāha* (“sweltering”) is used in the sense of a “fever” which, arising from mental or physical causes, causes distress in the body (AN 3.35:4.2). Elsewhere it’s used for exceptionally hot and humid weather (Bu Pc 57:7.1.14). It is not uncommon for a meditator to experience symptoms such as sweating when the meditation is not yet in balance.

204. An “inspiring” (*pasādanīya*) meditation subject (*nimitta*) is one that promotes joy in that meditator. This is very personal, but for different meditators it might be love, or the breath, or the recollection of the qualities of the Buddha.

205. “Reflecting” (*paṭisañcikkhati*) is in reference to the reviewing (commentary: *paccavekkhati*) that a good meditator always does at the end of the practice.

206. The mind has been “directed” to a certain meditation subject for the purpose of attaining *samādhi*. This is in reference to *vitakka* and *vicāra*, which have a decisive function in attaining and maintaining the first absorption.

207. To *paṭisaṃharati* is to “desist” from a bad deed (MN 61:10.6), to “unwrap” smothering coils (Ud 2.1:3.2), to “pull back” the hand (MN 48:11.7), or to “relax” the bow (DN 3:1.23.9). Here the meditator, confident in their attainment so far, knows that further progress depends not on intensifying effort, but on easing back.

208. This phrase indicates second and higher absorptions, as freedom from *vitakka* and *vicāra*, and inner contentment are characteristics of the second absorption, while mindful bliss is characteristic of the third.

the body, or mental sluggishness, or the mind is externally scattered. That mendicant should direct their mind toward an inspiring subject as a basis for meditation. As they do so, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed in *samādhi*. Then they reflect: 'I have accomplished the goal for which I directed my mind. Let me now relax.' They relax, and neither place the mind nor keep it connected. They understand: 'I'm neither placing the mind nor keeping it connected. Mindful within myself, I'm happy.' That's how there is directed development.

And how is there undirected development? Not directing their 8.1
mind externally, a mendicant understands: 'My mind is not directed externally.'²⁰⁹ And they understand: 'Before and behind, it's unconstricted, freed, and undirected.' And they also understand: 'I meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, mindful; I am happy.' Not directing their mind externally, a mendicant understands: 'My mind is not directed externally.' And they understand: 'Before and behind, it's unconstricted, freed, and undirected.' And they also understand: 'I meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, mindful; I am happy.' Not directing their mind externally, a mendicant understands: 'My mind is not directed externally.' And they understand: 'Before and behind, it's unconstricted, freed, and undirected.' And they also understand: 'I meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, mindful; I am happy.' Not directing their mind externally, a mendicant understands: 'My mind is not directed externally.' And they understand:

209. The specification of not directing the mind "externally" only is curious, since mindfulness meditation is normally practiced both internally and externally. The commentary explains that the meditator does not abandon their original meditation object to focus on some other external object, in contrast with the "directed" method. The idea seems to be that a more advanced meditator, since they no longer experience symptoms such as sweltering body, need not employ different strategies to overcome obstacles, but can simply proceed with the meditation and allow the outcomes to flow naturally.

‘Before and behind, it’s unconstricted, freed, and undirected.’ And they also understand: ‘I meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, mindful; I am happy.’ That’s how there is undirected development.

9.1 So, Ānanda, I’ve taught you directed development and undirected development. Out of sympathy, I’ve done what a teacher should do who wants what’s best for their disciples. Here are these roots of trees, and here are these empty huts. Practice absorption, Ānanda! Don’t be negligent! Don’t regret it later! This is my instruction to you.”

10.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

The Chapter at Nālandā

SN 47.11

A Great Man

Mahāpurisasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

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

“Sir, they speak of ‘a great man.’²¹⁰ How is a great man defined?” 1.3

“Sāriputta, someone whose mind is free is a great man, I say. If their mind is not free, I say they’re not a great man. 1.5

And how does someone have a free mind? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of the body, their mind becomes dispassionate, and is freed from the defilements by not grasping. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles— 2.1

210. The thirty-two “marks of a great man” are detailed in DN 14:1.32.7, DN 30:1.2.4, and MN 91:9.1, while the “meditation of a great man” is said to be emptiness (MN 151:2.6), and the eight “thoughts of a great man” are detailed at AN 8.30 and DN 34:2.1.150. | Sāriputta is asking the Buddha to redefine a Vedic term. Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka 8.3 says: “The great man is just the year, of which the sun is the essence. That which is the incorporeal self made of wisdom, and that which is yonder sun are one and the same: so should one understand it.” Thus for the Vedists, the great man is the realized soul who understands that he is essentially one with the divine cosmos.

keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they meditate observing an aspect of principles, their mind becomes dispassionate, and is freed from the defilements by not grasping. That’s how someone has a free mind.

- 2.9 Someone whose mind is free is a great man, I say. If their mind is not free, I say they’re not a great man.”

SN 47.12

At Nālandā

Nālandasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Nālandā in Pāvārika’s Mango Grove.²¹¹ Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 1.3 “Sir, I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.”
- 1.5 “That’s a grand and bold statement, Sāriputta. You’ve roared a definitive, categorical lion’s roar, saying: ‘I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.’

211. This was apparently the last time that the Buddha met Sāriputta. This encounter is recorded as part of the Mahāparinibbānasutta at DN 16:1.61.1 and expanded into a long discourse at DN 28. | Here in the Saṃyutta, this meeting is followed with the record of Sāriputta’s passing at SN 47.13, and then the reflection on the absence of both Sāriputta and Moggallāna at SN 47.14. For some reason, these events were omitted from the Mahāparinibbānasutta, even though they fit well thematically. The passing of the great disciples gives a chance for the Buddha to show the equanimous wisdom with which such tragedies should be met, in contrast with Ānanda’s emotional fragility. Other themes, such as the practice of mindfulness to be an island for oneself, the support for the fourfold assembly, the key role of a carer, or the pursuit of excellence also fit well with the Mahāparinibbānasutta.

What about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas 2.1
who lived in the past? Have you encompassed their minds to know
that those Buddhas had such ethics, or such qualities, or such wis-
dom, or such meditation, or such freedom?”

“No, sir.” 2.3

“And what about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Bud- 3.1
dhas who will live in the future? Have you encompassed their minds
to know that those Buddhas will have such ethics, or such qualities,
or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?”

“No, sir.” 3.3

“And what about me, the perfected one, the fully awakened Bud- 4.1
dha at present? Have you encompassed my mind to know that I have
such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation,
or such freedom?”

“No, sir.” 4.3

“In that case, Sāriputta, given that you don’t encompass the minds 5.1
of Buddhas past, future, or present, what then are you doing, making
such a grand and bold statement, roaring such a definitive, categorical
lion’s roar?”

“Sir, though I don’t encompass the minds of Buddhas past, future, 6.1
and present, still I understand this by inference from the teaching.²¹²
Suppose there was a king’s frontier citadel with fortified embank-
ments, ramparts, and arches, and a single gate. And it has a gate-
keeper who is astute, competent, and intelligent. He keeps strangers
out and lets known people in. As he walks around the patrol path,
he doesn’t see a hole or cleft in the wall, not even one big enough
for a cat to slip out. He thinks, ‘Whatever sizable creatures enter or
leave the citadel, all of them do so via this gate.’

In the same way, I understand this by inference from the teaching: 6.8
“Those who are perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas—whether

212. As at DN 14:1.37.4, inference (*anvaya*) is regarded as a valid form of knowledge. The Buddha himself is said to rely on inference using the same simile at AN 10.95:10.4. See SN 12.33 and notes for discussion.

past, future, or present—give up the five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Their mind is firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They correctly develop the seven awakening factors. And they awaken to the supreme perfect awakening.’”

- 7.1 “Good, good, Sāriputta! So Sāriputta, you should frequently speak this exposition of the teaching to the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.²¹³ Though there will be some futile people who have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Realized One, when they hear this exposition of the teaching they’ll give up that doubt or uncertainty.”

SN 47.13

With Cunda

Cundasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.²¹⁴ At that time Venerable Sāriputta was staying in the Magadhan lands near the little village of Nālaka, and he was sick, suffering, gravely ill. And the novice Cunda was his carer.²¹⁵

213. This closing section is not found in DN 16, but is at DN 28:21.2.

214. This event follows SN 47.12 at Nālandā and precedes SN 47.14 at Ukkacelā on the Vajjian shore of the Ganges, so the Buddha must have been somewhere on the road between them, not in Sāvattḥī. The commentary rather implausibly tries to reconcile this by proposing that the eighty-year old Buddha and Sāriputta took a side journey of over a thousand kilometres. It is simpler to assume that, since Sāvattḥī was the default location for teachings and is often ascribed as a matter of convention, it was mentioned here by mistake.

215. The commentaries identify “novice Cunda”, who reported the deaths of Sāriputta (SN 47.13:1.3) and Mahāvīra (DN 29:2.1, MN 104:3.1), as Sāriputta’s younger brother, explaining that the title “novice” was a nickname that persisted from the time he ordained as a young novice. The commentaries further identify him with Mahācunda, one of the great disciples (MN 8, MN 118, AN 6.17), who later brought the Dhamma to the land of the Cetis (AN 6.46, AN 10.24), and once stayed with Channa and Sāriputta (MN 144:4.1, SN 35.87:1.2).

Then Venerable Sāriputta was fully extinguished from that sickness. Then Cunda took Sāriputta's bowl and robes and set out for Sāvattthī. He went to see Venerable Ānanda at Jeta's grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:²¹⁶

"Sir, Venerable Sāriputta has become fully quenched. This is his bowl and robe."

"Reverend Cunda, we should see the Buddha about this matter. Come, let's go to the Buddha and inform him about this."

"Yes, sir," replied Cunda.

Then Ānanda and Cunda went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

"Sir, this novice Cunda says that Venerable Sāriputta has become fully quenched. This is his bowl and robe. Since I heard this, my body feels like it's drugged. I'm disorientated, and the teachings don't spring to mind."

"Well, Ānanda, when Sāriputta was fully quenched, did he take away your entire spectrum of ethical conduct, of immersion, of wisdom, of freedom, or of the knowledge and vision of freedom?"²¹⁷

"No, sir, he did not. But Venerable Sāriputta was my adviser and counselor. He educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired me. He never tired of teaching the Dhamma, and he supported his spiritual companions.²¹⁸ I remember the nectar of the teaching, the riches of the teaching, the support of the teaching given by Venerable Sāriputta."

"Ānanda, did I not prepare for this when I explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How

216. Sāriputta's passing is treated with simplicity and dignity. There is no mention of relics, or any supernatural occurrences.

217. These five "spectrums" (*dharmakkhandha*) are normally said to be the qualities of arahants (SN 3.24:3.6, AN 10.12:2.2). This is anomalous, as Ānanda is still a trainee and has not fully developed the last two. See also SN 55.26:17.1, where the stream-enterer Anāthapiṇḍika is said to possess right knowledge and right freedom.

218. Text's *otiṇṇo* appears to be an error and I ignore it.

could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible.

6.5 Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood, and the largest branch broke off.²¹⁹ In the same way, in the great Saṅgha that stands with heartwood, Sāriputta has become fully quenched.

6.7 How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible.

6.9 So Ānanda, live as your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge.

7.1 And how does a mendicant do this? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

7.6 That's how a mendicant lives with themselves as island and refuge, without other refuge; with the teachings as island and refuge, without other refuge.

7.7 Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge—those mendicants of mine who want to train shall be among the best of the best.”

SN 47.14

At Ukkacelā

Ukkacelasutta

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Vajjis near Ukkacelā on the bank of the Ganges River, together with a large

219. “Wear out” and “broke off” are both *palujjati*.

Saṅgha of mendicants. It was not long after Sāriputta and Moggallāna had become fully quenched.²²⁰ Now, at that time the Buddha was sitting in the open, surrounded by the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of mendicants, who were silent. He addressed them: 2.1

“Mendicants, this assembly seems empty to me now that Sāriputta and Moggallāna have become fully quenched. My assembly never used to be empty; I had no concern for any region where Sāriputta and Moggallāna stayed.²²¹ The Buddhas of the past or the future have pairs of chief disciples who at best were like Sāriputta and Moggallāna were to me. 2.2

It’s an incredible and amazing quality of such disciples that they fulfill the Teacher’s instructions and follow his advice. And they’re liked and approved, respected and admired by the four assemblies.²²² 2.7

And it’s an incredible and amazing quality of the Realized One that when such a pair of disciples becomes fully quenched he does not sorrow or lament. How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible. 2.9

Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood, and the largest branches broke off. In the same way, in the great Saṅgha that stands with heartwood, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have become fully quenched. 2.13

220. This must have taken place during the Buddha’s final journey depicted in the Mahāparinibbānasutta, immediately after crossing the Ganges at Pāṭaligāma (DN 16:2.1.1). It is, however, not mentioned there. Moggallāna’s death is not depicted in any early texts, as a result of which it became elaborated in a popular legend of later times.

221. The text uses the same present tense as the previous sentence, but it must refer to the past. Bodhi discusses variants here.

222. *Garubhāvanīyā* is a *dvanda* compound, “respected and admired” (see AN 5.81:1.1). | The four assemblies are monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. The number four indicates inclusivity.

- 2.15 How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible.
- 2.17 So mendicants, live as your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge.
- 3.1 And how does a mendicant do this? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.
- 3.6 That's how a mendicant lives with themselves as island and refuge, without other refuge; with the teachings as island and refuge, without other refuge.
- 3.7 Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge—those mendicants of mine who want to train shall be among the best of the best.”

SN 47.15

With Bāhiya

Bāhiyasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Then Venerable Bāhiya went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:²²³
- 1.3 “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.”
- 1.4 “Well then, Bāhiya, you should purify the starting point of skillful qualities. What is the starting point of skillful qualities? Well purified

223. For this Bāhiya, see note on SN 35.89:1.1.

ethics and correct view. When your ethics are well purified and your view is correct, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics.

What four? Meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. When you develop these four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics, you can expect growth, not decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.” 2.1

And then Venerable Bāhiya approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. Then Bāhiya, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, 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 homelessness. 3.1

He understood: “Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place.” And Venerable Bāhiya became one of the perfected. 3.3

SN 47.16

With Uttiya

Uttiyasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then Venerable Uttiya went up to the Buddha ... and asked him, “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.” 1.2

“Well then, Uttiya, you should purify the starting point of skillful qualities. What is the starting point of skillful qualities? Well purified ethics and correct view. When your ethics are well purified and your 1.4

view is correct, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics.

- 2.1 What four? Meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. When you develop these four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics, you'll cross beyond Death's dominion."
- 3.1 And then Venerable Uttiya approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. Then Uttiya, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, 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 homelessness.
- 3.3 He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Uttiya became one of the perfected.

SN 47.17

Noble

Ariyasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, when these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who practices them to the complete ending of suffering. What four?
- 1.3 It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ...

mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

When these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed 1.7
and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who
practices them to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 47.18

Divinity

Brahmasutta

At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying in 1.1
Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā
River.²²⁴

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, 1.2
“The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to con-
vergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past
sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover
the system, and to realize extinguishment.”²²⁵

224. This discourse is a good example of how the Satipaṭṭhānasutta (MN 10, DN 22) was constructed. The famous opening phrase is found here, where it is associated with Brahmā. It turns out that *ekāyana* is in fact a term found prominently in Brahmanical texts, used in the context of renunciation and contemplation to mean “convergence”, just as in Pali. In the Satipaṭṭhānasutta this connection is lost, as there is no Brahmanical context. Commentators subsequently struggled to explain the word, offering a range of possibilities, to which ancient Chinese translators and modern authors added more. The current sutta allows us to restore the Brahmanical context and determine the correct meaning. This further suggests that this is the original context, where the word had a contextual meaning, and it was later excerpted for the opening of the Satipaṭṭhānasutta. | This same discourse is presented as a first-person recollection of the Buddha at SN 47.43.

225. The phrase *ekāyano maggo* (“path to convergence”) is used in only one other context in Pali, where it means to “come together with” (MN 12:37.5). Here the Buddha’s phrase is echoed by Brahmā, which suggests it was a Brahmanical term. Yajñavalkya—in a core passage full of details shared with the suttas—uses it for a place where things unite or converge (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

- 2.1 What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.²²⁶ Or they'd meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... or mind ... or principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.”
- 3.1 Then the divinity Sahampati knew the Buddha's train of thought. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of the Buddha.²²⁷ He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said:
- 3.3 “That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! Sir, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.
- 4.1 What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and

2.4.11; in the same sense also at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.5.2; Mahābhārata 14.19.1–2). Thus *satipaṭṭhāna* leads to everything “coming together as one”. In other words, as seventh factor of the noble eightfold path, it leads to *samādhi*, the eighth factor (SN 45.1:3.9; see also MN 44:12.3). *Ekāyana* is also a name for a certain Sanskrit scripture (in a list of texts at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.1.2, 7.1.4, 7.2.1, 7.7.1; Puruṣottamasāṃhitā 1.10; Praśnasāṃhitā 2.38). Now, the latter text discusses the *ekāyana* as *nivṛtti*, “renunciation”, which is, in fact, introduced to the Vedic system by Yajñavalkya in the above-cited passage. Thus as a scripture it probably originally referred to that very passage exemplifying the Upaniṣadic teachings, which are otherwise omitted from the Chāndogya list.

226. This is phrased in optative because the Buddha is contemplating what would happen were he to teach and start his dispensation. Similarly, *idha* (“here”) is absent since it is not a present situation.

227. Sahampati's appearance here underscores the centrality of mindfulness and serves as divine endorsement (see SN 6.1:5.1 and note).

displeasure for the world. Or they'd meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... or mind ... or principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.”

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say: 5.1

“The compassionate one, 6.1
 who sees the ending of rebirth,
 understands the path to convergence.
 By this path people crossed over before,
 will cross, and are crossing.”

SN 47.19

At Sedaka

Sedakasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sumbhas, 1.1
 near the town of the Sumbhas named Sedaka.²²⁸ There the Buddha
 addressed the mendicants:

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a pole acrobat of the corpse- 1.3
 workers set up the bamboo pole of his tribe and said to his apprentice

228. This may be modern Sambalpur in Odisha, near the bay of Bengal on India's east coast. This Sutta is the earliest description of Indian pole acrobatics or *mallakambha*. Further east lies Chandraketurgarh in West Bengal, where the earliest physical evidence for *mallakambha* has been found. One pot from around 200 BCE shows, in detailed and graceful style, three acrobats using a T-shaped pole. One man kneels, holding the pole in his hands with great strength and balance, while a man and a woman perform acrobatics on opposite bars of the T. A crowd of women and men look on in amazement.

Medakathālikā,²²⁹ ‘Come now, dear Medakathālikā, climb up the bamboo pole and stand above my shoulders.’²³⁰

1.5 ‘Yes, tutor,’ she replied. She climbed up the bamboo pole and stood above her tutor’s shoulders.

1.6 Then the pole acrobat of the corpse-workers said to Medakathālikā, ‘You look after me, dear Medakathālikā, and I shall look after you. That’s how, guarding and looking after each other, we’ll display our skill, collect our fee, and get down safely from the bamboo pole.’²³¹

1.9 When he said this, Medakathālikā said to her teacher, ‘That’s not how it will be, tutor! You look after yourself, and I shall look after myself. That’s how, guarding and looking after ourselves, we’ll display our skill, collect our fee, and get down safely from the bamboo pole.’

2.1 That’s the way,” said the Buddha. “It’s just as Medakathālikā said to her tutor.²³² Thinking ‘I’ll look after myself,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Thinking ‘I’ll look after others,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Looking after yourself, you look after others; and looking after others, you look after yourself.

229. While the terms are not easy to interpret, it appears that it was a practice of the “corpse-workers” (*caṇḍāla*), the most despised caste (see SN 3.21:2.2 and note). Perhaps it originated as a tribal ritual or sport. Further references to this practice are found in DN 1:1.13.2 (see note there) and Ja 498, which is set near the opposite coast in Ujjeni.

230. Medakathālikā (“frying pan”) is a feminine form. The commentary says the name is declined “according to the feminine gender”, which suggests they were male (else no explanation would be needed). However, the text does not support this, and the depiction on the Chandraketugarh pottery clearly shows an adult woman. There are a number of cases where the commentary apparently finds it difficult to imagine a woman in a prominent role (see also SN 55.23:1.2).

231. The text implies that both acrobats were up the pole. Perhaps the plural is just a figure of speech, but in the pottery depiction there are indeed two suspended acrobats. I think the pole is planted on the ground, with the master half-way up, and Medakathālikā above him.

232. The text is a little unclear, but it seems that Medakathālikā was pointing out that by looking after oneself we are also looking after the other. It is remarkable how the Buddha is adopting the wisdom of a woman from such a despised caste.

And how do you look after others by looking after yourself? By 3.1
development, cultivation, and practice of meditation. And how
do you look after yourself by looking after others? By acceptance,
harmlessness, love, and sympathy.

Thinking ‘I’ll look after myself,’ you should cultivate mindfulness 3.7
meditation. Thinking ‘I’ll look after others,’ you should cultivate
mindfulness meditation. Looking after yourself, you look after oth-
ers; and looking after others, you look after yourself.”

SN 47.20

The Finest Lady in the Land

Janapadakalyāṇīsutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1
of the Sumbhas, near the town of the Sumbhas named Sedaka. There
the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”

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

“Mendicants, suppose that on hearing, ‘The finest lady in the land! 2.1
The finest lady in the land!’ a large crowd would gather.²³³ And the
finest lady in the land would dance and sing in a most thrilling way.²³⁴
On hearing, ‘The finest lady in the land is dancing and singing! The
finest lady in the land is dancing and singing!’ an even larger crowd
would gather.

Then a person would come along who wants to live and doesn’t 2.4
want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. They’d
say to him, ‘My man, this is a bowl full to the brim with oil. You
must carry it in between this large crowd and the finest lady in the

233. The introduction to Ja 96 quotes from this Sutta.

234. *Janapadakalyāṇī* is typically rendered as “the most beautiful lady in the land”, but here we see her talents as a dazzling singer and dancer. While she was famed for her beauty (Ud 3.2:9.1), the word *kalyāṇa* normally means “(morally) good, fine, lovely” and does not refer solely to her appearance.

land. And a man with a drawn sword will follow right behind you. Wherever you spill even a drop, he'll chop off your head right there.'

2.9 What do you think, mendicants? Would that person lose focus on that bowl, and negligently get distracted outside?"

2.11 "No, sir."

3.1 "I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is what it means. 'A bowl of oil filled to the brim' is a term for mindfulness of the body.

3.4 So you should train like this: 'We will develop mindfulness of the body. 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."

The Chapter on Ethics and Duration

SN 47.21

Ethics

Sīlasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the venerables Ānanda and Bhadda 1.1
were staying near Pāṭaliputta, in the Chicken Monastery.²³⁵ Then in
the late afternoon, Venerable Bhadda came out of retreat, went to
Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the
greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side
and said to Ānanda:

“Reverend Ānanda, the Buddha has spoken of skillful ethics. 1.5
What’s their purpose?”

“Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence 2.1
are excellent, and it’s a good question. For you asked: ‘The Buddha
has spoken of skillful ethics. What’s their purpose?’”

“Yes, reverend.” 2.5

“The Buddha has spoken of skillful ethics to the extent necessary 2.6
for developing the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an 3.1
aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness
and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect

235. See the similar setting in SN 45.18.

of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The Buddha has spoken of skillful ethics to the extent necessary for developing the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 47.22

Long Lasting

Ciraṭṭhitisutta

- 1.1 The same setting. Venerable Bhadda said to Venerable Ānanda:
- 1.3 “What is the cause, Reverend Ānanda, what is the reason why the true teaching does not last long after the final quenching of the Realized One?²³⁶ What is the cause, what is the reason why the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One?”
- 2.1 “Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence are excellent, and it’s a good question. For you asked: ‘What is the cause, Reverend Ānanda, what is the reason why the true teaching does not last long after the final quenching of the Realized One? What is the cause, what is the reason why the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One?’”
- 2.6 “Yes, reverend.”
- 2.7 “It’s because of not developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t last long after the final quenching of the Realized One. It’s because of developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One.
- 3.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness

236. The Buddha is asked this question at SN 47.25. Other answers are given at AN 5.201, AN 6.40, and AN 7.59. The opposite situation is discussed in the next discourse.

and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. It’s because of not developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t last long after the final quenching of the Realized One. It’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One.”

SN 47.23

Decline

Parihānasutta

At one time the venerables Ānanda and Bhadda were staying near 1.1
Pāṭaliputta, in the Chicken Monastery. Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Bhadda came out of retreat, went to Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Ānanda:

“What’s the cause, Reverend Ānanda, what’s the reason why the 1.4
true teaching declines? And what’s the cause, what’s the reason why the true teaching doesn’t decline?”

“Good, good, Reverend Bhadda! Your approach and eloquence 2.1
are excellent, and it’s a good question. For you asked: ‘What’s the cause, what’s the reason why the true teaching declines? And what’s the cause, what’s the reason why the true teaching doesn’t decline?’”

“Yes, reverend.” 2.6

“It’s because of not developing and cultivating the four kinds of 2.7
mindfulness meditation that the true teaching declines. It’s because of developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t decline.

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an 3.1
aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect

of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. It’s because of not developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching declines. And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t decline.”

SN 47.24

Plain Version

Suddhasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

1.8 These are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 47.25

A Certain Brahmin

Aññatarabrāhmaṇasutta

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

1.5 “What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why the true teaching does not last long after the final quenching of the Realized One? And what is the cause, what is the reason why the true

teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One?”

“Brahmin, it’s because of not developing and cultivating the four 2.1 kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t last long after the final quenching of the Realized One. It’s because of developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One.

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an 3.1 aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. It’s because of not developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching doesn’t last long after the final quenching of the Realized One. It’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the true teaching does last long after the final quenching of the Realized One.”

When he said this, the brahmin said to the Buddha, “Excellent, 4.1 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 47.26

Partly

Padesasutta

At one time the venerables Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, and Anurud- 1.1 dha were staying near Sāketa in the Thorny Wood.²³⁷ Then in the late afternoon, Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna came out of retreat, went to Anuruddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the

237. This discourse is similar to SN 52.4:1.1.

greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. Sāriputta said to Anuruddha:

- 1.4 “Reverend, they speak of the one called ‘a trainee’. How is a trainee defined?”
- 1.6 “Reverends, a trainee is someone who has partly developed the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. A trainee is someone who has partly developed the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 47.27

Completely

Samattasutta

- 1.1 The same setting.
- 1.3 “Reverend, they speak of the one called ‘an adept’. How is an adept defined?”
- 1.5 “Reverends, an adept is someone who has completely developed the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. An adept is someone who has completely developed the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 47.28

The World

Lokasutta

The same setting. “Reverend Anuruddha, what things have you 1.1
developed and cultivated to attain great direct knowledge?”

“Reverend, I attained great direct knowledge by developing and 1.4
cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

What four? It’s when I meditate observing an aspect of the body— 2.1
keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the
world. I meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... princi-
ples—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure
for the world. I attained great direct knowledge by developing and
cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds 2.7
of mindfulness meditation that I directly know the thousandfold
galaxy.”

SN 47.29

With Sirivaḍḍha

Sirivaḍḍhasutta

At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Rājagaha in the 1.1
Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. Now at that time
the householder Sirivaḍḍha was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then he
addressed a man:

“Please, my man, go to Venerable Ānanda, and in my name bow 1.4
with your head to his feet. Say to him: ‘Sir, the householder Siriva-
ḍḍha is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.’
And then say: ‘Sir, please visit him at his home out of sympathy.’”

“Yes, sir,” that man replied. He did as Sirivaḍḍha asked. Ānanda 1.9
consented with silence.

- 2.1 Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of the householder Sirivadḍha, sat down on the seat spread out, and said to him:
- 2.2 “I hope you’re keeping well, householder, I hope you’re all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing.”
- 2.3 “Sir, I’m not keeping well, I’m not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading.”
- 3.1 “So you should train like this: ‘I’ll meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I’ll meditate on an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.’ That’s how you should train.”
- 4.1 “These four kinds of mindfulness meditation that were taught by the Buddha are found in me, and I exhibit them.²³⁸ For I meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. And of the five lower fetters taught by the Buddha, I don’t see any that I haven’t given up.”
- 4.7 “You’re fortunate, householder, so very fortunate! You have declared the fruit of non-return.”

238. This idiom appears in SN 47.29, SN 55.3, SN 55.39 as well as MN 129. In MN it is behaviors, whereas in SN it is mostly inner qualities. If it was mostly external qualities, I would be inclined to translate literally in the sense of “I am seen engaging in these things, i.e.” I exhibit these things “.” But as inner qualities, it seems more like a reflective idiom, where the parallelism of the phrases, rather than being strictly literal, is meant in the sense of “I fully embody these things.” Anyway, I translate literally.

SN 47.30

With Mānadinna

Mānadinnasutta

The same setting. Now at that time the householder Mānadinna was 1.1
sick, suffering, gravely ill.²³⁹ Then he addressed a man:

“Please, my man, go to Venerable Ānanda ...” ... 1.4

“Sir, I’m not keeping well, I’m not getting by. My pain is terrible 1.5
and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading. When
I experience such painful feelings I meditate observing an aspect of
the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and dis-
pleasure for the world. I meditate observing an aspect of feelings ...
mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness
and displeasure for the world. And of the five lower fetters taught by
the Buddha, I don’t see any that I haven’t given up.”

“You’re fortunate, householder, so very fortunate! You have de- 1.11
clared the fruit of non-return.”

239. Mānadinna is mentioned only here.

The Chapter on Not Learned From Anyone Else

SN 47.31

Not Learned From Anyone Else

Ananussutasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “‘This is the observation of an aspect of the body.’ Such, mendicants, was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.²⁴⁰ ‘This observation of an aspect of the body should be developed.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of the body has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

2.1 ‘This is the observation of an aspect of feelings.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of feelings should be developed.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of feelings has been developed.’ ...

3.1 ‘This is the observation of an aspect of the mind.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of the mind should be developed.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of the mind has been developed.’ ...

4.1 ‘This is the observation of an aspect of principles.’ ... ‘This observation of an aspect of principles should be developed.’ ... ‘This

240. Here the Buddha frames his awakening in terms of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* instead of the four noble truths (SN 56.12:1.1).

observation of an aspect of principles has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.”

SN 47.32

Fading Away

Virāgasutta

“Mendicants, these four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. 1.1

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. 2.1

These four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.” 2.6

SN 47.33

Missed Out

Viraddhasutta

“Mendicants, whoever has missed out on the four kinds of mindfulness meditation has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken the four kinds of mindfulness meditation has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. 1.1

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect 2.1

of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

- 2.6 Whoever has missed out on these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 47.34

Developed

Bhāvitasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.
- 2.6 When these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.”

SN 47.35

Mindful

Satisutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, a mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.
- 2.1 And how is a mendicant mindful? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful,

rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That’s how a mendicant is mindful.

And how is a mendicant aware? It’s when a mendicant knows 3.1 feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away.²⁴¹ They know thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. They know perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. That’s how a mendicant is aware. A mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.”

SN 47.36

Enlightenment

Aññāsutta

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. 1.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. These are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

Because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mind- 1.8 fulness meditation, one of two results can be expected:²⁴² enlightenment in this very life, or if there’s residue left behind, non-return.”

241. This is the closest thing in the Suttas to the modern meditative practices known as “bare awareness”. Here, this meditative practice is said to be the “awareness” part of “mindfulness and awareness” (*satisampajañña*), as an complement to situational awareness in daily activities (SN 47.2). At DN 33:1.11.37 = AN 4.41:4.1 it is a further development of immersion leading to mindfulness and awareness, at AN 7.38:1.6 and AN 7.39:1.6 it leads to the four kinds of textual analysis, and at MN 123:22.2 it is one of the marvelous qualities of the Buddha.

242. This was expanded in the Satipaṭṭhānasutta at MN 10:46.1.

SN 47.37

Desire

Chandasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they do so they give up desire for the body. When desire is given up they realize freedom from death.
- 2.1 They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they do so they give up desire for feelings. When desire is given up they realize freedom from death.
- 3.1 They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they do so they give up desire for the mind. When desire is given up they realize freedom from death.
- 4.1 They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they do so they give up desire for principles. When desire is given up they realize freedom from death.”

SN 47.38

Complete Understanding

Pariññātasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they do so they completely understand the body. When the body is completely understood they realize freedom from death.

They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and 2.1
mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As they
do so they completely understand feelings. When feelings are com-
pletely understood they realize freedom from death.

They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, 3.1
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As
they do so they completely understand the mind. When the mind is
completely understood they realize freedom from death.

They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, 4.1
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. As
they do so they completely understand principles. When principles
are completely understood they realize freedom from death.”

SN 47.39

Development

Bhāvanāsutta

“Mendicants, I will teach you the development of the four kinds of 1.1
mindfulness meditation.²⁴³ Listen ...

And what is the development of the four kinds of mindfulness 1.3
meditation? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect
of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and
displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of
feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of
covetousness and displeasure for the world.

This is the development of the four kinds of mindfulness medita- 1.8
tion.”

243. This “development” Sutta is rather curious, since normally “development” refers to a growth or enhancement beyond the basics, as in SN 47.31:1.3 or the next Sutta.

SN 47.40

Analysis

Vibhaṅgasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I will teach you mindfulness meditation, the development of mindfulness meditation, and the practice that leads to the development of mindfulness meditation.”²⁴⁴ Listen ...
- 1.3 And what is mindfulness meditation? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called mindfulness meditation.
- 2.1 And what is the development of mindfulness meditation?²⁴⁵ It’s when a mendicant, with respect to the body, meditates observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.²⁴⁶ With respect to feelings ... mind ... principles, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called the development of mindfulness meditation.

244. Compare the structure of SN 51.19.

245. The term “development” shows that this takes the basic practice further.

246. This teaching on origination and vanishing is also found in DN 22:2.12, MN 10:5.2, and SN 52.1:3.1. It is explained in the Samudayasutta at SN 47.42. | The phrase *samudayadhamma* (“liable to originate”) is found elsewhere as the realization of stream-entry (SN 56.11:11.2), and as a noble one’s discernment of the five aggregates (SN 22.126:2.1). Since both these speak of noble realization, it is reasonable to assume the current passage does too. The suffix *-dhamma* indicates that this is not merely observing rise and fall, but is understanding the nature of things as dependently originated. | Grammatically, *samudayadhamma* would normally be read as an adjective, but here it seems necessary to construe it as a noun (“liability to originate”), a construction also used at SN 23.21. Bodhi also construes it as a noun: “nature of origination”.

And what is the practice that leads to the development of mindfulness meditation? It 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. This is called the practice that leads to the development of mindfulness meditation.” 3.1

The Chapter on Freedom From Death

SN 47.41

Freedom From Death

Amatasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, you should meditate with your mind firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. Don’t let freedom from death be lost on you.²⁴⁷ What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. You should meditate with your mind firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. Don’t let freedom from death be lost on you.”

247. *Mā* takes the aorist *panassa* (from *panassati*).

SN 47.42

Origin

Samudayasutta

“Mendicants, I will teach you the origin and disappearance of the four 1.1
kinds of mindfulness meditation.”²⁴⁸ Listen ...

What is the origin of the body?²⁴⁹ The body originates from 1.3
fuel.²⁵⁰ When fuel ceases, the body disappears.²⁵¹

Feelings originate from contact.²⁵² When contact ceases, feelings 1.6
disappear.

The mind originates from name and form.²⁵³ When name and 1.8
form cease, the mind disappears.

248. This discourse appears to be a fragmentary stub of a text more satisfactorily preserved in the Chinese translation at SA 609. | The mention of “origin and ending” links mindfulness meditation with dependent origination (SN 12.43:1.2). | The four *satipaṭṭhānas* are here treated as the objective foundations of meditation, a usage unique in the early texts. Normally *satipaṭṭhāna* refers to the act of setting up or establishing meditative attention on the four subjects, not the subjects themselves. The analysis, which follows that of the five aggregates, appears to be an early example of the Abhidhamma tendency toward systematization and objectification. Nonetheless, the details are carefully distinguished; for example, the singular “feeling” in the aggregates becomes the plural “feelings” here.

249. This question appears rather oddly here, and appears to be an editorial mistake. SA 609, rather, asks “What is the origination and cessation of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation”, then explains them, then rounds off by saying it has answered the question.

250. The same is said of “form” (*rūpa*) at SN 22.56:3.4 and SN 22.57:2.4. “Fuel” is *āhāra*, which here is obviously “food”, but I translate as “fuel” to maintain consistency with contexts where it is treated more generally.

251. While the specified origin and ending are the same, the Chinese text fills out each section by saying that one who meditates observing origin and ending will be independent and not grasp anything in the world. This passage is similar to one found in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, but not elsewhere in the Pali (MN 10:5.3).

252. Also at SN 22.56:6.5 and SN 22.57:6.6.

253. Said of “consciousness” at SN 22.56:13.5 and SN 22.57:14.5. While “mind” (*citta*) and “consciousness” (*viññāṇa*) are synonyms, *citta* is typically used in the context of practice, while *viññāṇa* is used in the context of understanding.

- 1.10 Principles originate from application of mind.²⁵⁴ When application of mind disappears, principles disappear.”²⁵⁵

SN 47.43

The Path

Maggasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.²⁵⁶

- 1.2 There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, this one time, when I was first awakened, I was staying in Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River. As I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.

254. In this singular instance, *dhamma*, taking on an objective sense, might be rendered as “phenomena” rather than the “principles” of cause and effect. However, “principles” can take on the, admittedly rare, sense “characteristic ingredients”, whereas “phenomena” cannot mean “laws of nature”. Moreover, *dhamma* here does not mean “things in general”, but rather “phenomena” whose causal arising in accord with fundamental “principles” of the “teaching” is understood through “rational” investigation. The commentary explains that the phenomena of the awakening factors originate through rational application of mind, while the phenomena of the hindrances arise through irrational application of mind. This set—the hindrances, mindfulness meditations, and awakening factors, mediated by application of mind, and culminating in realization—is met with frequently (eg. SN 46.2). | Compare “all things are produced by application of mind” at AN 8.83:2.8, AN 10.58:3.4.

255. This passage suggests that the hindrances, awakening factors, and truths were the original specification of “observation of principles”, since these are all rooted in application of mind, unlike the aggregates and six senses, which were added to the Satipaṭṭhānasutta. This specification is preserved in the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga (Vb 7).

256. This is a first-person account of the same events recounted in third person at SN 47.18.

What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect 2.1
 of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and
 displeasure for the world. Or they’d meditate observing an aspect
 of feelings ... or mind ... or principles—keen, aware, and mindful,
 rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds
 of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are
 in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying,
 to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to
 realize extinguishment.’

And then the divinity Sahampati, knowing my train of thought, as 3.1
 easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished
 from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of me. He arranged
 his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward me, and
 said: ‘That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! Sir, the
 four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence.
 They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and
 crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system,
 and to realize extinguishment.

What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect 4.1
 of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and
 displeasure for the world. Or they’d meditate observing an aspect
 of feelings ... or mind ... or principles—keen, aware, and mindful,
 rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds
 of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are
 in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying,
 to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to
 realize extinguishment.’

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say: 5.1

‘The compassionate one, 6.1
 who sees the ending of rebirth,
 understands the path to convergence.
 By this path people crossed over before,
 will cross over, and are crossing over.’”

SN 47.44

Mindful

Satisutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a mendicant should live mindfully. This is my instruction to you.
- 1.3 And how is a mendicant mindful? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That’s how a mendicant is mindful. A mendicant should live mindfully. This is my instruction to you.”

SN 47.45

A Heap of the Skillful

Kusalarāsisutta

- 1.1 “Rightly speaking, mendicants, you’d call these four kinds of mindfulness meditation a ‘heap of the skillful’. For these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are entirely a heap of the skillful.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.
- 2.6 Rightly speaking, you’d call these four kinds of mindfulness meditation a ‘heap of the skillful’. For these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are entirely a heap of the skillful.”

SN 47.46

Restraint in the Monastic Code

Pātimokkhasaṃvarasutta

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: 1.1

“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

“Well then, mendicant, you should purify the starting point of skillful qualities. What is the starting point of skillful qualities? Live restrained in the monastic code, conducting yourself well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you’ve undertaken. When you’ve done this, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics. 2.2

What four? Meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. 3.1

When you develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way, depending on and grounded on ethics, you can expect growth, not decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.” 3.6

And then that mendicant approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. 3.7

Then that mendicant, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, 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 homelessness. 4.1

He understood: “Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing 4.2

further for this place.” And that mendicant became one of the perfected.

SN 47.47

Bad Conduct

Duccaritasutta

- 1.1 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha ... and said:
- 1.2 “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.”
- 1.3 “Well then, mendicant, you should purify the starting point of skillful qualities. What is the beginning of skillful qualities? Give up bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind and develop good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. When you’ve done this, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, depending on and grounded on ethics.
- 2.1 What four? Meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. When you develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way, depending on and grounded on ethics, you can expect growth, not decline, in skillful qualities, whether by day or by night.” ...
- 2.7 And that mendicant became one of the perfected.

SN 47.48

Friends

Mittasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, those for whom you have sympathy, and those worth listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be

encouraged, supported, and established by you in the development of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. 2.1

Those for whom you have sympathy, and those worth listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the development of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. 2.6

SN 47.49

Feelings

Vedanāsutta

“Mendicants, there are these three feelings. What three? Pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling. These are the three feelings. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed to completely understand these three feelings. 1.1

What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. 2.1

These four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed to completely understand these three feelings. 2.6

Defilements

Āsavasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three defilements. What three? The defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the three defilements.
- 1.5 The four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed to give up these three defilements.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.
- 2.6 These four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed to give up these three defilements.”

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 47.51–62

Twelve Discourses on the Ganges River, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the 1.1
east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the
four kinds of mindfulness meditation slants, slopes, and inclines to
extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the four kinds of mind- 2.1
fulness meditation slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s
when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—
keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for
the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind
... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and
displeasure for the world.

That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four 2.6
kinds of mindfulness meditation slants, slopes, and inclines to extin-
guishment.”

Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited.

3.1

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 47.63–72

The Realized One

Appamādavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, is said to be the best of all sentient beings—be they footless, with two feet, four feet, or many feet ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148.)

- 2.1 The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
 roots, heartwood, jasmine,
 monarch, sun and moon,
 and cloth is the tenth.

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 47.73–84

Hard Work, Etc.

Balakaraṇīyavagga

“Mendicants, all the hard work that gets done depends on the earth 1.1
and is grounded on the earth. ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160.)

Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
a tree, a pot, and a spike,
the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
a ship, a guest house, and a river.

2.1

The Chapter on Searches

SN 47.85–94

Searches, Etc.

Esanāvagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the search for a spiritual path. ...”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170.)

- 2.1 Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

The Chapter on Floods

SN 47.95–104

Higher Fetters, Etc.

Oghavagga

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for re- 1.1
birth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless
realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher
fetters.

The four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed 1.5
for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and
giving up of these five higher fetters.

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an 2.1
aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness
and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect
of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of
covetousness and displeasure for the world.

These four kinds of mindfulness meditation should be developed 2.6
for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and
giving up of these five higher fetters.”

*(The Linked Discourses on Mindfulness Meditation should be told in full as
in the Linked Discourses on the Path. These ten discourses correspond to SN
45.171–179, with the above as the final discourse.)*

Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,

4.1

aggregates, and fetters high and low.

The Linked Discourses on Mindfulness Meditation, the third section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE FACULTIES

The Chapter on the Plain Version

SN 48.1

Plain Version

Suddhikasutta

1.1 At Sāvaththī.

1.2 There the Buddha said:

1.3 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁵⁷ What five?²⁵⁸ The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.²⁵⁹ These are the five faculties.”

257. *Indriya* (“faculty”) is an abstract noun from *indra*, the name of the potent Vedic god of war. In the Vedas, Indra manifests his *indriya* by drinking soma. The drug enables him to release his full potential and power; originally this probably referred to drinking an amphetamine-like substance before battle. Thus *indriya* means “faculty” in the sense “capability”, but also has the sense “potential, potency”.

258. This Saṃyutta is unique in that it gathers several different kinds of things under the banner of *indriya*. The five spiritual faculties predominate, but we also find the sense faculties, usually reckoned as six (SN 48.25–30), but only five in SN 48.41 and SN 48.42; the five faculties of feeling (SN 48.31–40); the three faculties pertaining to life (SN 48.22); the three faculties pertaining to enlightenment (SN 48.23. Together these were systematized as the Abhidhamma set of 22 faculties (Vb 5).

259. These are the five so-called “spiritual faculties”, whose specification is identical to the “five powers” (SN 50.1–12). For definitions, see SN 48.8, SN 48.9, and SN 48.10.

SN 48.2

A Stream-Enterer (1st)

Paṭhamasotāpannasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. A noble
disciple comes to truly understand these five faculties’ gratification,
drawback, and escape.²⁶⁰ Such a noble disciple is called a stream-
enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined
for awakening.”

SN 48.3

A Stream-Enterer (2nd)

Dutiyasotāpannasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of 1.1
faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. A noble disciple
comes to truly understand these five faculties’ origin, disappearance,
gratification, drawback, and escape. Such a noble disciple is called a
stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured,
destined for awakening.”

260. Of all the sets dealing with the path, only the five faculties are analyzed according to gratification, drawback, and escape. This treatment is elsewhere used for the factors under the wisdom analysis of the phenomena of reality, such as the five aggregates and the six senses. This reflects the fact that the “22 faculties” include, as well as the path, also the senses and other phenomena. Thus the category as a whole melds the path (fourth noble truth) with the phenomena of suffering (first noble truth). This is even implicit in the notion of “faculty” as not just something that one might elect to practice, but a potential within each person. Later in the Saṃyutta we see other similar examples, also unique to the faculties, where they are treated according to “origin and disappearance” (SN 48.3) and the four noble truths (SN 48.7).

SN 48.4

A Perfected One (1st)

Paṭhamaarahantasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. A noble disciple comes to be freed by not grasping after truly understanding these five faculties’ gratification, drawback, and escape.²⁶¹ Such a mendicant is called a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment.”

SN 48.5

A Perfected One (2nd)

Dutiyaarahantasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. A mendicant comes to be freed by not grasping after truly understanding these five faculties’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape. Such a mendicant is called a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment.”

261. A stream-enterer has developed the faculties and understands them, whereas an arahant is freed by not grasping. This distinction is found throughout the Suttas, eg. at SN 22.109–10.

SN 48.6

Ascetics and Brahmins (1st)

Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand the 1.4
gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to these five fac-
ulties. 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 truly understand the 2.1
origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when
it comes to these five faculties. 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 48.7

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand 1.1
the faculty of faith, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads
to its cessation.²⁶² They don’t understand the faculty of energy ...
mindfulness ... immersion ... wisdom, its origin, its cessation, and
the practice that leads to its 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 the faculty 2.1
of faith, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its

262. This is the four noble truths.

cessation. They do understand the faculty of energy ... mindfulness ... immersion ... wisdom, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its 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 48.8

Should Be Seen

Daṭṭhabbasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁶³ What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.
- 1.4 And where should the faculty of faith be seen? In the four factors of stream-entry.²⁶⁴
- 1.7 And where should the faculty of energy be seen? In the four right efforts.²⁶⁵
- 1.10 And where should the faculty of mindfulness be seen? In the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.²⁶⁶
- 1.13 And where should the faculty of immersion be seen? In the four absorptions.²⁶⁷
- 1.16 And where should the faculty of wisdom be seen? In the four noble truths.²⁶⁸
- 1.19 These are the five faculties.”

263. This discourse offers brief expansions of each of the five faculties in terms of standard doctrinal groups of four. This complements the definitions in the next discourses. | The same analysis is applied to the five powers at AN 5.15.

264. Faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, and unshakeable ethics (SN 12.41, SN 55.1). | By this means “ethics” are included in the faculties although not explicitly mentioned. We have noted the same thing for the awakening factors (SN 46.1) and mindfulness meditations (SN 47.3).

265. Per the next Saṃyutta (SN 49.1).

266. Per the previous Saṃyutta (SN 47.1).

267. As usual, *samādhī* (“immersion”) is defined in terms of *jhāna* (“absorption”; see SN 53.1–12).

268. Per the final Saṃyutta (SN 56.1).

SN 48.9

Analysis (1st)

Paṭhamavibhaṅgasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁶⁹ What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

And what is the faculty of faith? It’s when a noble disciple has faith 1.4
in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘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.’²⁷⁰ This is called
the faculty of faith.

And what is the faculty of energy? It’s when a noble disciple 2.1
lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and
embracing skillful qualities. They’re strong, staunchly vigorous, not
slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. This is
called the faculty of energy.

And what is the faculty of mindfulness? It’s when a noble disciple 3.1
is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can

269. A similar analysis of the five powers is found at AN 5.14.

270. Here only faith in the Buddha is mentioned. But one who has faith in the Buddha has faith in his teachings, and in those who have realized his teachings. So while this seems like a narrower definition than the four factors of stream-entry mentioned in the previous Sutta, it is meant by way of example, not excluding other dimensions.

remember and recall what was said and done long ago.²⁷¹ This is called the faculty of mindfulness.

4.1 And what is the faculty of immersion? It's when a noble disciple, relying on letting go, gains immersion, gains unification of mind.²⁷² This is called the faculty of immersion.

5.1 And what is the faculty of wisdom? It's when a noble disciple is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. This is called the faculty of wisdom.

5.4 These are the five faculties."

271. This agrees with the pre-Buddhist sense of *sati* (Sanskrit *smṛti*, *smara*), "to remember, keep in mind" (Rig Veda 7.104.07, 10.61.4, 10.106.9; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.8.1.2; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.15.1; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.13–14, 8.12.3; Kena Upaniṣad 4.5). Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.3.2.3–4 speaks of one who performs the fire ritual while understanding, "In me those gods reside" and thereby wins and traverses all the worlds (since the gods and their worlds (= heavens) exist inside them; see SN 2.26:5.2 and note there). When such a one leaves the ritual ground they continue to "attend" (*upasthāna* = Pali *upaṭṭhāna*) the sacred fire through remembering it (*smara*), and thus staying near it in their mind. "Memory" is critical to the practice of "remembering" scripture (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.7); a skilled reciter enters an uninterrupted flow state where the text is vividly present. In this sense, mindfulness can be understood as the element of continuity that knits consciousness together in a coherent stream. In meditation contexts this is reinforced by words such as "presence" (*parimukham*), "observation" (*anupassanā*), and "clearly knows" (*pajānāti*). Thus when practicing "mindfulness of breathing" one pays continuous attention to the breaths, not "forgetting" what one is doing.

272. This phrase is only used in the context of the five faculties; for the powers, the *jhāna* formula is used. A meditator who "lets go" their attachments to the sensory world with its desires and pleasures find the freedom of absorption.

SN 48.10

Analysis (2nd)

Dutiyavibhaṅgasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁷³ What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

And what is the faculty of faith? It’s when a noble disciple has faith 1.4
in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘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.’ This is called the
faculty of faith.

And what is the faculty of energy? It’s when a noble disciple 2.1
lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and
embracing skillful qualities. They’re strong, staunchly vigorous,
not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They
generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so
that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise. They generate enthusiasm,
try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful
qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm,
try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities
arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind,
and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not
lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. This is called the
faculty of energy.

And what is the faculty of mindfulness? It’s when a noble disciple 3.1
is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can
remember and recall what was said and done long ago. They med-
itate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful,
rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate
observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware,

273. This discourse combines the definitions of the previous two, with the exception of faith, for which the four factors of stream-entry are not mentioned.

and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness.

- 4.1 And what is the faculty of immersion? It's when a noble disciple, relying on letting go, gains immersion, gains unification of mind. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they 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 with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called the faculty of immersion.

- 5.1 And what is the faculty of wisdom? It's when a noble disciple is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. This is called the faculty of wisdom.

- 5.5 These are the five faculties."

The Chapter on Weaker

SN 48.11

Gain

Paṭilābhasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

And what is the faculty of faith? It’s when a noble disciple has faith 1.4
in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘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.’ This is called the
faculty of faith.

And what is the faculty of energy? The energy that’s gained owing 2.1
to the four right efforts. This is called the faculty of energy.

And what is the faculty of mindfulness? The mindfulness that’s 3.1
gained owing to the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. This is
called the faculty of mindfulness.

And what is the faculty of immersion? It’s when a noble disciple, 4.1
relying on letting go, gains immersion, gains unification of mind.
This is called the faculty of immersion.

And what is the faculty of wisdom? It’s when a noble disciple is 5.1
wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is
noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering.
This is called the faculty of wisdom.

5.4 These are the five faculties.”

SN 48.12

In Brief (1st)

Paṭhamasamkīttasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁷⁴ What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re a non-returner. If they are weaker still, they’re a once-returner. If they are weaker still, they’re a stream-enterer. If they’re weaker still, they’re a follower of teachings. If they’re weaker still, they’re a follower by faith.”²⁷⁵

SN 48.13

In Brief (2nd)

Dutiyasamkīttasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re a non-returner ... a once-returner ... a stream-enterer ... a follower of teachings ... a follower by faith.

274. In this and following discourses the concern shifts from definition to spiritual potential or capacity. We see who possesses the faculties, and understand how their development relates to the stages of realization.

275. Even the least of those on the path to stream-entry possess all five faculties to some degree. For the follower of teachings and follower by faith, see SN 25.1 and notes.

So from a disparity of faculties there's a disparity of fruits. And 1.6
from a disparity of fruits there's a disparity of individuals."

SN 48.14

In Brief (3rd)

Tatīyasamīkhiṭṭasutta

"Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the
five faculties.

Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a 1.5
perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they're a non-returner
... a once-returner ... a stream-enterer ... a follower of teachings ...
a follower by faith.

So, mendicants, if you practice partially you succeed partially. If 1.6
you practice fully you succeed fully.²⁷⁶ But in any case, these five
faculties are not barren, I say."

SN 48.15

In Detail (1st)

Paṭhamaviththārasutta

"Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the
five faculties.

Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a 1.5
perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they're one who is extin-
guished between one life and the next ... one who is extinguished
upon landing ... one who is extinguished without extra effort ... one
who is extinguished with extra effort ... one who heads upstream,

276. This idea is discussed more fully at AN 3.86–88.

going to the Akaniṭṭha realm ... a once-returned ... a stream-enterer
... a follower of teachings ... a follower by faith.”

SN 48.16

In Detail (2nd)

Dutiyavittthārasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re one who is extinguished between one life and the next ... one who is extinguished upon landing ... one who is extinguished without extra effort ... one who is extinguished with extra effort ... one who heads upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm ... a once-returned ... a stream-enterer ... a follower of teachings ... a follower by faith.
- 1.6 So from a disparity of faculties there’s a disparity of fruits. And from a disparity of fruits there’s a disparity of individuals.”

SN 48.17

In Detail (3rd)

Tatiyavittthārasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re one who is extinguished between one life and the next ... one who is extinguished upon landing ... one who is extinguished without extra effort ... one who is extinguished with extra effort ... one who heads upstream,

going to the Akaniṭṭha realm ... a once-returner ... a stream-enterer ... a follower of teachings ... a follower by faith.

So, mendicants, if you practice fully you succeed fully. If you 1.6
practice partially you succeed partially. But in any case, these five
faculties are not barren, I say.”

SN 48.18

Practicing

Paṭipannasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the
five faculties.

Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is 1.5
a perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re practicing to
realize the fruit of perfection ... a non-returner ... practicing to
realize the fruit of non-return ... a once-returner ... practicing to
realize the fruit of once-return ... a stream-enterer ... practicing to
realize the fruit of stream-entry. Someone who totally and utterly
lacks these five faculties stands outside in the faction of ordinary
persons, I say.”²⁷⁷

277. While it the five qualities of faith, etc., are found among those who are unenlightened, and even, as potential, among all beings, it is only on entering the noble path that they are considered “faculties” with the decisive power to overcome their opposites. | The expression “stands outside in the faction of ordinary persons” is found only here and SN 55.40:2.1. In both cases it indicates individuals who are not noble ones, but who nonetheless may be Buddhists. *Bāhira* (“outside”) here should be distinguished from the more common *bāhiraka* (“outsider”), which refers to non-Buddhists.

SN 48.19

Endowed

Sampannasutta

- 1.1 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 2.1 “Sir, they speak of someone who is ‘accomplished in the faculties.’²⁷⁸ How is someone accomplished in the faculties defined?”
- 2.3 “Mendicant, it’s when a mendicant develops the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom that lead to peace and awakening. This is how someone who is accomplished in the faculties is defined.”

SN 48.20

The Ending of Defilements

Āsavakkhayasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 It’s because of developing and cultivating these five faculties that a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

278. In SN 35.154, “accomplished in the faculties” is defined as someone who has mastery over the senses.

The Chapter on the Six Faculties

SN 48.21

Future Lives

Punabbhavasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. As long as
I didn’t truly understand these five faculties’ origin, disappearance,
gratification, drawback, and escape, 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 these five faculties’ origin, dis- 1.5
appearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, 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; 1.6
this is my last rebirth; now there’ll be no more future lives.’”

SN 48.22

The Life Faculty

Jīvitindriyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three faculties.²⁷⁹ What three? The faculties of femininity, masculinity, and life.²⁸⁰ These are the three faculties.”

SN 48.23

The Faculty of Enlightenment

Aññindriyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these three faculties. What three? The faculty of understanding that enlightenment is imminent. The faculty of enlightenment. The faculty of one who is enlightened.²⁸¹ These are the three faculties.”

279. Here begins a series on faculties other than the main five. The sequence of topics is not clear, and the collection may be disorganized.

280. The faculty of femininity is described as “feminine moves, feminine appearance, feminine ways, feminine desires, feminine voice, and feminine adornment”, which may be observed and desired in oneself or another (AN 7.51:2.2). It is thus the *expression* of femininity, the *performance* of it, and perhaps the potential for such performance, rather than biological sex. The faculty of masculinity is the opposite. That these are “faculties” suggests that everyone has the potential for both. | The faculty of life is the life force (SN 47.9:2.5), which, when cut off, means death (DN 22:18.10, MN 9:22.5, Bu Pj 3:3.10). It has both material and mental aspects (Vb 5:11.1).

281. Found at DN 33:1.10.111 and Iti 62:2.3, this went on to become a standard set in later Theravāda. | “The faculty of understanding that one’s enlightenment is imminent” is literally, “The faculty aware that ‘I shall know the unknown.’” | The verses at Iti 62 help explain the meaning; see notes there for a detailed discussion. In brief, late canonical texts (followed by the commentary) identify the three with (1) the path to stream-entry, (2) from stream-entry until the path to arahantship, and (3) the realization of arahantship. I disagree, and think they apply to: (1) the path to arahantship; (2) the occasion of realizing arahantship; (3) one living as an arahant.

SN 48.24

A One-Seeder

Ekabījīsutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁸² What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the
five faculties.

Someone who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is a 1.5
perfected one. If they are weaker than that, they’re one who is extin-
guished between one life and the next ... one who is extinguished
upon landing ... one who is extinguished without extra effort ... one
who is extinguished with extra effort ... one who heads upstream,
going to the Akaniṭṭha realm ... a once-returner ... a one-seeder ...
one who goes from family to family ... one who has seven rebirths
at most ... a follower of teachings ... a follower by faith.”

SN 48.25

Plain Version

Suddhakasutta

“Mendicants, there are these six faculties.²⁸³ What six? The faculties 1.1
of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These are the six
faculties.”

282. Here we return for just one discourse to the five spiritual faculties, a clear indication that the collection is disordered.

283. Here begins discussion of the six sense faculties.

SN 48.26

A Stream-Enterer

Sotāpannasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these six faculties. What six? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. A noble disciple comes to truly understand these six faculties’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape. Such a noble disciple is called a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

SN 48.27

A Perfected One

Arahantasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these six faculties. What six? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. A mendicant comes to be freed by not grasping after truly understanding these six faculties’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape.
- 1.5 Such a mendicant is called a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment.”

SN 48.28

Awakened

Sambuddhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these six faculties. What six? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

As long as I didn't truly understand these six faculties' origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, 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. 1.4

But when I did truly understand these six faculties' origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, 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. 1.5

Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.' 1.6

SN 48.29

Ascetics and Brahmins (1st)

Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

"Mendicants, there are these six faculties. What six? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. 1.1

There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to these six faculties. 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. 1.4

There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to these six faculties. 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." 1.6

SN 48.30

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand the eye faculty, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They don’t understand the ear faculty ... nose faculty ... tongue faculty ... body faculty ... mind faculty, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its 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 do understand the eye faculty, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They understand the ear faculty ... nose faculty ... tongue faculty ... body faculty ... mind faculty, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its 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.”

The Chapter on the Pleasure Faculty

SN 48.31

Plain Version

Suddhikasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁸⁴ What five? The faculties 1.1
of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity. These are the
five faculties.”

SN 48.32

A Stream-Enterer

Sotāpannasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of 1.1
pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity. A noble disciple
comes to truly understand these five faculties’ origin, disappearance,
gratification, drawback, and escape. Such a noble disciple is called a
stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured,
destined for awakening.”

284. Here we move on to another set of faculties, the five faculties relating to feeling. The capacity to feel is also a kind of spiritual potency, since feeling stirs a meditator to the path. They are defined at SN 48.36.

SN 48.33

A Perfected One

Arahantasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity. A mendicant comes to be freed by not grasping after truly understanding these five faculties’ origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape.
- 1.5 Such a mendicant is called a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment.”

SN 48.34

Ascetics and Brahmins (1st)

Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.
- 1.4 There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to these five faculties. 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 do truly understand the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape when it comes to these five faculties. 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 48.35

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.

Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t under- 1.4
stand the faculty of pleasure, its origin, its cessation, and the practice
that leads to its cessation. There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t
understand the faculty of pain ... happiness ... sadness ... equanim-
ity, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its 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 the faculty 2.1
of pleasure, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its
cessation. There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand the
faculty of pain ... happiness ... sadness ... equanimity, its origin, its
cessation, and the practice that leads to its 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 48.36

Analysis (1st)

Paṭhamavibhaṅgasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.

And what is the faculty of pleasure? Physical enjoyment, physical 2.1
pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that’s born from physical
contact. This is called the faculty of pleasure.

- 3.1 And what is the faculty of pain? Physical pain, physical unpleasantness, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from physical contact. This is called the faculty of pain.
- 4.1 And what is the faculty of happiness? Mental enjoyment, mental pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that's born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of happiness.
- 5.1 And what is the faculty of sadness? Mental pain, mental displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of sadness.
- 6.1 And what is the faculty of equanimity? Neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling, whether physical or mental. This is the faculty of equanimity.
- 6.4 These are the five faculties."

SN 48.37

Analysis (2nd)

Dutiyaṭṭhāṅgasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.
- 2.1 And what is the faculty of pleasure? Physical enjoyment, physical pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that's born from physical contact. This is called the faculty of pleasure.
- 3.1 And what is the faculty of pain? Physical pain, physical unpleasantness, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from physical contact. This is called the faculty of pain.
- 4.1 And what is the faculty of happiness? Mental enjoyment, mental pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that's born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of happiness.
- 5.1 And what is the faculty of sadness? Mental pain, mental displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of sadness.

And what is the faculty of equanimity? Neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling, whether physical or mental. This is the faculty of equanimity. 6.1

In this context, the faculties of pleasure and happiness should be seen as pleasant feeling. The faculties of pain and sadness should be seen as painful feeling. The faculty of equanimity should be seen as neutral feeling. 7.1

These are the five faculties.” 7.4

SN 48.38

Analysis (3rd)

Tatīyavibhaṅgasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity. 1.1

And what is the faculty of pleasure? Physical enjoyment, physical pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that’s born from physical contact. This is called the faculty of pleasure. 2.1

And what is the faculty of pain? Physical pain, physical unpleasantness, the painful, unpleasant feeling that’s born from physical contact. This is called the faculty of pain. 3.1

And what is the faculty of happiness? Mental enjoyment, mental pleasure, the enjoyable, pleasant feeling that’s born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of happiness. 4.1

And what is the faculty of sadness? Mental pain, mental displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that’s born from mind contact. This is called the faculty of sadness. 5.1

And what is the faculty of equanimity? Neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling, whether physical or mental. This is the faculty of equanimity. 6.1

In this context, the faculties of pleasure and happiness should be seen as pleasant feeling. The faculties of pain and sadness should be 7.1

seen as painful feeling. The faculty of equanimity should be seen as neutral feeling.

- 7.4 That's how these five faculties, depending on how they're explained, having been five become three, and having been three become five."

SN 48.39

The Simile of the Fire Sticks

Kaṭṭhopamasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.
- 1.4 The faculty of pleasure arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as pleasant. When in a state of pleasure, you understand: 'I'm in a state of pleasure.' With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as pleasant, you understand that the corresponding faculty of pleasure that had arisen ceases and stops.
- 2.1 The faculty of pain arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as painful. When in a state of pain, you understand: 'I'm in a state of pain.' With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as painful, you understand that the corresponding faculty of pain that had arisen ceases and stops.
- 3.1 The faculty of happiness arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as happiness. When in a state of happiness, you understand: 'I'm in a state of happiness.' With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as happiness, you understand that the corresponding faculty of happiness that had arisen ceases and stops.
- 4.1 The faculty of sadness arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as sadness. When in a state of sadness, you understand: 'I'm in a state of sadness.' With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as sadness, you understand that the corresponding faculty of sadness that had arisen ceases and stops.

The faculty of equanimity arises dependent on a contact to be 5.1
 experienced as equanimous. When in a state of equanimity, you
 understand: ‘I’m in a state of equanimity.’ With the cessation of
 that contact to be experienced as equanimous, you understand that
 the corresponding faculty of equanimity that had arisen ceases and
 stops.

When you rub two sticks together, heat is generated and fire is 6.1
 produced. But when you part the sticks and lay them aside, any
 corresponding heat ceases and stops.²⁸⁵

In the same way, the faculty of pleasure arises dependent on a 6.2
 contact to be experienced as pleasant. When in a state of pleasure,
 you understand: ‘I’m in a state of pleasure.’ With the cessation of
 that contact to be experienced as pleasant, you understand that the
 corresponding faculty of pleasure that arises ceases and stops.²⁸⁶

The faculty of pain ... happiness ... sadness ... equanimity arises 7.1
 dependent on a contact to be experienced as equanimous. When in
 a state of equanimity, you understand: ‘I’m in a state of equanimity.’
 With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as equanimous,
 you understand that the corresponding faculty of equanimity that
 arises ceases and stops.”

285. Experience depends on the collision of disparate elements, whose friction or “resistance” (*paṭigha*, DN 15:20.4) sparks the light of consciousness. Hence consciousness, like fire, is beautiful but also burning (SN 35:28). | This simile is also found at MN 140:19.13, SN 12.62:4.1, and SN 36.10:1.10.

286. Text switches from “arisen” (*uppanna*) to “arises” (*uppajjati*).

SN 48.40

Irregular Order

Uppaṭipāṭikasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties.²⁸⁷ What five? The faculties of pain, sadness, pleasure, happiness, and equanimity.
- 1.4 While a mendicant is meditating—diligent, keen, and resolute—the faculty of pain arises.²⁸⁸ They understand: ‘The faculty of pain has arisen in me. And that has a basis, a source, a condition, and a reason.²⁸⁹ It’s not possible that the faculty of pain will arise without a basis, a source, a condition, or a reason.’ They understand the faculty of pain, its origin, its cessation, and where that faculty of pain that’s arisen ceases without remainder. And where does that faculty of pain that’s arisen cease without remainder? It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. That’s where the faculty of pain that’s arisen ceases without remainder. They’re called a mendicant who understands the cessation of the faculty of pain, and who applies their mind to that end.
- 2.1 While a mendicant is meditating—diligent, keen, and resolute—the faculty of sadness arises.²⁹⁰ They understand: ‘The faculty of

287. Here the faculties are correlated with the absorptions, highlighting the connection between the feelings and the practice of the path. | The title, according to the commentary, refers to the fact that the faculties are presented in the order in which they are abandoned through the development of absorption, rather than in the normal teaching sequence.

288. They experience pain in the body while meditating. | Each section pivots on the use of the verb *uppajjati* (“arise”) in present tense, past participle, and future tense.

289. Here *nimitta* clearly means “basis”, as also at eg. AN 2.77.

290. The sense of this is unclear. Perhaps as the meditator’s first absorption weakens they become conscious of how close the suffering of the sensory world is, and long for higher states. The commentary, instead, connects this sadness

sadness has arisen in me. And that has a basis, a source, a condition, and a reason. It's not possible that the faculty of sadness will arise without a basis, a source, a condition, or a reason.' They understand the faculty of sadness, its origin, its cessation, and where that faculty of sadness that's arisen ceases without remainder. And where does that faculty of sadness that's arisen cease without remainder? It's when, 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. That's where the faculty of sadness that's arisen ceases without remainder. They're called a mendicant who understands the cessation of the faculty of sadness, and who applies their mind to that end.

While a mendicant is meditating—diligent, keen, and resolute— 3.1
the faculty of pleasure arises.²⁹¹ They understand: 'The faculty of pleasure has arisen in me. And that has a basis, a source, a condition, and a reason. It's not possible that the faculty of pleasure will arise without a basis, a source, a condition, or a reason.' They understand the faculty of pleasure, its origin, its cessation, and where that faculty of pleasure that's arisen ceases without remainder. And where does that faculty of pleasure that's arisen cease without remainder? It's when, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' That's where the faculty of pleasure that's arisen ceases without remainder. They're called a mendicant who understands the

with the *vitakka* and *vicāra* that are still operating at this point. These are not in themselves unpleasant, but perhaps they are considered so because they are relatively unpeaceful.

291. Here the faculty of "pleasure" (*sukha*) seems to be equated with "rapture" (*pīti*), and "happiness" (*somanassa*) with "bliss" (also *sukha*).

cessation of the faculty of pleasure, and who applies their mind to that end.

- 4.1 While a mendicant is meditating—diligent, keen, and resolute—the faculty of happiness arises. They understand: ‘The faculty of happiness has arisen in me. And that has a basis, a source, a condition, and a reason. It’s not possible that the faculty of happiness will arise without a basis, a source, a condition, or a reason.’ They understand the faculty of happiness, its origin, its cessation, and where that faculty of happiness that’s arisen ceases without remainder. And where does that faculty of happiness that’s arisen cease without remainder? It’s when, giving up pleasure and pain, and disappearance former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. That’s where the faculty of happiness that’s arisen ceases without remainder. They’re called a mendicant who understands the cessation of the faculty of happiness, and who applies their mind to that end.

- 5.1 While a mendicant is meditating—diligent, keen, and resolute—the faculty of equanimity arises. They understand: ‘The faculty of equanimity has arisen in me. And that has a basis, a source, a condition, and a reason. It’s not possible that the faculty of equanimity will arise without a basis, a source, a condition, or a reason.’ They understand the faculty of equanimity, its origin, its cessation, and where that faculty of equanimity that’s arisen ceases without remainder. And where does that faculty of equanimity that’s arisen cease without remainder? It’s when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. That’s where the faculty of equanimity that’s arisen ceases without remainder. They’re called a mendicant who understands the cessation of the faculty of equanimity, and who applies their mind to that end.”

The Chapter on Old Age

SN 48.41

Old Age

Jarādhhammasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD.²⁹² At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvattthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern
Monastery. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of
retreat and sat warming his back in the last rays of the sun.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and while 2.1
massaging the Buddha’s limbs he said:

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how the complexion of your skin 2.2
is no longer pure and bright. Your limbs are flaccid and wrinkled,
and your body is stooped. And it’s apparent that there has been a
deterioration in your faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body.”

“That’s how it is, Ānanda. When young you’re liable to grow old; 3.1
when healthy you’re liable to get sick; and when alive you’re liable to
die. The complexion of the skin is no longer pure and bright. The
limbs are flaccid and wrinkled, and the body is stooped. And it’s
apparent that there has been a deterioration in the faculties of eye,
ear, nose, tongue, and body.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 4.1
went on to say:

292. Here we begin the next set of faculties, the five external senses. Each of these can be understood as a potential or capacity of the mind.

- 5.1 “Curse this wretched old age,
which makes you so ugly.
That’s how much this delightful puppet
is ground down by old age.
- 6.1 Even if you live for a hundred years,
you’ll still end up dying.
Death spares no one,
but crushes all underfoot.”

SN 48.42

The Brahmin Uṇṇābha

Uṇṇābhabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Then Uṇṇābha the brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.²⁹³ When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:
- 2.1 “Worthy Gotama, these five faculties have different domains and different ranges, and don’t experience each other’s domain and range.²⁹⁴ What five? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. What do these five faculties, with their different domains and ranges, have recourse to? What experiences their domains and ranges?”
- 3.1 “Brahmin, these five faculties have different domains and different ranges, and don’t experience each other’s domain and range. What five? The faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. These five

293. Uṇṇābha became a lay follower following a discussion on the bases of psychic power at SN 51.15. He was evidently named for his “woolly eyebrows”.

294. The phrasing here parallels the simile of the six animals in SN 35.247. Here, however, the text makes it clear that we are talking about meditative development, as is also the case where the same phrase appears in MN 43:21.3.

faculties, with their different domains and ranges, have recourse to the mind. And the mind experiences their domains and ranges.”²⁹⁵

“But worthy Gotama, what does the mind have recourse to?” 4.1

“The mind has recourse to mindfulness.” 4.2

“But what does mindfulness have recourse to?” 4.3

“Mindfulness has recourse to freedom.”²⁹⁶ 4.4

“But what does freedom have recourse to?” 4.5

“Freedom has recourse to extinguishment.” 4.6

“But what does extinguishment have recourse to?” 4.7

“This question goes too far, brahmin! You weren’t able to grasp the limit of questioning.”²⁹⁷ For extinguishment is the objective, destination, and culmination of the spiritual life.” 4.8

And then the brahmin Uṇṇābha approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. 5.1

Then, not long after he had left, the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Suppose there was a bungalow or a hall with a peaked roof, with windows on the eastern side. When the sun rises and a ray of light enters through a window, where would it land?” 6.1

“On the western wall, sir.” 6.3

“In the same way, the brahmin Uṇṇābha’s faith in the Realized One is settled, rooted, and planted deep. It’s strong and can’t be shifted by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. If he were to pass away at this time, he would be bound by no fetter that might return him to this world.”²⁹⁸ 6.4

295. In terms of meditative progress, the five faculties imply sense restraint as a preparation for meditation. Then one withdraws from the senses to that which is their center and controller, the mind. Mindfulness then leads to the liberation of immersion, culminating in awakening.

296. “Freedom” is identified with the faculty of *samādhi* at SN 48.46:2.7.

297. Also at SN 23.1:3.10 and MN 44:29.14.

298. That is, he is a non-returner.

SN 48.43

At Sāketa

Sāketasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāketa in the deer park at the Añjana Wood. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, is there a method in which the five faculties become the five powers, and the five powers become the five faculties?”
- 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.”
- 3.1 “Mendicants, there is a method in which the five faculties become the five powers, and the five powers become the five faculties.
- 4.1 And what is that method? The faculty of faith is the power of faith, and the power of faith is the faculty of faith.²⁹⁹ The faculty of energy is the power of energy, and the power of energy is the faculty of energy. The faculty of mindfulness is the power of mindfulness, and the power of mindfulness is the faculty of mindfulness. The faculty of immersion is the power of immersion, and the power of immersion is the faculty of immersion. The faculty of wisdom is the power of wisdom, and the power of wisdom is the faculty of wisdom.
- 4.7 Suppose there was a river slanting, sloping, and inclining to the east, and in the middle was an island. There’s a method in which that river can be reckoned to have just one stream. But there’s also a method in which that river can be reckoned to have two streams.
- 5.1 And what’s the method in which that river can be reckoned to have just one stream? By taking into account the water to the east

299. This establishes that the faculties and powers are the same. Yet the form used is not that of emphatic identity (which would employ repeated demonstrative pronouns), but could be translated, “the faculty of faith becomes the power of faith, the power of faith becomes the faculty of faith.”

and the west of the island, that river can be reckoned to have just one stream.

And what's the method in which that river can be reckoned to have two streams? By taking into account the water to the north and the south of the island, that river can be reckoned to have two streams.³⁰⁰ 6.1

By the same method, the faculty of faith is the power of faith, and the power of faith is the faculty of faith. The faculty of energy is the power of energy, and the power of energy is the faculty of energy. The faculty of mindfulness is the power of mindfulness, and the power of mindfulness is the faculty of mindfulness. The faculty of immersion is the power of immersion, and the power of immersion is the faculty of immersion. The faculty of wisdom is the power of wisdom, and the power of wisdom is the faculty of wisdom. 6.4

It's because of developing and cultivating the five faculties that a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements." 6.9

SN 48.44

At the Eastern Gate

Pubbakoṭṭhakasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in Sāvattḥī at the eastern gate. Then the Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta: 1.1

300. The simile explains the different ways in which the stream can be considered, but exactly how this is to be applied is not spelled out. Rivers in the Ganges plain generally flow from west to east. This suggests that the two sets proceed in the same way, leading to the ocean of Nibbāna. Along the way, however, they are for a short time split into north and south. The commentary explains the difference in terms of positive and negative: the faculties consolidate the positive qualities (of faith, etc.) while the powers quash the negative qualities (of doubt, etc.).

- 1.4 “Sāriputta, do you have faith that the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, when developed and cultivated, have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination?”
- 2.1 “Sir, in this case I don’t rely on faith in the Buddha’s claim that³⁰¹ the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, when developed and cultivated, have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination. There are those who have not known or seen or understood or realized or experienced this with wisdom. They may rely on faith in this matter. But there are those who have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom. They have no doubts or uncertainties in this matter. I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom. I have no doubts or uncertainties that the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, when developed and cultivated, have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination.”
- 3.1 “Good, good, Sāriputta! There are those who have not known or seen or understood or realized or experienced this with wisdom. They may rely on faith in this matter. But there are those who have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom. They have no doubts or uncertainties that the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, when developed and cultivated, have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination.”

301. See too SN 41.8, AN 5.34, and AN 7.57.

SN 48.45

At the Eastern Monastery (1st)

Paṭhamapubbārāmasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī 1.1
in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery.
There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, how
many faculties must a mendicant develop and cultivate so that they
can 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”?’”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. . . .” 2.1

“A mendicant must develop and cultivate one faculty so that they 2.2
can declare enlightenment.³⁰² What one? The faculty of wisdom.
When a noble disciple has wisdom, the faith, energy, mindfulness,
and immersion that follow along with that become stabilized.³⁰³
This is the one faculty that a mendicant must develop and cultivate
so that they can 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.”’”

SN 48.46

At the Eastern Monastery (2nd)

Dutiyapubbārāmasutta

The same setting. 1.1

302. The following series of Suttas expands the number of faculties required. This is not a contradiction, because each faculty depends on the prior development of the previous ones.

303. This can apply to wisdom generally, but specifically the realization of the four noble truths at stream-entry, after which it is not possible to completely lose the faculties.

- 1.2 “Mendicants, how many faculties must a mendicant develop and cultivate so that they can 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”?’”
- 2.1 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...”
- 2.2 “A mendicant must develop and cultivate two faculties so that they can declare enlightenment. What two? Noble wisdom and noble freedom. For their noble wisdom is the faculty of wisdom. And their noble freedom is the faculty of immersion.
- 2.8 These are the two faculties that a mendicant must develop and cultivate so that they can 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.”’”

SN 48.47

At the Eastern Monastery (3rd)

Tatiyapubbārāmasutta

- 1.1 The same setting.
- 1.2 “Mendicants, how many faculties must a mendicant develop and cultivate so that they can 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”?’”
- 2.1 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...”
- 2.2 “A mendicant must develop and cultivate four faculties so that they can declare enlightenment. What four? The faculties of energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.
- 2.6 These are the four faculties that a mendicant must develop and cultivate so that they can 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.”’”

SN 48.48

At the Eastern Monastery (4th)

Catutthapubbārāmasutta

The same setting.

1.1

“Mendicants, how many faculties must a mendicant develop and cultivate so that they can 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”?’”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. . . .”

2.1

“A mendicant must develop and cultivate five faculties so that they can declare enlightenment. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

2.2

These are the five faculties that a mendicant must develop and cultivate so that they can 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.”’”

2.6

SN 48.49

About Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer

Piṇḍolabhāradvājasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita’s monastery.

1.1

Now at that time Venerable Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer had 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.’”

1.3

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then they said, “What reason does Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer see for doing this?”

1.5

“It’s because Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer has developed and cultivated three faculties that he declares enlightenment: ‘I under-

3.1

stand: “Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.”

- 3.3 What three? The faculties of mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.
- 3.5 It’s because Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer has developed and cultivated these three faculties that he declares enlightenment.
- 3.7 What’s the culmination of these three faculties? They culminate in ending. In the ending of what? Of rebirth, old age, and death.
- 3.11 It’s because he sees that they culminate in the ending of rebirth, old age, and death that Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer declares 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.”’”

SN 48.50

At Āpaṇa

Āpaṇasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Aṅgas, near the Aṅgan town named Āpaṇa.³⁰⁴ Then the Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta:
- 1.4 “Sāriputta, would a noble disciple who is sure and devoted to the Realized One have any doubt or uncertainty about the Realized One or his instructions?”
- 2.1 “Sir, a noble disciple who is sure and devoted to the Realized One would have no doubt or uncertainty about the Realized One or his instructions.

304. Aṅga was the country to that controlled the Ganges to the east of both Magadha and Vesālī. The market town of Āpaṇa was evidently the chief settlement of the region. At MN 54:1.2 it was said to a town of the Aṅguttarāpans, in reference to the region of Aṅga north of both the Ganges and the Mahī, “Aṅga North of the Water”.

You can expect that a faithful noble disciple will live with energy 2.2
roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful
qualities. They're strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it
comes to developing skillful qualities. For their energy is the faculty
of energy.

You can expect that a faithful and energetic noble disciple will be 3.1
mindful, with utmost mindfulness and alertness, able to remember
and recall what was said and done long ago. For their mindfulness is
the faculty of mindfulness.

You can expect that a faithful, energetic, and mindful noble disci- 4.1
ple will, relying on letting go, gain immersion, gain unification of
mind. For their immersion is the faculty of immersion.

You can expect that a faithful, energetic, mindful noble disciple 5.1
with their mind immersed in samādhi will understand this: 'Trans-
migration has no known beginning.'³⁰⁵ No first point is found of
sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance
and fettered by craving. But when that dark mass of ignorance fades
away and ceases with no residue left behind, that state is peaceful and
sublime. That is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attach-
ments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment.
For their noble wisdom is the faculty of wisdom.'³⁰⁶

When a noble disciple has tried again and again, recollected again 6.1
and again, entered immersion again and again, and understood with
wisdom again and again, they will be confident of this: 'I have previ-
ously heard of these things. But now I have direct meditative expe-
rience of them, and see them with penetrating wisdom.' For their
faith is the faculty of faith."

"Good, good, Sāriputta! 7.1

Sāriputta, a noble disciple who is sure and devoted to the Realized 7.2
One would have no doubt or uncertainty about the Realized One or
his instructions. ..."

305. See SN 15.1:1.7 and note.

306. This is a unique description of the wisdom faculty.

7.3 The Buddha then repeated Sāriputta's answer word for word.

The Chapter on the Boar's Cave

SN 48.51

At Sālā

Sālasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the 1.1
land of the Kosalans near the brahmin village of Sālā. There the
Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, the lion, king of
beasts, is said to be the best of animals in terms of strength, speed,
and courage. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the
best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming
awakened.”³⁰⁷

307. The five faculties are “qualities on the side of awakening” (*bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*) because they lead to awakening (SN 48.51:2.6). This term is used repeatedly in this Saṃyutta in this sense. Outside of this context, it is used occasionally in the general sense of meditative development, without further specification (AN 5.56:3.1). In three instances it is extended to “seven” such qualities (DN 27:30.5, Iti 82:3.1, Iti 97:4.2), which the commentary identifies with the seven sets of dhammas totaling 37 (rather than the seven awakening factors alone). We also find the synonymous phrase *sambodhipakkhika* at AN 9.1. At Thag 16.9:9.2 we find qualities that are “skillful, on the side of awakening” (*kusalā bodhipakkhikā*), cementing the connection with the expressions “on the side of the skillful” or “on the side of the unskillful” (SN 46.31:1.1, MN 117:36.1, AN 1.56:1.1). The qualities “on the side of awakening” oppose those “on the side of Māra” (Thag 4.4:1.2).

- 2.1 And what are the qualities on the side of awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom are qualities on the side of awakening, in that they lead to becoming awakened. The lion, king of beasts, is said to be the best of animals in terms of strength, speed, and courage. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.”

SN 48.52

In the Land of the Mallas

Mallikasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Mallas, near the Mallian town named Uruvelakappa.³⁰⁸ There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:
- 1.4 “Mendicants, as long as noble knowledge hasn’t arisen for a noble disciple the four faculties are not stable and fixed. But when noble knowledge has arisen for a noble disciple the four faculties become stable and fixed.
- 2.1 It’s just like in a bungalow. As long as the roof peak is not lifted into place, the rafters are not stable or fixed. But when the roof peak is lifted into place, the rafters become stable and fixed.
- 2.3 In the same way, as long as noble knowledge hasn’t arisen for a noble disciple the four faculties are not stable and fixed. But when noble knowledge has arisen for a noble disciple the four faculties become stable and fixed.
- 3.1 What four? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, and immersion. When a noble disciple has wisdom, the faith, energy, mindfulness, and immersion that follow along with that become stabilized.”

308. The Mallian lands lay to the north of the Sarabhū/Gaghara river, and west of the Vajjian federation.

SN 48.53

A Trainee

Sekhasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, is there a way that a mendicant who is a trainee, standing at the level of a trainee, can understand that they are a trainee? And that a mendicant who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can understand that they are an adept?" 1.1

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ..." 2.1

"There is a way that a mendicant who is a trainee, standing at the level of a trainee, can understand that they are a trainee, and that a mendicant who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can understand that they are an adept. 2.2

And what is a way that a mendicant who is a trainee can understand that they are a trainee? It's when a mendicant who is a trainee truly understands: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. This is a way that a mendicant who is a trainee can understand that they are a trainee. 3.1

Furthermore, a mendicant who is a trainee reflects: 'Is there any other ascetic or brahmin elsewhere whose teaching is as true, as real, as accurate as that of the Buddha?'³⁰⁹ They understand: 'There is no other ascetic or brahmin elsewhere whose teaching is as true, as real, as accurate as that of the Buddha.' This too is a way that a mendicant who is a trainee can understand that they are a trainee. 4.1

Furthermore, a mendicant who is a trainee understands the five faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. And although they don't have direct meditative experience of their destination, apex, fruit, and culmination, they do see them with penetrat- 5.1

309. Outside of Buddhism.

ing wisdom. This too is a way that a mendicant who is a trainee can understand that they are a trainee.

- 6.1 And what is the way that a mendicant who is an adept can understand that they are an adept? It's when a mendicant who is an adept understands the five faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. They have direct meditative experience of their destination, apex, fruit, and culmination, and they see them with penetrating wisdom. This is a way that a mendicant who is an adept can understand that they are an adept.
- 7.1 Furthermore, a mendicant who is an adept understands the six faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. They understand: 'These six faculties will totally and utterly cease without remainder. And no other six faculties will arise anywhere anyhow.' This too is a way that a mendicant who is an adept can understand that they are an adept."

SN 48.54

Footprints

Padasutta

- 1.1 "The footprints of all creatures that walk can fit inside an elephant's footprint, so an elephant's footprint is said to be the biggest of them all. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the steps that lead to awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.³¹⁰
- 1.3 And what are the steps that lead to awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom are steps that lead to awakening, in that they lead to becoming awakened.
- 1.9 The footprints of all creatures that walk can fit inside an elephant's footprint, so an elephant's footprint is said to be the biggest of them

310. The phrase "steps that lead to awakening" (*padāni bodhāya samvattanti*) is clearly meant to parallel *bodhipakkhiyā* ("on the side of awakening") in preceding and following Suttas.

all. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the steps that lead to awakening; that is, for becoming awakened. ”

SN 48.55

Heartwood

Sārasutta

“Of all kinds of fragrant heartwood, red sandalwood is said to be 1.1
the best. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the
best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming
awakened.

And what are the qualities on the side of awakening? The faculties 1.3
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom are qualities
on the side of awakening, in that they lead to becoming awakened.

Of all kinds of fragrant heartwood, red sandalwood is said to be 1.9
the best. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the
best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming
awakened.”

SN 48.56

Grounded

Paṭiṭṭhitasutta

“Mendicants, when a mendicant is grounded in one thing the five 1.1
faculties become developed, well developed. What one thing? Dili-
gence. And what is diligence? It’s when a mendicant looks after
their mind when it comes to defilements and things accompanied
by defilements. As they do so the faculties of faith, energy, mind-
fulness, immersion, and wisdom are fully developed. That’s how
when a mendicant is grounded in one thing the five faculties become
developed, well developed.”

SN 48.57

With the Divinity Sahampati

Sahampatibrahmasutta

- 1.1 At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying in Uruvelā at the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.³¹¹
- 1.2 Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, “When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination.”
- 2.1 Then the divinity Sahampati knew the Buddha's train of thought. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of the Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said:
- 2.3 “That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination.
- 3.1 Once upon a time, sir, I lived the spiritual life under the fully awakened Buddha Kassapa.³¹² There they knew me as the mendicant Sahaka. Because of developing and cultivating these same five

311. Compare the similar framing in the context of mindfulness meditation at SN 47.18.

312. This detail is not mentioned elsewhere. Given that in a past life as Jotipāla, the Buddha also went forth under Kassapa, this implies that Sahampati and the Buddha were fellow monks in Kassapa's community (MN 81).

faculties I lost desire for sensual pleasures. When my body broke up, after death, I was reborn in a good place, in the realm of divinity. There they know me as the divinity Sahampati.

That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! I know 3.7
and see how when these five faculties are developed and cultivated they have freedom from death as their objective, destination, and culmination."

SN 48.58

The Boar's Cave

Sūkarakhatasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's 1.1
Peak Mountain in the Boar's Cave.³¹³ Then the Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta:

"Sāriputta, considering what benefit does a mendicant with de- 1.3
filements ended, in rolling forth, roll forth with utmost deference for the Realized One or his instructions?"³¹⁴

"Sir, it is considering the supreme sanctuary from the yoke that a 1.4
mendicant with defilements ended, in rolling forth, rolls forth with utmost deference for the Realized One or his instructions."³¹⁵

"Good, good, Sāriputta! For it is considering the supreme sanctu- 1.5
ary from the yoke that a mendicant whose defilements are ended, in

313. This is famously the scene of Sāriputta's awakening (MN 74:1.2).

314. The interpretation of this discourse is problematic, and no parallels are recorded. I translate fairly literally, not trying to smooth over the problems. I believe it is thematically similar to SN 16.5, where Mahākassapa explains that he continues his austere lifestyle even though he is enlightened both because he enjoys it, and to inspire future generations. | I take the expression *pavattamāno pavattati* ("in rolling forth, roll forth") as referring to Sāriputta's role as the disciple who, like no other, continues to "roll forth" the wheel of the teaching (MN 111:23.1, SN 8.7:3.4, AN 1.187:1.1). The Buddha is asking what motivates Sāriputta to teach.

315. Presumably this means so that others can realize awakening.

rolling forth, rolls forth with utmost deference for the Realized One or his instructions.

- 2.1 And what is that supreme sanctuary from the yoke?”
- 2.2 “It’s when a mendicant with defilements ended develops the faculties of faith,³¹⁶ energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which lead to peace and awakening. It is considering this supreme sanctuary from the yoke that a mendicant with defilements ended, in rolling forth, rolls forth with utmost deference for the Realized One or his instructions.”
- 2.8 “Good, good, Sāriputta! For this is that supreme sanctuary from the yoke.
- 3.1 And what is that utmost deference that a mendicant with defilements ended, in rolling forth, shows toward the Realized One or his instructions?”
- 3.2 “It’s when a mendicant with defilements ended maintains respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the training, and immersion.³¹⁷ This is that utmost deference.”
- 3.4 “Good, good, Sāriputta! For this is that utmost deference that a mendicant with defilements ended, in rolling forth, shows toward the Realized One or his instructions.”

316. The text seems corrupt here; first, the faculties are the path to awakening, not awakening itself; and second, an arahant does not “develop” for they have already fully developed. “Develop” (*bhāveti*) is a causative verb, to “make be more”. Such verbs can mean to make or instigate someone to do something, although this is not how this very common verb is used elsewhere. Nonetheless, the sense here seems to be that an arahant teaches in order to establish others on the path to awakening.

317. The same five things were taught to Mahākassapa as leading to the enduring of the dispensation (SN 16.13:4.3).

SN 48.59

Arising (1st)

Paṭhamauppiṇṇasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, these five faculties don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These five faculties don’t arise to be developed and cultivated except when a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha has appeared.” 1.2

SN 48.60

Arising (2nd)

Dutiyauppiṇṇasutta

“Mendicants, these five faculties don’t arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One’s training. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These five faculties don’t arise to be developed and cultivated apart from the Holy One’s training.” 1.1

The Chapter on Leading to Awakening

SN 48.61

Fetters

Samyojanasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, when these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to giving up the fetters. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to giving up the fetters.”

SN 48.62

Tendencies

Anusayasutta

1.1 “Mendicants, when these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to uprooting the underlying tendencies. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to uprooting the underlying tendencies.”

SN 48.63

Complete Understanding

Pariññāsutta

“Mendicants, when these five faculties are developed and cultivated 1.1
they lead to the complete understanding of the course of time. What
five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and
wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they
lead to the complete understanding of the course of time.”

SN 48.64

Ending of Defilements

Āsavakkhayaṣutta

“Mendicants, when these five faculties are developed and cultivated 1.1
they lead to the ending of defilements.³¹⁸ What five? The faculties
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these

318. The discourses SN 48.61–64 follow the same template as SN 54.19–20. In both series, we have the fetters, underlying tendencies, course of time, and end of defilements as individual items, then a final passage that combines all four items. We find the same basic series also at SN 45.42–45, but without the combined list. The editing in different editions exhibits considerable uncertainty. In the MS edition, for example, the current Sutta lists the final four in one sentence, whereas at SN 54.20:1.8 they are separated by ellipsis, showing that the editors thought some passages had been elided. BJT, on the other hand, spells out the main four passages in full, but omits the combined series entirely. At SN 54.20 it says, “these three discourses should also be expanded just as the discourse on the fetters”. However it has, in fact, just spelled all of the discourses in full, rendering the instructions moot, so they must be a holdover from one of the sources from which the BJT was edited. I won’t discuss all the editorial problems, but in the next note I propose my solution.

five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to the ending of defilements.”³¹⁹

- 2.1 “Mendicants, when these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to giving up the fetters, uprooting the underlying tendencies, completely understanding the course of time, and ending the defilements. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. When these five faculties are developed and cultivated they lead to giving up the fetters, uprooting the underlying tendencies, completely understanding the course of time, and ending the defilements.”

SN 48.65

Two Fruits

Paṭhamaphalasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.
- 1.5 Because of developing and cultivating these five faculties, one of two results can be expected: enlightenment in this very life, or if there’s residue left behind, non-return.”

319. The close *-ti* here in the MS edition indicates that, following the pattern of the previous three discourses, the Sutta ends here. The PTS, followed by Bodhi, omits this closing statement and continues as if it were the same Sutta (BJT, as noted above, omits the following combined section entirely). I believe the next passage, with the combined list, should be counted as a separate Sutta, although it is not reckoned so in any Pali edition. However, the fact that the combined passage is not found in BJT, nor in the template parallel at SN 45.42–45, suggests that it may be entirely spurious, having arisen by confusion created by the extreme abbreviations in the texts here.

SN 48.66

Seven Benefits

Dutiyaphalasutta

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties 1.1
of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the
five faculties.

Because of developing and cultivating these five faculties, seven 1.5
fruits and benefits can be expected. What seven? They attain enlight-
enment early on in this very life. If not, they attain enlightenment
at the time of death. If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters,
they’re extinguished between one life and the next ... they’re extin-
guished upon landing ... they’re extinguished without extra effort
... they’re extinguished with extra effort ... they head upstream,
going to the Akaniṭṭha realm.

Because of developing and cultivating these five faculties, these 1.14
seven fruits and benefits can be expected.”

SN 48.67

A Tree (1st)

Paṭhamarukkkhasutta

“Mendicants, of all the trees in the Black Plum Tree Land, the black 1.1
plum is said to be the best.³²⁰ In the same way, the faculty of wisdom
is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that
is, for becoming awakened. And what are the qualities on the side of
awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion,
and wisdom are qualities on the side of awakening, in that they lead
to becoming awakened. Of all the trees in the Black Plum Tree Land,
the black plum is said to be the best. In the same way, the faculty of

320. The black plum (*jambu*) is also said to be the best of all trees at Skanda
Purāṇa 252.26.

wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.”

SN 48.68

A Tree (2nd)

Dutiyarukkkhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, of all the trees belonging to the gods of the thirty-three, the Orchid Tree is said to be the best.³²¹ In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.
- 1.3 And what are the qualities on the side of awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom are qualities on the side of awakening, in that they lead to awakening.
- 1.9 Of all the trees belonging to the gods of the thirty-three, the Orchid Tree is said to be the best. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.”

SN 48.69

A Tree (3rd)

Tatīyarukkkhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, of all the trees belonging to the titans, the Vivid Pātala is said to be the best.³²² In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened. And what are the qualities on the side of awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion,

321. The gods’ delight in the Orchid Tree (*pārichattaka*, also known as *koviḷāra*) is shown at AN 7.69.

322. “Vivid Pātala” renders *cittapāṭali*, a variety of *Stereospermum chelonoides*. This was the awakening tree of Vipassī (DN 14:1.8.1), and the tree after which Pāṭaliputta was named (DN 16:1.19.2).

and wisdom are qualities on the side of awakening, in that they lead to awakening. Of all the trees belonging to the titans, the Vivid Patala is said to be the best. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened”

SN 48.70

A Tree (4th)

Catuttharukkhassutta

“Mendicants, of all the trees belonging to the phoenixes, the Red 1.1
Silk-Cotton Tree is said to be the best.³²³ In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened. And what are the qualities on the side of awakening? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom are qualities on the side of awakening, in that they lead to awakening. Of all the trees belonging to the phoenixes, the Red Silk-Cotton Tree is said to be the best. In the same way, the faculty of wisdom is said to be the best of the qualities on the side of awakening; that is, for becoming awakened.”

323. The Red Silk-Cotton Tree (*kūṭasimbālī*, *Bombax ceiba*) has red flowers and spikes on the trunk. It lends its name to one of the hells (MN 130:22.1), and features in a delightful story about Sakka’s ecological awareness (SN 11.6:2.2).

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 48.71–82

Slanting East, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east.
In the same way, a mendicant developing and cultivating the five
faculties slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 1.3 How so? It’s when a mendicant develops the faculties of faith,
energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which rely on seclu-
sion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a
mendicant developing and cultivating the five faculties slants, slopes,
and inclines to extinguishment.”
- 2.1 Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited.

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 48.83–92

The Chapter on Diligence

Appamādavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on diligence at SN 45.139–148.)

The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
roots, heartwood, jasmine,
monarch, sun and moon,
and cloth is the tenth.

2.1

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 48.93–104

The Chapter on Hard Work

Balakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on hard work at SN 45.149–160.)

2.1

Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
a tree, a pot, and a spike,
the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
a ship, a guest house, and a river.

The Chapter on Searches

SN 48.105–114

The Chapter on Searches

Esanāvagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on searches at SN 45.161–170.)

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

2.1

The Chapter on Floods

SN 48.115–124

Floods, etc.

Oghavagga

1.1 “Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.

1.5 The five faculties should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What five? It’s when a mendicant develops the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.

1.8 These five faculties should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”

(Tell in full as in the Linked Discourses on the Path, SN 45.171–179, with the above as the final discourse.)

2.1 Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

Another Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 48.125–136

Another on Sloping East, Etc.

Punagaṅgāpeyyālavagga

“Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. 1.1
In the same way, a mendicant developing and cultivating the five
faculties slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

How so? It’s when a mendicant develops the faculties of faith, 1.3
energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which culminate in
the removal of greed, hate, and delusion. That’s how a mendicant de-
veloping and cultivating the five faculties slants, slopes, and inclines
to extinguishment.”

Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited.

2.1

Another Chapter on Diligence

SN 48.137–146

Another Chapter on Diligence

Punaappamādavagga

(This text consists of the title only. Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Hard Work

SN 48.147–158

Another Chapter on Hard Work

Punagaṅgāpeyyālavagga

(This text consists of the title only. Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Searches

SN 48.159–168

Another Chapter on Searches

Punaesanāvagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Floods

SN 48.169–178

Another Series on Floods, Etc.

Punaoghavagga

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for re- 1.1
birth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless
realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher
fetters.

The five faculties should be developed for the direct knowledge, 1.5
complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher
fetters. What five? It’s when a mendicant develops the faculties of
faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which culmi-
nate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion.

These five faculties should be developed for the direct knowledge, 1.8
complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher
fetters.”

Floods, yokes, grasping, 2.1
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

The Linked Discourses on the Faculties, the fourth section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE RIGHT EFFORTS

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 49.1–12

Sloping East, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

- At Sāvatthī. 1.1
- There the Buddha said: 1.2
- “Mendicants, there are these four right efforts.³²⁴ What four? 1.3
- It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, 1.5
exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t
arise.³²⁵
- They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, 1.6
and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given
up.
- They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, 1.7
and strive so that skillful qualities arise.
- They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, 1.8
and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not

324. In brief, the four are the efforts to prevent, to abandon, to arouse, and to perfect.

325. According to the Sutta analysis at Vb 8, the “bad unskillful qualities” are greed, hate, and delusion with associated phenomena. “Enthusiasm” (*chanda*) is the wholesome and righteous desire to practice.

lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. These are the four right efforts.

- 2.1 The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four right efforts slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 2.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the four right efforts slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment?
- 2.4 They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise.
- 2.5 They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up.
- 2.6 They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise.
- 2.7 They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed.
- 2.8 That's how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four right efforts slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment."

(Tell in full as in SN 45.92–102.)

- 4.1 Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that's how this chapter is recited.

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 49.13–22

Diligence

Appamādavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148.)

The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
roots, heartwood, jasmine,
monarch, sun and moon,
and cloth is the tenth.

2.1

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 49.23–34

Hard Work, Etc.

Balakaraṇīyavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, all the hard work that gets done depends on the earth and is grounded on the earth. In the same way, a mendicant develops and cultivates the four right efforts depending on and grounded on ethics.
- 1.3 How so? It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise. ... so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed.
- 1.6 That’s how a mendicant develops and cultivates the four right efforts depending on and grounded on ethics.”
(*Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160.*)
- 2.1 Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
a tree, a pot, and a spike,
the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
a ship, a guest house, and a river.

The Chapter on Searches

SN 49.35–44

Ten Discourses on Searches, Etc.

Esanāvagga

“Mendicants, there are these three searches. What three? The search 1.1
for sensual pleasures, the search for continued existence, and the
search for a spiritual path. These are the three searches.

The four right efforts should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
searches. What four? It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm,
tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskill-
ful qualities don’t arise. . . . so that skillful qualities that have arisen
remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed.

These four right efforts should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.9
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these three
searches.”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170.)

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

2.1

The Chapter on Floods

SN 49.45–54

Floods, Etc.

Oghavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.
- 1.5 The four right efforts should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What four? It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise. . . . so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed.
- 1.9 These four right efforts should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”
- (*Tell in full as in SN 45.171–179, with the above as the final discourse.*)
- 2.1 Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

The Linked Discourses on the Right Efforts, the fifth section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE FIVE POWERS

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 50.1–12

Sloping East, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

1.1 “Mendicants, there are these five powers.³²⁶ What five? The powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five powers. The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

1.7 And how does a mendicant who develops the five powers slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops the powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

2.1 Six on slanting to the east,

326. As seen in SN 48.43, the five powers are almost identical to the five spiritual faculties. Though theoretically consisting of 108 discourses, the Saṃyutta on the powers consists almost entirely of stock passages and abbreviations. The analysis lacking here is found in a series of Suttas at AN 5.13–16. | The Chinese version, representing the Sarvāstivāda Balasaṃyukta, gathers many of the discourses on different sets of “powers” that in the Pali are scattered about the canon. This is similar to the Indriyasamṃyutta, which likewise collects multiple different kinds of “faculties”. This is surely more likely to represent the original collection.

and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that's how this chapter is recited.

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 50.13–22

Diligence

Appamādavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on diligence at SN 45.139–148.)

2.1

The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
roots, heartwood, jasmine,
monarch, sun and moon,
and cloth is the tenth.

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 50.23–34

Hard Work

Balakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on hard work at SN 45.149–160.)

Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
a tree, a pot, and a spike,
the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
a ship, a guest house, and a river.

2.1

The Chapter on Searches

SN 50.35–44

Searches

Esanāvagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on searches at SN 45.161–170.)

2.1

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

The Chapter on Floods

SN 50.45–54

Floods, Etc.

Oghavagga

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for re- 1.1
birth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless
realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher
fetters.

The five powers should be developed for the direct knowledge, 1.5
complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher
fetters. What five? It’s when a mendicant develops the powers of
faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which rely on
seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.

These five powers should be developed for the direct knowledge, 1.12
complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher
fetters.”

(Tell in full as in SN 45.171–179, with the above as the final discourse.)

Another Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 50.55–66

Sloping East, Etc.

Punagaṅgāpeyyālavagga

1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east.
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the five powers slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops the powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion.

1.5 That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

(Tell in full for each of the different rivers as in SN 45.91–102, removal of greed version.)

2.1 Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited.

Another Chapter on Diligence

SN 50.67–76

Another Chapter on Diligence

Punaappamādavagga

(This text consists of the title only. Tell in full as in SN 45.139–148, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Hard Work

SN 50.77–88

Another Chapter on Hard Work

Punabalakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.149–160, removal of greed version.)

Another Chapter on Searches

SN 50.89–98

Another Series on Searches, Etc.

Punaesanāvagga

(Tell in full as in SN 45.161–170, removal of greed version.)

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

2.1

Another Chapter on Floods

SN 50.99–108

Another Series on Floods, Etc.

Punaoghavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.
- 1.5 The five powers should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What five? A mendicant develops the powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion.
- 1.8 These five powers should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”
- 2.1 Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

The Linked Discourses on the Powers, the sixth section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON
THE BASES OF PSYCHIC
POWER

The Chapter at the Cāpāla Shrine

SN 51.1

From the Near Shore

Apārasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far

shore.³²⁷ What four?³²⁸ It's when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort.³²⁹ They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort.³³⁰ They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort.³³¹ They develop the basis of psychic power that has

327. *Iddhi* (Sanskrit *rddhi* or *siddhi*) conveys the root sense “thriving, increase, success”. In the Atharva Veda we find *samrddhi* and *vyrddhi* in the sense “prosperity” and “misfortune” (eg. 10.2.10). As “success, completion” (of the sacrifice) we find *rddhi* at Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 4.6.9.11. As far as I know, the Buddhist texts are where we first find *iddhi* in the sense of “psychic power” (or “spiritual magnification”, “heightened potency”; SN 51.10:3.2, SN 51.11:5.1). This sense is not attested in Sanskrit texts until later. The Yogasūtra elaborates many such powers and the methods of achieving them (3.17–3.37), but immediately warns that they are obstacles to *śamādhī* (3.38). They are sometimes also numbered eight (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 3.20.53, 9.21.12), and we find this number also in Jain texts, which list various kinds of *rddhi* (or *labdhi*; eg. Ṭhāṇaṅga 5.168, Bhagavatisūtra 8.139). Perhaps this idea was first popularized among the *śramaṇa* schools such as Buddhism and Jainism. All these religions, however, aim at liberation from suffering, and do not regard the attainment of psychic powers as an end in itself. Probably the interest in such abilities was drawn from the broader ascetic culture, where to this day we find a fascination with such powers. In the Indian context, it is important to avoid such terms as “supernatural”, as such phenomena, though extraordinary, are well within the realm of the natural. They do not arise from the intervention of God or any other metaphysical means, but rather from the development and amplification of abilities latent in all beings. This teaching framework, accordingly, focuses on those things that form the *bases* (*pāda*) of psychic power. The powers themselves are mere adornments to the path, whose true purpose is to lead “from the near shore to the far shore”.

328. See SN 51.13 and SN 51.20 for further analysis.

329. “Enthusiasm” (*chanda*) is skillful desire to accomplish the path. The word *chanda* itself is neutral, and sometimes means “sensual desire” (*kāmacchanda*) or “consent” (Kd 2:23.1.5, Pli Tv Bi Pm:9.1).

330. The four factors map straightforwardly onto the final three factors of the noble eightfold path. “Enthusiasm” and “energy” both fall under “right effort”, while *citta* is “right immersion”, and *vīmaṁsā* is “right wisdom”.

331. Here, *citta* (“mental development”) means the development of the mind in immersion. This sense is common for *citta* in the context of the path, for example *cittasampadā* = *śamādhisampadā* (DN 8:15.2); *cittabhāvanā* = *śamādhībhāvanā* (SN 1.23:2.2). The same sense is apparent in *cittānupassanā* (“observation of

immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. When these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.”

SN 51.2

Missed Out

Viraddhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whoever has missed out on the four bases of psychic power has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken the four bases of psychic power has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. Whoever has missed out on these four bases of psychic power has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken these four bases of psychic power has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 51.3

A Noble One

Ariyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who practices them to the complete ending of suffering. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ...

the mind”) in *satipaṭṭhāna*, although there we see that the sense is somewhat broader, encompassing the mind as it goes through the process of development leading to immersion.

inquiry, and active effort. When these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they are noble and emancipating, and bring one who practices them to the complete ending of suffering.”

SN 51.4

Disillusionment

Nibbidāsutta

“Mendicants, these four bases of psychic power, when developed 1.1
and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation,
peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. What four? It’s when
a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion
due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry,
and active effort. These four bases of psychic power, when developed
and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation,
peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.”

SN 51.5

Partly

Iddhipadesasutta

“Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past who have partly 1.1
manifested psychic powers have done so by developing and cultivat-
ing the four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins
in the future who will partly manifest psychic powers will do so by
developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power. All the
ascetics and brahmins in the present who are partly manifesting psy-
chic powers do so by developing and cultivating the four bases of
psychic power.

What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic 2.1
power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental
development ... inquiry, and active effort. All the ascetics and brah-

mins in the past who have partly manifested psychic powers have done so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the future who will partly manifest psychic powers will do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the present who are partly manifesting psychic powers do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.6

Completely

Samattasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past who have completely manifested psychic powers have done so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the future who will completely manifest psychic powers will do so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the present who are completely manifesting psychic powers do so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. All the ascetics and brahmins in the past who have completely manifested psychic powers have done so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the future who will completely manifest psychic powers will do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power. All the ascetics and brahmins in the present who are completely manifesting psychic powers do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.7

A Mendicant

Bhikkhusutta

“Mendicants, all the mendicants in the past ... future ... present who 1.1
realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and
who live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due
to the ending of defilements, do so by developing and cultivating
the four bases of psychic power.

What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic 2.1
power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental
development ... inquiry, and active effort. All the mendicants in the
past ... future ... present who realize the undefiled freedom of heart
and freedom by wisdom, and who live having realized it with their
own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements, do so
by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.8

Awakened

Buddhasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four bases of psychic power. What four? 1.1
It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has
immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development
... inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic
power. It is because he has developed and cultivated these four bases
of psychic power that the Realized One is called ‘the perfected one,
the fully awakened Buddha.’”

Knowledge

Ñāṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants: ‘This is the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.³³² ‘This basis of psychic power ... should be developed.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.
- 2.1 ‘This is the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... should be developed.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.
- 3.1 ‘This is the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... should be developed.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.
- 4.1 ‘This is the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... should be developed.’ ... ‘This basis of psychic power ... has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.”

332. Here the text treats the *iddhipādas* in line with the fourth noble truth (SN 56.11).

SN 51.10

At the Cāpāla Shrine

Cetiyasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, 1.1
at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.³³³ Then the Bud-
dha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered
Vesālī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround,
he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, get your sitting cloth.³³⁴
Let’s go to the Cāpāla Shrine for the day’s meditation.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Taking his sitting cloth he followed 1.7
behind the Buddha.

Then the Buddha went up to the Cāpāla Shrine, and sat down on 2.1
the seat spread out. Ānanda bowed to the Buddha and sat down to
one side. The Buddha said to him:

“Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Seven Maid- 3.1
ens, Many Sons, Sāranda, and Cāpāla Shrines are all lovely. Who-
ever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—
made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them,
and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live for the
proper lifespan or what’s left of it.³³⁵ The Realized One has devel-

333. This discourse is found at AN 8.70 and Ud 6.1, and is also included as a section of the Mahāparinibbānasutta (DN 16:3.1.1).

334. This detail is often mentioned in texts of the Sarvāstivāda school, but rarely in Pali.

335. Normally *kappa* as a period of time means “eon”, but the late canonical texts Kathāvatthu (Kv 11.5) and Milindapañha (Mil 5.1.10) argue that it means the “lifespan”, an interpretation followed by the commentaries. Support for this comes from DN 26:28.3, which says that “long life” for a mendicant is the four bases of psychic power which enable you to remain for the *kappa*. Here it is surely talking about a full lifespan. Underlying this is the idea that in different epochs the “proper lifespan” varies; in the Buddha’s day it was one hundred years (DN 14:1.7.7). We can resolve the problem if we read *kappa* here, not as a period of time, but as “(that which is) proper, fitting”, i.e. the “proper” lifespan of a hundred years. The cosmic sense can be seen as derived from the same idea; a *kalpa* is “(that which is) proper (for the cosmos)”.

oped and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live for the proper lifespan or what's left of it."

4.1 But Ānanda didn't get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn't beg the Buddha, "Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the proper lifespan! May the Holy One please remain for the proper lifespan! 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." For his mind was as if possessed by Māra.³³⁶

5.1 For a second time ... For a third time, the Buddha said to Ānanda:

5.3 "Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Seven Maidens, Many Sons, Sārāṇadā, and Cāpāla Shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live for the proper lifespan or what's left of it. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live for the proper lifespan or what's left of it."

6.1 But Ānanda didn't get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn't beg the Buddha, "Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the proper lifespan! May the Holy One please remain for the proper lifespan! 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." For his mind was as if possessed by Māra.

336. Here Ānanda's mind is "as if" possessed (*yathā*), but in the Vinaya *yathā* is missing: he is possessed (Kd 1:1.10.17). Remember, Ānanda is telling this story about himself.

Then the Buddha said to him, “Go now, Ānanda, at your convenience.” 7.1

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before sitting at the root of a tree close by. 7.4

And then, not long after Ānanda had left, Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and said to him:³³⁷ 8.1

“Sir, may the Blessed One now be fully extinguished! May the Holy One now be fully extinguished! Now is the time for the full extinguishment of the Buddha. Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I shall not be fully extinguished until I have monk disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned, have memorized the teachings, and practice in line with the principle of the teaching. Not until they practice properly, living in line with the teaching. Not until they’ve learned their own denomination, and explain, teach, assert, establish, disclose, analyze, and make it clear. Not until they can legitimately and completely refute the doctrines of others that come up, and teach with a demonstrable basis.’³³⁸ 9.1

Today you do have such monk disciples. May the Blessed One now be fully extinguished! May the Holy One now be fully extinguished! Now is the time for the full extinguishment of the Buddha. 10.1

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I shall not be fully extinguished until I have nun disciples who are competent, educated, self-assured, learned ...’³³⁹ 11.1

337. Māra (see SN 4.1:2.1) feigns compassion, urging the Buddha to find his final peace; but he has an ulterior motive, for with the Buddha’s passing Māra’s job will be much easier.

338. Māra is citing the Buddha’s words for his own purpose. The Pali tradition does not say when this encounter took place, but the Sanskrit Sarvāstivāda Catusparisatsūtra places it shortly after the Buddha’s awakening.

339. This passage makes it clear that it was the Buddha’s intention from the beginning to establish an order of nuns (*bhikkhuni*). This passage lists the four assemblies that constitute a full dispensation; a similar pattern was recognized by the Jains.

- 12.1 Today you do have such nun disciples. May the Blessed One now be fully extinguished! May the Holy One now be fully extinguished! Now is the time for the full extinguishment of the Buddha.
- 13.1 Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I shall not be fully extinguished until I have layman disciples ... and laywoman disciples who are competent, educated, self-assured, learned ...’ ...
- 14.1 Today you do have such layman³⁴⁰ and laywoman disciples. May the Blessed One now be fully extinguished! May the Holy One now be fully extinguished! Now is the time for the full extinguishment of the Buddha.
- 15.1 Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I shall not be fully extinguished until my spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and fully revealed among gods and humans.’ Today your spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and fully revealed among gods and humans. May the Blessed One now be fully extinguished! May the Holy One now be fully extinguished! Now is the time for the full extinguishment of the Buddha.”
- 16.1 When this was said, the Buddha said to Māra, “Relax, Wicked One. The full extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon.”³⁴¹ Three months from now the Realized One will be fully extinguished.”³⁴²
- 17.1 So at the Cāpāla Shrine the Buddha, mindful and aware, surrendered the life force.³⁴³ When he did so there was a great earthquake,

340. Note the mixing up of the gender sequence, not found in AN 8.70 or DN 16.

341. This passage is the narrative inverse of the occasion when Brahmā begged the Buddha to teach (SN 6.1:5.5, etc.). Throughout, the sutta artfully preserves a degree of narrative ambiguity. Here it almost appears as if the Buddha assents to passing away because of Māra’s request, although his intent was clear earlier. Māra’s reasoning, moreover, is based on the Buddha’s own words.

342. See DN 16:3.9.3 for a discussion of this date.

343. The Cāpāla shrine is unknown outside of this context. The Udāna commentary says that it was named after the *yakkha* who formerly lived there. Now, *cāpalla* means “fickleness, propensity to tremble” and is from the same root as

awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky.³⁴⁴ Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“Comparing the incomparable
 with the creation of prolonged life,³⁴⁵
 the sage surrendered the life force.³⁴⁶
 Happy inside, serene,
 he shattered self-creation like a suit of armor.”³⁴⁷

18.1

earth-“quake” (*bhumicāla*; *capala* = *pacala* via metathesis). It is no great leap to *cāpāla*. If this is correct, it suggests that the shrine was dedicated to an earth spirit who commanded earthquakes; a fitting setting for the events to follow.

344. Northern India lies in the shadow of the seismically active Alpide Belt, so the occurrence of earthquakes is realistic even if the causes are not scientific.

345. For this difficult verse, I generally follow Bhikkhu Bodhi’s long discussion in *Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, note 255 on the Mahāvagga. *Sambhava* means “production, creation”, and here I think it refers to the prolonging of life which the Buddha had just rejected.

346. *Bhava-saṅkhāra* (“life force”) here is equivalent to *āyusaṅkhāra* and *jīvita-saṅkhāra*.

347. *Attasambhava* (“self-creation”) harks back to *sambhava* in the first line.

The Chapter on Shaking the Stilt Longhouse

SN 51.11

Before

Pubbasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 “Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: ‘What’s the cause, what’s the reason for the development of the bases of psychic power?’³⁴⁸ Then it occurred to me: ‘It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They think: “My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.”³⁴⁹ And they meditate perceiving before and behind:³⁵⁰ as before, so be-

348. The emphasis through this passage is the even, unconstricted, balanced development of meditation. The same set of items is applied to the parts of the body (Thag 6.4:4.1), and the development of immersion generally (AN 3.90:7.2). In the context of the bases of psychic power, the terms are spelled out in SN 51.20.

349. This passage on relaxed effort is reminiscent of Soṇa and his harp (AN 6.55:4.2). | The ideas of “constricted internally” (due to lack of energy) and “scattered externally” (due to overactive thinking) are also in *satipaṭṭhāna* (MN 10:34.8).

350. Applied to walking meditation at AN 7.61:8.1.

hind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below;³⁵¹ as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that's full of radiance.

They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due 2.1
to energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. They think: "My inquiry won't be too lax or too tense. And it'll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally." And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that's full of radiance.'

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 5.1
cultivated in this way, they wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves 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; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.³⁵²

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 6.1
cultivated in this way, with clairaudience that is purified and superhu-

351. Being equally aware above and below is familiar from the divine meditations (SN 42.8:12.1).

352. Technically, it is the "varieties of psychic power" (*iddhividham*) listed here that lend this practice its name. But the text goes on to include the other forms of higher knowledge as well. Further details are given at SN 51.22. | "Psychic powers" (*iddhi*) were much cultivated in the Buddha's day, but the means to acquire them varied: devotion to a god, brutal penances, or magic rituals. The Buddha taught that the mind developed in *samādhi* was capable of things that are normally incomprehensible. | Only a few of these are attested as events in the early texts. The most common is the ability to "materialize and dematerialize", exhibited by the Buddha (AN 8.30:2.1), some disciples (MN 37:6.1), and deities (MN 67:8.1). The Pali is *āvibhāvaṃ tirobhāvaṃ*, literally "manifest state, hidden state". Also found in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.1.

man they hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.³⁵³

- 7.1 When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, they understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with their own mind.³⁵⁴ They understand mind with greed as ‘mind with greed’, and mind without greed as ‘mind without greed’. They understand 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 ... They understand unfreed mind as ‘unfreed mind’.

- 8.1 When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, they 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. They 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

353. “Clairaudience” is a literal rendition of *dibbasota*. The root sense of *dibba* is to “shine” like the bright sky or a divine being. The senses of clarity and divinity are both present.

354. Note that the Indic idiom is not the “reading” of minds, which suggests hearing the words spoken in inner dialogue. While this is exhibited by the Buddha (eg. AN 8.30:2.1), the main emphasis is on the comprehension of the overall state of mind.

I was reborn here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.³⁵⁵

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 9.1 cultivated in this way, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They 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, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.³⁵⁶

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 10.1 cultivated in this way, they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”³⁵⁷

355. Empowered by the fourth *jhāna*, memory breaks through the veil of birth and death, revealing the vast expanse of time and dispelling the illusion that there is any place of eternal rest or sanctuary in the cycle of transmigration.

356. Here knowledge extends to the rebirths of others as well as oneself. Even more significant, it brings in the understanding of cause and effect; *why* rebirth happens the way it does. Such knowledge, however, is not infallible, as the Buddha warns in DN 1:2.5.3 and MN 136. The experience is one thing; the inferences drawn from it are another. One should draw conclusions only tentatively, after long experience.

357. This is the experience of awakening that is the true goal of the Buddhist path. The defilements—properties of the mind that create suffering—have been

SN 51.12

Very Fruitful

Mahapphalasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when the four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they’re very fruitful and beneficial. How so? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They think: ‘My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance.
- 2.1 They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. They think: ‘My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance. When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way they’re very fruitful and beneficial.
- 3.1 When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, a mendicant wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. ...
- 4.1 When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, they realize the undefiled freedom of heart

curbed by the practice of ethics and suppressed by the power of *jhāna*. Here they are eliminated forever.

and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

SN 51.13

Immersion Due to Enthusiasm

Chandasamādhisutta

“Mendicants, if a mendicant depends on enthusiasm in order to gain 1.1
immersion, gain unification of mind, this is called immersion due
to enthusiasm.³⁵⁸ They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort,
exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise.
They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and
strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up.
They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and
strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try,
make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities
that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are
fully developed. These are called active efforts.³⁵⁹ And so there is
this enthusiasm, this immersion due to enthusiasm, and these active
efforts. This is called the basis of psychic power that has immersion
due to enthusiasm, and active effort.

If a mendicant depends on energy in order to gain immersion, 2.1
gain unification of mind, this is called immersion due to energy.
They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and
strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise ... so that skillful

358. The basic statement includes a long compound (*chandasamādhippadhā-nasaṅkhārasamannāgataṃ*), which leaves the relationship between the terms ambiguous. This analysis clarifies that the first two terms have a dependent relationship, “immersion due to enthusiasm”.

359. This confirms that these two items of the compound belong together. *Padhāna* is a normal term for “effort, striving”, while *saṅkhāra* can mean “effective work” (SN 48.17:1.5). The explanation shows that the energy here is not just something that one has, but which is generated through the active exercise of the mind in the four duties of right effort.

qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. These are called active efforts. And so there is this energy, this immersion due to energy, and these active efforts. This is called the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort.

3.1 If a mendicant depends on mental development in order to gain immersion, gain unification of mind, this is called immersion due to mental development. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise ... so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. These are called active efforts. And so there is this mental development, this immersion due to mental development, and these active efforts. This is called the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort.

4.1 If a mendicant depends on inquiry in order to gain immersion, gain unification of mind, this is called immersion due to inquiry. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise ... so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. These are called active efforts. And so there is this inquiry, this immersion due to inquiry, and these active efforts. This is called the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort."

SN 51.14

With Moggallāna

Moggallānasutta

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattihī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery. Now at that time several mendicants were staying beneath the longhouse. They were haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, loose-tongued,

unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds and undisciplined faculties.

Then the Buddha addressed Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, “These 2.1
spiritual companions of yours staying beneath the longhouse are
haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, loose-tongued, unmindful, lack-
ing situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds and
undisciplined faculties. Go, Moggallāna, and strike awe in those
mendicants!”

“Yes, sir,” replied Mahāmoggallāna. Then he used his psychic 3.1
power to make the longhouse shake and rock and tremble with his
big toe.³⁶⁰ Then those mendicants stood to one side, shocked and
awestruck.

“Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! There’s no wind at all; 3.3
and this stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother has deep foundations. It’s
firmly embedded, imperturbable and unshakable. And yet it shakes
and rocks and trembles!”

Then the Buddha went up to those mendicants and said: 4.1

“Why do you, mendicants, stand to one side, shocked and 4.2
awestruck?”

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! There’s no wind at all; and this 4.3
stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother has deep foundations. It’s firmly
embedded, imperturbable and unshakable. And yet it shakes and
rocks and trembles!”

“Wanting to strike awe in you, the mendicant Moggallāna made 4.5
the longhouse shake and rock and tremble with his big toe.

What do you think, mendicants? What things has the mendicant 4.6
Moggallāna developed and cultivated so as to have such power and
might?”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our 4.8
refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of
this. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

360. Moggallāna displayed a similar wonder at MN 37:11.4, also a means of last resort in the face of negligence. Referred to at Thag 20.1:55.1.

- 5.1 “Well then, mendicants, listen. The mendicant Moggallāna has become so powerful and mighty by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power. What four? Moggallāna develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. He thinks: ‘My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And he meditates perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, he develops a mind that’s full of radiance. The mendicant Moggallāna has become so powerful and mighty by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.
- 5.16 And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, the mendicant Moggallāna wields the many kinds of psychic power ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. ...³⁶¹
- 5.17 And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, the mendicant Moggallāna realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And he lives having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

SN 51.15

The Brahmin Uṇṇābha

Uṇṇābhabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita’s monastery. Then Uṇṇābha the brahmin went up to Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him.³⁶² When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to him, “Worthy Ānanda, what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?”

361. The remaining higher knowledges should be filled in here.

362. The follow-up to Uṇṇābha’s conversion in this discourse is at SN 48.42.

- “The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha, brahmin, is to give up desire.”³⁶³ 1.6
- “But is there a path and a practice for giving up that desire?” 2.1
- “There is.” 2.2
- “What is that path?” 3.1
- “It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. This is the path and the practice for giving up that desire.” 3.2
- “This being the case, worthy Ānanda, the path is endless, not finite.³⁶⁴ For it’s not possible to give up desire by means of desire.”³⁶⁵ 4.1
- “Well then, brahmin, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, brahmin?³⁶⁶ Have you ever had a desire to walk to the park,³⁶⁷ but when you arrived at the park, the corresponding desire faded away?” 4.3
- “Yes, sir.” 4.7
- “Have you ever had the energy to walk to the park, but when you arrived at the park, the corresponding energy faded away?” 4.8
- “Yes, sir.” 4.10
- “Have you ever had the idea to walk to the park,³⁶⁸ but when you arrived at the park, the corresponding idea faded away?” 4.11
- “Yes, sir.” 4.13
- “Have you ever inquired regarding a walk to the park, but when you arrived at the park, the corresponding inquiry faded away?” 4.14

363. “Desire” is *chanda*, rendered as “enthusiasm” in the context of the bases of psychic power.

364. See Bodhi’s note here in *Connected Discourses* for readings.

365. This logical problem with Buddhist philosophy is commonly raised today.

366. The four items here correspond to the four bases of psychic power, but they must be rendered differently for coherence. The *iddhipāda* formula is not mentioned in this discourse.

367. Here too *chanda* is “desire”. It could have been rendered, “Have you ever felt enthusiastic about walking to the park?”

368. “Idea” is *citta*, normally “mind”, or “mental development” in the context of the bases of psychic power.

4.16 “Yes, sir.”

5.1 “In the same way, take a mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment. They formerly had the desire to attain perfection, but when they attained perfection the corresponding desire faded away. They formerly had the energy to attain perfection, but when they attained perfection the corresponding energy faded away. They formerly had the idea to attain perfection, but when they attained perfection the corresponding idea faded away. They formerly inquired regarding attaining perfection, but when they attained perfection the corresponding inquiry faded away. What do you think, brahmin? This being the case, is the path endless or finite?”

6.1 “Clearly, worthy Ānanda, this being the case, the path is finite, not endless. Excellent, worthy Ānanda! 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 worthy Ānanda has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Ānanda remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

SN 51.16

Ascetics and Brahmins (1st)

Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

1.1 “Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past, future, or present who are mighty and powerful have become so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.

2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... men-

tal development ... inquiry, and active effort. All the ascetics and brahmins in the past, future, or present who are mighty and powerful have become so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.17

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

“Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past, future, or 1.1
present who wield the various kinds of psychic power—multiplying themselves 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; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity—do so by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.

What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic 4.1
power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. Mendicants, all the ascetics and brahmins in the past, future, or present who wield the many kinds of psychic power—multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity—do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.18

A Mendicant

Bhikkhusutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power, a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. By developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

SN 51.19

A Teaching on Psychic Power, Etc.

Iddhādidēsanāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I will teach you psychic power, the bases of psychic power, the development of the bases of psychic power, and the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power.³⁶⁹ Listen ...
- 2.1 And what is psychic power? It’s when a mendicant wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. This is called psychic power.

369. This approach is like a version of the four noble truths, reformulated to suit the context. Compared to the four noble truths, the first and fourth items are similar, but the middle two are different.

And what is the basis of psychic power? The path and practice 3.1
that leads to gaining psychic power. This is called the basis of psychic
power.

And what is the development of the bases of psychic power? It's 4.1
when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has
immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development
... inquiry, and active effort. This is called the development of the
bases of psychic power.

And what is the practice that leads to the development of the 5.1
bases of psychic power? It 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. This is called
the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic
power."

SN 51.20

Analysis

Vibhaṅgasutta

"Mendicants, when the four bases of psychic power are developed 1.1
and cultivated they're very fruitful and beneficial.

How so? It's when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic 2.1
power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They
think: 'My enthusiasm won't be too lax or too tense. And it'll be
neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.' And they
meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as
behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by
day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and
unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that's full of radiance.

They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due 2.9
to energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. They
think: 'My inquiry won't be too lax or too tense. And it'll be neither
constricted internally nor scattered externally.' And they meditate

perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that's full of radiance.

3.1 And what is enthusiasm that's too lax? It's when enthusiasm is coupled with laziness. This is called lax enthusiasm.

4.1 And what is enthusiasm that's too tense? It's when enthusiasm is coupled with restlessness. This is called tense enthusiasm.

5.1 And what is enthusiasm that's constricted internally? It's when enthusiasm is coupled with dullness and drowsiness. This is called enthusiasm constricted internally.

6.1 And what is enthusiasm that's scattered externally? It's when enthusiasm is frequently scattered and diffused externally on account of the five kinds of sensual stimulation. This is called enthusiasm scattered externally.

7.1 And how does a mendicant meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before? It's when the perception of before and behind is properly grasped, focused on, borne in mind, and penetrated with wisdom by a mendicant. That's how a mendicant meditates perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before.

8.1 And how does a mendicant meditate as below, so above; as above, so below? It's when a mendicant examines their own body up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth. 'In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.' That's how a mendicant meditates as below, so above; as above, so below.

9.1 And how does a mendicant meditate as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day? It's when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort, with the same features, attributes, and signs by day as by night. And they

develop it with the same features, attributes, and signs by night as by day. That's how a mendicant meditates as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day.

And how, with an open and unenveloped heart, does a mendicant 10.1
develop a mind that's full of radiance? It's when a mendicant has properly grasped the perception of light, and has properly grasped the perception of day. That's how, with an open and unenveloped heart, a mendicant develops a mind that's full of radiance.

And what is energy that's too lax? ... 11.1

And what is mental development that's too lax? ... 16.1

And what is inquiry that's too lax? It's when inquiry is coupled 20.1
with laziness. This is called lax inquiry.

And what is inquiry that's too tense? It's when inquiry is coupled 21.1
with restlessness. This is called tense inquiry.

And what is inquiry that's constricted internally? It's when in- 22.1
quiry is coupled with dullness and drowsiness. This is called inquiry constricted internally.

And what is inquiry that's scattered externally? It's when inquiry 23.1
is frequently scattered and diffused externally on account of the five kinds of sensual stimulation. This is called inquiry scattered externally. ... That's how, with an open and unenveloped heart, a mendicant develops a mind that's full of radiance. When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way they're very fruitful and beneficial.

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 24.1
cultivated in this way, a mendicant wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. ...³⁷⁰ When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements."

370. All the higher knowledges should be understood here.

The Chapter on the Iron Ball

SN 51.21

The Path

Maggasutta

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 “Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: ‘What’s the path and practice for developing the bases of psychic power?’ Then it occurred to me: ‘It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They think: “My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.” And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance.

1.12 They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy . . . mental development . . . inquiry, and active effort. They think: “My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.” And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance.’

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 2.1
cultivated in this way, a mendicant wields the many kinds of psy-
chic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ...
controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and 2.2
cultivated in this way, they realize the undefiled freedom of heart
and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their
own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

(The six direct knowledges should be told in full.)

SN 51.22

The Iron Ball

Ayogūlasutta

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down 1.2
to one side, and said to him:³⁷¹

“Sir, do you have personal experience of having gone to the realm 1.3
of divinity by psychic power with a mind-made body?”

“I do, Ānanda.” 1.4

“But do you have personal experience of having gone to the realm 1.5
of divinity by psychic power with this body made up of the four
principal states?”³⁷²

“I do, Ānanda.” 1.6

371. It is typical of Ānanda to ask the Buddha on such matters. Here he elicits from the Buddha a fascinating and unique description of his meditative methods for developing special abilities.

372. In several cases he is said to have disappeared from where he was and reappeared in the realm of divinity (eg. SN 6.5, MN 49:3.2), but I am not sure if it is possible to determine which method he used in specific instances. It seems reasonable to infer that this was his ordinary physical body, because he disappeared from his normal place. A mind-made body is a separate entity (MN 77:30.1), so the physical body should remain where it is. On the other hand, the same expression is used when he approached Anuruddha, who explicitly says it was a mind-made body (AN 8.30:23.3).

- 2.1 “It’s incredible and amazing that the Buddha is at least able to go to the realm of divinity by psychic power with a mind-made body! And that he has personal experience of going to the realm of divinity by psychic power with this body made up of the four principal states!”³⁷³
- 2.2 “Ānanda, the Realized Ones are incredible and have incredible qualities. They’re amazing and have amazing qualities.
- 3.1 Sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body becomes lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant.
- 4.1 Suppose there was an iron ball that had been heated all day. It’d become lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant.³⁷⁴ In the same way, sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body becomes lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant.
- 5.1 Sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body easily rises up from the ground into the air. He wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.
- 6.1 Suppose there was a light tuft of cotton-wool or kapok. Taken up by the wind, it would easily rise up from the ground into the air. In the same way, sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking

373. *Omāti* is a unique verb, literally to “measure down”. The commentary treats it as *pahoti*, “is able”. The past participle *omatta* is occasionally found in the sense of the lesser or subordinate option (Tha Ap 146:4.3; DN-a 2:214.105). Notice that up until now, in both Ānanda’s questions and the Buddha’s answers, the phrasing has been exactly parallel. Ānanda is varying the phrasing here. I think he means to suggest that the mind-made body is the less impressive power, so I translate “is at least able”.

374. On the physics of this see DN 23:17.5.

into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body easily rises up from the ground into the air. He wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.”

SN 51.23

A Mendicant

Bhikkhusutta

“Mendicants, there are these four bases of psychic power. What four? 1.1
It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic power. By developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

SN 51.24

Plain Version

Suddhikasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four bases of psychic power. What four? 1.1
It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.25

Fruits (1st)

Paṭhamaphalasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four bases of psychic power. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic power. Because of developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, one of two results can be expected: enlightenment in this very life, or if there’s residue left behind, non-return.”

SN 51.26

Fruits (2nd)

Dutiyaphalasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four bases of psychic power. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic power. Because of developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, seven fruits and benefits can be expected.
- 2.1 What seven? They attain enlightenment early on in this very life. If not, they attain enlightenment at the time of death. If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters, they’re extinguished between one life and the next ... they’re extinguished upon landing ... they’re extinguished without extra effort ... they’re extinguished with extra effort ... they head upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm. Because of developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, these seven fruits and benefits can be expected.”

SN 51.27

With Ānanda (1st)

Paṭhamaānandasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

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

1.2

“Sir, what is psychic power? What is the basis of psychic power? What is the development of the bases of psychic power? And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power?”

2.1

“Ānanda, take a mendicant who wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. This is called psychic power.

2.2

And what is the basis of psychic power? The path and practice that leads to gaining psychic power. This is called the basis of psychic power.

3.1

And what is the development of the bases of psychic power? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. This is called the development of the bases of psychic power.

4.1

And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power? It 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. This is called the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power.”

5.1

SN 51.28

With Ānanda (2nd)

Dutiyaānandasutta

- 1.1 The Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, what is psychic power? What is the basis of psychic power? What is the development of the bases of psychic power? And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power?”
- 1.3 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. ...”
- 2.1 “Ānanda, take a mendicant who wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. This is called psychic power.
- 3.1 And what is the basis of psychic power? The path and practice that leads to gaining psychic power. This is called the basis of psychic power.
- 4.1 And what is the development of the bases of psychic power? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. This is called the development of the bases of psychic power.
- 5.1 And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power? It 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. This is called the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.29

Several Mendicants (1st)

Paṭhamabhikkhusutta

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down 1.1
to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, what is psychic power? What is the basis of psychic power? 1.2
What is the development of the bases of psychic power? And what
is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic
power?”

“Mendicants, take a mendicant who wields the many kinds of 2.1
psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ...
controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. This is called
psychic power.

And what is the basis of psychic power? The path and practice 3.1
that leads to gaining psychic power. This is called the basis of psychic
power.

And what is the development of the bases of psychic power? It’s 4.1
when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has
immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development
... inquiry, and active effort. This is called the development of the
bases of psychic power.

And what is the practice that leads to the development of the 5.1
bases of psychic power? It 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. This is called
the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic
power.”

SN 51.30

Several Mendicants (2nd)

Dutiabhikkhusutta

- 1.1 Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha ... The Buddha said to them:
- 1.3 “Mendicants, what is psychic power? What is the basis of psychic power? What is the development of the bases of psychic power? And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power?”
- 1.4 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. ...”
- 2.1 “And what is psychic power? It’s a mendicant who wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity. This is called psychic power.
- 3.1 And what is the basis of psychic power? The path and practice that leads to gaining psychic power. This is called the basis of psychic power.
- 4.1 And what is the development of the bases of psychic power? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. This is called the development of the bases of psychic power.
- 5.1 And what is the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power? It 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. This is called the practice that leads to the development of the bases of psychic power.”

SN 51.31

About Moggallāna

Moggallānasutta

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, 1.1
mendicants? What things has the mendicant Moggallāna developed
and cultivated so as to have such power and might?”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our 2.1
refuge. ...”

“The mendicant Moggallāna has become so powerful and mighty 2.2
by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.

What four? Moggallāna develops the basis of psychic power that 3.1
has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. He thinks:
‘My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither
constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And he meditates
perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so
before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night;
as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart,
he develops a mind that’s full of radiance.

He develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due 3.9
to energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. He
thinks: ‘My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be nei-
ther constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ ... And so, with
an open and unenveloped heart, he develops a mind that’s full of
radiance. The mendicant Moggallāna has become so powerful and
mighty by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic
power.

And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic 4.1
power, the mendicant Moggallāna wields the many kinds of psychic
power: multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling
the body as far as the realm of divinity.

And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic 4.2
power, the mendicant Moggallāna realizes the undefiled freedom of

heart and freedom by wisdom. And he lives having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

SN 51.32

The Realized One

Tathāgatasutta

- 1.1 There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? What things has the Realized One developed and cultivated so as to have such power and might?”
- 2.1 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. . . .”
- 2.2 “The Realized One has become so powerful and mighty by developing and cultivating the four bases of psychic power.
- 3.1 What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. He thinks: ‘My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And he meditates perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, he develops a mind that’s full of radiance.
- 3.9 He develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy . . . mental development . . . inquiry, and active effort. He thinks: ‘My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.’ And he meditates perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, he develops a mind that’s full of radiance.
- 3.18 The Realized One has become so powerful and mighty by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.
- 4.1 And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power, the Realized One wields the many kinds of psychic power:

multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.

And by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic ^{4.2} power, the Realized One realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And he lives having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

(The six direct knowledges should be told in full.)

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 51.33–44

The Ganges River, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

- 1.1 “Mendicants, the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east.
In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four
bases of psychic power slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
- 1.3 And how does a mendicant who develops the four bases of psy-
chic power slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a
mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion
due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry,
and active effort.
- 2.1 That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four bases
of psychic power slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”
- 3.1 Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited.

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 51.45–54

Diligence

Appamādavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on diligence at SN 45.139–148.)

The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
roots, heartwood, jasmine,
monarch, sun and moon,
and cloth is the tenth.

2.1

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 51.55–66

Hard Work

Balakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on hard work at SN 45.149–160.)

- 2.1 Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
 a tree, a pot, and a spike,
 the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
 a ship, a guest house, and a river.

The Chapter on Searches

SN 51.67–76

Searches

Esanāvagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on searches at SN 45.161–170.)

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

2.1

The Chapter on Floods

SN 51.77–86

Floods, Etc.

Oghavagga

1.1 “Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.

1.5 The four bases of psychic power should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm ... energy ... mental development ... inquiry, and active effort. These four bases of psychic power should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”

(Tell in full as in the Linked Discourses on the Path at SN 45.171–180.)

2.1 Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

**The Linked Discourses on the Bases
of Psychic Power, the seventh section.**

LINKED DISCOURSES WITH
ANURUDDHA

The Chapter on In Private

SN 52.1

In Private (1st)

Paṭhamarahogatasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.³⁷⁵ Then as Anuruddha was in private retreat this thought came to his mind:
- 1.4 “Whoever has missed out on these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.³⁷⁶ Whoever has undertaken these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.”
- 2.1 Then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna knew what Venerable Anuruddha was thinking. As easily as a strong person would extend or

375. Anuruddha was the brother of Ānanda and Mahānāma (Kd 17:1.1.3) which, according to the commentary, makes the Buddha his cousin. In this Saṃyutta he appears as an exponent of mindfulness meditation; he is well known also as a master of clairvoyance (AN 1.192:1.1). Many Suttas feature him, and his verses at Thag 16.9 give further details of his home life, his practice, and his past lives.

376. Also at SN 47.33.

contract their arm, he reappeared in front of Anuruddha,³⁷⁷ and said to him:

“Reverend Anuruddha, how do you define the undertaking of the 2.3
four kinds of mindfulness meditation by a mendicant?”

“Reverend, it’s when a mendicant, with respect to the body in- 3.1
ternally, meditates observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and
to originate and vanish—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetous-
ness and displeasure for the world.³⁷⁸ With respect to the body
externally, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to van-
ish, and to originate and vanish—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of
covetousness and displeasure for the world. With respect to the
body internally and externally, they meditate observing the liability
to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish—keen, aware,
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unre- 4.1
pulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving
the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish:
‘May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the
repulsive,’ that’s what they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiv-
ing the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,’ that’s what
they do. If they wish: ‘May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful
and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,’ that’s
what they do.

With respect to feelings internally ... externally ... internally and 5.1
externally, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to van-
ish, and to originate and vanish ...

With respect to the mind internally ... externally ... internally 7.1
and externally, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to
vanish, and to originate and vanish ...

377. Despite Anuruddha’s love of solitude, his appearances in the discourses often feature his encounters with fellow monks, speaking to their warm and collegiate relationship.

378. Here Anuruddha extends the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula to include both internal/external and origination/vanishing.

- 9.1 With respect to principles internally ... externally ... internally and externally, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish ...
- 10.1 If they wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’ that’s what they do. ... If they wish: ‘May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, ignoring both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,’ that’s what they do.
- 10.3 That’s how to define the undertaking of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation by a mendicant.”

SN 52.2

In Private (2nd)

Dutiyarahogatasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥi.
- 1.2 Then as Anuruddha was in private retreat this thought came to his mind:
- 1.3 “Whoever has missed out on these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has missed out on the noble path to the complete ending of suffering. Whoever has undertaken these four kinds of mindfulness meditation has undertaken the noble path to the complete ending of suffering.”
- 2.1 Then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna knew what Venerable Anuruddha was thinking. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he reappeared in front of Anuruddha and said to him:
- 3.1 “Reverend Anuruddha, how do you define the undertaking of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation by a mendicant?”
- 4.1 “Reverend, it’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body internally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of the body externally ... internally and externally—keen,

aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of feelings internally ... externally ... internally and externally ... 5.1

They meditate observing an aspect of the mind internally ... externally ... internally and externally ... 6.1

They meditate observing an aspect of principles internally ... externally ... internally and externally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That's how to define the undertaking of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation by a mendicant." 7.1

SN 52.3

On the Bank of the Sutanu

Sutanusutta

At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvattṭhī on the bank of the Sutanu.³⁷⁹ Then several mendicants went up to Venerable Anuruddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side, and said to him: 1.1

"What things has Venerable Anuruddha developed and cultivated to attain great direct knowledge?" 1.4

"Reverends, I attained great direct knowledge by developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? I meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I attained great direct knowledge by developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. 2.1

379. The Sutanu ("slender") river is mentioned only here. Anuruddha is often depicted in these out-of-the-way settings.

- 2.8 And it was by developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I directly knew the lower principle as lower, the middle principle as middle, and the higher principle as higher.”³⁸⁰

SN 52.4

At Thorny Wood (1st)

Paṭhamakaṇḍakīsutta

- 1.1 At one time the venerables Anuruddha, Sāriputta, and Mahāmoggallāna were staying near Sāketa in the Thorny Wood.³⁸¹ Then in the late afternoon, Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna came out of retreat, went to Anuruddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. Sāriputta said to Anuruddha:
- 1.4 “Reverend Anuruddha, what things should a trainee mendicant enter and remain in?”
- 2.1 “Reverend Sāriputta, a trainee mendicant should enter and remain in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings . . . mind . . . principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and

380. The exact sense of “lower”, “middle”, and “higher” *dharmas* here is unclear. Given the context of Anuruddha’s psychic powers, I follow Bodhi’s suggestion that we interpret in line with AN 3.76, understanding *dharmas* as the “principle” governing the relationship between mental quality and states of rebirth (SN 12.20:2.3). The commentary, alternatively, cites the Abhidhamma Dhammasaṅgī (Ds 1.1:40.1), which has the three as one of its triads in the sense of good, mundane wholesome, and transcendent mental phenomena. This analysis, however, does not really reflect Sutta usage, which typically speaks of simply lower and higher *dharmas* (SN 46.2:10.2). Moreover, we would expect a plural in that case.

381. The Thorny Wood is only mentioned this series of three Suttas and SN 47.26. All feature the same people and are probably on the same occasion.

displeasure for the world. A trainee mendicant should enter and remain in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 52.5

At Thorny Wood (2nd)

Dutiyakaṇḍakīsutta

At Sāketa. Sāriputta said to Anuruddha: 1.1

“Reverend Anuruddha, what things should a mendicant who is 1.3
an adept enter and remain in?”

“Reverend Sāriputta, a mendicant who is an adept should en- 1.4
ter and remain in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What
four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the
body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displea-
sure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ...
mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness
and displeasure for the world. A mendicant who is an adept should
enter and remain in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

SN 52.6

At Thorny Wood (3rd)

Tatīyakaṇḍakīsutta

At Sāketa. Sāriputta said to Anuruddha: 1.1

“What things has Venerable Anuruddha developed and cultivated 1.3
to attain great direct knowledge?”

“Reverend, I attained great direct knowledge by developing and 1.4
cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? I
meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mind-
ful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I meditate
observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware,
and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I

attained great direct knowledge by developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

- 1.11 And it's because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I directly know the thousandfold galaxy."

SN 52.7

The Ending of Craving

Tañhākkhayasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 There Venerable Anuruddha addressed the mendicants: "Reverends, mendicants!"

1.4 "Reverend," they replied. Anuruddha said this:

2.1 "Reverends, when these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated they lead to the ending of craving. What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. When these four kinds of mindfulness meditation are developed and cultivated they lead to the ending of craving."

SN 52.8

The Salaḷa Tree Hut

Salaḷāgārasutta

1.1 At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the *salaḷa* tree hut.³⁸² There Venerable Anuruddha addressed the mendi-

382. *Salaḷa* was the awakening tree of the Buddha Paduma (Tha Ap 179:1.2), which suggests it was a large tree. It is sometimes identified with frankincense (*sallakī*, Sanskrit *śallakī*, *Boswellia serrata*), but seems to me unlikely. Frankincense thrives in arid highlands quite distant from the rich riverlands of Sāvatthī, and is a straggly tree unsuited to construction (although the hut could simply be

cants: “Reverends, suppose that, although the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east, a large crowd were to come along with a spade and basket, saying: ‘We’ll make this Ganges River slant, slope, and incline to the west!’ What do you think, reverends? Would they succeed?”

“No, reverend. Why is that? The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. It’s not easy to make it slant, slope, and incline to the west. That large crowd will eventually get weary and frustrated.” 1.7

“In the same way, while a mendicant develops and cultivates the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, if rulers or their chief ministers, friends or colleagues, relatives or family should invite them to accept wealth, saying: ‘Please, my man, why let these other robes torment you? Why follow the practice of shaving your head and carrying an alms bowl? Come, return to a lesser life, enjoy wealth, and make merit!’ 2.1

It is quite impossible for a mendicant who is developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation to resign the training and return to a lesser life. Why is that? Because for a long time that mendicant’s mind has slanted, sloped, and inclined to seclusion. So it’s impossible for them to return to a lesser life. 3.1

And how does a mendicant develop and cultivate the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That’s how a mendicant develops and cultivates the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.” 3.4

near a frankincense). The flowers or garlands of *salaḍa* are, in poetry, abundant (eg. Ja 511:27.3, Tha Ap 209, Tha Ap 556:3.3)), BUT THE FRANKINCENSE FLOWER IS SMALL AND A POOR CANDIDATE FOR GARLANDS. [MN 93:11.6 and MN 96:16.3 speak of the fire of the *salaḍa*, but no Pali reference, so far as I know, speaks of the most characteristic feature of frankincense, its aromatic gum used for incense. Sometimes the variant readings suggest a confusion with the pine tree *sarala* (*Pinus roxburghii*, SN 56.32:2.2), but that of course has no flowers.

SN 52.9

In Ambapālī's Mango Grove

Ambapālivanasutta

- 1.1 At one time the venerables Anuruddha and Sāriputta were staying near Vesālī in Ambapālī's Mango Grove. Then in the late afternoon, Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Anuruddha, and said to him:
- 2.1 “Reverend Anuruddha, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. What kind of meditation are you usually practicing these days?”
- 2.3 “These days, reverend, I usually meditate with my mind firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? I meditate observing an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. These days I usually meditate with my mind firmly established in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation. A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—usually meditates with their mind firmly established in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”
- 3.1 “We're so fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate, to have heard such a dramatic statement in the presence of Venerable Anuruddha.”

SN 52.10

Gravely Ill

Bālhagilānasutta

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvattthī in the Dark Forest. And he was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then several mendicants went up to Venerable Anuruddha, and said to him:

“What meditation does Venerable Anuruddha practice so that 2.1
physical pain doesn’t occupy his mind?”

“Reverends, I meditate with my mind firmly established in the four 2.2
kinds of mindfulness meditation so that physical pain doesn’t occupy
my mind. What four? I meditate observing an aspect of the body
... feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of
covetousness and displeasure for the world. I meditate with my mind
firmly established in these four kinds of mindfulness meditation so
that physical pain doesn’t occupy my mind.”

Chapter Two

SN 52.11

A Thousand Eons

Kappasahassasutta

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then several mendicants went up to Venerable Anuruddha, exchanged greetings with him ... and said:
- 2.1 “What things has Venerable Anuruddha developed and cultivated to attain great direct knowledge?”
- 2.2 “Reverends, I attained great direct knowledge by developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? I meditate observing an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. I attained great direct knowledge by developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.
- 2.9 And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I recollect a thousand eons.”

SN 52.12

Psychic Powers

Iddhividhasutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds 1.1
of mindfulness meditation that I wield the many kinds of psychic
power: multiplying myself and becoming one again ... controlling
the body as far as the realm of divinity.”

SN 52.13

Clairaudience

Dibbasotasutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds 1.1
of mindfulness meditation that, with clairaudience that is purified
and superhuman, I hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly,
whether near or far.”

SN 52.14

Encompassing the Mind

Cetopariyasutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds 1.1
of mindfulness meditation that I understand the minds of other
beings and individuals, having encompassed them with my mind. I
understand mind with greed as ‘mind with greed’ ... I understand
unfreed mind as ‘unfreed mind.’”

SN 52.15

Possible

Ṭhānasutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I truly understand the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible.”³⁸³

SN 52.16

The Results of Deeds Undertaken

Kammasamādānasutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I truly understand the result of deeds undertaken in the past, future, and present in terms of grounds and causes.”

SN 52.17

Where All Paths of Practice Lead

Sabbatthagāminisutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I truly understand where all paths of practice lead.”

383. The ten kinds of knowledge to follow are called the ten powers of a Realized One (*dasatathāgatabala*, AN 10.21, MN 12:9.1).

SN 52.18

Diverse Elements

Nānādhātusutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of 1.1
mindfulness meditation that I truly understand the world with its
many and diverse elements.”

SN 52.19

Diverse Beliefs

Nānādhimuttisutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of 1.1
mindfulness meditation that I truly understand the diverse convictions of sentient beings.”

SN 52.20

Comprehending the Faculties of Others

Indriyaparopariyattasutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of 1.1
mindfulness meditation that I truly understand the faculties of other
sentient beings and other individuals after encompassing them with
my mind.”

SN 52.21

Absorptions, Etc.

Jhānādisutta

“... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of 1.1
mindfulness meditation that I truly understand corruption, cleans-

ing, and emergence regarding the absorptions, liberations, immersions, and attainments.”

SN 52.22

Past Lives

Pubbenivāsasutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.”

SN 52.23

Clairvoyance

Dibbacakkhusutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.”

SN 52.24

The Ending of Defilements

Āsavakkhayasutta

- 1.1 “... And it’s because of developing and cultivating these four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I 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.”

The Linked Discourses with Anuruddha, the eighth section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON ABSORPTION

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on the Ganges

SN 53.1–12

Absorptions, Etc.

Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga

1.1 At Sāvatthī.³⁸⁴

1.3 “Mendicants, there are these four absorptions. What four?

1.5 It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

1.6 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they 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.

1.7 And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and

384. The previous Jhānasamyutta (SN 34.1) focused on the process of perfecting meditation. This chapter deals with the meditation states themselves. However, one looking for extra details on these states may be disappointed, as we find only the usual formula applied in the standard series of repetitions. For notes see SN 45.8.

aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’

With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. 1.8

These are the four absorptions. 1.9

The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment. 2.1

And how does a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? 2.3

It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. 2.4

As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. 2.5

That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.” 2.8

Six on slanting to the east,
and six on slanting to the ocean;
these two sixes make twelve,
and that’s how this chapter is recited. 3.1

The Chapter on Diligence

SN 53.13–22

Diligence

Appamādavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on diligence at SN 45.139–148.)

2.1

The Realized One, footprint, roof peak,
roots, heartwood, jasmine,
monarch, sun and moon,
and cloth is the tenth.

The Chapter on Hard Work

SN 53.23–34

Hard Work

Balakaraṇīyavagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on hard work at SN 45.149–160.)

Hard work, seeds, and dragons,
a tree, a pot, and a spike,
the atmosphere, and two on clouds,
a ship, a guest house, and a river.

2.1

The Chapter on Searches

SN 53.35–44

Searches

Esanāvagga

(Tell in full as in the chapter on searches at SN 45.161–170.)

2.1

Searches, discriminations, defilements,
states of existence, three kinds of suffering,
barrenness, stains, and troubles,
feelings, craving, and thirst.

The Chapter on Floods

SN 53.45–54

Floods, etc.

Oghavagga

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for re- 1.1
birth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless
realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher
fetters.

The four absorptions should be developed for the direct knowl- 1.5
edge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five
higher fetters. What four? It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded
from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and
remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born
of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As
the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they
enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ...
fourth absorption. These four absorptions should be developed for
the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving
up of these five higher fetters.”

(Tell in full as in the Linked Discourses on the Path at SN 45.171–180.)

Floods, yokes, grasping,
ties, and underlying tendencies,
kinds of sensual stimulation, hindrances,
aggregates, and fetters high and low.

2.1

The Linked Discourses on Absorption, the ninth section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON BREATH MEDITATION

The Chapter on One Thing

SN 54.1

One Thing

Ekadhammasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

“Mendicants, when one thing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. What one thing? Mindfulness of breathing. 1.3

And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? 1.6

- 1.7 It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.³⁸⁵
- 1.8 Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.³⁸⁶
- 2.1 Breathing in heavily they know: 'I'm breathing in heavily.' Breathing out heavily they know: 'I'm breathing out heavily.'³⁸⁷ Breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' Breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.'³⁸⁸ They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the whole body.'³⁸⁹ They practice like this:

385. The situation here—a mendicant gone to the forest—establishes that this practice takes place in the wider context of the Gradual Training. Indeed, this whole sutta can be understood as an expansion of this phrase, mentioned briefly at DN 2:67.3. | For *parimukhaṃ* ("present") we find *pratimukha* in Sanskrit, which can mean "presence" or the reflection of the face. Late canonical Pali explains *parimukhaṃ* as "the tip of the nose or the reflection of the face (*mukhanimitta*)". *Parimukha* in Sanskrit is rare, but it appears in Pāṇini 4.4.29, which the commentary illustrates with the example of a servant "in the presence" of their master (cp. SN 47.8). So it seems the sense is "before the face" or more generally "in the presence". | To "bring mindfulness" (*satim upaṭṭhapetvā*) is to "do satipaṭṭhāna". The root sense of *upaṭṭhāna* is to "stand near" or "attend" (like a nurse on a patient, SN 47.13:1.3), and the Sanskrit *upasthāna* is commonly used in the sense "homage" of the gods, based on the idea of "attending" the sacred flame. A literal translation of the phrase might be, "having made memory attend to what is present".

386. The most fundamental meditation instruction. Notice how the Buddha phrases it: not "concentrate on the breath" as an object, but rather "breathing" as an activity to which one brings mindfulness. The stages of breath meditation are not meant to be done deliberately, but to be observed and understood as the natural process of deepening meditation.

387. In the beginning, the breath is somewhat rough and coarse. The Pali idiom is "long" and "short" breath, but in English we usually say one breathes "heavily" or "lightly".

388. Over time, the breath becomes more subtle and soft.

389. The "whole body" (*sabbakāya*) here refers to the breath, marking the fuller and more continuous awareness that arises with tranquility. Some, however, interpret it as the "whole physical body", broadening awareness to encompass the movement and settling of energies throughout the body.

‘I’ll breathe in stilling the physical process.’ They practice like this:
 ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the physical process.’³⁹⁰

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing rapture.’ They 3.1
 practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing rapture.’³⁹¹ They
 practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing bliss.’ They practice
 like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing bliss.’³⁹² They practice like
 this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the mental process.’ They practice
 like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the mental process.’³⁹³ They
 practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling the mental process.’ They
 practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the mental process.’³⁹⁴

390. The “physical process” (*kāyasaṅkhāra*) is the breath itself (SN 41.6:1.8). This can become so soft as to be imperceptible.

391. “Rapture” (*pīti*) is a joyous emotional response to pleasure, usually a spiritual sense of elevation or uplift in meditation. Normally rapture is said to arise before tranquility as part of the process leading toward absorption (see below, MN 118:34.1). In mindfulness of breathing, however, the body typically becomes quite tranquil before rapture arises.

392. The uplifting quality of rapture becomes sublimated to a more subtle, pervasive pleasure or bliss. The meditator refines and stabilizes these positive emotions in their journey toward absorption, which occurs when all necessary factors are fully developed and perfectly balanced in a subtle union.

393. “Mental processes” are said to be “perception and feeling” (MN 44:14.1, SN 41.6:1.7). The “feelings” include rapture and bliss. “Perception” in meditation includes the “light” (MN 128:28.2) or “forms” (MN 77:23.14) often experienced by meditators at this point. Later texts call this a *nimitta*, a “sign” that the mind is becoming subtle and the hindrances quiet as the meditator nears absorption.

394. A paradox of meditation is that the stronger things are, the more subtle they become. In the initial stages of practice, it is common to have overwhelming experiences of rapture, with tears of joy, or dramatic and striking “visions”. Inexperienced meditators often take this to signify a profound realization. With patient mindfulness, however, the feelings and perceptions settle down and become unified, so they are no longer experienced as separate things. Just as the physical breath virtually disappeared, here too the feelings and perceptions can become so subtle as to feel like the simple, normal state of the mind.

- 4.1 They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the mind.’³⁹⁵ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in gladdening the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out gladdening the mind.’³⁹⁶ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in immersing the mind in samādhī.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out immersing the mind in samādhī.’³⁹⁷ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in freeing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out freeing the mind.’³⁹⁸ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing impermanence.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing impermanence.’³⁹⁹
- 5.1 They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing fading away.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing fading away.’⁴⁰⁰ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing cessation.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing cessation.’⁴⁰¹ They practice like

395. With the stilling of “mental processes”, the mind itself becomes clear, the center of awareness that knows all of this. These four factors focus on the experience of absorption.

396. This applies especially to the first two absorptions.

397. “Immersion” (*samādhī*) is deep meditative stillness. The word conveys the sense of “gathered”, “collected”, with a secondary sense of “ignited”, “illuminated”. It emphasizes both the stability of the mind as well as the unification of all the mental factors present (see MN 44:12.2 and note there).

398. The mind is liberated from hindrances in absorption. This is a state so very refined it is called the “bliss of awakening” (MN 139:9.18), albeit temporarily (AN 5.149).

399. The first twelve steps focused on serenity (*samatha*), and now the final four steps shift focus to discernment (or “insight”, *vipassanā*). This exemplifies the most common course of practice, where serenity precedes discernment (AN 4.170:3.2). Here, impermanence is contemplated in the context of mindfulness of breathing itself. The entire course of practice has seen the physical energies of the breath become subtle and fade, then the mental processes, then the mind itself is transformed. The meditator reflects on these changes and sees not simply that change happens, but how changes happen due to causes.

400. *Virāga* means both “dispassion” in the sense of letting go desire, and “fading away” in the sense of its gradual disappearance.

401. This refers to the permanent ending of the fetters or underlying tendencies.

this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’⁴⁰²

Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial.” 6.1

SN 54.2

Awakening Factors

Bojjhaṅgasutta

“Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? It’s when a mendicant develops mindfulness of breathing together with the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial.” 1.1

SN 54.3

Plain Version

Suddhikasutta

“Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? 1.1

402. This is the full renunciation of all worldly desires that occurs with arahantship (“perfection”). These final four stages illustrating the progress of insight can even be mapped on to the four stages of awakening: the stream-enterer sees that “whatever has a beginning also has an end”; for the once-returner, greed and hate are fading away; for the non-returner, greed and hate have ceased; and for the arahant, all defilements are relinquished.

- 1.3 It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.
- 1.4 Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ...
- 1.5 They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing letting go.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing letting go.'
- 1.6 Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial."

SN 54.4

Fruits (1st)

Paṭhamaphalasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it's very fruitful and beneficial. And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial?
- 1.3 It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.
- 1.4 Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ...
- 1.5 They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing letting go.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing letting go.'
- 1.6 Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way you can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life, or if there's residue left behind, non-return."

SN 54.5

Fruits (2nd)

Dutiyaphalasutta

“Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? 1.1

It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. 1.3

Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ... 1.4

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ 1.5

Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial. 1.6

When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way you can expect seven fruits and benefits. What seven? You attain enlightenment early on in this very life. If not, you attain enlightenment at the time of death. If not, with the ending of the five lower fetters you’re extinguished in between one life and the next ... you’re extinguished upon landing ... you’re extinguished without extra effort ... you’re extinguished with extra effort ... you head upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm ... When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way you can expect these seven fruits and benefits.” 2.1

SN 54.6

With Ariṭṭha

Ariṭṭhasutta

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

There the Buddha ... said: 1.2

- 1.3 “Mendicants, do you develop mindfulness of breathing?” When he said this, Venerable Aritṭha said to him:⁴⁰³
- 1.5 “Sir, I develop mindfulness of breathing.”
- 1.6 “But mendicant, how do you develop it?”
- 1.7 “Sir, I’ve given up desire for sensual pleasures of the past. I’m rid of desire for sensual pleasures of the future. And I have eliminated perception of aversion regarding phenomena internally and externally.⁴⁰⁴ Just mindful, I will breathe in. Mindful, I will breathe out.⁴⁰⁵ That’s how I develop mindfulness of breathing.”
- 2.1 “That is mindfulness of breathing, Aritṭha; I don’t deny it. But as to how mindfulness of breathing is fulfilled in detail, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 2.4 “Yes, sir,” Aritṭha replied. The Buddha said this:
- 3.1 “And how is mindfulness of breathing fulfilled in detail? It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. Breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ This is how mindfulness of breathing is fulfilled in detail.”

403. Aritṭha is castigated at length for his wrong views at MN 22.

404. While this claim, if true, indicates good progress, it is still partial: desire for past and future is abandoned (but not hate); hate in the present is abandoned (but not desire); and delusion is not mentioned. | Compare a similar construction at SN 21.10:3.6.

405. BJT has the verb in present tense. I follow the MS reading, assuming the future tense is further evidence of his partial understanding.

SN 54.7

About Mahākappina

Mahākappinasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

Now at that time Venerable Mahākappina was sitting not far from the Buddha, cross-legged, his body set straight, and mindfulness brought to the present. The Buddha saw him, and addressed the mendicants:

1.2

“Mendicants, do you see any perturbation or trembling in that mendicant’s body?”

2.1

“Sir, whenever we see that mendicant meditating—whether in the middle of the Saṅgha or alone in private—we never see any perturbation or trembling in his body.”

2.2

“Mendicants, when an immersion has been developed and cultivated there’s no perturbation or trembling of the body or mind. That mendicant gets such immersion when he wants, without trouble or difficulty. And what is that immersion?”

3.1

When immersion due to mindfulness of breathing has been developed and cultivated there’s no perturbation or trembling of the body or mind.⁴⁰⁶ And how is immersion due to mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated in such a way?

4.1

It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’

5.1

That’s how immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so that there’s no perturbation or trembling of the body or mind.”

5.4

406. This introduces the term “immersion due to mindfulness of breathing” which is maintained in following discourses.

SN 54.8

The Simile of the Lamp

Padīpopamasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. How so?
- 2.1 It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. Breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ That’s how immersion due to mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, is very fruitful and beneficial.
- 3.1 Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too usually practiced this kind of meditation. And while I was usually practicing this kind of meditation neither my body nor my eyes became fatigued.⁴⁰⁷ And my mind was freed from defilements by not grasping.
- 4.1 Now, a mendicant might wish:⁴⁰⁸ ‘May neither my body nor my eyes become fatigued. And may my mind be freed from the defile-

407. The body might become fatigued, for example, through many hours of walking meditation. The eyes might become fatigued when focusing on an external object of meditation, such as a corpse, a light, or a color. More generally, since mindfulness of breathing focuses on the principle of life, it is nourishing and sustaining for both body and mind. It is because other meditations have certain counter-indications (see also the next Sutta) that mindfulness of breathing is recommended as generally suited for almost everyone. Nonetheless, there are certain counter-indications for any meditation. In some people, it can induce panic attacks, amplify delusional thinking or hallucinations, and strengthen anxiety or depression. Meditation is an exercise for the mind, and like physical exercise, it should only be undertaken in accordance with one’s capacity.

408. The same rhetorical pattern is used in MN 6 and AN 10.71.

ments by not grasping.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I give up memories and 5.1
thoughts tied to domestic life.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the 6.1
repulsive in the unrepulsive.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the 7.1
unrepulsive in the repulsive.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the 8.1
repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I meditate perceiving the 9.1
unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘May I meditate staying equani- 10.1
mous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Quite secluded from sensual plea- 11.1
sures, secluded from unskillful qualities, may 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.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘As the placing of the mind and 12.1
keeping it connected are stilled, may 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.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘With the fading away of rapture, 13.1
may I enter and remain in the third absorption, where I will meditate

with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, “Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.” So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

- 14.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘With the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, may I enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 15.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that “space is infinite”, may I enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 16.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that “consciousness is infinite”, may I enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 17.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that “there is nothing at all”, may I enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 18.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, may I enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 19.1 Now, a mendicant might wish: ‘Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, may I enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling.’ So let them closely focus on this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.
- 20.1 When immersion due to mindfulness of breathing has been developed and cultivated in this way, if they feel a pleasant 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 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 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. 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.' 21.1

Suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. As the oil and the wick are used up, it would be extinguished due to not being fed. 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.'" 22.1

SN 54.9

At Vesālī

Vesālīsutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.⁴⁰⁹ Now at that time the Buddha spoke in many ways to the mendicants about the 1.1

409. This episode is told in full as the origin story for the Vinaya rule prohibiting murder (Bu Pj 3), and it is referenced at MN 145:5.32 and SN 35.88:16.2. As a narrative, it is unusual and puzzling in many respects, but the overall message is clear: mindfulness of breathing is a peaceful and wholesome meditation.

meditation on ugliness. He praised the meditation on ugliness and its development.⁴¹⁰

- 2.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for a fortnight.⁴¹¹ No-one should approach me, except the one who brings my almsfood.”
- 2.4 “Yes, sir,” replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, except the one who brought the almsfood.
- 3.1 Then those mendicants thought, “The Buddha spoke in many ways about the meditation on ugliness. He praised the meditation on ugliness and its development.” They committed themselves to developing the many different facets of the meditation on ugliness. Becoming horrified, repelled, and disgusted with this body, they looked for a suicide weapon.⁴¹² Each day ten, twenty, or thirty mendicants committed suicide.⁴¹³
- 4.1 Then after a fortnight had passed, the Buddha came out of retreat and addressed Ānanda, “Ānanda, why does the mendicant Saṅgha seem so diminished?”
- 4.3 Ānanda told the Buddha all that had happened, and said, “Sir, please explain another way the mendicant Saṅgha might be settled in enlightenment.”
- 5.1 “Well then, Ānanda, gather all the mendicants staying in the vicinity of Vesālī together in the assembly hall.”
- 5.2 “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He did what the Buddha asked, went up to him, and said, “Sir, the mendicant Saṅgha has assembled. Please, sir, come at your convenience.”
- 6.1 Then the Buddha went to the assembly hall, sat down on the seat spread out, and addressed the mendicants:

410. That is, the contemplation of the parts of the body, or the corpse meditations.

411. See note on SN 45.11:1.2.

412. For *sattahāraka*, see note on SN 35.88:16.2.

413. In the Vinaya version, they took their own lives, killed each other, and got the sham monk Migalaṇḍika to kill them.

“Mendicants, when this immersion due to mindfulness of breath- 6.3
ing is developed and cultivated it’s peaceful and sublime, a delectable
and blissful meditation. And it disperses and settles unskillful quali-
ties on the spot whenever they arise.

In the last month of summer, when the dust and dirt is stirred up, 7.1
a large storm out of season disperses and settles it on the spot.

In the same way, when this immersion due to mindfulness of 7.2
breathing is developed and cultivated it’s peaceful and sublime, a
delectable and blissful meditation. And it disperses and settles un-
skillful qualities on the spot whenever they arise. And how is it so
developed and cultivated?

It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of 8.1
a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body
straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.

Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ... 8.2

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They 8.3
practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’

That’s how this immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is de- 8.4
veloped and cultivated so that it’s peaceful and sublime, a delectable
and blissful meditation. And it disperses and settles unskillful quali-
ties on the spot whenever they arise.”

SN 54.10

With Kimbila

Kimilasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Ki- 1.1
mbilā in the Freshwater Mangrove Wood. Then the Buddha said to
Venerable Kimbila,⁴¹⁴ “Kimbila, how is immersion due to mindful-

414. The several discourses at Kimbilā all feature the monk named Kimila; it is a common practice to this day to name monastics for their place of residence. We might translate, “the venerable of Kimbilā”. In those discourses, he asks the

ness of breathing developed and cultivated so that it is very fruitful and beneficial?”

- 2.1 When he said this, Kimbila kept silent.
- 2.2 For a second time ...
- 2.3 And for a third time, the Buddha said to him, “How is immersion due to mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so that it is very fruitful and beneficial?” And a second time and a third time Kimbila kept silent.
- 3.1 When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha speak on immersion due to mindfulness of breathing. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”
- 4.1 “Well then, Ānanda, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 4.2 “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. The Buddha said this:
- 4.4 “Ānanda, how is immersion due to mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so that it is very fruitful and beneficial? It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.
- 4.6 Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. ...
- 4.7 They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ That’s how immersion due to mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, is very fruitful and beneficial.
- 5.1 There’s a time when a mendicant is breathing in heavily, and they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’⁴¹⁵ Breathing in lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing in lightly.’ Breathing out lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing out lightly.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the whole body.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing

Buddha about the long lasting of the dispensation (AN 5.201, AN 6.40, AN 7.59).

415. This passage shows how mindfulness of breathing maps on to the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, a theme explored in more detail in MN 118.

the whole body.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling the physical process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the physical process.’ At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.⁴¹⁶ Why is that? Because the breath is a certain aspect of the body, I say.⁴¹⁷ Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

There’s a time when a mendicant practices like this: ‘I’ll breathe in 6.1 experiencing rapture.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing rapture.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing bliss.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing bliss.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the the mental process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the the mental process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling the mental process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the mental process.’⁴¹⁸ At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Why is that? Because careful application of mind to the in-breaths and out-breaths is a certain aspect of feelings, I say.⁴¹⁹ Therefore, at such a time a mendicant

416. This shows how mindfulness of breathing maps on to the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, a theme explored in more detail in MN 118.

417. The Pali here is *kāyaññataram*, literally, “a certain body”. What it means is that the breath, as one of the four material elements, is a certain aspect of our physical embodiment which is selected here for contemplation, rather than, say, the parts of the body or the postures as we find in the full presentation of *satipaṭṭhāna* at MN 10 or MN 119. Here and below, MN 118 prefixes the locative plural, “a certain body among the bodies”.

418. The “inbreathing” phrase is absent from MS, but it is found in PTS.

419. The sense here is that the pleasant feelings of breath meditation are part of the full spectrum of feelings contemplated in *satipaṭṭhāna*, which include painful feelings (MN 10:32.1). The meditator “carefully” (*sādhukam*) focuses on these feelings as they manifest in the breath. The point is that “breath” is not purely a physical phenomenon. The material property of “air” is its most obvious

is meditating by observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

- 7.1 There's a time when a mendicant practices like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in gladdening the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out gladdening the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in immersing the mind in samādhi.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out immersing the mind in samādhi.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in freeing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out freeing the mind.' At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Why is that? Because there is no development of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing for someone who is unmindful and lacks awareness, I say.⁴²⁰ Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

- 8.1 There's a time when a mendicant practices like this: 'I'll breathe in observing impermanence.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing impermanence.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing fading away.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing fading away.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in ob-

dimension, but we experience breath as a complex that includes emotional and cognitive dimensions. As the physical process becomes subtle, feeling becomes apparent as an aspect of the breath that has always been there, but not clearly perceived.

420. Here the manner of explanation is changed, but the sense is not dissimilar. At MN 10:34.1 the contemplation of mind includes states of mind characterized by greed, hate, and delusion, which are experienced by one lacking mindfulness and awareness. Mindfulness of breathing, however, focuses on the purified mind states of deep meditation. It is also perhaps noteworthy that the third absorption is said to be characterized by mindfulness and awareness, while the fourth absorption is characterized by equanimity, which is highlighted in the next step.

serving cessation.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing cessation.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Having seen with wisdom the giving up of covetousness and displeasure, they watch closely over with equanimity.⁴²¹ Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

Suppose there was a large heap of sand at the crossroads. And a 9.1
cart or chariot were to come by from the east, west, north, or south
and destroy that heap of sand.

In the same way, when a mendicant is meditating by observing an 9.6
aspect of the body, feelings, mind, or principles, they destroy bad,
unskillful qualities.”

421. “Covetousness and displeasure” are the defilements relinquished in *satipa-ttḥāna* itself (MN 10:3.2). This passage refers to reviewing or reflective knowledge, looking back over the course of meditation, seeing how the defilements are abandoned, and understanding how this happens according to the “principles” (*dhammā*) of cause and effect. With understanding comes equanimity, as one is no longer attached.

Chapter Two

SN 54.11

Icchānaṅgala

Icchānaṅgalasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala.⁴²² There he addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for three months. No-one should approach me, except the one who brings my almsfood.”
- 1.5 “Yes, sir,” replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, except the one who brought the almsfood.
- 2.1 Then after three months had passed, the Buddha came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants:
- 2.2 “Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what was the ascetic Gotama’s usual meditation during the rainy season residence?’ You should answer them like this. ‘Reverends, the ascetic Gotama’s usual meditation during the rainy season residence was immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.’
- 2.5 In this regard: mindful, I breathe in. Mindful, I breathe out.⁴²³

422. Icchānaṅgala was a center east of Sāvattthī for the innovative brahmins of the Kosala region.

423. Given the consistency of this formula, it seems that the variations in the Buddha’s own meditation are meaningful and should be reflected in translation. These are the omission of *va* (“just”) here; the omission of *vā* (“or”) below; and the omission of *sikkhati* (“one trains”).

Breathing in heavily I know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing 2.6
out heavily I know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ Breathing in lightly I
know: ‘I’m breathing in lightly.’ Breathing out lightly I know: ‘I’m
breathing out lightly.’ I know: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the whole
body.’ ...

I know: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ I know: ‘I’ll breathe 2.9
out observing letting go.’

For if anything should be rightly called ‘a noble meditation’, or 3.1
else ‘a divine meditation’, or else ‘a realized one’s meditation’,⁴²⁴ it’s
immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

For those mendicants who are trainees—who haven’t achieved 3.5
their heart’s desire, but live aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from
the yoke—the development and cultivation of immersion due to
mindfulness of breathing leads to the ending of defilements.

For those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the 3.6
defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be
done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended
the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through en-
lightenment—the development and cultivation of immersion due
to mindfulness of breathing leads to blissful meditation in this life,
and to mindfulness and awareness.

For if anything should be rightly called ‘a noble meditation’, or 4.1
else ‘a divine meditation’, or else ‘a realized one’s meditation’, it’s
immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.”

424. Here we find “divine meditation” (*brahmavihāra*), which is normally asso-
ciated with the four immeasurables.

SN 54.12

In Doubt

Kaṅkheyyasutta

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Lomasakaṅgiya was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.⁴²⁵ Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to Venerable Lomasakaṅgiya, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, is the meditation of a trainee just the same as the meditation of a realized one? Or is the meditation of a trainee different from the meditation of a realized one?”
- 2.1 “Reverend Mahānāma, the meditation of a trainee and a realized one are not the same; they are different. Those mendicants who are trainees haven’t achieved their heart’s desire, but live aspiring for the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. They meditate after giving up the five hindrances.⁴²⁶ What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.
- 3.1 Those who are trainee mendicants . . . meditate after giving up the five hindrances.
- 4.1 Those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart’s goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—for them, the five hindrances are cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.⁴²⁷

425. Malalasekera in his *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* says that this monk, whose name is spelled *lomasavangisa* in Sinhalese manuscripts, is probably the same person as the *lomasakaṅgiya* of MN 133 and Thag 1.37. This suggestion is supported by the fact that that the name is spelled *lomasakambhiya* in Burmese editions. I take the plunge and read *lomasakaṅgiya* here. The name means “hairy-limbs”.

426. The hindrances are abandoned through the practice of *jhāna*. Still, they may re-arise in the future. | Here, as so often, *viharati* means “meditate”.

427. This clearly shows that *tathāgata* in such contexts means any “realized one”, i.e. any arahant.

What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.

Those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the defilements ... for them, the five hindrances are cut off at the root ... and unable to arise in the future. And here's another way to understand how the meditation of a trainee and a realized one are different. 5.1

At one time the Buddha was staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. 6.1 There he addressed the mendicants, 'Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for three months. No-one should approach me, except the one who brings my almsfood.'

'Yes, sir,' replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, 6.5 except the one who brought the almsfood.

Then after three months had passed, the Buddha came out of 7.1 retreat and addressed the mendicants:

'Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to 7.2 ask you: "Reverends, what was the ascetic Gotama's usual meditation during the rainy season residence?" You should answer them like this: "Reverends, the ascetic Gotama's usual meditation during the rainy season residence was immersion due to mindfulness of breathing."

In this regard: mindful, I breathe in. Mindful, I breathe out. 7.5

Breathing in heavily I know: "I'm breathing in heavily." Breathing 7.6 out heavily I know: "I'm breathing out heavily." ...

I know: "I'll breathe in observing letting go." I know: "I'll breathe 7.7 out observing letting go."

For if anything should be rightly called "noble meditation", or 8.1 else "divine meditation", or else "a realized one's meditation", it's immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

For those mendicants who are trainees—who haven't achieved 9.1 their heart's desire, but live aspiring for the supreme sanctuary from the yoke—the development and cultivation of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing leads to the ending of defilements.

For those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the 10.1 defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be

done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—the development and cultivation of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing leads to blissful meditation in this very life, and to mindfulness and awareness.

11.1 For if anything should be rightly called “noble meditation”, or else “divine meditation”, or else “a realized one’s meditation”, it’s immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.’

11.5 This is another way to understand how the meditation of a trainee and a realized one are different.”

SN 54.13

With Ānanda (1st)

Paṭhamaānandasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

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

1.3 “Sir, is there one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills four things; and those four things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill seven things; and those seven things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill two things?”

2.1 “There is, Ānanda.”

3.1 “Sir, what is that one thing?”

3.2 “Immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. And the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom.

4.1 And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to

an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. Breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’

There’s a time when a mendicant is breathing in heavily, and they 5.1 know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling the physical process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the physical process.’ At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Why is that? Because the breath is a certain aspect of the body, I say. Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

There’s a time when a mendicant practices like this: ‘I’ll breathe in 6.1 experiencing rapture ... bliss ... mind ...’ ... They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling the mental process.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling the mental process.’ At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Why is that? Because careful application of mind to the in-breaths and out-breaths is a certain aspect of feelings, I say. Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

There’s a time when a mendicant practices like this: ‘I’ll breathe 7.1 in experiencing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in glad-denening the mind ... immersing the mind in samādhi ... freeing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out freeing the mind.’ At

such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Why is that? Because there is no development of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing for someone who is unmindful and lacks awareness, I say. Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

8.1 There's a time when a mendicant practices like this: 'I'll breathe in observing impermanence ... fading away ... cessation ... letting go.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing letting go.' At such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Having seen with wisdom the giving up of covetousness and displeasure, they watch closely over with equanimity. Therefore, at such a time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

9.1 That's how immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

10.1 And how are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the seven awakening factors? Whenever a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body, their mindfulness is established and lucid. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of mindfulness; they develop it and perfect it.

11.1 As they live mindfully in this way they investigate, explore, and inquire into that principle with wisdom. At such a time, a mendicant has activated the awakening factor of investigation of principles; they develop it and perfect it.

12.1 As they investigate principles with wisdom in this way their energy is roused up and unflagging. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of energy; they develop it and perfect it.

When you're energetic, rapture not of the flesh arises. At such a 13.1
time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of rapture; they
develop it and perfect it.

When the mind is full of rapture, the body and mind become 14.1
tranquil. At such a time, a mendicant has activated the awakening
factor of tranquility; they develop it and perfect it.

When the body is tranquil and one feels bliss, the mind becomes 15.1
immersed in samādhi. At such a time, a mendicant has activated the
awakening factor of immersion; they develop it and perfect it.

They closely watch over that mind immersed in samādhi. At such a 16.1
time, a mendicant has activated the awakening factor of equanimity;
they develop it and perfect it.

Whenever a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of feel- 17.1
ings ... mind ... principles, their mindfulness is established and
lucid. At such a time, a mendicant has activated the awakening factor
of mindfulness; they develop it and perfect it. ...

(Tell in full as for the first kind of mindfulness meditation.)

They closely watch over that mind immersed in samādhi. At such a 18.1
time, a mendicant has activated the awakening factor of equanimity;
they develop it and perfect it. That's how the four kinds of mind-
fulness meditation are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the
seven awakening factors.

And how are the seven awakening factors developed and culti- 19.1
vated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom? It's when a mendi-
cant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of
principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity,
which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as
letting go. That's how the seven awakening factors are developed and
cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom."

SN 54.14

With Ānanda (2nd)

Dutiyaānandasutta

- 1.1 Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him: “Ānanda, is there one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills four things; and those four things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill seven things; and those seven things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill two things?”
- 1.3 “Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...”
- 1.4 “There is, Ānanda.
- 2.1 And what is that one thing? Immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. And the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom.
- 2.3 And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? ...
- 2.5 That’s how the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom.”

SN 54.15

Several Mendicants (1st)

Paṭhamabhikkhusutta

- 1.1 Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 1.2 “Sir, is there one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills four things; and those four things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill seven things; and those seven things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill two things?”

“There is, mendicants.” 1.3

“Sir, what is that one thing?” 2.1

“Immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. And the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom. 2.2

And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so 3.1
as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? ...

That’s how the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom.” 3.3

SN 54.16

Several Mendicants (2nd)

Dutiabhikkhusutta

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat 1.1
down to one side. The Buddha said to them:

“Mendicants, is there one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills four things; and those four things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill seven things; and those seven things, when developed and cultivated, fulfill two things?” 1.2

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...” 1.3

“There is, mendicants.” 1.4

And what is that one thing? Immersion due to mindfulness of 2.1
breathing is one thing that, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. And the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom.

And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated 3.1
so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? It’s when

a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. ...

- 18.1 That’s how the seven awakening factors are developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom.”

SN 54.17

Giving Up the Fetters

Samyojanappahānasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to giving up the fetters ...”

SN 54.18

Uprooting the Tendencies

Anusayasamugghātasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to uprooting the underlying tendencies ...”

SN 54.19

Completely Understanding the Course of Time

Addhānapariññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to completely understanding the course of time ...”

SN 54.20

The Ending of Defilements

Āsavakkhayasutta

“Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to the ending of defilements.” ...⁴²⁸ 1.1

“And how is immersion due to mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so as to lead to giving up the fetters,⁴²⁹ uprooting the underlying tendencies, completely understanding the course of time, and ending the defilements?

It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and establishes mindfulness in front of them. ... 1.6

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’ 1.7

That’s how immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so as to lead to giving up the fetters, uprooting the underlying tendencies, completely understanding the course of time, and ending the defilements.” 1.8

The Linked Discourses on Mindfulness of Breathing, the tenth section.

428. See SN 48.64 and notes. I believe this opening fragment is a separate discourse, and what follows is a distinct discourse combining the items of SN 54.17–20.

429. Unlike SN 48.64:2.1, the text does not coherently present a complete separate Sutta. Nonetheless, I believe this is due to faulty editing. This should start with, “Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to ...”, but this is not found in any edition I have seen.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON STREAM-ENTRY

The Chapter at Bamboo Gate

SN 55.1

A Wheel-Turning Monarch

Cakkavattirājasutta

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

There the Buddha ... said:

1.2

“Mendicants, suppose a wheel-turning monarch were to rule as sovereign lord over these four continents. And when his body breaks up, after death, he’s reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the thirty-three. There he amuses himself in the Garden of Delight, escorted by a band of nymphs, and supplied and provided with the five kinds of heavenly sensual stimulation. Still, as he’s lacking four things, he’s not exempt from hell, the animal realm, or the ghost realm. He’s not exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.”⁴³⁰

1.3

Now suppose a noble disciple wears rags and feeds on scraps of almsfood. Still, as they have four things, they’re exempt from hell,

1.4

430. The legendary wheel-turning monarch, who ruled without violence from sea to sea, is depicted in detail in DN 17 and DN 26. | The four continents (*dīpa*) are largely mythical, but attempting real world correlations: the Black Plum Tree Land (*jambudīpa*, India), West of Godāvarī (*aparagoyāna*, western Asia and Africa; see AN 3.80:4.2 and note), North of Kuru (*uttarakuru*, central and northern Asia), and East of Videha (*pubbavidehāna*, eastern Asia). Notably there is no continent to the south of India, suggesting there is at least some geographical reality underlying these places.

the animal realm, or the ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

- 2.1 What four?⁴³¹ It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha:⁴³² '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.'⁴³³

- 2.4 They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life, imme-

431. These are the four factors of stream-entry. The devotional passages that follow are regularly recited throughout Theravadin communities, and also form the basis of meditation on the triple gem.

432. "Experiential" is *avecca*, literally "having undergone". "Experiential confidence" is the faith of a stream-enterer, who has seen for themselves.

433. *Bhagavā* ("blessed one", "lord") is the standard honorific for the Buddha in Pali; normally I translate it as "the Buddha". The literal meaning is "one who has good fortune", in which sense it stems from Vedic times (Rig Veda 7.41.5). In Pali it is used only for the Buddha, but elsewhere was a general honorific used, for example, by King Janaka to address Yajñavalkya (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.14), among respected peers (Chândogya Upaniṣad 1.8.7), to a teacher (Chândogya Upaniṣad 4.4.3), or by Manu to his daughter (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.8.1.9). | *Buddha* ("awakened one") is used in Pali especially of Siddhattha Gotama himself, but occasionally as a general term for those who are enlightened. The idea of "awakening" is found throughout the Vedic texts, often associated with the Dawn (RV 1.113.4). | *Arahant* ("perfected one", literally "worthy") is used for the Buddha and others who have realized full awakening. Originally an epithet of the "worthy gods" deserving of praise and sacrifice (eg. RV 1.94.1, 1.127.06, 1.134.6, 5.7.2, 5.52.5, 5.86.5; ŚB 3.4.1.3). | *Vijjācaraṇasampanna* ("accomplished in knowledge and conduct") is explained in detail at DN 3. | For *sugata* ("holy") see note on SN 38.3:1.4. | *Lokavidū* may be explained as singular—knowing the cosmos inside a person (SN 2.26)—or plural—knowing the worlds, sometimes numbered three (Tha Ap 535:26.2; cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.5.16). | The Buddha's training is often compared to taming a fine horse or elephant (eg. MN 65:33.1, MN 107:3.2). | The Buddha's role as teacher of gods is emphasized in SN 1, SN 2, SN 6, and many places throughout the canon.

diately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.⁴³⁴

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of 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.’⁴³⁵

Furthermore, 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.⁴³⁶

These are the four qualities that they possess.

2.9

434. *Sanditṭhika* and *akālika* (“apparent in the present life, immediately effective”) are synonyms, as are *anantara* and *diṭṭheva dhamme*, all of which mean “in the present life, without delay or interim”, in contrast with *samparāyika* (“pertaining to lives to come”; see eg. MN 13:8.5). | *Ehipassika* (“inviting inspection”) is literally “come-and-see-ish”. | For “relevant”, see note on SN 55.7:3.1. | “Sensible people” is *viññū*, “knowing ones”. | All these epithets seem primarily Buddhist. 435. The suttas distinguish between two senses of Saṅgha. The “mendicant Saṅgha” (*bhikkhusaṅgha*) is the conventional community of monks and nuns. The “Saṅgha of disciples” (*sāvakaśaṅgha*) is classified as fourfold according to the stages of awakening: stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection. Each of these stages is further subdivided into those of the path who are practicing for realization and those of the fruit who have realized. These are referred to as “noble disciples”, four of the path and four of the fruit, making eight individuals in total. Saṅgha is not used in the sense of “spiritual community”. | “Worthy of hospitality” is literally “to be treated as a guest” (*pāhuṇa*, see SN 4.18:1.2). | “Religious donation” is *dakkhiṇa*, the fee paid to Vedic priests for their services; for details see MN 142:5.1. | *Añjali* is the gesture of raising one’s cupped palms, originally for receiving water or ghee as a ritual gesture (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.5.1, 1.9.3.6, 5.3.4.21, 9.4.2.4, 13.8.4.5). | The idea of the “field of merit” is that donations to the Saṅgha yield abundant fruit (see SN 1.33, MN 56, AN 8.59, AN 3.57, AN 8.12, MN 142, etc.). In Sanskrit, *puṇyakṣetra* is used for a holy place, especially a ford (*tīrtha*) such as Gayā (Garuḍa Purāṇa 1.82.7) or the Ganges (Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇa 3.40.58).

436. This entails keeping the five precepts at a minimum.

- 2.10 And, mendicants, gaining these four continents is not worth a sixteenth part of gaining these four things.”⁴³⁷

SN 55.2

The Objective of the Spiritual Life

Brahmacariyogadhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”⁴³⁸
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”
- 3.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 4.1 “Those who have faith and ethics,
confidence, and vision of the truth,
in time arrive at happiness,
the objective of the spiritual life.”

437. Compare Dhp 178.

438. A stream-enterer is “assured” (*niyata*) in the sense of being confident, and of being bound for Nibbāna, because of their understanding of the “surety of natural principles” (see SN 12.20:2.3. They are “destined for awakening” (*sambodhiparāyaṇa*) in a maximum of seven more lives.

SN 55.3

With Dīghāvu

Dīghāvuupāsakasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Now at that time the lay follower Dīghāvu was sick, suffering, gravely ill.⁴³⁹ Then he addressed his father, the householder Jotika,⁴⁴⁰ "Please, householder, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the lay follower Dīghāvu is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.' And then say: 'Sir, please visit him at his home out of sympathy.'"

"Yes, dear," replied Jotika. He did as Dīghāvu asked. The Buddha consented with silence. 1.9

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of the lay follower Dīghāvu, sat down on the seat spread out, and said to him, "I hope you're keeping well, Dīghāvu, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing."

"Sir, I'm not keeping well, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading." 2.3

"So, Dīghāvu, you should train like this: 'I will have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And I will have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.' That's how you should train." 2.4

"Sir, these four factors of stream-entry that were taught by the Buddha are found in me, and I exhibit them.⁴⁴¹ For I have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... 3.1

439. This is Dīghāvu's only appearance in the Suttas. A fabled wise prince of the same name features in a long Vinaya story (Kd 10:2.3.1).

440. This is also Jotika's only appearance.

441. As well as this set of "four factors of stream-entry", we find a complementary set (SN 55.5, SN 55.50). In a later text the two are distinguished (DN 33:1.11.108).

And I have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.”

3.6 “In that case, Dīghāvu, grounded on these four factors of stream-entry you should further develop these six things that play a part in realization. You should meditate observing the impermanence of all conditions, perceiving suffering in impermanence, perceiving not-self in suffering, perceiving giving up, perceiving fading away, and perceiving cessation.⁴⁴² That’s how you should train.”

4.1 “These six things that play a part in realization that were taught by the Buddha are found in me, and I exhibit them. For I meditate observing the impermanence of all conditions, perceiving suffering in impermanence, perceiving not-self in suffering, perceiving giving up, perceiving fading away, and perceiving cessation.

4.3 But still, sir, I think, ‘I hope Jotika doesn’t suffer distress when I’ve gone.’” Jotika said, “Dear Dīghāvu, don’t focus on that.⁴⁴³ Come on, dear Dīghāvu, you should closely focus on what the Buddha is saying.”

5.1 When the Buddha had given this advice he rose from his seat and left. Not long after the Buddha left, Dīghāvu passed away. Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

5.4 “Sir, the lay follower named Dīghāvu, who was advised in brief by the Buddha, has passed away. Where has he been reborn in his next life?”

5.6 “Mendicants, the lay follower Dīghāvu was astute. He practiced in line with the teaching, and did not trouble me about the teachings. With the ending of the five lower fetters, he’s been reborn spontaneously, and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.”

442. See AN 6.35 and SN 46.71–76.

443. The text doesn’t identify the speaker, but the use of *tāta* shows that it must be Jotika.

SN 55.4

With Sāriputta (1st)

Paṭhamasāriputtasutta

At one time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's 1.1
Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then in the late afternoon, Ven-
erable Ānanda came out of retreat ... and said to Sāriputta:

“Reverend, how many things do people have to possess in order 1.3
for the Buddha to declare that they're a stream-enterer, not liable to
be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening?”

“Reverend, people have to possess four things in order for the 1.4
Buddha to declare that they're a stream-enterer, not liable to be
reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.

What four? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence 2.1
in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.
People have to possess these four things in order for the Buddha to
declare that they're a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the
underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

SN 55.5

With Sāriputta (2nd)

Dutiyasāriputtasutta

Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one 1.1
side. The Buddha said to him:

“Sāriputta, they speak of a ‘factor for stream-entry’. What is a 1.2
factor for stream-entry?”

“Sir, the factors for stream-entry are associating with true per- 1.4
sons, listening to the true teaching, rational application of mind, and
practicing in line with the teaching.”

- 1.5 “Good, good, Sāriputta! For the factors for stream-entry are associating with true persons, listening to the true teaching, rational application of mind, and practicing in line with the teaching.
- 2.1 Sāriputta, they speak of ‘the stream.’ What is the stream?”
- 2.3 “Sir, the stream 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.”
- 2.5 “Good, good, Sāriputta! For the stream 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.
- 3.1 Sāriputta, they speak of ‘a stream-enterer.’ What is a stream-enterer?”
- 3.3 “Sir, anyone who possesses this noble eightfold path is called a stream-enterer, the venerable of such name and such clan.”
- 3.4 “Good, good, Sāriputta! For anyone who possesses this noble eightfold path is called a stream-enterer, the venerable of such name and such clan.”

SN 55.6

The Chamberlains

Thapatisutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī. At that time several mendicants were making a robe for the Buddha, thinking that when his robe was finished and the three months of the rains residence had passed the Buddha would set out wandering. Now at that time the chamberlains Isidatta and Purāṇa

were residing in Sādhuka on some business.⁴⁴⁴ They heard about this.

So they posted someone on the road, saying: 2.1

“My man, let us know when you see the Blessed One coming, the 2.2
perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.” And that person stood
there for two or three days before they saw the Buddha coming off
in the distance. When they saw him, they went to the chamberlains
and said:

“Sirs, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened 2.5
Buddha is coming. Please come at your convenience.”

Then the chamberlains went up to the Buddha, bowed, and fol- 3.1
lowed behind him. And then the Buddha left the road, went to the
root of a certain tree, and sat down on the seat spread out. The cham-
berlains Isidatta and Purāṇa bowed, sat down to one side, and said
to the Buddha:

“Sir, when we hear that you will be setting out from Sāvattḥī to 4.1
wander in the Kosalan lands, we’re sad and upset, thinking that you
will be far from us. And when we hear that you are setting out from

444. Rod Bucknell, my friend and co-founder of SuttaCentral, sent me this note (edited for clarity): The commentary says they “were staying in their own tributary village named Sādhuka”. On the Chinese side, taken as a translation, 鹿徑澤 would be “Deer path swamp”, which could well be the name of a village. Taken as a transcription, *lu-jing-ze*, it certainly doesn’t ring any bell. As to why the two chamberlains were there, SA 860 says: 修治田業, “to manage/oversee the farming”. It also mentions that they are brothers. The rest is as in the Pali, including details of how they attend on the king’s two wives when they go out (riding on an elephant), and the Buddha’s message about the benefits of renunciation versus the dustiness of the household life. Putting all this together, I think one can infer this: The brothers Isidatta and Purāṇa serve as chamberlains in Pasenadi’s court. They have been given the farming village Sādhuka as a feifdom, and they occasionally visit it to check out the farming activity here, which provides them with a second source of income. This is why they happen to be in such an insignificant little place at the time represented in the sutta. (Sādhuka is apparently only two or three days’ walk from Sāvattḥī, in contrast to Sāketa, which is seven chariot-rides away, according to MN 24).

Sāvattḥī to wander in the Kosalan lands, we're sad and upset, thinking that you are far from us.

5.1 And when we hear that you will be setting out from the Kosalan lands to wander in the Mallian lands, we're sad and upset, thinking that you will be far from us. And when we hear that you are setting out from the Kosalan lands to wander in the Mallian lands, we're sad and upset, thinking that you are far from us.

6.1 And when we hear that you will be setting out from the Mallian lands to wander in the Vajjian lands ...

7.1 you will be setting out from the Vajjian lands to wander in the Kāsian lands ...

8.1 you will be setting out from the Kāsian lands to wander in the Magadhan lands ...⁴⁴⁵

8.4 you are setting out from the Kāsian lands to wander in the Magadhan lands, we're sad and upset, thinking that you are far from us.

9.1 But when we hear that you will be setting out from the Magadhan lands to wander in the Kāsian lands, we're happy and joyful, thinking that you will be near to us. And when we hear that you are setting out from the Magadhan lands to wander in the Kāsian lands ...

10.1 you will be setting out from the Kāsian lands to wander in the Vajjian lands ...

11.1 you will be setting out from the Vajjian lands to wander in the Mallian lands ...

12.1 you will be setting out from the Mallian lands to wander in the Kosalan lands ...⁴⁴⁶

13.1 you will be setting out in the Kosalan lands to wander to Sāvattḥī, we're happy and joyful, thinking that⁴⁴⁷ you will be near to us.

445. Māgadhesu is preferable.

446. Text shifts, apparently in error, to locative singular for *kosale*, with several variants.

447. Read *kosalesu*, as Savatthi is in Kosala. Note that text's *kosalehi* ("from the land of the Kosalans") is Magadhan locative plural (AN 4.67:5.1), so perhaps this is a source of confusion.

And when we hear that you are staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's 13.4
Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery we have no little happiness and
joy, thinking that you are near to us."

"Well then, chamberlains, life at home is cramped and dirty, life 14.1
gone forth is wide open. Just this much is enough for diligence."

"Sir, for us there is something that's even more cramped than that, 14.3
and is considered as such."

"What is that?" 14.4

"Sir, it's when King Pasenadi of Kosala wants to go and visit a park. 15.1
We have to harness and prepare his royal elephants. Then we have
to seat his dear and beloved wives on the elephants, one in front
of us, and one behind.⁴⁴⁸ Those sisters smell like a freshly opened
perfume box; that's how the royal ladies smell with makeup on.⁴⁴⁹
The touch of those sisters is like a tuft of cotton-wool or kapok; that's
how pampered the royal ladies are. Now at that time we must look
after the elephants, the sisters, and ourselves. But we don't recall
having a bad thought regarding those sisters. This is that thing that's
even more cramped than that, and is considered as such."

"Well then, chamberlains, life at home is cramped and dirty, life 16.1
gone forth is wide open. Just this much is enough for diligence. A
noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to
be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.

What four? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confi- 17.1
dence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They live at

448. This passage gives us an idea of the duties of the *thapati* ("chamberlain"). Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.4.4.17–18 tells us that royal authority goes from the king, to the king's brother, to the *thapati*, to the village head. Similarly, Atharva Veda 2.32.4a and 5.23.11a mention the *thapati* directly after the king. The current passage shows they were trusted with the most intimate and sensitive duties of the court. Elsewhere we learn that they shared the meal and carriage with the king, accompanying him on military campaigns (MN 89:18.1), while the current sutta shows them engaged in governing the provinces. Thus the *thapati* was the highest non-royal official in the court, entrusted with governing, advising, and security of the household.

449. The "sisters" are queens Somā and Sakulā (MN 90:3.1).

home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share.⁴⁵⁰ A noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.

18.1 And you have experiential confidence in the Buddha ...⁴⁵¹ the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And whatever there is in your family that's available to give, you share it all with those who are ethical, of good character.

18.6 What do you think, chamberlains? How many people among the Kosalans are your equal when it comes to giving and sharing?"

18.9 "We're fortunate, sir, so very fortunate, in that the Buddha understands us like this."

SN 55.7

The People of Bamboo Gate

Veḥudvāreyyasutta

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Bamboo Gate. The brahmins and householders of Bamboo Gate heard:

1.4 "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Bamboo Gate, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He has this good reputation: '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.' He has

450. Here ethics is replaced by generosity as the fourth factor.

451. Isidatta and Purāṇa were not only trusted members of Pasenadi's retinue (MN 89:18.1), they were, according to this passage, at least stream-enterers (see too AN 6.120–139:1.12). They died as once-returners (AN 6.44:2.3, AN 10.75:2.2).

realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

Then the brahmins and householders of Bamboo Gate went up 2.1
to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. Seated to one side they said to the Buddha:

“Worthy Gotama, these are our wishes, desires, and hopes. We 2.2
wish to live at home with our children; to use sandalwood imported from Kāsi; to wear garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and to accept gold and currency. And when our body breaks up, after death, we wish to be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. Given that we have such wishes, may the Buddha teach us the Dhamma so that we may achieve them.”

“Householders, I will teach you an explanation of the Dhamma 3.1
that is relevant for oneself.⁴⁵² Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, worthy sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 3.3

“And what is the explanation of the Dhamma that applies to one- 4.1
self?

It’s when a noble disciple reflects: ‘I want to live and don’t want 4.2
to die; I want to be happy and recoil from pain. Since this is so, if someone were to take my life, I wouldn’t like that. But others also want to live and don’t want to die; they want to be happy and recoil from pain. So if I were to take the life of someone else, they wouldn’t

452. “Relevant for oneself” is *attupanāyika*, where *upanāyika* is a form of *opaneyyika*, a standard epithet of the Dhamma. The root sense is “leading near”, but here we see that the applied sense is “applicable to oneself”, i.e. “relevant”. See also Thag 1.1:1.4.

like that either. The thing that is disliked by me is also disliked by others. Since I dislike this thing, how can I inflict it on someone else?’ Reflecting in this way, they give up killing living creatures themselves. And they encourage others to give up killing living creatures, praising the giving up of killing living creatures. So their bodily behavior is purified in three points.

5.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to steal from me, I wouldn’t like that. But if I were to steal from someone else, they wouldn’t like that either. The thing that is disliked by me is also disliked by others. Since I dislike this thing, how can I inflict it on someone else?’ Reflecting in this way, they give up stealing themselves. And they encourage others to give up stealing, praising the giving up of stealing. So their bodily behavior is purified in three points.

6.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to have relations with my wives, I wouldn’t like it. But if I were to have relations with someone else’s wives, he wouldn’t like that either. The thing that is disliked by me is also disliked by others. Since I dislike this thing, how can I inflict it on others?’ Reflecting in this way, they give up sexual misconduct themselves. And they encourage others to give up sexual misconduct, praising the giving up of sexual misconduct. So their bodily behavior is purified in three points.

7.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to distort my meaning by lying, I wouldn’t like it.’⁴⁵³ But if I were to distort someone else’s meaning by lying, they wouldn’t like it either. The thing that is disliked by me is also disliked by someone else. Since I dislike this thing, how can I inflict it on others?’ Reflecting in this way, they give up lying themselves. And they encourage others to give up lying, praising the giving up of lying. So their verbal behavior is purified in three points.

453. Here, in the context of false speech, *attha* means “meaning” rather than “welfare”.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to break 8.1
me up from my friends by backbiting, I wouldn’t like it. But if I
were to break someone else from their friends by backbiting, they
wouldn’t like it either. ...’ So their verbal behavior is purified in three
points.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to attack 9.1
me with harsh speech, I wouldn’t like it. But if I were to attack
someone else with harsh speech, they wouldn’t like it either. ...’ So
their verbal behavior is purified in three points.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: ‘If someone were to annoy 10.1
me by talking silliness and nonsense, I wouldn’t like it. But if I were to
annoy someone else by talking silliness and nonsense, they wouldn’t
like it either.’ The thing that is disliked by me is also disliked by
another. Since I dislike this thing, how can I inflict it on another?’
Reflecting in this way, they give up talking nonsense themselves.
And they encourage others to give up talking nonsense, praising the
giving up of talking nonsense. So their verbal behavior is purified in
three points.

And they have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teach- 11.1
ing ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by
the noble ones ... leading to immersion. When a noble disciple pos-
sesses these seven good qualities and these four desirable states 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.’”

When he had spoken, the brahmins and householders of Bamboo 12.1
Gate said to the Buddha, “Excellent, worthy Gotama! ... We go for
refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant
Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember us
as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life.”

In the Brick Hall (1st)

Paṭhamagiñjakāvasathasutta

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying at Nātika in the brick house.⁴⁵⁴ Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 2.1 “Sir, the monk named Sālha has passed away. Where has he been reborn in his next life? The nun named Nandā, the layman named Sudatta, and the laywoman named Sujātā have passed away. Where have they been reborn in the next life?”
- 3.1 “Ānanda, the monk Sālha passed away having realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.
- 3.2 The nun Nandā passed away having ended the five lower fetters. She’s been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.
- 3.3 The layman Sudatta passed away having ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. He’s a once-returner; he will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.
- 3.4 The laywoman Sujātā passed away having ended three fetters. She’s a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.
- 4.1 It’s no wonder that a human being should pass away. But if you should come and ask me about it each and every time someone dies that would be a bother for me. So Ānanda, I will teach you the

454. These events are also related at DN 16:2.5.1 and DN 18:1.2. | Nātika (also spelled *nātika*, or *nādika*; Sanskrit *jñātrka*; Prākṛit *nāyika*) was the clan to which the Jain leader Mahāvīra (called Nātaputta, i.e. Nātīputta) belonged. This is the chief town of the clan. It was part of the Vajjian Federation (see DN 16:2.5.1). | Over a millennium previously, the Indus Valley Civilization had built cities of fired brick with standardized size and construction methods, but in the Buddha’s day most buildings were wood. This is the only brick building mentioned in the suttas, although brick construction is also discussed in the Vinaya.

explanation of the Dhamma named ‘the mirror of the teaching’. A noble disciple who has this may 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.’

And what is that mirror of the teaching? 5.1

It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. This is that mirror of the teaching. A noble disciple who has this may 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.’” 6.1

(The following two discourses have the same setting.)

SN 55.9

At the Brick Hall (2nd)

Dutiyagiṇṇjakāvasathasutta

Ānanda said to the Buddha: 1.1

“Sir, the monk named Asoka has passed away.⁴⁵⁵ Where has he been reborn in his next life? The nun named Asokā, the layman named Asoka, and the laywoman named Asokā have passed away. Where have they been reborn in the next life?” 1.2

“Ānanda, the monk Asoka passed away having realized the unde- 2.1
filed freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom ... in this very life

...

(And all is explained as in SN 55.8.)

455. This series of “Asokas” is not found in DN 16 or DN 18, a curious anomaly that is passed over in the commentaries.

- 3.1 This is that mirror of the teaching. A noble disciple who has this may 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 55.10

At the Brick Hall (3rd)

Tatiyagiñjakāvasathasutta

- 1.1 Ānanda said to the Buddha:
- 1.2 “Sir, the layman named Kakkāṭa has passed away in Ñātika. Where has he been reborn in his next life? The laymen named Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda have passed away in Ñātika. Where have they been reborn in the next life?”
- 2.1 “Ānanda, the laymen Kakkāṭa, Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda passed away having ended the five lower fetters. They’ve been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.
- 3.1 Over fifty laymen in Ñātika have passed away having ended the five lower fetters. They’ve been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.
- 3.2 More than ninety laymen in Ñātika have passed away having ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. They’re once-returners, who will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.
- 3.3 More than five hundred laymen in Ñātika have passed away having ended three fetters. They’re stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.⁴⁵⁶

456. The commentary attributes the large number of deaths to a recent plague (*ahivātārōga*, “viper’s breath disease”). This deadly contagion (malaria?) was

It's no wonder that a human being should pass away. But if you 4.1
should come and ask me about it each and every time someone
passes away, that would be a bother for me. So Ānanda, I will teach
you the explanation of the Dhamma named 'the mirror of the teach-
ing'. A noble disciple who has this may 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.'

And what is that mirror of the teaching? 5.1

It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Bud- 6.1
dha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical
conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. This is
that mirror of the teaching. A noble disciple who has this may 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.'"

known to kill off entire families (Kd 1:50.1.1). According to the commentaries,
the same disease once afflicted Vesālī, prompting the teaching of the Ratanasutta
(Snp 2.1, Kp 6).

The Chapter on the Royal Monastery

SN 55.11

A Saṅgha of a Thousand Nuns

Sahassabhikkhunisaṃghasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattihī in the Royal Monastery.⁴⁵⁷ Then a Saṅgha of a thousand nuns went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. The Buddha said to them:⁴⁵⁸
- 2.1 “Nuns, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

457. The Royal Monastery (*rājakārāma*) was a residence for nuns near Sāvattihī, also featured in MN 146.

458. This is the only time we hear of such a large community of nuns in the early texts, though the Apadānas know of even larger numbers.

SN 55.12

The Brahmins

Brāhmaṇasutta

At Sāvattḥi. “Mendicants, the brahmins advocate a practice called 1.1
 ‘get up and go’. They encourage their disciple: ‘Please, my man, rising
 early you should face east and walk. Do not avoid a pit, a cliff, a
 stump, thorny ground, a swamp, or a sewer. You should await death
 in the place that you fall. And when your body breaks up, after death,
 you’ll be reborn in a good place, a heaven realm.’⁴⁵⁹

But this practice of the brahmins is a foolish procedure, a stupid 2.1
 procedure. It doesn’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation,
 peace, insight, awakening, or extinguishment. But in the training
 of the Noble One I advocate a ‘get up and go’ practice which does
 lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight,
 awakening, and extinguishment.

And what is that ‘get up and go’ practice? It’s when a noble disciple 3.1
 has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the
 Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble
 ones ... leading to immersion. This is that ‘get up and go’ practice
 which does lead solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation,
 peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.”

459. Unsurprisingly for a practice with such a high mortality rate, the *udaya-gāmini* is not attested in Brahmanical texts. It seems to be a misunderstanding of the *udayanīya*, which is a rite that concludes the sacrifice. After bathing (*avabhṛtha*), the sacrificer emerges from the water (*udayanīya*). Bhāradvāja Śrautasūtra 14.25.13 says that after the *udayanīya*, those performing the sacrifice should move away toward the east, north, or according to some, the north-east. The successful completion of the sacrifice would, of course, be expected to win the favors of the gods, so it is only a small stretch to imagine that they would have been promised the gods’ protection and a heavenly rebirth.

SN 55.13

With the Senior Monk Ānanda

Ānandattherasutta

- 1.1 At one time the venerables Ānanda and Sāriputta were staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Venerable Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to him:
 - 1.4 “Reverend, how many things do people have to give up and how many do they have to possess in order for the Buddha to declare that they’re a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening?”
 - 1.5 “Reverend, people have to give up four things and possess four things in order for the Buddha to declare that they’re a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.
 - 2.1 What four? They don’t have the distrust in the Buddha that causes an unlearned ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And they do have the experiential confidence in the Buddha that causes a learned noble disciple to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a good place, a heavenly realm. ‘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.’
 - 3.1 They don’t have the distrust in the teaching that causes an unlearned ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And they do have the experiential confidence in the teaching that causes a learned noble disciple to be reborn—when their body breaks up,

after death—in a good place, a heavenly realm. ‘The teaching 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 don’t have the distrust in the Saṅgha that causes an un- 4.1
learned ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And they do have the experiential confidence in the Saṅgha that causes a learned noble disciple to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a good place, a heavenly realm. ‘The Saṅgha of 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 Saṅgha of the Buddha’s disciples is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, and worthy of veneration with cupped palms.’

They don’t have the unethical conduct that causes an unlearned 5.1
ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And they do have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones that causes a learned noble disciple to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a good place, a heavenly realm. Their ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. People have to give up these four things and possess these four things in order for the Buddha to declare that they’re a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

SN 55.14

Fear of the Bad Place

Duggatibhayasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things has gone beyond all fear of being reborn in a bad place. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things has gone beyond all fear of being reborn in a bad place.”

SN 55.15

Fear of the Bad Place, the Underworld

Duggativinipātabhayasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things has gone beyond all fear of being reborn in a bad place, the underworld. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things has gone beyond all fear of being reborn in a bad place, the underworld.”

SN 55.16

Friends and Colleagues (1st)

Paṭhamamittāmaccasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, those who you have sympathy for, and those worth listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the four fac-

tors of stream-entry.⁴⁶⁰ What four? Experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. Those who you have sympathy for, and those worth listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be encouraged, supported, and established by you in these four factors of stream-entry.”

SN 55.17

Friends and Colleagues (2nd)

Dutiyamittāmaccasutta

“Mendicants, those who you have sympathy for, and those worth 1.1
listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should
be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the four factors
of stream-entry. What four? Experiential confidence in the Buddha
...

There might be change in the four principal states—the elements 2.1
of earth, water, fire, and air—but a noble disciple with experien-
tial confidence in the Buddha would never change. In this context,
‘change’ means that such a noble disciple will be reborn in hell, the
animal realm, or the ghost realm: this is quite impossible.

Experiential confidence in the teaching ... 2.3

Experiential confidence in the Saṅgha ... 2.4

The ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to im- 2.5
mersion. There might be change in the four principal states—the
elements of earth, water, fire, and air—but a noble disciple with the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones would never change. In this
context, ‘change’ means that such a noble disciple will be reborn in
hell, the animal realm, or the ghost realm: this is quite impossible.

Those who you have sympathy for, and those worth listening to— 2.8
friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be encouraged,

460. This discourse and the next lack *vo* (“by you”) found elsewhere (SN 47.4:2.1), apparently by editorial oversight.

supported, and established by you in these four factors of stream-entry.”

SN 55.18

A Visit to the Gods (1st)

Paṭhamadevacārikasutta

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī. And then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared among the gods of the thirty-three. Then several deities of the company of the thirty-three went up to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, bowed, and stood to one side. Moggallāna said to them:
- 2.1 “Reverends, it’s good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha. ... It’s the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It’s good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that’s loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It’s the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”
- 3.1 “My good fellow Moggallāna, it’s good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... It’s the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It’s good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that’s loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It’s the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

SN 55.19

A Visit to the Gods (2nd)

Dutiyadevacārikasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

And then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from Jeta's Grove and reappeared among the gods of the thirty-three. Then several deities of the company of the thirty-three went up to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, bowed, and stood to one side. Moggallāna said to them:

1.2

“Reverends, it's good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha. ... It's the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, have been reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It's good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that's loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It's the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, have been reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

2.1

“My good Moggallāna, it's good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... It's the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, have been reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It's good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that's loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It's the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, have been reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

3.1

SN 55.20

A Visit to the Gods (3rd)

Tatīyadevacārikasutta

- 1.1 Then the Buddha, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from Jeta's Grove and reappeared among the gods of the thirty-three. Then several deities of the company of the thirty-three went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. The Buddha said to them:
- 2.1 "Reverends, it's good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha. ... It's the reason why some sentient beings are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. It's good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that's loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It's the reason why some sentient beings are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening."
- 3.1 "Good fellow, it's good to have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... It's the reason why some sentient beings are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. It's good to have experiential confidence in the teaching. ... the Saṅgha ... and to have the ethical conduct that's loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. It's the reason why some sentient beings are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening."

The Chapter with Sarakāṇi

SN 55.21

With Mahānāma (1st)

Paṭhamamahānāmasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1
of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.
Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat
down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, this Kapilavatthu is successful and prosperous, populous and 1.4
full of people, with cramped cul-de-sacs.⁴⁶¹ In the late afternoon,
after paying homage to the Buddha or an esteemed mendicant, I
enter Kapilavatthu. I encounter a stray elephant, horse, chariot, cart,
or person. At that time I lose mindfulness regarding the Buddha,
the teaching, and the Saṅgha. I think: ‘If I were to die at this time,
where would I be reborn in my next life?’”⁴⁶²

461. *Byūha* (“cul-de-sac”) is defined in the Vinaya: “one departs the same way one enters” (Bi Pc 14:2.1.8).

462. This relates to the commonly-held idea in modern Theravada that rebirth is determined by one’s “last mind-moment” or “final thought”. This idea is incorrect on a number of grounds. First, there’s no such thing as “mind moments” in early Buddhism. Second, rebirth is determined not by “thought” (*citta*) but by “deed” (*kamma*). So it would only apply in the case of someone who was actually committing good or bad *kamma* at the time of death, which most people are not, like Mahānāma here; he is simply returning home. Finally, what normally prevails at the time of death is habitual *kamma* (like keeping precepts every day) or very strong *kamma* (such as attaining *jhāna*). In the Suttas, deathbed *kamma*

- 2.1 “Do not fear, Mahānāma, do not fear! Your death will not be a bad one; your passing will not be a bad one. Take someone whose mind has for a long time been imbued with faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. Their body is formed, made up of the four principal states, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. Right here the crows, vultures, hawks, hounds, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures devour it. But their mind rises up, headed for a higher place.
- 3.1 Suppose a person was to sink a pot of ghee or oil into a deep lake and break it open. Its shards and chips would sink down, while the ghee or oil in it would rise up, headed for a higher place.⁴⁶³
- 3.3 In the same way, take someone whose mind has for a long time been imbued with faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. Their body is formed, made up of the four principal states, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. Right here the crows, vultures, hawks, hounds, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures devour it. But their mind rises up, headed for a higher place.⁴⁶⁴
- 3.6 Your mind, Mahānāma, has for a long time been imbued with faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. Do not fear, Mahānāma, do not fear! Your death will not be a bad one; your passing will not be a bad one.”

prevails only in rare cases when someone is creating very good (MN 97:38.7) or very bad (SN 42.3:2.7) *kamma* at the time of death; see too the case of Sarakāni in SN 55.24:9.11 and SN 55.25:11.10.

463. There is a parallel for this simile at SN 42.6:7.1.

464. Here *citta* (“mind”) continues from one life to the next, in the role that *viññāṇa* plays elsewhere (eg. DN 28:7.13).

With Mahānāma (2nd)

Dutiyamahānāmasutta

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1
of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.
Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat
down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, this Kapilavatthu is successful and prosperous, populous and 1.4
full of people, with cramped cul-de-sacs. In the late afternoon, after
paying homage to the Buddha or an esteemed mendicant, I enter
Kapilavatthu. I encounter a stray elephant, horse, chariot, cart, or
person. At that time I lose mindfulness regarding the Buddha, the
teaching, and the Saṅgha. I think: ‘If I were to die at this time, where
would I be reborn in my next life?’”

“Do not fear, Mahānāma, do not fear! Your death will not be a 2.1
bad one; your passing will not be a bad one. A noble disciple who
has four things slants, slopes, and inclines toward extinguishment.
What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence
in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.

Suppose there was a tree that slants, slopes, and inclines to the 3.1
east. If it was cut off at the root where would it fall?”

“Sir, it would fall in the direction that it slants, slopes, and inclines.” 3.2

“In the same way, a noble disciple who has four things slants, 3.3
slopes, and inclines toward extinguishment.”

SN 55.23

With Godhā the Sakyan

Godhasakkasutta

- 1.1 At Kapilavatthu. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to Godhā the Sakyan, and said to her,⁴⁶⁵ “Godhā, how many things must an individual have for you to recognize them as a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening?”
- 2.1 “Mahānāma, an individual must have three things for me to recognize them as a stream-enterer. What three? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... and the Saṅgha ... When an individual has these three things I recognize them as a stream-enterer.
- 3.1 But Mahānāma, how many things must an individual have for *you* to recognize them as a stream-enterer?”

465. There is a Sakyan lady named Kālīgodhā (“black iguana”), whose son is Bhaddhiya (see SN 55.48:1.2). She features in SN 55.39 and Thag 16.7, where she is addressed simply as *godhā*. In the current Sutta, the individual is referred to as *godhā sakko*, with the name in feminine but the clan in masculine. The same readings are found in BJT. Now, while Pali allows nominatives in apposition to be of different genders, it prefers agreement, as seen in *kālīgodhā sākiyānī* of SN 55.39:1.3, where the masculine name of the clan has been adapted to the feminine name of the person. I suggest the inverse has happened here: the feminine name has been adapted to masculine in agreement with the clan. But the manuscript tradition shows that this is in flux, as seen in the Sinhalese manuscripts cited in footnotes in the PTS edition, which use the masculine vocative *godha* (with some variations and inconsistencies). They also insert the masculine honorific *bho*, which strikes me as a tell that that manuscript tradition edited the text to be masculine. This is, of course, inconclusive, but ultimately I think there was only one person, a woman called Kālīgodhā, or Godhā in brief, a Sakyan lady who was mother of Bhaddiya. Since here she is mentioned following Mahānāma, the form of her name was mistakenly adapted to his, creating a tension in the text, which editors have addressed inconsistently. Note too that in conversation the name alone is used; the clan is only mentioned in background narrative, which as a rule is added later. See SN 47.19:1.4, where the text’s female was made male in the commentary. In both cases, the person with a female name has a strong voice in the narrative.

“Godhā, an individual must have four things for me to recognize 3.2
them as a stream-enterer.⁴⁶⁶ What four? It’s when a noble disciple
has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the
Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble
ones ... leading to immersion. When an individual has these four
things I recognize them as a stream-enterer.”

“Hold on, Mahānāma, hold on! Only the Buddha would know 4.1
whether or not they have these things.”

“Come, Godhā, let’s go to the Buddha and inform him about this.” 4.3

Then Mahānāma and Godhā went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat 4.4
down to one side. Mahānāma told the Buddha all that had happened,
and then said:

“Sir, some instigation of a legal proceeding might come up. The 8.1
Buddha might take one side, and the Saṅgha of monks the other.⁴⁶⁷
I’d side with the Buddha. May the Buddha remember me as having
such confidence. Some instigation of a legal proceeding might come
up. The Buddha might take one side, and the Saṅgha of monks and
the Saṅgha of nuns the other. ... The Buddha might take one side,
and the Saṅgha of monks and the Saṅgha of nuns and the laymen
the other. ... The Buddha might take one side, and the Saṅgha of
monks and the Saṅgha of nuns and the laymen and the laywomen
the other. ... The Buddha might take one side, and the Saṅgha of
monks and the Saṅgha of nuns and the laymen and the laywomen
and the world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population
with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—the other. I’d
side with the Buddha. May the Buddha remember me as having
such confidence.”

“Godhā, what do you have to say to Mahānāma when he speaks 8.19
like this?”

466. Mahānāma is, of course, correct, but curiously the Buddha’s reply is not recorded.

467. “Instigation of a legal proceeding” (*dharmo samuppādo*) is glossed with *kāraṇa* (here, “argument, disciplinary case”). See AN 10.33:1.9, “the instigation and settlement of disciplinary issues” (*adhikaraṇa-samuppāda-vūpasama*).

- 8.20 “Sir, I have nothing to say to Mahānāma when he speaks like this, except what is good and wholesome.”

SN 55.24

About Sarakāni (1st)

Paṭhamasaraṇānisakkasutta

- 1.1 At Kapilavatthu.
- 1.2 Now at that time Sarakāni the Sakyan had passed away.⁴⁶⁸ The Buddha declared that he was a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.
- 1.5 At that, several Sakyans came together complaining, grumbling, and objecting, “Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! Who can’t become a stream-enterer these days? For the Buddha even declared Sarakāni to be a stream-enterer after he passed away. Sarakāni was too weak for the training; he used to drink liquor.”⁴⁶⁹
- 2.1 Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said:
- 3.1 “Mahānāma, when a lay follower has for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, how could they go to the underworld? And if anyone should rightly be said to have for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, it’s Sarakāni the Sakyan. Sarakāni the Sakyan has for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. How could he go to the underworld?

468. He appears only in this Sutta and the next. MS spells his name *saraṇāni*. Pali names often have different spellings. Unless there is a reason otherwise, I adopt the choices by Bodhi, who, following the most common international practice, usually follows the Sinhalese manuscripts.

469. Drinking alcohol violates the fifth precept, meaning that he could not be a stream-enterer. It is noteworthy that this Sutta follows immediately after one where the key question is whether keeping precepts is essential for a stream-enterer.

Take a certain individual who has experiential confidence in the 4.1
 Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They have laughing wis-
 dom and swift wisdom, and are endowed with freedom. They've
 realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom.
 And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very
 life due to the ending of defilements. This individual is exempt from
 hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They're exempt from
 places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

Take another individual who has experiential confidence in the 5.1
 Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They have laughing wis-
 dom and swift wisdom, but are not endowed with freedom. With
 the ending of the five lower fetters they're reborn spontaneously.
 They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that
 world. This individual, too, is exempt from hell, the animal realm,
 and the ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places,
 the underworld.

Take another individual who has experiential confidence in the 6.1
 Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... But they don't have laugh-
 ing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom.
 With the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate,
 and delusion, they're a once-returner. They come back to this world
 once only, then make an end of suffering. This individual, too, is
 exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They're
 exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

Take another individual who has experiential confidence in the 7.1
 Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... But they don't have laugh-
 ing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom.
 With the ending of three fetters they're a stream-enterer, not liable
 to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.
 This individual, too, is exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the
 ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places, the
 underworld.

Take another individual who doesn't have experiential confidence 8.1
 in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They don't have

laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. Still, they have these qualities: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. And they accept the teachings proclaimed by the Realized One after deliberating them with a degree of wisdom. This individual, too, doesn't go to hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They don't go to places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

9.1 Take another individual who doesn't have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They don't have laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. Still, they have these qualities: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. And they have a degree of faith and fondness for the Buddha.⁴⁷⁰ This individual, too, doesn't go to hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They don't go to places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

9.9 If these great sal trees could understand what was well said and poorly said, I'd declare them to be stream-enterers. Why can't this apply to Sarakāṇi? Mahānāma, Sarakāṇi the Sakyan undertook the training at the time of his death."⁴⁷¹

SN 55.25

About Sarakāṇi the Sakyan (2nd)

Dutiyaśaraṇāṇisakkasutta

1.1 At Kapilavatthu.

470. *Saddhāmatta* ("a degree of faith") is sufficient for one to progress in the path (MN 22:47.2, MN 70:21.2). Compare *saddhāmattaka*, which is used in a diminutive sense, "mere faith" (MN 65:28.5, AN 6.55:11.2).

471. Sarakāṇi was not a "drunk stream-enterer", as slandered by the Sakyans. Here he is said to have completed the factors of stream-entry by undertaking the training (in the five precepts) on his deathbed (see SN 55.28:2.7), while SN 55.21:1.13 confirms that he "fulfilled" said training.

Now at that time Sarakāni the Sakyan had passed away. The Buddha declared that he was a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. 1.2

At that, several Sakyans came together complaining, grumbling, and objecting, “Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! Who can’t become a stream-enterer these days? For the Buddha even declared Sarakāni to be a stream-enterer after he passed away. Sarakāni didn’t fulfill the training.”⁴⁷² 1.5

Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said: 1.12

“Mahānāma, when a lay follower has for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, how could they go to the underworld? And if anyone should rightly be said to have for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, it’s Sarakāni the Sakyan. Sarakāni the Sakyan has for a long time gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. 3.1

Take a certain individual who is sure and devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They have laughing wisdom and swift wisdom, and are endowed with freedom. They realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. This individual is exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They’re exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld. 4.1

Take another individual who is sure and devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They have laughing wisdom and swift wisdom, but are not endowed with freedom. With the ending of the five lower fetters, they’re extinguished between one life and the next ... they’re extinguished upon landing ... they’re extinguished without extra effort ... they’re extinguished with extra effort ... they head upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm. This individual, too, 5.1

472. This is a rephrasing of the claim in the previous Sutta.

is exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

6.1 Take another individual who is sure and devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... But they don't have laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. With the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, they're a once-returner. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. This individual, too, is exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

7.1 Take another individual who is sure and devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... But they don't have laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. With the ending of three fetters they're a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. This individual, too, is exempt from hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They're exempt from places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

8.1 Take another individual who isn't sure or devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They don't have laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. Still, they have these qualities: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. And they accept the teachings proclaimed by the Realized One after deliberating them with a degree of wisdom. This individual, too, doesn't go to hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They don't go to places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

9.1 Take another individual who isn't sure or devoted to the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... They don't have laughing wisdom or swift wisdom, nor are they endowed with freedom. Still, they have these qualities: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. And they have a degree of faith and love for the Buddha. This individual, too, doesn't go to hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. They don't go to places of loss, bad places, the underworld.

Suppose there was a barren field, a barren ground, with uncleared stumps. And you had seeds that were broken, spoiled, weather-damaged, infertile, and ill kept. And the heavens didn't provide enough rain. Would those seeds grow, increase, and mature?" 10.1

"No, sir." 10.3

"In the same way, take a teaching that's badly explained and badly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. This is what I call a barren field. A disciple remains in such a teaching, practicing in line with that teaching, practicing it properly, living in line with that teaching. This is what I call a bad seed. 10.4

Suppose there was a fertile field, a fertile ground, well-cleared of stumps. And you had seeds that were intact, unspoiled, not weather-damaged, fertile, and well-kept. And there's plenty of rainfall. Would those seeds grow, increase, and mature?" 11.1

"Yes, sir." 11.4

"In the same way, take a teaching that's well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha. This is what I call a fertile field. A disciple remains in such a teaching, practicing in line with that teaching, practicing it properly, living in line with that teaching. This is what I call a good seed. Why can't this apply to Sarakāni? Mahānāma, Sarakāni the Sakyan fulfilled the training at the time of his death." 11.5

SN 55.26

With Anāthapiṇḍika (1st)

Paṭhamaanāthapiṇḍikasutta

At Sāvatthi.

1.1

- 1.2 Now at that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was sick, suffering, gravely ill.⁴⁷³ Then he addressed a man, “Please, my man, go to Venerable Sāriputta, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: ‘Sir, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.’ And then say: ‘Sir, please visit him at his home out of sympathy.’”
- 2.1 “Yes, sir,” that man replied. He did as Anāthapiṇḍika asked. Sāriputta consented with silence.
- 4.1 Then Venerable Sāriputta robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Ānanda as his second monk to Anāthapiṇḍika’s home. He sat down on the seat spread out and said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “I hope you’re keeping well, householder; I hope you’re all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing.”
- 4.3 “Sir, I’m not keeping well, I’m not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading.”
- 5.1 “Householder, you don’t have the distrust in the Buddha that causes an unlearned ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And you have 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.’ Seeing in yourself that experiential confidence in the Buddha, that pain may die down on the spot.
- 6.1 You don’t have the distrust in the teaching that causes an unlearned ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And you have experiential confidence in the teaching: ‘The teach-

473. The sick Anāthapiṇḍika was also consoled by Ānanda at SN 55.27:3.2. At MN 143, Sāriputta consoles him in his final hours. In other cases, we find the Buddha making such visits to sick monks (SN 22.87:2.7, SN 22.88:2.8, SN 46.14:2.1, SN 46.15:2.1, AN 6.56:2.1), but for some reason visits to householders are only attested for Sāriputta (MN 97:28.2) or Ānanda (SN 47.29:2.2).

ing 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.’ Seeing in yourself that experiential confidence in the teaching, that pain may die down on the spot.

You don’t have the distrust in the Saṅgha that causes an unlearned 7.1
ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And you have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of 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 Saṅgha of the Buddha’s disciples is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, and worthy of veneration with cupped palms. It is the supreme field of merit for the world.’ Seeing in yourself that experiential confidence in the Saṅgha, that pain may die down on the spot.

You don’t have the unethical conduct that causes an unlearned 8.1
ordinary person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. Your ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. Seeing in yourself that ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, that pain may die down on the spot.

You don’t have the wrong view that causes an unlearned ordinary 9.1
person to be reborn—when their body breaks up, after death—in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. You have right view. Seeing in yourself that right view, that pain may die down on the spot.

You don’t have the wrong purpose ... 10.1

wrong speech ... 11.1

wrong action ... 12.1

wrong livelihood ... 13.1

- 14.1 wrong effort ...
- 15.1 wrong mindfulness ...
- 16.1 wrong immersion ...
- 17.1 wrong knowledge ...
- 18.1 wrong freedom ... You have right freedom. Seeing in yourself that right freedom, that pain may die down on the spot.”⁴⁷⁴
- 19.1 And then Anāthapiṇḍika’s pain died down on the spot. Then he served Sāriputta and Ānanda from his own dish. When Sāriputta had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Anāthapiṇḍika took a low seat and sat to one side. Venerable Sāriputta expressed his appreciation to him with these verses.
- 20.1 “Whoever has faith in the Realized One,
unwavering and well grounded;
whose ethical conduct is good,
praised and loved by the noble ones;
- 21.1 who has confidence in the Saṅgha,
and correct view:
they’re said to be prosperous,
their life is not in vain.
- 22.1 So let the wise devote themselves
to faith, ethical behaviour,
confidence, and insight into the teaching,
remembering the instructions of the Buddhas.”
- 23.1 After expressing his appreciation to Anāthapiṇḍika with these verses, Sāriputta rose from his seat and left.
- 24.1 Then Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “So, Ānanda, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?”

474. Right knowledge and right freedom are normally only qualities of an arahant, but here they are ascribed to Anāthapiṇḍika though he is only a stream-enterer. See note on SN 45.26:2.2.

“Sir, Venerable Sāriputta advised the householder Anāthapiṇḍika 24.3
in this way and that.”

“Sāriputta is astute, Ānanda. He has great wisdom, since he can 24.4
analyze the four factors of stream-entry in ten respects.”

SN 55.27

With Anāthapiṇḍika (2nd)

Dutiyaanāthapiṇḍikasutta

At Sāvattḥi. 1.1

Now at that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was sick, suf- 1.2
fering, gravely ill. Then he addressed a man, “Please, my man, go to
Venerable Ānanda, and in my name bow with your head to his feet.
Say to him: ‘Sir, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is sick, suffering,
gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.’ And then say: ‘Sir,
please visit him at his home out of sympathy.’”

“Yes, sir,” that man replied. He did as Anāthapiṇḍika asked. 2.1
Ānanda consented with silence.

Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his 3.1
bowl and robe, went to the home of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika.
He sat down on the seat spread out and said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “I
hope you’re keeping well, householder, I hope you’re all right. I hope
your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its
growing.”

“Sir, I’m not keeping well, I’m not getting by. My pain is terrible 3.3
and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading.”

“Householder, when an unlearned ordinary person has four 4.1
things, they’re frightened and terrified, and fear what awaits them af-
ter death. What four? Firstly, an unlearned ordinary person distrusts
the Buddha. Seeing in themselves that distrust of the Buddha, they’re
frightened and terrified, and fear what awaits them after death.

Furthermore, an unlearned ordinary person distrusts the teaching 5.1
...

- 6.1 Furthermore, an unlearned ordinary person distrusts the Saṅgha ...
- 7.1 Furthermore, an unlearned ordinary person has unethical conduct. Seeing in themselves that unethical conduct, they're frightened and terrified, and fear what awaits them after death. When an unlearned ordinary person has these four things, they're frightened and terrified, and fear what awaits them after death.
- 8.1 When a learned noble disciple has four things, they're not frightened or terrified, and don't fear what awaits them after death. What four? Firstly, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... Seeing in themselves that experiential confidence in the Buddha, they're not frightened or terrified, and don't fear what awaits them after death.
- 9.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the teaching ...
- 10.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Saṅgha ...
- 11.1 Furthermore, 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. Seeing in themselves that ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, they're not frightened or terrified, and don't fear what awaits them after death.
- 11.3 When a learned noble disciple has these four things, they're not frightened or terrified, and don't fear what awaits them after death."
- 12.1 "Honorable Ānanda, I am not afraid. What have I to fear? For I have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And of the training rules appropriate for laypeople taught by the Buddha, I don't see any that I have broken."
- 12.9 "You're fortunate, householder, so very fortunate! You have declared the fruit of stream-entry."

SN 55.28

Fears and Enmities (1st)

Paṭhamabhayaverūpasantasutta

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

Seated to one side, the Buddha said to the householder Anāthapi- 1.2
ṇḍika:

“Householder, when a noble disciple has quelled five fears and 1.3
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.’

What are the five fears and enmities they have quelled? Anyone 2.1
who kills living creatures brims with fear and enmity both in this life
and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. So
that fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from killing
living creatures. Anyone who steals ... Anyone who commits sexual
misconduct ... Anyone who lies ... Anyone who consumes beer,
wine, and liquor intoxicants brims with fear and enmity both in this
life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness.
So 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? It’s 3.1
when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ...
the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct
loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. These are the four
factors of stream-entry that they possess.

4.1 And what is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom?⁴⁷⁵ A noble disciple rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself: ‘So, when this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. So, 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. 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. 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. When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. 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.’ This is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom.

5.1 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,

475. A stream-enterer understands dependent origination (SN 12.27:5.1).

the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I'm not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’”

SN 55.29

Fears and Enmities (2nd)

Dutiyabhayaverūpasantasutta

At Sāvattḥī. ... “Mendicants, when a noble disciple has quelled five 1.1
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 55.30

With Nandaka the Licchavi

Nandakalicchavisutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, 1.1
in the hall with the peaked roof. Then Nandaka the Licchavi chief
minister went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side.
The Buddha said to him:

“Nandaka, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, 2.1
not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for
awakening. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential
confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And
they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to
immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-
enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined
for awakening.

- 3.1 A noble disciple who has these four things is endowed with long life, both human and heavenly ...⁴⁷⁶ beauty ... happiness ... glory ... and sovereignty, both human and heavenly. Now, I don't say this because I've heard it from some other ascetic or brahmin. I only say it because I've known, seen, and realized it for myself.
- 4.1 When he had spoken, a certain person said to Nandaka:
- 4.2 "Sir, it is time to bathe."
- 4.3 "Enough now, lad, with that exterior bath. This interior bathing will do for me, that is,⁴⁷⁷ confidence in the Buddha."

476. Here *samīyutta* (with instrumental) has the unusual sense "endowed with".

477. See MN 7:18.5 and note for the "inner bathing".

The Chapter on Overflowing Merit

SN 55.31

Overflowing Merit (1st)

Paṭhamapuññābhisandasutta

At Sāvattḥī.

1.1

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? Firstly, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... This is the first kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness.

1.2

Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the teaching ... This is the second kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness.

2.1

Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Saṅgha ... This is the third kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness.

3.1

Furthermore, 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. This is the fourth kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness.”

4.1

SN 55.32

Overflowing Merit (2nd)

Dutiyapuññābhisandasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ...
- 3.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple lives at home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share. This is the fourth kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness.”

SN 55.33

Overflowing Merit (3rd)

Tatīyapuññābhisandasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ...
- 3.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. This is the fourth kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness.”

SN 55.34

Footprints of the Gods (1st)

Paṭhamadevapadasutta

At Sāvattḥi.

1.1

“Mendicants, these four footprints of the gods are in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings.”⁴⁷⁸ 1.2

What four? Firstly, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... This is the first footprint of the gods in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings. 2.1

Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... 3.1

Furthermore, 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. This is the fourth footprint of the gods in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings. These four footprints of the gods are in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings.” 4.1

SN 55.35

Footprints of the Gods (2nd)

Dutiyadevapadasutta

“Mendicants, these four footprints of the gods are in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings. 1.1

What four? Firstly, 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 2.1

478. Compare the “footprints of the Dhamma” (AN 4.29:1.1) or the “footprints of the Realized One” (MN 27:19.3). | *Devapada* appears at Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.6.9 in the sense “holy word”.

and humans, awakened, blessed.’ Then they reflect: ‘What now is the footprint of the gods?’ They understand: ‘I hear that these days the gods consider non-harming to be supreme.’⁴⁷⁹ But I don’t hurt any creature firm or frail. I definitely live in possession of a footprint of the gods.’ This is the first footprint of the gods in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings.

3.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the teaching ... the Saṅgha ...

4.1 Furthermore, 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. Then they reflect: ‘What now is the footprint of the gods?’ They understand: ‘I hear that these days the gods consider non-harming to be supreme. But I don’t hurt any creature firm or frail. I definitely live in possession of a footprint of the gods.’ This is the fourth footprint of the gods in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings. These four footprints of the gods are in order to purify unpurified beings and cleanse unclean beings.”

SN 55.36

In Common With the Gods

Devasabhāgatasutta

1.1 “Mendicants, when someone possesses four things the gods are pleased and speak of what they have in common. What four? Firstly, a noble disciple possesses experiential confidence in the Buddha ... There are deities who possess experiential confidence in the Buddha who passed away from here and were reborn there. They think: ‘Possessing such experiential confidence in the Buddha, we passed away from there and were reborn here. That noble disciple possesses

479. The use of *eterahi* (“these days”) suggests that this was not always the case, alluding to the violent tendencies in the past (i.e. the Vedas) of deities such as Indra, who in Buddhism had become apostles of peace (eg. SN 11.6).

the same kind of experiential confidence in the Buddha, so they will come into the presence of the gods.⁴⁸⁰

Furthermore, a noble disciple possesses experiential confidence in the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they possess the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. There are deities who possess the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones who passed away from here and were reborn there. They think: ‘Possessing such ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, we passed away from there and were reborn here. That noble disciple possesses the same kind of ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, so they will come into the presence of the gods.’ When someone possesses four things the gods are pleased and speak of what they have in common.” 2.1

SN 55.37

With Mahānāma

Mahānāmasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: 1.1

“Sir, how is a lay follower defined?” 2.1

“Mahānāma, when you’ve gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, you’re considered to be a lay follower.” 2.2

“But how is an ethical lay follower defined?” 3.1

“When a lay follower doesn’t kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor, they’re considered to be an ethical lay follower.”⁴⁸¹ 3.2

480. MS reads the imperative *ehīti* (“do come!”), but I follow Bodhi’s emendation to the future *ehīti* (“will come”).

481. This is an important distinction, which counters the “no true Scotsman” argument sometimes said of Buddhists. If someone has gone for refuge, they are a Buddhist, even if they are not keeping precepts or otherwise practicing.

- 4.1 “But how is a faithful lay follower defined?”
- 4.2 “It’s when a lay follower has faith in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘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.’ Then they’re considered to be a faithful lay follower.”
- 5.1 “But how is a generous lay follower defined?”
- 5.2 “It’s when a lay follower lives at home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share. Then they’re considered to be a generous lay follower.”
- 6.1 “But how is a wise lay follower defined?”
- 6.2 “It’s when a lay follower is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. Then they’re considered to be a wise lay follower.”

SN 55.38

Rain

Vassasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose 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.⁴⁸² In the same way, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and the ethics loved by the noble ones.

Refuge is a commitment to what one takes as the highest value, regardless of one’s personal achievements or failings.

482. This simile (see note at SN 12.23:7.1) is balanced out in SN 55.40, which underlines that this process only succeeds for the diligent.

These things flow onwards; and, after crossing to the far shore, they lead to the ending of defilements.”

SN 55.39

With KāḲigodhā

KāḲigodhasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near 1.1
Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. Then the Buddha robed
up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home
of KāḲigodhā the Sakyan lady, where he sat down on the seat spread
out.⁴⁸³ Then KāḲigodhā went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat
down to one side. The Buddha said to her:

“Godhā, a female noble disciple who has four things is a stream- 2.1
enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined
for awakening. What four? It’s when a female noble disciple has ex-
periential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha
... And she lives at home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess,
freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to char-
ity, loving to give and to share. A female noble disciple who has
these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the
underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

“Sir, these four factors of stream-entry that were taught by the 3.1
Buddha are found in me, and I exhibit them. For I have experiential
confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And I
share without reservation all the gifts available to give in our family
with those who are ethical and of good character.”

“You’re fortunate, Godhā, so very fortunate, You have declared 3.7
the fruit of stream-entry.”

483. See note on SN 55.23:1.2. If, as I propose, these two Godhās are in fact the same individual, this discourse must have occurred after the previous, since there she did not know the four factors correctly.

SN 55.40

Nandiya the Sakyan

Nandiyasakkasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. Then Nandiya the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:
- 1.3 “Sir, if a noble disciple were to totally and utterly lack the four factors of stream-entry, would they live negligently?”
- 2.1 “Nandiya, someone who totally and utterly lacks these four factors of stream-entry stands outside in the faction of ordinary persons, I say. Nevertheless, Nandiya, as to how a noble disciple lives negligently and how they live diligently, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”
- 2.4 “Yes, sir,” Nandiya replied. The Buddha said this:
- 3.1 “And how does a noble disciple live negligently? Firstly, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... They’re content with that confidence, and don’t make a further effort for solitude by day or retreat by night. When they live negligently, there’s no joy.⁴⁸⁴ When there’s no joy, there’s no rapture. When there’s no rapture, there’s no tranquility. When there’s no tranquility, there’s suffering. When one is suffering, the mind does not become immersed in samādhi. When the mind is not immersed in samādhi, principles do not become clear. Because principles have not become clear, they’re reckoned to live negligently.
- 4.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. They’re content with that ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, and don’t make a further effort for solitude by day or retreat by night. When they live negligently, there’s no joy. When there’s no joy, there’s no rapture.

484. As at SN 35.97:1.5.

When there's no rapture, there's no tranquility. When there's no tranquility, there's suffering. When one is suffering, the mind does not become immersed in samādhi. When the mind is not immersed in samādhi, principles do not become clear. Because principles have not become clear, they're reckoned to live negligently. That's how a noble disciple lives negligently.

And how does a noble disciple live diligently? Firstly, a noble 5.1
disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... But they're not content with that confidence, and make a further effort for solitude by day and retreat by night. When they live diligently, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi. When the mind is immersed in samādhi, principles become clear. Because principles have become clear, they're reckoned to live diligently.

Furthermore, a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the 6.1
teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. But they're not content with that ethical conduct loved by the noble ones, and make a further effort for solitude by day and retreat by night. When they live diligently, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi. When the mind is immersed in samādhi, principles become clear. Because principles have become clear, they're reckoned to live diligently. That's how a noble disciple lives diligently."

The Chapter on Overflowing Merit, With Verses

SN 55.41

Overflowing Merit (1st)

Paṭhamaabhisandasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ...
- 3.1 Furthermore, they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. ... These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness.
- 4.1 When a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it’s not easy to count how much merit they have by saying that⁴⁸⁵ this is the extent of their overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. It’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.
- 5.1 It’s like trying to count how much water is in the ocean. It’s not easy to say how many gallons, how many hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of gallons there are. It’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of water.

485. In this passage, SN consistently uses *gaṇetum* (“to count”), while AN uses *gahetum* (“to grasp”, AN 4.51:6.2).

In the same way, when a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it's not easy to count how much merit they have by saying that this is the extent of their overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. It's simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Hosts of people use the rivers,
and though the rivers are many,
all reach the great deep, the boundless ocean,
the cruel sea that's home to precious gems.

So too, when a person gives food, drink, and clothes;
and they're a giver of beds, seats, and mats—⁴⁸⁶
the streams of merit reach that astute person,
as the rivers bring their waters to the sea.”

SN 55.42

Overflowing Merit (2nd)

Dutiyaabhisandasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ...

Furthermore, a noble disciple lives at home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share. This is the fourth kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures hap-

486. Adopt the reading *seyyā-nisajja-(a)ttharaṇassa* from AN 4.51:8.2 and AN 5.45:8.2, against MS's *seyyāni paccattharaṇassa* here. The correct reading is found here in BJT and PTS.

piness. These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness.

4.1 When a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it's not easy to count how much merit they have by saying that this is the extent of their overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. It's simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.

5.1 There are places where the great rivers—the Ganges, Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—join together and converge. It's not easy to count how much water is in such places by saying how many gallons, how many hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of gallons there are. It's simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of water.

5.5 In the same way, when a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it's not easy to count how much merit they have by saying that this is the extent of their overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. It's simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.”

5.8 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

6.1 “Hosts of people use the rivers,
and though the rivers are many,
all reach the great deep, the boundless ocean,
the cruel sea that's home to precious gems.

7.1 So too, when a person gives food, drink, and clothes;
and they're a giver of beds, seats, and mats—
the streams of merit reach that astute person,
as the rivers bring their waters to the sea.”

SN 55.43

Overflowing Merit (3rd)

Tatiyaabhisandasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... 1.1

Furthermore, a noble disciple is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. This is the fourth kind of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurture happiness. 3.1

When a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it’s not easy to count how much merit they have by saying that this is the extent of their overflowing merit, overflowing goodness that nurtures happiness. It’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.” 4.1

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say: 4.4

“One who desires merit, grounded in the skillful, 5.1
develops the path to realize freedom from death.
Once they’ve reached the heart of the teaching,
delighting in ending,
they don’t tremble at the approach
of the King of Death.”

SN 55.44

Rich (1st)

Paṭhamamahaddhanasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is said to be rich, affluent, and wealthy.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is said to be rich, affluent, and wealthy.”

SN 55.45

Rich (2nd)

Dutiyamahaddhanasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is said to be rich, affluent, wealthy, and famous.
- 2.1 What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is said to be rich, affluent, wealthy, and famous.”

SN 55.46

Plain Version

Suddhakasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.

What four? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence 2.1
in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A
noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable
to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening."

SN 55.47

With Nandiya

Nandiyasutta

At Kapilavatthu. Seated to one side, the Buddha said to Nandiya the 1.1
Sakyan:

"Nandiya, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, 1.3
not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for
awakening.

What four? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence 2.1
in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A
noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable
to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening."

SN 55.48

With Bhaddiya

Bhaddiyasutta

At Kapilavatthu. Seated to one side, the Buddha said to Bhaddiya 1.1
the Sakyan:⁴⁸⁷

"Bhaddiya, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer 1.3
..."

487. Bhaddiya, the son of (Kālī) Godhā, was a ruler of the Sakyans who later became a monk (Ud 2.10, Thag 16.7:2.4). He was said to be the foremost of those who went forth from an eminent family (AN 1.193).

SN 55.49

With Mahānāma

Mahānāmasutta

- 1.1 At Kapilavatthu. Seated to one side, the Buddha said to Mahānāma the Sakyan:
- 1.3 “Mahānāma, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer ...”

SN 55.50

Factors

Aṅgasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four factors for stream-entry. What four? Associating with true persons, listening to the true teaching, rational application of mind, and practicing in line with the teaching. These are the four factors for stream-entry.”

The Chapter on a Wise Person

SN 55.51

With Verses

Sagāthakasutta

“Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, 1.1
not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for
awakening.

What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence 2.1
in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the
ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A
noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable
to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 2.8
went on to say:

“Whoever has faith in the Realized One,⁴⁸⁸ 3.1
unwavering and well grounded;
whose ethical conduct is good,
praised and loved by the noble ones;

who has confidence in the Saṅgha, 4.1

488. These verses are stock, eg. AN 4.52:5.1, SN 55.26:20.1, Thag 8.2:6.1, etc.

and correct view:
they're said to be prosperous,
their life is not in vain.

- 5.1 So let the wise devote themselves
to faith, ethical behaviour,
confidence, and insight into the teaching,
remembering the instructions of the Buddhas.”

SN 55.52

One Who Completed the Rains

Vassamvutthasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time a certain mendicant who had completed the rainy season residence in Sāvathī arrived at Kapilavatthu on some business. The Sakyans of Kapilavatthu heard about this.
- 2.1 They went to that mendicant, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, we hope that the Buddha is healthy and strong.”
- 2.3 “He is, respectable sirs.”
- 3.1 “And we hope that Sāriputta and Moggallāna are healthy and strong.”
- 3.2 “They are.”
- 4.1 “And we hope that the mendicant Saṅgha is healthy and strong.”
- 4.2 “It is.”
- 5.1 “But sir, during this rains residence did you hear and learn anything in the presence of the Buddha?”
- 5.2 “Respectable sirs, I heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘There are fewer mendicants who realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. There are more mendicants who, having ended the five lower fetters,

are reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.’

In addition, I heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 6.1
 ‘There are fewer mendicants who, having ended the five lower fetters, are reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. There are more mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, are once-returners, who come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.’

In addition, I heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 7.1
 ‘There are fewer mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, are once-returners, who come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. There are more mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.’”

SN 55.53

With Dhammadinna

Dhammadinnasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Varanasi in the deer park 1.1
 at Isipatana. Then the lay follower Dhammadinna, together with five hundred lay followers, went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:⁴⁸⁹

“May the Buddha please advise and instruct us. It will be for our 1.3
 lasting welfare and happiness.”

“So, Dhammadinna, you should all train like this: ‘From time to 2.1
 time we will undertake and dwell upon the discourses spoken by the

489. Despite his evident eminence, this is the only appearance of the layman Dhammadinna. For the nun of the same name, see MN 44. | Other lay followers with similarly large retinues include Anāthapiṇḍika AN 5.176:1.1, Hatthaka of Āḷavī (AN 8.24:1.2), and Dhammika (Sn 2.14:1.3).

Realized One that are deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness.⁴⁹⁰ That’s how you should train yourselves.”

- 2.4 “Sir, we live at home with our children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi, wearing garlands, fragrance, and makeup, and accepting gold and currency. It’s not easy for us to undertake and dwell from time to time upon the discourses spoken by the Realized One that are deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness.⁴⁹¹ Since we are established in the five training rules, please teach us further.”
- 3.1 “So, Dhammadinna, you should all train like this: ‘We will have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And we will have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.”
- 4.1 “Sir, these four factors of stream-entry that were taught by the Buddha are found in us, and we embody them. For we have experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And we have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.”
- 4.7 “You’re all fortunate, Dhammadinna, so very fortunate! You’ve all declared the fruit of stream-entry.”

490. Such discourses, which are also referred to at AN 2.47:1.5, AN 5.79:5.2, and SN 20.7:2.4, contrast with the frivolous poetry of outsiders. I understand the expression as referring to the Suttas in general, rather than specifying particularly difficult texts. | The expression “undertake and dwell” (*upasampajja viharati*) is normally used for meditation states, whereas for the Suttas one is enjoined to listen, scrutinize, and memorize. Perhaps the original intent was to “enter and dwell in the meditations taught in the Suttas”. | The Chāndogya Upaniṣad uses the Sanskrit form *upasampadya* for “entering the light (of the Self)” (8.3.4, 8.12.2–3). Pañcaviṃśabrahmaṇa 13.10.16 uses it in the context of texts, but in a different way: “The two feet of the *jagatī* meter are subsumed in the *gāyatrī*.”

491. Given that Dhammadinna was evidently a sincere devotee, it seems odd that he should find studying or listening to Suttas from time to time to be impossible. After all, he is right now in the presence of the Buddha, listening to a Sutta. This, I think, lends credence to the notion that the Buddha was in fact talking about deep meditation.

SN 55.54

Sick

Gilānasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near 1.1
Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.

At that time several mendicants were making a robe for the Bud- 1.2
dha, thinking that when his robe was finished and the three months
of the rains residence had passed the Buddha would set out wander-
ing.

Mahānāma the Sakyan heard about this. Then he went up to the 1.4
Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him that he had
heard that the Buddha was leaving. He added, “Sir, I haven’t heard
and learned it in the presence of the Buddha how a wise lay follower
should advise another wise lay follower who is sick, suffering, gravely
ill.”

“Mahānāma, a wise lay follower should put at ease another wise 2.1
lay follower who is sick, suffering, gravely ill with four consolations.
‘Be at ease, sir.’⁴⁹² You have experiential confidence in the Buddha
... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And you have the ethical conduct
loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion.’

When a wise lay follower has put at ease another wise lay follower 3.1
who is sick, suffering, gravely ill with these four consolations, they
should say: ‘Are you concerned for your mother and father?’ If they
reply, ‘I am,’ they should say: ‘But sir, it’s your nature to die. Whether
or not you are concerned for your mother and father, you will die
anyway. It would be good to give up concern for your mother and
father.’

If they reply, ‘I have given up concern for my mother and father,’ 4.1
they should say: ‘But are you concerned for your partners and chil-
dren?’ If they reply, ‘I am,’ they should say: ‘But sir, it’s your nature
to die. Whether or not you are concerned for your partners and

492. “Sir” here is *āyasmā*.

children, you will die anyway. It would be good to give up concern for your partners and children.’

- 5.1 If they reply, ‘I have given up concern for my partners and children,’ they should say: ‘But are you concerned for the five kinds of human sensual stimulation?’ If they reply, ‘I am,’ they should say: ‘Respectable sir, heavenly sensual pleasures are better than human sensual pleasures. It would be good to turn your mind away from human sensual pleasures and focus it on the gods of the four great kings.’⁴⁹³
- 6.1 If they reply, ‘I have done so,’ they should say: ‘Respectable sir, the gods of the thirty-three are better than the gods of the four great kings ...
- 7.1 Respectable sir, the gods of Yama ... the joyful gods ... the gods who love to create ... the gods who control what is created by others ... the gods of the realm of divinity are better than the gods who control what is created by others. It would be good to turn your mind away from the gods who control what is created by others and focus it on the gods of the realm of divinity.’ If they reply, ‘I have done so,’ they should say: ‘Respectable sir, the realm of divinity is impermanent, not lasting, and included within substantial reality. It would be good to turn your mind away from the realm of divinity and apply it to the cessation of substantial reality.’⁴⁹⁴
- 8.1 If they reply, ‘I have done so,’ then there is no difference between a lay follower whose mind is freed in this way and a mendicant whose mind is freed from defilements; that is,⁴⁹⁵ between the freedom of one and the other.”

493. Compare Sāriputta’s teaching to Dhanañjāni at MN 97:30.1.

494. In the Dhanañjānisutta, Sāriputta only taught as far as the Brahmā realm, for which the Buddha chastised him.

495. This passage shows that a lay person can attain arahantship, at least on their deathbed. At Kd 1:7.11.1, the layman Yasa attains arahantship and immediately ordains. From these cases, the later tradition asserted that if a lay person becomes an arahant, they *must* either ordain or die that very day (Mīl 6.2.2). But this oversteps the Suttas. While an arahant must live a celibate life of detachment, which ordination is supposed to support, nothing in the Suttas precludes other

SN 55.55

The Fruit of Stream-Entry

Sotāpattiphalasutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry. What four? Associating
with true persons, listening to the true teaching, rational application
of mind, and practicing in line with the teaching. When these four
things are developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of
the fruit of stream-entry.”

SN 55.56

The Fruit of Once-Return

Sakadāgāmiphalasutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to the realization of the fruit of once-return. ...”

SN 55.57

The Fruit of Non-Return

Anāgāmiphalasutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to the realization of the fruit of non-return. ...”

means of achieving the same end. | See note on deathbed conversions at SN 55.21:1.13.

SN 55.58

The Fruit of Perfection

Arahattaphalasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to the realization of the fruit of perfection. ...”

SN 55.59

The Getting of Wisdom

Paññāpaṭilābhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to the getting of wisdom. ...”

SN 55.60

The Growth of Wisdom

Paññāvuddhisutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to the growth of wisdom. ...”

SN 55.61

The Increase of Wisdom

Paññāvepullasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to the increase of wisdom. ...”

The Chapter on Great Wisdom

SN 55.62

Great Wisdom

Mahāpaññāsutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to great wisdom. What four? Associating with true persons, listening
to the true teaching, rational application of mind, and practicing in
line with the teaching. When these four things are developed and
cultivated they lead to great wisdom.”

SN 55.63

Widespread Wisdom

Puthupaññāsutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to widespread wisdom ...”

SN 55.64

Abundant Wisdom

Vipulapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to abundant wisdom ...”

SN 55.65

Deep Wisdom

Gambhīrapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to deep wisdom ...”

SN 55.66

Extraordinary Wisdom

Appamattapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to unrivaled wisdom ...”

SN 55.67

Vast Wisdom

Bhūripaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to vast wisdom ...”

SN 55.68

Much Wisdom

Paññābhāṣasutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to much wisdom ...”

SN 55.69

Fast Wisdom

Sīghapaññāsutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to fast wisdom ...”

SN 55.70

Light Wisdom

Lahupaññāsutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to light wisdom ...”

SN 55.71

Laughing Wisdom

Hāsapaññāsutta

“Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead 1.1
to laughing wisdom ...”

SN 55.72

Swift Wisdom

Javanapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to swift wisdom ...”

SN 55.73

Sharp Wisdom

Tikkhapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to sharp wisdom ...”

SN 55.74

Penetrating Wisdom

Nibbedhikapaññāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, when four things are developed and cultivated they lead to penetrating wisdom. What four? Associating with true persons, listening to the true teaching, rational application of mind, and practicing in line with the teaching. When these four things are developed and cultivated they lead to penetrating wisdom.”

The Linked Discourses on Stream-Entry, the eleventh section.

LINKED DISCOURSES ON THE TRUTHS

The Chapter on Immersion

SN 56.1

Immersion

Samādhisutta

1.1 At Sāvattī.

1.3 “Mendicants, develop immersion.⁴⁹⁶ A mendicant who has immersion truly understands. What do they truly understand? They truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. Develop immersion. A mendicant who has immersion truly understands.

2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation to understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’”

496. This Sutta and the next parallel SN 22.5 and SN 22.6 respectively.

SN 56.2

Retreat

Paṭisallānasutta

“Mendicants, meditate in retreat.⁴⁹⁷ A mendicant in retreat truly un- 1.1
derstands. What do they truly understand? They truly understand:
‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the
cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the ces-
sation of suffering’. Meditate in retreat. A mendicant in retreat truly
understands.

That’s why you should practice meditation to understand: ‘This is 2.1
suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation
of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of
suffering.’”

SN 56.3

A Gentleman (1st)

Paṭhamakulaputtasutta

“Mendicants, whatever gentlemen—past, future, or present—rightly 1.1
go forth from the lay life to homelessness, all of them do so in order
to truly comprehend the four noble truths.

What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, 2.1
the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation
of suffering. Whatever gentlemen—past, future, or present—rightly
go forth from the lay life to homelessness, all of them do so in order
to truly comprehend the four noble truths.

That’s why you should practice meditation to understand: ‘This is 3.1
suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation
of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of
suffering.’”

497. See note on SN 22.6:1.2.

SN 56.4

A Gentleman (2nd)

Dutiyakulaputtasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever gentlemen—past, future, or present—truly comprehend after rightly going forth from the lay life to homelessness, all of them truly comprehend the four noble truths.
- 2.1 What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. ...
- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.5

Ascetics and Brahmins (1st)

Paṭhamasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever ascetics and brahmins truly awaken—in the past, future, or present—all of them truly awaken to the four noble truths.
- 2.1 What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. ...
- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.6

Ascetics and Brahmins (2nd)

Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, whatever ascetics and brahmins—past, future, or present—reveal that they are awakened, all of them reveal that they truly awakened to the four noble truths.

What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. ... 2.1

That's why you should practice meditation ... 3.1

SN 56.7

Thoughts

Vitakkasutta

“Mendicants, don’t think bad, unskillful thoughts, such as sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts. Why is that? Because those thoughts aren’t beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. 1.1

When you think, you should think: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. Why is that? Because those thoughts are beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. 2.1

That’s why you should practice meditation ... 3.1

SN 56.8

Thought

Cintasutta

“Mendicants, don’t think up a bad, unskillful idea.⁴⁹⁸ For example: the cosmos is eternal, or not eternal, or finite, or infinite; the soul 1.1

498. While this phrase is on the whole clearly a synonym for the previous sutta, the phrasing is interestingly different. The use of singular shows that *citta* here means “mind state”, not “thought”; but since we are concerned with theories, we use “idea”. *Cinteti* straddles the meaning of *vitakketi* and *ceteti* “intends”, which is quite nicely represented by the English idiom “(to) think (something) up”.

and the body are one and the same, or the soul is one thing, the body another; after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. Why is that? Because those thoughts aren't beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

- 2.1 When you think something up, you should think: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. Why is that? Because those thoughts are beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.
- 3.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.9

Arguments

Viggāhikakathāsutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, don't get into arguments, such as: 'You don't understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You're practicing wrong. I'm practicing right. I stay on topic, you don't. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you've thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You're trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!' Why is that? Because those discussions aren't beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

When you discuss, you should discuss: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’ ...

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.10

Low Talk

Tiracchānakathāsutta

“Mendicants, don’t engage in all kinds of low talk, such as⁴⁹⁹ talk about kings, bandits, and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that place.⁵⁰⁰ Why is that? Because those discussions aren’t beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

When you discuss, you should discuss: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’ ...

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

499. *Tiracchānakathā* literally means “animal talk”. The Pali word for animal, *tiracchāna* has the sense of “moving horizontally”, and “low talk” is that which does not elevate.

500. *Bhavābhava* does not mean “existence and non-existence” but is a distributive compound, “this or that state of existence”. Indian religious texts are full of discussions about different heavens and hells.

The Chapter on Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma

SN 56.11

Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma

Dhammacakkappavattanasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana.⁵⁰¹ There the Buddha addressed the group of five mendicants:⁵⁰²
- 2.1 “Mendicants, these two extremes should not be cultivated by one gone forth.⁵⁰³ What two? Indulgence in sensual pleasures, which is

501. This is the Buddha’s first discourse proper. In the narrative following the Buddha’s awakening (Kd 1:6.16.9), it follows the apparently fruitless encounter with Upaka on the road from Bodhgaya to Varanasi (MN 26:25.1), and precedes the teaching on not-self (SN 22.59). It is included in full in the later treatise the Paṭisambhidāmagga (Ps 2.6:1.1), and is alluded to many times in the Suttas, sometimes by name (MN 141:32.1), sometimes implicitly (MN 26:29.1). It is still a key text in Theravāda Buddhism, and is regularly memorized and recited.

502. These are the ascetics with whom the Bodhisatta practiced before rejecting their path of extreme asceticism (MN 36:20.2). The Buddha has traveled especially to teach them out of gratitude, because they were very helpful to him (MN 26:24.5). Their names are listed in the Vinaya account: Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma, and Assaji (Kd 1:6.31.6). | Note that he calls them “mendicants”, a term typically reserved for Buddhist renunciates. For a similar usage, see MN 140:3.4. In the Vinaya account, they ordained after this teaching.

503. Expanded on at SN 42.12:2.1.

low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And indulgence in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and pointless.⁵⁰⁴ Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One understood the middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.⁵⁰⁵

And what is that middle way of practice? It 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.⁵⁰⁶ This is that middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment. 3.1

Now this is the noble truth of suffering. Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; being coupled with the disliked is suffering; separation from the liked is suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.⁵⁰⁷ 4.1

Now this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering. It's the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights. That is,⁵⁰⁸ craving for sensual 4.3

504. The Buddha begins by finding common ground with the ascetics—the rejection of sensual pleasures, repudiating their idea that he had given himself up to luxury (see DN 29:23.2). Only then does he reject the five ascetics' own practice of self-mortification. The descriptions in the Suttas make it clear that these practices were closely allied to the Jains, although the Buddha does not formally identify them (MN 85:10.2).

505. Also at MN 139:3.2, SN 42.12:2.7.

506. These are defined at SN 45.8.

507. Further defined at MN 28:3.2 and MN 141.

508. This definition clarifies two common misunderstandings. First, not all desire causes suffering, for some kinds of desire lead out of suffering (SN 51.15:4.1). Second, rebirth is not a tangential part of the Buddha's teachings, uncritically inherited from cultural suppositions; it is baked into the fundamental meaning of the four noble truths. | The idiom *tatratatra* (literally "there, there") is not selective ("here and there") but distributive ("each and every place", "everywhere"). By taking pleasure in sense experience, the mind binds itself to the need for continued stimulation in future lives. The distancing sense "there" is important, for craving does not merely satisfy itself with what it currently

pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving for nonexistence.⁵⁰⁹

4.6 Now this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving no residue left behind; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it.⁵¹⁰

4.8 Now this is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. It 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.⁵¹¹

5.1 'This is the noble truth of suffering.' Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.⁵¹² 'This noble truth of suffering should be completely understood.' Such was the vision that

experiences, but must always seek out renewed gratification. For an Upaniṣadic precursor, see the note to the same idiom at MN 2:8.8.

509. Craving for sensual pleasures in this life or the next, binding oneself to a form that can experience such pleasures. In Buddhism, this includes not only the human realm, but all of the heavenly realms too, so far as the Brahmā realm. When a person has good kamma, they are reborn in a realm where they enjoy such pleasures, if not, in a lower realm. | Craving to continue existence (*bhavataṇhā*) refers to any desire, whether conscious or not, to continue existence after death. When it solidifies as a view it is called eternalism, and motivates religious and spiritual practices aiming at "eternal life". As such, it especially applies to rebirth in the Brahmā realms. However, it is still present even in those who do not ascribe to such a view; craving is more primal than view (see SN 12.2:6.3 and notes). | Craving for nonexistence is the longing to destroy the self, in contrast with the Buddhist perspective that the self is a false construct. When it crystallizes as a view it is called annihilationism.

510. These are all terms for Nibbāna.

511. Thus the four noble truths include the noble eightfold path as the final factor, just as the path includes the truths as its first factor, right view. They are different perspectives on the same thing.

512. Each of the truths is analyzed in three "rounds": the knowledge of each truth (*saccañāṇa*); the knowledge of what is to be done in respect to each truth (*kiccañāṇa*); and the completion of work (*katañāṇa*). Normally the realization of the four truths indicates stream-entry, which, if that applies here, suggests that the Buddha first attained stream-entry, then practiced according to the relevant

arose in me ...⁵¹³ ‘This noble truth of suffering has been completely understood.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering should be given up.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...⁵¹⁴ ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been given up.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering should be realized.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...⁵¹⁵ ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering should be developed.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...⁵¹⁶ ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.⁵¹⁷

duties, before culminating in arahantship. This progression through the stages of awakening could have happened in a single night.

513. Suffering should not be avoided, but should be “known all around”, “completely understood” (*pariññeyyam*).

514. Note that it is not suffering that should be given up, but its cause.

515. “Should be realized” (*sacchikātabbam*) is literally “should be seen with one’s own eyes”, “should be witnessed”.

516. “Developed” is literally “made to be more”, “amplified”, rather than brought into being from nothing. This implies that the potential is already present.

517. The Buddha rejects the idea that his fundamental insight was passed down through oral tradition. He had studied the texts of the Brahmins (MN 26:15.7) and showed a detailed knowledge of them, as I have documented extensively in my notes. He also shows knowledge of Jain texts, but does not actually say that he memorized them. He was not shy to adopt things he thought worthwhile, but he always insisted that the key teachings were discovered through his own experience.

- 9.1 As long as my true knowledge and vision about these four noble truths was not fully purified in these three rounds and twelve aspects, 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.⁵¹⁸
- 10.1 But when my true knowledge and vision about these four noble truths was fully purified in these three rounds and twelve aspects, 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.
- 10.2 Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.'⁵¹⁹
- 10.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the group of five mendicants approved what the Buddha said.
- 11.1 And while this discourse was being spoken, the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in Venerable Koṇḍañña: "Everything that is liable to arise is liable to cease."
- 12.1 And when the Buddha rolled forth the Wheel of Dhamma, the earth gods raised the cry:⁵²⁰ "Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Buddha has rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world."⁵²¹

518. The related passage at AN 8.64:10.1 shows that the "three rounds and twelve aspects" apply to the knowledge and vision, not the truths.

519. Whereas the final of the three rounds indicates the attaining of arahantship, this indicates the reviewing knowledge by which the Buddha realized that he had become an arahant, completing his spiritual quest.

520. The wheel, like that of the wheel-turning monarch, echoes both the unstoppable conquests of the the ancient Indo-Europeans in their wheeled chariots, and the unstoppable progress of the sun in the sky.

521. The cry to the gods is inserted between noting that Koṇḍañña had realized the Dhamma, and the Buddha's acknowledgement of that fact. This serves to highlight the cosmic significance of Koṇḍañña's achievement: he showed that others, not just the Buddha, could realize the Dhamma. Some versions of this text lack the passage on the gods, suggesting that it was added later.

Hearing the cry of the earth gods, the gods of the four great kings 12.3
 ... the gods of the thirty-three ... the gods of Yama ... the joyful
 gods ... the gods who love to create ... the gods who control what
 is created by others ... the gods of the Divinity's host raised the cry:
 "Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Buddha has rolled
 forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be
 rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or
 by anyone in the world."

And so at that moment, that second, that hour, the cry soared 13.1
 up to the realm of divinity. And this ten-thousandfold galaxy shook
 and rocked and trembled. And an immeasurable, magnificent light
 appeared in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.⁵²²

Then the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment: "Koṇḍañña 14.1
 has really understood! Koṇḍañña has really understood!"

And that's how Venerable Koṇḍañña came to be known as "Ko- 14.3
 ṇḍañña Who Understood".

SN 56.12

The Realized Ones

Tathāgatasutta

"‘This is the noble truth of suffering.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, 1.1
 wisdom, realization, and light that arose in the Realized Ones re-
 garding teachings not learned before from another.⁵²³ ‘This noble
 truth of suffering should be completely understood.’ ... ‘This noble
 truth of suffering has been completely understood.’ ...

522. This phrase is only associated with key events in the Buddha's life (MN 120:17.5). At the conclusion of the Brahmajālasutta the galaxy is more modestly said to tremble (DN 1:3.74.6).

523. This repeats a core statement of the previous text, but generalized to include all Buddhas, past and future.

- 2.1 ‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering should be given up.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been given up.’ ...
- 3.1 ‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering should be realized.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized.’ ...
- 4.1 ‘This is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering should be developed.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in the Realized Ones regarding teachings not learned before from another.”

SN 56.13

Aggregates

Khandhasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.
- 2.1 And what is the noble truth of suffering? You should say: ‘The five grasping aggregates.’ That is: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.⁵²⁴ This is called the noble truth of suffering.
- 3.1 And what is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? It’s the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights. That is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and craving for nonexistence. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.

524. Again this discourse repeats a key passage of SN 56.11, here offering a more succinct definition of suffering. The next Sutta is the same, except it has the six senses here.

And what is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving no residue left behind; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it. This is called the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. 4.1

And what is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering? It 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. This is called the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These are the four noble truths. 5.1

That's why you should practice meditation to understand: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.'" 6.1

SN 56.14

Interior Sense Fields

Ajjhattikāyatana-sutta

"Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. 1.1

And what is the noble truth of suffering? You should say: 'The six interior sense fields'. What six? The sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. This is called the noble truth of suffering. 2.1

And what is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? ... 3.1
the cessation of suffering? ... 4.1

the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering? It is simply this noble eightfold path ... 5.1

That's why you should practice meditation ... 6.1

SN 56.15

Remembering (1st)

Paṭhamadhāraṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, do you remember the four noble truths that I taught?”
When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha:
- 1.3 “I do, sir.”
- 1.4 “How so, mendicant?”
- 1.5 “Sir, I remember that suffering is the first noble truth you’ve taught; the origin of suffering is the second; the cessation of suffering is the third; and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is the fourth. That’s how I remember the four noble truths as you’ve taught them.”
- 2.1 “Good, good, mendicant! It’s good that you remember the four noble truths as I’ve taught them. Suffering is the first noble truth I’ve taught, and that’s how you should remember it. The origin of suffering is the second; the cessation of suffering is the third; and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is the fourth. That’s how you should remember the four noble truths as I’ve taught them.
- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.16

Remembering (2nd)

Dutiyadhāraṇasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, do you remember the four noble truths that I taught?”
When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha:
- 1.3 “I do, sir.”
- 2.1 “How so, mendicant?”
- 2.2 “Sir, I remember that suffering is the first noble truth you’ve taught. For if any ascetic or brahmin should say this: ‘What the ascetic Gotama teaches is not the first noble truth of suffering. I’ll deny this first noble truth of suffering and describe another first no-

ble truth of suffering.’ That is not possible. The origin of suffering ... The cessation of suffering ... The practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is the fourth noble truth you’ve taught. For if any ascetic or brahmin should say this: ‘What the ascetic Gotama teaches is not the fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. I’ll deny this fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering and describe another fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ That is not possible. That’s how I remember the four noble truths as you’ve taught them.”

“Good, good, mendicant! It’s good that you remember the four 3.1 noble truths as I’ve taught them. Suffering is the first noble truth I’ve taught, and that’s how you should remember it. For if any ascetic or brahmin should say this: ‘What the ascetic Gotama teaches is not the first noble truth of suffering. I’ll deny this first noble truth of suffering and describe another first noble truth of suffering.’ That is not possible. The origin of suffering ... The cessation of suffering ... The practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is the fourth noble truth I’ve taught, and that’s how you should remember it. For if any ascetic or brahmin should say this: ‘What the ascetic Gotama teaches is not the fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. I’ll deny this fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering and describe another fourth noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ That is not possible. That’s how you should remember the four noble truths as I’ve taught them.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

4.1

SN 56.17

Ignorance

Avijjāsutta

Seated to one side, that mendicant said to the Buddha:

1.1

- 1.2 “Sir, they speak of this thing called ‘ignorance’. What is ignorance? And how is an ignoramus defined?”
- 1.5 “Not knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called ignorance. And this is how an ignoramus is defined.
- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.18

Knowledge

Vijjāsutta

- 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 this thing called ‘knowledge’. What is knowledge? And how is a knowing one defined?”
- 1.5 “Knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called knowledge. And this is how a knowing one is defined.
- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.19

Expressions

Saṅkāsanāsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, I’ve declared: ‘This is the noble truth of suffering.’ For that there are limitless arrangements, phrasings, and illustrations:⁵²⁵

525. A parallel phrase dealing with the skillful and unskillful is found at AN 4.188:3.2, except it says “words, phrasings, and teachings of the Realized One”. Taken together with the next line, these passages are saying that these basic teachings are expressed in countless different ways. | Take *vaṇṇā* here in the sense “order, arrangement, presentation”, otherwise attested only for Sanskrit *varṇa*. | *Saṅkāsanā*, from root *kās* (“shine”) is unique in early Pali, but in late

“This is another way of saying that this is the noble truth of suffering.”⁵²⁶ I’ve declared: ‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering.’ ... I’ve declared: ‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.’ ... I’ve declared: ‘This is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ For that there are limitless arrangements, phrasings, and illustrations: ‘This is another way of saying that this is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’
That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

2.1

SN 56.20

Real

Tathasutta

“Mendicants, these four things are real, not unreal, not otherwise. 1.1
What four? ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ...
‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’ ... These four things are real, not unreal, not otherwise.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

2.1

canonical Pali it appears with several other terms in an expansion of the current passage, evidently having the sense “illustration” (Ne 4:32.2, Pe 1:32.1).

526. Literally, “Thus also, ‘This is the noble truth of suffering.’”

The Chapter at the Village of Koṭi

SN 56.21

At the Village of Koṭi (1st)

Paṭhamakoṭigāmasutta

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Vajjis at the village of Koṭi.⁵²⁷ There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, due to not understanding and not penetrating four noble truths, both you and I have wandered and transmigrated for such a very long time.
- 2.1 What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These noble truths of suffering, origin, cessation, and the path have been understood and comprehended. Craving for continued existence has been cut off; the leash to existence is ended; now there’ll be no more future lives.”
- 3.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 4.1 “Because of not truly seeing
the four noble truths,

527. This is included in both the Mahāparinibbānasutta (DN 16:2.1.5) and the Vinaya (Kd 6:29.1.2), and is cited in the Netti (Ne 37:367.1).

we have transmigrated for a long time
from one rebirth to the next.

But now that these truths have been seen, 5.1
the leash to existence is eradicated.
The root of suffering is cut off,
now there'll be no more future lives.”

SN 56.22

At the Village of Koṭi (2nd)

Dutiyakoṭigāmasutta

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly under- 1.1
stand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.⁵²⁸ 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 truly understand about 2.1
suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. 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.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 3.1
went on to say:

“There are those who don't understand suffering 4.1
and suffering's cause,
and where all suffering
ceases no residue left behind.

And they do not know the path 5.1
that leads to the stilling of suffering.
They lack the heart's release,
as well as the release by wisdom.

528. The Sutta is also found at Iti 103, and the verses at Snp 3.12:5.1.

Unable to make an end,
they continue to be reborn and grow old.

6.1 But there are those who understand suffering
and suffering's cause,
and where all suffering
ceases no residue left behind.

7.1 And they understand the path
that leads to the stilling of suffering.
They're endowed with the heart's release,
as well as the release by wisdom.
Able to make an end,
they don't continue to be reborn and grow old."

SN 56.23

The Fully Awakened Buddha

Sammāsambuddhasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 "Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These are the four noble truths. It is because he has truly understood these four noble truths that the Realized One is called 'the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha'.

2.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.24

The Perfected Ones

Arahantasutta

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, whatever perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas 1.2
truly awaken—in the past, future, or present—all of them truly
awaken to the four noble truths.

What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, 2.1
the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation
of suffering. Whatever perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas truly
awaken—in the past, future, or present—all of them truly awaken
to the four noble truths.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 3.1

SN 56.25

The Ending of Defilements

Āsavakkhayasutta

“Mendicants, I say that the ending of defilements is for one who 1.1
knows and sees, not for one who does not know or see. For one
who knows and sees what? The ending of defilements is for one who
knows and sees suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. The
ending of the defilements is for one who knows and sees this.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 2.1

SN 56.26

Friends

Mittasutta

“Mendicants, those who you have sympathy for, and those worth 1.1
listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should
be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the true com-
prehension of the four noble truths.

What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, 2.1
the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation
of suffering. Those who you have sympathy for, and those worth

listening to—friends and colleagues, relatives and family—should be encouraged, supported, and established by you in the true comprehension of these four noble truths.

- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.27

Real

Tathasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These four noble truths are real, not unreal, not otherwise. That’s why they’re called ‘noble truths’.

- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.28

The World

Lokasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. In this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans, the Realized One is the Noble One. That’s why they’re called ‘noble truths’.

- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.29

Should Be Completely Understood

Pariññeyyasutta

“Mendicants, there are these four noble truths. What four? The noble 1.1
truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering,
and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These are
the four noble truths. Of these four noble truths, there is one to be
completely understood, one to be given up, one to be realized, and
one to be developed.

And which noble truth should be completely understood? The 2.1
noble truth of suffering should be completely understood. The noble
truth of the origin of suffering should be given up. The noble truth of
the cessation of suffering should be realized. The noble truth of the
practice that leads to the cessation of suffering should be developed.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 3.1

SN 56.30

With Gavampati

Gavampatisutta

At one time several mendicants were staying in the land of the Cetīs 1.1
at Sahajāti.⁵²⁹ Now at that time, after the meal, on return from alm-

529. The Cetis were a rather obscure people living in the Bundelkhand division of Madhya Pradesh, south of Vaccha and west of Magadha, around the Vettavati river (Sanskrit *vetravati*, modern Betwa), a tributary of the Yamunā flowing from the Vindhya ranges to the south. Apart from this Sutta, three discourses feature Mahācunda there (AN 6.46, AN 10.24, AN 10.85). A century after the Buddha, Revata stopped there heading south from Saṅkassa, where ten leading monks met him to discuss the dispute at the upcoming Second Council (Kd 22:1.9.39). | The spelling of the city is highly uncertain: *sayamjāti*, *sahajāti*, *sañjāti*, *sahañcanika*, *sahajaniya*. The commentary to Ja 422 says the name of the Ceti capital was Sothhivati, sometimes identified with Śuktimatī found in Sanskrit sources. Possibly these variants reflect attempts to render the local

sround, several senior mendicants sat together in the pavilion and this discussion came up among them:

- 1.3 “Reverends, does someone who sees suffering also see the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering?”
- 2.1 When they said this, Venerable Gavampati said to those senior mendicants:⁵³⁰
- 2.2 “Reverends, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha:⁵³¹ ‘Someone who sees suffering also sees the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. Someone who sees the origin of suffering also sees suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. Someone who sees the cessation of suffering also sees suffering, the origin of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. Someone who sees the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering also sees suffering, the origin of suffering, and the cessation of suffering.’”

dialect. The sense of the name is “one’s own caste”, perhaps suggesting they were an insular people.

530. Gavampati (“lord of cows”) appears in DN 23:33.1, where he is said to spend his days meditating in a celestial palace. That Sutta, like the present one, does not speak of the Buddha as still living, although the current Sutta asserts that he heard this teaching from the Buddha. He also has a single verse at Thag 1.38, where he is said to have stilled the mighty Sarabhū river with his powers. Gavampati was also said to have been among the friends of Yasa who were among the earliest ordained monks (Kd 1:9.1.1). The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya says that he was invited to the First Council after the Buddha’s passing, but declined as his own time was drawing near. These passages, slight as they are, suggest a somewhat mystical figure, whose legend perhaps grew due to his reclusive nature. In later years he came to be regarded as one of the 80 great disciples, and he remains an object of worship in South-east Asia. | Read *there bhikkhū*. | This passage is cited at Kv 2:9:26.3.

531. Despite this claim, the following passage is not found elsewhere in the Pali.

The Chapter in a Rosewood Forest

SN 56.31

In a Rosewood Forest

Sīsapāvanasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in a rosewood grove.⁵³² Then the Buddha picked up a few rosewood leaves in his hand and addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the few leaves in my hand, or those in the grove above?” 1.1

“Sir, the few leaves in your hand are a tiny amount. There are far more leaves in the grove above.” 1.6

“In the same way, there is much more that I have directly known but have not explained to you. What I have explained is a tiny amount.⁵³³ And why haven’t I explained it? 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 I haven’t explained it.” 1.8

532. *Sīmsapa* is *Dalbergia sissoo*, the North Indian Rosewood.

533. Read *appamattakam akkhātam*, which is omitted in MS and other Burmese manuscripts.

- 2.1 And what have I explained? I have explained: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’.
- 3.1 And why have I explained this? 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 I’ve explained it.
- 4.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.32

Acacia Leaves

Khadirapattasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose someone were to say: ‘Without truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is not possible.
- 2.1 It’s as if someone were to say: ‘I’ll make a basket out of acacia leaves or pine needles or myrobalan leaves, and use it to carry water or ripe palmyra fruit.’⁵³⁴ That is not possible. In the same way, suppose someone were to say: ‘Without truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is not possible.
- 3.1 But suppose someone were to say: ‘After truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is possible.
- 4.1 It’s as if someone were to say: ‘I’ll make a basket out of lotus leaves or flame-of-the-forest leaves or camel’s foot creeper leaves, and use it to carry water or ripe palmyra fruit.’⁵³⁵ That is possible. In the same

534. “Acacia” (*khadira*) is *Senegalia catechu*, whose leaves are compounded of many tiny leaflets like a fern. | “Pine” (*sarala*) is *Pinus roxburghii*. | “Myrobalan” (*āmalaka*) is *Phyllanthus emblica*, whose leaves are very small. | Read *tālapakka* per BJT.

535. These plants all have large, broad leaves.

way, suppose someone were to say: ‘After truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is possible.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

5.1

SN 56.33

A Stick

Daṇḍasutta

“Mendicants, suppose a stick was tossed up in the air. Sometimes it’d 1.1
fall on its bottom and sometimes the top. It’s the same for sentient
beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fet-
tered 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? It’s because they haven’t seen the four noble truths.
What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation,
and the path.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

2.1

SN 56.34

Clothes

Celasutta

“Mendicants, if your clothes or head were on fire, what would you do 1.1
about it?”

“Sir, if our clothes or head were on fire, we’d apply extraordinary 1.2
enthusiasm, effort, zeal, vigor, perseverance, mindfulness, and situa-
tional awareness in order to extinguish it.”

“Mendicants, so long as you have not encompassed the four no- 2.1
ble truths, regard your burning head or clothes with equanimity,
ignore them, and apply extraordinary enthusiasm, effort, zeal, vigor,
perseverance, mindfulness, and situational awareness to truly com-

prehending the four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

3.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.35

A Hundred Spears

Sattisatasutta

1.1 "Mendicants, suppose there was a man with a lifespan of a hundred years. And someone might say to him: 'Come now, my man, they'll strike you with a hundred spears in the morning, at midday, and in the late afternoon.'⁵³⁶ And you'll live for a hundred years being struck with three hundred spears every day. But when a hundred years have passed, you will comprehend the four noble truths for the first time.'

2.1 For an earnest gentleman this is sufficient reason to submit.

2.2 Why is that? This transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of blows by spears, swords, arrows, and axes. Now this may be so. But the comprehension of the four noble truths doesn't come with pain or sadness, I say. Rather, the comprehension of the four noble truths comes only with pleasure and happiness, I say. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

3.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.36

Living Creatures

Pāṇasutta

1.1 "Suppose a person was to strip all the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in the Black Plum Tree Land, gather them together into one pile, and

536. A metaphor for the sufferings of hell (MN 129:8.1).

make them into stakes. Then they'd impale the large creatures in the ocean on large stakes; the medium-sized creatures on medium-sized stakes; and the small creatures on small stakes. They wouldn't run out of sizable creatures in the ocean before using up all the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in the Black Plum Tree Land. There are far more small creatures in the ocean than this, so it wouldn't be feasible to impale them on stakes.⁵³⁷ Why is that? Because of the small size of those life-forms. That's how big the plane of loss is.

An individual accomplished in view, exempt from that vast plane 2.6
of loss, truly understands: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'.

That's why you should practice meditation ... 3.1

SN 56.37

The Simile of the Sun (1st)

Paṭhamasūriyasutta

"Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and harbinger of the sunrise. 1.1

In the same way, for a mendicant right view is the forerunner 1.2
and harbinger of truly comprehending the four noble truths. That mendicant can expect to truly understand: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'.

That's why you should practice meditation ... 2.1

537. Even though the Buddha never, so far as we know, visited the ocean, he recognized the vast extent of oceanic life (SN 56.65).

SN 56.38

The Simile of the Sun (2nd)

Dutiyasūriyasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, as long as the moon and the sun don’t arise in the world, no great light or great radiance appears.⁵³⁸ Darkness prevails then, utter darkness. Day and night aren’t found, nor months and fortnights, nor seasons and years.
- 2.1 But when the moon and the sun arise in the world, a great light, a great radiance appears. Darkness no longer prevails. Day and night are found, and months and fortnights, and seasons and years.
- 2.4 In the same way, as long as the Realized One doesn’t arise in the world, no great light or great radiance appears. Darkness prevails then, utter darkness. There’s no explanation of the four noble truths, no teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of them.
- 3.1 But when the Realized One arises in the world, a great light, a great radiance appears. Darkness no longer prevails. Then there’s the explanation of the four noble truths, the teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of them. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- 4.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.39

Indra’s pillar

Indakhīlasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They

538. See DN 27 for the early Buddhist conception of the origins of the cosmos.

gaze up at the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking:⁵³⁹ 'Surely this worthy one knows and sees.'

Suppose there was a light tuft of cotton-wool or kapok which was 2.1
taken up by the wind and landed on level ground. The east wind
wafts it west; the west wind wafts it east; the north wind wafts it
south; and the south wind wafts it north. Why is that? It's because
the tuft of cotton-wool is so light.

In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly 2.5
understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
They gaze up at the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking:
'Surely this worthy one knows and sees.' Why is that? It's because
they haven't seen the four noble truths.

There are ascetics and brahmins who truly understand about suf- 3.1
fering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They don't gaze up at
the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking: 'Surely this worthy
one knows and sees.'

Suppose there was an iron pillar or an Indra's pillar with deep 4.1
foundations, firmly embedded, imperturbable and unshakable.⁵⁴⁰
Even if violent storms were to blow up out of the east, the west, the
north, and the south, they couldn't make it shake or rock or tremble.
Why is that? It's because that Indra's pillar is firmly embedded, with
deep foundations.

In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who truly un- 4.5
derstand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They
don't gaze up at the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking:
'Surely this worthy one knows and sees.' Why is that? It's because
they have clearly seen the four noble truths. What four? The noble
truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

That's why you should practice meditation ...” 5.1

539. Compare MN 79:5.4. At DN 2:35.2 this is the attitude of a servant to the king. The Buddha was not impressed with unthinking devotion.

540. For Indra's pillar, see note on SN 1.37:7.2.

SN 56.40

Looking For a Debate

Vādatthikasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, take any mendicant who truly understands: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. An ascetic or brahmin might come from the east, west, north, or south wanting to debate, seeking a debate, thinking: ‘I’ll refute their doctrine!’ It’s simply impossible for them to legitimately make that mendicant shake or rock or tremble.
- 2.1 Suppose there was a stone post, sixteen feet long,⁵⁴¹ Eight feet were buried underground, and eight above ground. Even if violent storms were to blow up out of the east, the west, the north, and the south, they couldn’t make it shake or rock or tremble. Why is that? It’s because that stone post is firmly embedded, with deep foundations.
- 2.6 In the same way, take any mendicant who truly understands: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. An ascetic or brahmin might come from the east, west, north, or south wanting to debate, seeking a debate, thinking: ‘I’ll refute their doctrine!’ It’s simply impossible for them to legitimately make that mendicant shake or rock or tremble. Why is that? It’s because they have clearly seen the four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

541. A *kukku* (or *hattha*) is a cubit, roughly 45 cm or 18 in. I round down to “feet”.

The Chapter on a Cliff

SN 56.41

Speculation About the World

Lokacintāsutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a certain person left Rājagaha, thinking ‘I’ll speculate about the world.’ They went to the Sumāgadhā lotus pond and sat down on the bank speculating about the world.⁵⁴² Then that person saw an army of four divisions enter a lotus stalk. When he saw this he thought, ‘I’ve gone mad, really, I’ve lost my mind! I’m seeing things that don’t exist in the world.’ 1.3

Then that person entered the city and informed a large crowd, ‘I’ve gone mad, really, I’ve lost my mind! I’m seeing things that don’t exist in the world.’ 2.1

‘But how is it that you’re mad? How have you lost your mind? And what have you seen that doesn’t exist in the world?’ 2.4

542. “Speculation about the world” is said to be one of the four trains of thought that can drive you mad (AN 4.77:1.9). At MN 48:8.9 it is distinguished as speculation about this world and the next. | The Buddha once visited the Sumāgadhā pond to accept Nigrodha’s challenge. There was a peacock’s feeding ground nearby. The Rāmāyaṇa describes the river Sumāgadhī, which rises among the five hills of Rajagaha like a gorgeous garland (1.31.7); this must be a lake on that river. Perhaps to be identified with the modern Dhadhar.

- 2.6 ‘Sirs, I left Rājagaha, thinking “I’ll speculate about the world.” I went to the Sumāgadhā lotus pond and sat down on the bank speculating about the world. Then I saw an army of four divisions enter a lotus stalk. That’s why I’m mad, that’s why I’ve lost my mind. And that’s what I’ve seen that doesn’t exist in the world.’
- 2.10 ‘Well, my man, you’re definitely mad, you’ve definitely lost your mind. And you’re seeing things that don’t exist in the world.’
- 3.1 But what that person saw was in fact real, not unreal. Once upon a time, a battle was fought between the gods and the titans. In that battle the gods won and the titans lost. The defeated and terrified titans entered the citadel of the titans through the lotus stalk only to confuse the gods.⁵⁴³
- 4.1 So mendicants, don’t speculate about the world.⁵⁴⁴ For example: the cosmos is eternal, or not eternal, or finite, or infinite; the soul and the body are one and the same, or the soul is one thing, the body another; after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. Why is that? Because those thoughts aren’t beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.
- 5.1 When you think something up, you should think: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of

543. The titans and the gods are normally depicted as human-sized. The commentaries say they employed the Sambaru sorcery to escape the gods (SN 11.23:1.8).

544. The sequence of ideas is not really coherent: the Buddha has said that such speculation will drive you mad; then that the man was in fact not mad; then says this is a reason to not do it (the parallel at SA 407 is similar). It’s also unclear what his speculations had to do with the titans entering the lotus stalk: he just happened to be there when it happened. If, however, in his contemplations he fell into *samādhi* and had a truthful psychic vision, what exactly is the problem? The only issue, as far as the Sutta says, is not the speculation itself, but that oneself and others will *think* that you’re mad.

suffering'. Why is that? Because those thoughts are beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

That's why you should practice meditation ..."

6.1

SN 56.42

A Cliff

Papātasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's 1.1
Peak Mountain.

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "Come, mendicants, 1.2
let's go to Inspiration Peak for the day's meditation."⁵⁴⁵

"Yes, sir," they replied. Then the Buddha together with several 1.4
mendicants went to Inspiration Peak.

A certain mendicant saw the big cliff there and said to the Buddha, 1.6
"Sir, that big cliff is really big and scary. Is there any other cliff bigger
and scarier than this one?"

"There is, mendicant." 1.10

"But sir, what is it?" 2.1

"Mendicant, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly un- 2.2
derstand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.⁵⁴⁶
They take pleasure in choices that lead to rebirth, old age, and death,
to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.⁵⁴⁷ Since they
take pleasure in such choices, they continue to make them. Hav-
ing made choices that lead to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow,

545. Normally "inspiration" (*paṭibhāna*) describes inspired and eloquent speech. It is not clear what this has to do with the hill, which does not appear elsewhere.

546. This is a condensed treatment of dependent origination, beginning here with ignorance.

547. Their "choices" (*saṅkhārā*) are driven by craving, here expressed as "taking pleasure" (*abhiramanti*), and lead to rebirth and the rest.

lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress, they fall down the cliff of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. 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.

- 3.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who truly understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They don't take pleasure in choices that lead to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. Since they don't take pleasure in such choices, they stop making them. Having stopped making choices that lead to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress, they don't fall down the cliff of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from suffering, I say.

- 4.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.43

The Great Scorching

Mahāpariṇāhasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, there is a hell called 'The Great Scorching'.⁵⁴⁸ There, whatever sight you see with your eye is unlikable, not likable; undesirable, not desirable; unpleasant, not pleasant.⁵⁴⁹ Whatever sound you hear ... Whatever odor you smell ... Whatever flavor you taste ... Whatever touch you feel ... Whatever idea you know with your mind is unlikable, not likable; undesirable, not desirable; unpleasant, not pleasant."

548. Elsewhere, *mahāpariṇāha* describes the intense scorching of a pit of burning coals (MN 75:15.10).

549. This description also at SN 35.135:1.4.

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, 2.1
 “Sir, that scorching really is mighty, so very mighty. Is there any other
 scorching more mighty and terrifying than this one?”

“There is, mendicant.” 2.4

“But sir, what is it?” 3.1

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly 3.2
 understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
 They take pleasure in choices that lead to rebirth ... They continue
 to make such choices ... Having made such choices, they burn with
 the scorching of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation,
 pain, sadness, and distress. 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.

There are ascetics and brahmins who truly understand about suf- 4.1
 fering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They don’t take pleasure
 in choices that lead to rebirth ... They stop making such choices
 ... Having stopped making such choices, they don’t burn with the
 scorching of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain,
 sadness, and distress. They’re freed from rebirth, old age, and death,
 from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They’re freed
 from suffering, I say.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 5.1

SN 56.44

A Bungalow

Kūṭāgārasutta

“Mendicants, suppose someone were to say: ‘Without truly compre- 1.1
 hending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the
 path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is not possible.

It’s as if someone were to say: ‘Before the lower story of a bunga- 2.1
 low is built, I will hoist up the upper story.’ That is not possible. In
 the same way, suppose someone were to say: ‘Without truly compre-

hending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is not possible.

3.1 But suppose someone were to say: ‘After truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is possible.

4.1 It’s as if someone were to say: ‘After the lower story of a bungalow is built, I will hoist up the upper story.’ That is possible. In the same way, suppose someone were to say: ‘After truly comprehending the noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path, I will completely make an end of suffering.’ That is possible.

5.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.45

Splitting Hairs

Vālasutta

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

1.2 Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. He saw several Licchavi youths practicing archery near the town hall. They were shooting arrows from a distance through a small keyhole, shaft after shaft without missing.⁵⁵⁰

1.4 When he saw this he thought, “These Licchavi youths really are trained, so well trained, in that they shoot arrows from a distance through a small keyhole, shaft after shaft without missing.”

2.1 Then Ānanda wandered for alms in Vesālī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

3.1 “What do you think, Ānanda? Which is harder and more challenging: to shoot arrows from a distance through a small keyhole,

550. *Poṅkha* means “feathered shaft”, while the expression *poṅkhānupoṅkha* is treated in the Niddesas as meaning “repeatedly, continuously” (Cnd 12:24.4).

shaft after shaft without missing? Or to take a horsehair split into seven strands and penetrate one tip with another tip?”

“It’s more difficult and challenging, sir, to take a horsehair split into seven strands and penetrate one tip with another tip.” 3.4

“Still, Ānanda, those who truly penetrate suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path penetrate something tougher than that. 3.5

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 4.1

SN 56.46

Darkness

Andhakārasutta

“Mendicants, the boundless gloom of interstellar space is so utterly dark that even the luminosity of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression.”⁵⁵¹ 1.1

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, 2.1
“Sir, that darkness really is mighty, so very mighty. Is there any other darkness more mighty and terrifying than this one?”

“There is, mendicant.” 2.4

“But sir, what is it?” 3.1

“There are ascetics and brahmins who don’t truly understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They take pleasure in choices that lead to rebirth ... They continue to make such choices ... Having made such choices, they fall into the darkness of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They’re not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from 3.2

551. The commentary identifies this realm of “utter darkness” (*andhakāratimisā*) with a cold hell realm. There is a corresponding Purāṇic hell called *andhatāmisra*. | *Agha* (“void”) is a synonym of *ākāśa* (“space”, MN 62:12.5). | *Asaṃvuta* was translated by Ñāṇamoli as “abysmal”, but this relies on a commentarial cosmology that is not found in the suttas. The sense, rather, is “boundless”. The root harks back to the Vedic serpent Vṛtra who wraps the world in darkness. | *Nānubhonti* (“makes no impression”) is glossed in the commentary to AN 4.127 as *nappahonti* (“ineffective”).

sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're not freed from suffering, I say.

- 4.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who truly understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. They don't take pleasure in choices that lead to rebirth ... They stop making such choices ... Having stopped making such choices, they don't fall into the darkness of rebirth, old age, and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from suffering, I say.

- 5.1 That's why you should practice meditation ..."

SN 56.47

A Yoke With a Hole (1st)

PaṭhamachiggaḬayugasutta

- 1.1 "Mendicants, suppose a person were to throw a yoke with a single hole into the ocean. And there was a one-eyed turtle who popped up once every hundred years.⁵⁵²
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Would that one-eyed turtle, popping up once every hundred years, still poke its neck through the hole in that yoke?"
- 1.4 "Only after a very long time, sir, if ever."
- 2.1 "That one-eyed turtle might poke its neck through the hole in that yoke, but in any case it'd be sooner than a fool fallen to the underworld is reborn as a human being, I say.
- 3.1 Why is that? Because in that place there's no principled or moral conduct, and no doing what is good and skillful. There they just prey on each other, preying on the weak. Why is that? It's because they haven't seen the four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

552. For *kāṇa* as "one-eyed" see Manu 3.177.

That's why you should practice meditation ..."

4.1

SN 56.48

A Yoke With a Hole (2nd)

Dutiyachiggaḷayugasutta

"Mendicants, suppose the earth was entirely covered with water. And 1.1
a person threw a yoke with a single hole into it. The east wind wafts
it west; the west wind wafts it east; the north wind wafts it south;
and the south wind wafts it north. And there was a one-eyed turtle
who popped up once every hundred years.

What do you think, mendicants? Would that one-eyed turtle, 1.5
popping up once every hundred years, still poke its neck through
the hole in that yoke?"

"It would be an anomaly, sir." 1.7

"That's how anomalous it is to get reborn as a human being.⁵⁵³ 2.1
And that's how anomalous it is for a Realized One to arise in the
world, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. And that's how
anomalous it is for the teaching and training proclaimed by a Realized
One to shine in the world. And now, mendicants, you have been
reborn as a human being. A Realized One has arisen in the world,
a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. And the teaching and
training proclaimed by a Realized One shines in the world.

That's why you should practice meditation ..."

3.1

553. For "anomalous" see note on SN 12.17:3.7.

SN 56.49

Sineru, King of Mountains (1st)

Paṭhamasinerupabbatarājasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose a person was to place on Sineru, the king of mountains, seven pebbles the size of mung beans.⁵⁵⁴
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven pebbles the size of mung beans? Or Sineru, the king of mountains?”
- 1.4 “Sir, Sineru, the king of mountains, is certainly more. The seven pebbles the size of mung beans are tiny. Compared to Sineru, they don’t count, there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a fraction.”
- 1.7 “In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble disciple accomplished in view, 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 doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction, since there are at most seven more lives. Such an individual truly understands about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.50

Sineru, King of Mountains (2nd)

Dutiyasinerupabbatarājasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose Sineru, the king of mountains, was worn away and eroded except seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds.⁵⁵⁵
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the portion of Sineru, the king of mountains, that has been worn away and eroded? Or the seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds that are left?”

554. See SN 13.11.

555. See SN 13.10.

“Sir, the portion of Sineru, the king of mountains, that has been 1.4
worn away and eroded is certainly more. The seven pebbles the size
of mustard seeds are tiny. Compared to Sineru, they don’t count,
there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble 1.7
disciple accomplished in view, 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 doesn’t count, there’s no
comparison, it’s not worth a fraction, since there are at most seven
more lives. Such an individual truly understands about suffering, its
origin, its cessation, and the path.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...” 2.1

The Chapter on Comprehension

SN 56.51

A Fingernail

Nakhasikhāsaṭṭa

- 1.1 Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, addressed the mendicants:⁵⁵⁶ “What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”
- 1.4 “Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The little bit of dirt on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great earth, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”
- 1.6 “In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble disciple accomplished in view, 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 doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction, since there are at most seven more lives. Such an individual truly understands about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- 2.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

556. SN 56.51–60 are roughly parallel to SN 13.1–10.

SN 56.52

A Lotus Pond

Pokkharāṇīsutta

“Mendicants, suppose there was a lotus pond that was fifty leagues 1.1
long, fifty leagues wide, and fifty leagues deep, full to the brim so a
crow could drink from it. 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 1.3
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 1.5
on the tip of a blade of grass is tiny. Compared to the water in the
lotus pond, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a
fraction.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple ... 1.7

That’s why you should practice meditation ... 1.8

SN 56.53

Where the Waters Join Together (1st)

Paṭhamasambhejjasutta

“Mendicants, there are places where the great rivers—the Ganges, 1.1
Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—join together and converge.
Suppose a person was to draw two or three drops of water from such
a place.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the two or three 1.3
drops drawn out or the water in the confluence?”

“Sir, the water in the confluence is certainly more. The two or three 1.5
drops drawn out are tiny. Compared to the water in the confluence,
it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple ... 1.7

That’s why you should practice meditation ... 1.8

SN 56.54

Where the Waters Join Together (2nd)

Dutiyasambhejjasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, there are places where the great rivers—the Ganges, Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī—join together and converge. Suppose that water dried up and evaporated except two or three drops.
- 1.3 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the water in the confluence that has dried up and evaporated, or the two or three drops left?”
- 1.5 “Sir, the water in the confluence that has dried up and evaporated 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 doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”
- 1.7 “In the same way, for a noble disciple ...
- 1.8 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.55

The Earth (1st)

Paṭhamamahāpathavīsutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose a person was to place seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds on the great earth.
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds, or the great earth?”
- 1.4 “Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds are tiny. Compared to the great earth, they don’t count, there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a fraction.”
- 1.6 “In the same way, for a noble disciple ...
- 1.7 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.56

The Earth (2nd)

Dutiyamahāpathavīsutta

“Mendicants, suppose the great earth was worn away and eroded 1.1
except seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the great earth 1.2
that has been worn away and eroded, or the seven clay balls the size
of jujube seeds that are left?”

“Sir, the great earth that has been worn away and eroded is cer- 1.4
tainly more. The seven clay balls the size of jujube seeds are tiny.
Compared to the great earth that has been worn away and eroded,
they don’t count, there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a frac-
tion.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple ... 1.6

That’s why you should practice meditation ... 1.7

SN 56.57

The Ocean (1st)

Paṭhamamahāsamuddasutta

“Mendicants, suppose a man was to draw up two or three drops of 1.1
water from the ocean.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the two or three 1.2
drops drawn out or the water in the ocean?”

“Sir, the water in the ocean is certainly more. The two or three 1.4
drops drawn out are tiny. Compared to the water in the ocean, it
doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way, for a noble disciple ... 1.6

That’s why you should practice meditation ... 1.7

SN 56.58

The Ocean (2nd)

Dutiyamahāsamuddasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose the water in the ocean dried up and evaporated except two or three drops.
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the water in the ocean that has dried up and evaporated, or the two or three drops left?”
- 1.4 “Sir, the water in the ocean that has dried up and evaporated is certainly more. The two or three drops left are tiny. Compared to the water in the ocean that has dried up and evaporated, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”
- 1.6 “In the same way, for a noble disciple ...
- 1.7 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.59

A Mountain (1st)

Paṭhamapabbatūpamasutta

- 1.1 “Mendicants, suppose a person was to place seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds on the Himalayas, the king of mountains.
- 1.2 What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds, or the Himalayas, the king of mountains?”
- 1.4 “Sir, the Himalayas, the king of mountains, is certainly more. The seven pebbles the size of mustard seeds are tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, they don’t count, there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a fraction.”
- 1.6 “In the same way, for a noble disciple ...
- 1.7 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

SN 56.60

A Mountain (2nd)

Dutiyapabbatūpamasutta

“Mendicants, suppose the Himalayas, the king of mountains, was 1.1
worn away and eroded except seven pebbles the size of mustard
seeds.

What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the portion of 1.2
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?”

“Sir, the portion of the Himalayas, the king of mountains, that has 1.4
been worn away and eroded is certainly more. The seven pebbles
the size of mustard seeds are tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, they
don’t count, there’s no comparison, they’re not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble 1.6
disciple accomplished in view, 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 doesn’t count, there’s no
comparison, it’s not worth a fraction, since there are at most seven
more lives. Such an individual truly understands about suffering, its
origin, its cessation, and the path.

That’s why you should practice meditation . . .” 2.1

The First Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Raw Grain

SN 56.61

Not Human

Aññatrasutta

- 1.1 Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”
- 1.4 “Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The little bit of dirt on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great earth, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”
- 2.1 “In the same way, the sentient beings reborn as humans are few, while those not reborn as humans are many.⁵⁵⁷ Why is that? It’s because they haven’t seen the four noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
- 3.1 That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

557. The next series is similar to AN 1.348–374.

SN 56.62

In the Borderlands

Paccantasutta

Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, 1.1
addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? Which
is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”

“Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The little bit of dirt on 1.4
your fingernail 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 in central countries 2.1
are few, while those reborn in the borderlands, among uneducated
foreigners, are many. ...”⁵⁵⁸

SN 56.63

Wisdom

Paññāsutta

“... the sentient beings who have the noble eye of wisdom are few, 1.1
while those who are ignorant and confused are many. ...”

SN 56.64

Beer and Wine

Surāmerayasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from intoxicants of beer, wine, 1.1
and liquor, are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

558. Rebirth in civilized lands was felt to offer the supporting conditions for practice.

SN 56.65

Born in Water

Odakasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings born on land are few, while those born in water are many. ...”

SN 56.66

Respect Mother

Matteyyasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who respect their mothers are few, while those who don’t are many. ...”

SN 56.67

Respect Father

Petteyyasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who respect their fathers are few, while those who don’t are many. ...”

SN 56.68

Respect Ascetics

Sāmaññasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who respect ascetics are few, while those who don’t are many. ...”

SN 56.69

Respect Brahmins

Brahmaññasutta

“... the sentient beings who respect brahmins are few, while those 1.1
who don’t are many. ...”

SN 56.70

Honor the Elders

Pacāyikasutta

“... the sentient beings who honor the elders in the family are few, 1.1
while those who don’t are many. ...”

The Second Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Raw Grain

SN 56.71

Killing Living Creatures

Pāṇātipātasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from killing living creatures are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”⁵⁵⁹

SN 56.72

Stealing

Adinnādānasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from stealing are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

559. The following series include guidelines for a mendicant’s conduct (DN 1:1.8.1).

SN 56.73

Sexual Misconduct

Kāmesumicchācārasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from sexual misconduct are few, 1.1
while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.74

Lying

Musāvādasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from lying are few, while those 1.1
who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.75

Backbiting

Pesunñasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from backbiting are few, while 1.1
those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.76

Harsh Speech

Pharusavācāsutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from harsh speech are few, while 1.1
those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.77

Nonsense

Samphappalāpasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from talking nonsense are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.78

Plants

Bījagāmasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from injuring plants and seeds are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.79

Food at the Wrong Time

Vikālabhojanasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from food at the wrong time are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.80

Fragrance and Makeup

Gandhavilepanasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from attiring and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup are few, while those who don’t refrain are many ...”

The Third Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Raw Grain

SN 56.81

Dancing and Singing

Naccagītasutta

... “... the sentient beings who refrain from seeing shows of dancing, 1.1
singing, and music are few, while those who don’t refrain are many
...”

SN 56.82

High Beds

Uccāsāyanasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from high and luxurious beds are 1.1
few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.83

Gold and Currency

Jātarūparajatasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving gold and currency are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.84

Raw Grain

Āmakadhaññasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving raw grain are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.85

Raw Meat

Āmakamaṃsasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving raw meat are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.86

Women and Girls

Kumārikasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving women and girls are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.87

Bondservants

Dāsīdāsaṣutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving male and female 1.1
bondservants are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.88

Goats and Sheep

Ajeḷakasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving goats and sheep 1.1
are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.89

Chickens and Pigs

Kukkuṭasūkarasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving chickens and pigs 1.1
are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.90

Elephants and Cows

Haṭṭhigavassasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving elephants, cows, 1.1
horses, and mares are few, while those who don’t refrain are many.
...”

The Fourth Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Raw Grain

SN 56.91

Fields and Land

Khettavatthusutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from receiving fields and land are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.92

Buying and Selling

Kayavikkayasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who refrain from buying and selling are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.93

Errands

Dūteyyasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from running errands and mes- 1.1
sages are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.94

False Weights

Tulākūṭasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from falsifying weights, metals, 1.1
or measures are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.95

Bribery

Ukkoṭanasutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from bribery, fraud, cheating, and 1.1
duplicity are few, while those who don’t refrain are many. ...”

SN 56.96–101

Mutilation, Etc.

Chedanādisutta

“... the sentient beings who refrain from mutilation, murder, abduc- 1.1
tion, banditry, plunder, and violence are few, while those who don’t
refrain are many. Why is that? It’s because they haven’t seen the four
noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, its origin, its
cessation, and the path.

That’s why you should practice meditation ...”

2.1

The Chapter of Abbreviated Texts on Five Destinations

SN 56.102

Passing Away as Humans and Reborn in Hell

Manussacutinirayasutta

- 1.8 “... the sentient beings who die as humans and are reborn as humans are few, while those who die as humans and are reborn in hell are many ...”

SN 56.103

Passing Away as Humans and Reborn as Animals

Manussacutitiracchānasutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who die as humans and are reborn as humans are few, while those who die as humans and are reborn in the animal realm are many ...”

SN 56.104

Passing Away as Humans and Reborn as Ghosts

Manussacutippetivisayasutta

“... the sentient beings who die as humans and are reborn as humans 1.1
are few, while those who die as humans and are reborn in the ghost
realm are many ...”

SN 56.105–107

Passing Away as Humans and Reborn as Gods

Manussacutidevanirayādisutta

“... the sentient beings who die as humans and are reborn as gods are 1.1
few, while those who die as humans and are reborn in hell, or the
animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.108–110

Passing Away as Gods and Reborn as Gods

Devacutinirayādisutta

“... the sentient beings who die as gods and are reborn as gods are 1.1
few, while those who die as gods and are reborn in hell, or the animal
realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.111–113

Dying as Gods and Reborn as Humans

Devamanussanirayādisutta

“... the sentient beings who die as gods and are reborn as humans 1.1
are few, while those who die as gods and are reborn in hell, or the
animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.114–116

Dying in Hell and Reborn as Humans

Nirayamanussanirayādisutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who die in hell and are reborn as humans are few, while those who die in hell and are reborn in hell, or the animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.117–119

Dying in Hell and Reborn as Gods

Nirayadevanirayādisutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who die in hell and are reborn as gods are few, while those who die in hell and are reborn in hell, or the animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.120–122

Dying as Animals and Reborn as Humans

Tiracchānamanussanirayādisutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who die as animals and are reborn as humans are few, while those who die as animals and are reborn in hell, or the animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.123–125

Dying as Animals and Reborn as Gods

Tiracchānadevanirayādisutta

- 1.1 “... the sentient beings who die as animals and are reborn as gods are few, while those who die as animals and are reborn in hell, or the animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.126–128

Dying as Ghosts and Reborn as Humans

Pettimanussanirayādisutta

“... the sentient beings who die as ghosts and are reborn as humans 1.1
are few, while those who die as ghosts and are reborn in hell, or the
animal realm, or the ghost realm are many.”

SN 56.129–130

Dying as Ghosts and Reborn as Gods

Pettidevanirayādisutta

“... the sentient beings who die as ghosts and are reborn as gods are 1.1
few, while those who die as ghosts and are reborn in hell are many.”

“... the sentient beings who die as ghosts and are reborn as gods 1.2
are few, while those who die as ghosts and are reborn in the animal
realm are many.”

SN 56.131

Dying as Ghosts and Reborn as Ghosts

Pettidevapettivisayasutta

“... the sentient beings who die as ghosts and are reborn as gods 1.1
are few, while those who die as ghosts and are reborn in the ghost
realm are many. Why is that? It’s because they haven’t seen the four
noble truths. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin
of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to
the cessation of suffering.

That’s why you should practice meditation to understand: ‘This is 2.1
suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation
of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of
suffering.’”

3.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

The Linked Discourses on the Truths, the twelfth section.

THE GREAT BOOK IS FINISHED.

THE LINKED DISCOURSES ARE COMPLETE.

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 Tipiṭaka. 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.

About SuttaCentral

SuttaCentral publishes early Buddhist texts. Since 2005 we have provided root texts in Pali, Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and other languages, parallels between these texts, and translations in many

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“Bilara” means “cat” in Pali, and it is the name of our Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) software. Bilara is a web app that enables translators to translate early Buddhist texts into their own language. These translations are published on SuttaCentral with the root text and translation side by side.

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