

The Pali Canon

Source Texts for Secular Buddhism

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Abbreviations

A	<i>Anguttara Nikaya (Numerical Discourses. Tr. Nyanaponika/Bodhi, Alta Mira, 1999)</i>
D	<i>Digha Nikaya (Long Discourses. Tr. Walshe, Wisdom, 1995)</i>
Dh	<i>Dhammapada (Tr. Fronsdal, Shambhala, 2005)</i>
M	<i>Majjhima Nikaya (Middle Length Discourses. Tr. Nanamoli/Bodhi, Wisdom, 1995)</i>
Mv	<i>Mahavagga (Vinaya Vol. IV. Tr. Horner, PTS, 1951)</i>
S	<i>Samyutta Nikaya (Connected Discourses. Tr. Bodhi, Wisdom, 2000)</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta Nipata (Group of Discourses. Tr. Norman, PTS, 2001)</i>
Ud	<i>Udana (Tr. Ireland, BPS, 1997)</i>

*After each citation, I provide the Pali Text Society page number, followed by the page number of the English translation mentioned above (unless the translation is my own). Thus **S. II, 105-6, pp. 603-4**, refers to the *Samyutta Nikaya*, section **II**, pp. **105-6** in the PTS edition of the Pali, and **pp. 603-4** in Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.*

Please note that in many cases I have abridged and adapted the citation and replaced my own terminology for that of the original translator. If you wish to quote a passage cited here, please consult the original translation on which it is based. SB

Contents

To the Kalamas	4
The City	5
The Snake	6
The Raft	6
The Ocean	7
The Elephant	8
The Arrow	9
Mara	11
The Noble Lineage	14
The Noble Quest	14
Turning the Wheel of Dhamma	15
The Mark of Not Self	18
Conditioned Arising	20
Consciousness	23
Mindfulness	26
Action	27
Self and Others	28
The Middle Way	31
Stream Entry	32
The Unconditioned	34
God	35
Miracles	37
Last Words	38

To the Kalamas

[The Kalamas:] “There are, Lord, some ascetics and brahmins who come to Kesaputta. They explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, debunk, revile and vilify the doctrines of others. But then some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesaputta, and they too explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, debunk, revile and vilify the doctrines of others. For us there is perplexity and doubt as to which of these good ascetics speak the truth and which falsehood.”

[Buddha:] “It is fitting for you to be perplexed, O Kalamas, it is fitting for you to be in doubt. Do not go by oral traditions, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reflection on reasons, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of the speaker, or because you think, ‘The ascetic is our teacher.’ But when you know for yourselves, ‘These things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practised, lead to harm and suffering,’ then you should abandon them. ... These things are wholesome, these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practised, lead to welfare and happiness, then you should engage in them.

“Kalamas, a person who is greedy, hating and deluded, overpowered by greed, hatred and delusion, his thoughts controlled by them, will destroy life, take what is not given, engage in sexual misconduct and tell lies; he will also prompt others to do likewise. Will that conduce to his harm and suffering for a long time?” - “ Yes, Lord.” ...

“Then, Kalamas, that noble disciple – devoid of covetousness, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful – dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving kindness,... compassion,... altruistic joy,... and equanimity...., likewise the second quarter, the third and the fourth.

“When, Kalamas, this noble disciple has thus made his mind free of enmity, free of ill will, uncorrupted and pure, he has won four assurances in this very life.

“The first assurance is this: ‘If there is another world, and if good and bad deeds bear fruit and yield results, it is possible that with the breakup of the body, after death, I shall arise in a good destination, in a heavenly world.’

“The second assurance is this: ‘If there is no other world, and if good and bad deeds do not bear fruit and yield results, still right here in this very life, I live happily, free of enmity and ill will.’

“The third assurance is this: ‘Suppose evil befalls the evil doer. Then, as I do not intend evil for anyone, how can suffering afflict me, one who does no evil deed?’

“The fourth assurance is this: ‘Suppose evil does not befall the evil doer. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.’” [A. III, 65, pp. 65-7]

[*AA commentary*: “both respects” = because he does no evil and because no evil will befall him. Also cf. M. 60, and M. 68]

The City

“Suppose, monks, a man wandering through a forest would see an ancient path, an ancient road travelled upon by people in the past. He would follow it and would see an ancient city, an ancient capital that had been inhabited by people in the past, with parks, groves, ponds and ramparts, a delightful place. Then the man would inform the king or a royal minister: ‘Sire, know that while wandering through the forest I saw an ancient path, an ancient road travelled upon by people in the past. I followed it and saw an ancient city, an ancient capital that had been inhabited by people in the past, with parks, groves, ponds and ramparts, a delightful place. Renovate that city, Sire!’ Then the king or royal minister would renovate the city, and some time later that city would become successful and prosperous, well populated, filled with people, attained to growth and expansion.

“So too, monks, I saw the ancient path, the ancient road travelled by the Fully Awakened Ones of the past. And what is that ancient path, that ancient road? It is just this noble eightfold path; that is: appropriate seeing, thinking, talking, acting, working, trying, recollecting, concentrating. I followed that path and by doing so I have directly known aging and death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, and conditioned arising. Having directly known them, I have explained them to the monks, the nuns, the male lay followers, and female lay followers. This good life, monks, has become successful and prosperous, extended, popular, widespread, well proclaimed among devas and humans. [S. II, 105-6, pp. 603-4.]

The Snake

“Suppose a man needing a snake, seeking a snake, wandering in search of a snake, saw a large snake and grasped its coils or its tail. It would turn back on him and bite his hand or arm or one of his limbs, and because of that he would come to death or deadly suffering. Why is that? Because of his wrong grasp of the snake. So too, here some misguided men learn the Dhamma but having learned the Dhamma, they do not examine the meaning of those teachings with intelligence, they do not gain a reflective acceptance of them. Instead, they learn the Dhamma only for the sake of criticising others and winning in debates, and they do not experience the good for the sake of which they learned the Dhamma. These teachings, being wrongly grasped by them, conduce to their harm and suffering for a long time. [M. 22, i 134, p. 227.]

The Raft

“Suppose, monks, a man in the course of a journey saw a great expanse of water, whose near shore was dangerous and fearful and whose further shore was safe and free from fear, but there was no ferryboat or bridge going to the far shore. Then he thought: ‘suppose I collect grass, twigs, branches and leaves and bind them together as a raft, and supported by the raft and making an effort with my hands and feet, I got safely across to the far shore.’ ... Having arrived at the far shore, he might think thus: ‘This raft has been very helpful to me, suppose I were to hoist it on my head or load it on my shoulder, then go wherever I want.’ Now, monks, what do you think? By doing so, would that man be doing what should be done with the raft?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“By doing what would that man be doing what should be done with the raft? Having arrived at the far shore, he might think thus: ‘This raft has been very helpful

to me, suppose I were to haul it onto the dry land or set it adrift in the water, and then go wherever I want.’ Now, monks, it is by so doing that the man would be doing what should be done with that raft. So I have shown you how the dhamma is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.

“Monks, when you know the dhamma to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even good states (*dhamma*), how much more so bad states (*adhamma*).” [M 22, i. 135, p. 228-9.]

The Ocean

“Just as the great ocean gradually shelves, slopes and inclines, and there is no sudden precipice, so also in this Dhamma and Discipline there is a gradual training, a gradual course, a gradual progression, and there is no sudden penetration to final knowledge.

“... Just as whatever great rivers there are – the Ganges, the Yamuna, the Aciravati, the Sarabhu, and the Mahi – on reaching the great ocean lose their former names and identities and are just called ‘the great ocean,’ so also those of the four castes – nobles, brahmins, merchants and workers – having gone forth from home to the homeless state in the Dhamma and Discipline, abandon their former names and identities and are just called ‘recluses, the followers of the Sakyan Son.’

“...Just as the great ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, so also this Dhamma and Discipline has one taste, the taste of liberation.” [Ud. 5.5, pp. 71-2.]

(cf. As the flowing rivers disappear into the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine Person, who is greater than the great. [*Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.8*])

The Elephant

At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi at the Jeta's Grove at Anathapindika's monastery. At that time there were a number of recluses and brahmins living around Savatthi. And they were of various views, of various opinions, of various beliefs, and they relied for their support on their various views. There were some who asserted and held this view: "The world is eternal, only this is true, and any other is false." There were some who asserted and held this view: "The world is not eternal..." "The world is finite..." "The world is infinite..." "The soul and the body are the same..." "...are different..." "After death one exists..." "After death one does not exist..." "After death one both exists and does not exist..." "After death one neither exists or does not exist..." And they lived quarrelsome, disputatious, and wrangling, wounding each other with verbal darts, saying: "Dhamma is like this, Dhamma is not like that! Dhamma is not like this, Dhamma is like that!"

[This was reported to the Buddha, who said:] "The wanderers of other sects are blind. They do not know what is beneficial and what is harmful. They do not know what is Dhamma, they do not know what is not Dhamma..."

"Formerly, monks, there was a certain king in this very Savatthi. And the king addressed a man: 'Come now, bring together all those persons in Savatthi who have been blind from birth.'

"'Yes, your majesty,' that man replied, and after detaining all the blind people in Savatthi, brought them to the king.

"'Now, my man, show the blind people an elephant.'

"'Very well, your majesty,' the man replied, and he presented an elephant to the blind people, saying, 'This, blind people, is an elephant.'

"To some of the blind people he presented the head of the elephant, saying: 'This is an elephant.' To some he presented an ear,... a tusk,... the trunk,... the body,... the leg,... the hindquarters,... the tail,... the tuft at the end of the tail, saying: 'This is an elephant.'

"Then the king approached the blind people and said: 'Tell me, blind people, what is an elephant like?'

"Those blind people who had been shown the head of the elephant replied: 'An elephant is just like a water jar...' 'just like a winnowing basket...' 'just like a

ploughshare...’ ‘just like a plough pole...’ ‘just like a storeroom...’ ‘just like a post...’ ‘just like a mortar...’ ‘just like a pestle...’ ‘just like a broom.’

“Saying ‘An elephant is like this, an elephant is not like that!’ ‘An elephant is not like this, an elephant is like that!’ they fought each other with their fists. And the king was delighted (with the spectacle.)”

[Ud. 6.4, pp. 86-8.]

The Arrow

[Malunkyaputta:] “The Buddha does not declare these to me, and I do not approve of and accept the fact that he does not declares these to me. Only if he declares to me either ‘the world is eternal’ or ‘the world is not eternal’ etc, then I will lead the spiritual life under him. If he does not, then I will abandon the training.”

[Buddha:] “Suppose, Malunkyaputta, a man were wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends brought a surgeon to treat him. The man would say: ‘I will not let the surgeon pull out this arrow until I know the name and clan of the man who wounded me; until I know whether the man who wounded me was tall or short or of medium height; until I know whether the man who wounded me was dark or brown or golden skinned; until I know whether the man who wounded me lives in such a village or town or city; until I know whether the bow that wounded me was a long bow or a crossbow; until I know whether the bowstring that wounded me was fibre or reed or sinew or hemp or bark; until I know whether the shaft that wounded me was wild or cultivated; until I know with what kind of feathers the shaft that wounded me was fitted – whether those of a vulture or a crow or a hawk or a peacock or a stork; until I know what kind of arrow it was that wounded me – whether it was hoof-tipped or curved or barbed or calf-toothed or oleander.

“All this would still not be known to that man and meanwhile he would die. So, too, Malunkyaputta, if anyone should say: ‘I will not lead the spiritual life under the Buddha until the Buddha declares to me, ‘the world is eternal’ etc., that would still remain undeclared by the Buddha and meanwhile that person would die.

“Malunkyaputta, if there is the view ‘the world is eternal’ etc, the spiritual life cannot be lived. Whether there is the view ‘the world is eternal’ etc., there is birth, there is ageing, there is death, there are sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, the destruction of which I prescribe here and now.

“Therefore, Malunkyaputta, remember what I have left undeclared as undeclared, and remember what I have declared as declared.

“And what have I declared? ‘This is suffering’ – I have declared. ‘This is the origin of suffering – I have declared. ‘This is the cessation of suffering – I have declared. This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering – I have declared.

“Why have I declared that? Because it is beneficial, it belongs to the fundamentals of the spiritual life, it leads to disengagement, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nibbana. That is why I have declared it.” [M 63 i 426-32, pp. 533-6.]

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“Then the [aged] Ven. Malunkyaputta approached the Buddha and said to him: ‘Venerable Sir, it would be good if the Buddha would teach me the Dhamma in brief, so that I might dwell alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent and resolute.’

“Here, Malunkyaputta, regarding things seen, heard, sensed, and cognized by you: in the seen there will be merely the seen; in the heard there will be merely the heard; in the sensed there will be merely the sensed; in the cognized there will be merely the cognized.

“...then, Malunkyaputta, you will not be ‘of that’. When you are not ‘of that’ then you will not be ‘in that’. When you are not ‘in that’, then you will be neither here nor hereafter nor in between the two. This is the end of suffering.” [S. IV, 73, pp. 1175-6. Cf. Ud. 1, 10, pp. 21-2.]

Mara

“[425] While I was meditating for the attainment of rest-from-exertion, with my self intent upon striving, near the river Neranjara, having made a great effort [426] Namuci approached me, uttering compassionate words: ‘You are thin, of bad complexion; death is near you. [427] [There are] one thousand parts of death; [only] one part of you is life. Live, sir, life is better. If you live, you will perform merits. [428] Much merit will be heaped up by you practising the holy life and sacrificing the aggihutta [sacrifice]. What do you want with striving? [429] The road to striving is hard to travel, hard to perform, hard to achieve.’” Saying these verses, Mara stood near the Buddha.

[430] He said this to that Mara, who had spoken thus: “Kinsman of the negligent, evil one, you have come here for your own purpose. [431] I do not have the slightest need of merit, but Mara ought to speak to those who have need of merits. [432] There is faith, and energy, and wisdom is found in me. Why do you ask me about life even though my self is thus intent [upon striving]? [433] This wind would dry up even the streams of the rivers; and why should my blood not be dried up when my self is intent [upon striving]? [434] When my blood is being dried up, then the bile and phlegm are dried up. When the flesh wastes away, the mind becomes clearer, and all the more my mindfulness and wisdom and concentration stand [firm].

[435] While I dwell thus, having reached the highest sensation, my mind has no regard from sensual pleasures. See a being’s pure state. [436] Sensual pleasures are your first army; discontent is called your second; your third is hunger and thirst; the fourth is called craving. [437] Sloth and torpor are your fifth; the sixth is called fear; your seventh is doubt; hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth. [438] Gain, renown, honour, and whatever fame is falsely received, and whoever both extols

himself and disparages others, [439] that is your army, Namuci, that is the striking force of Kanha. One who is not a hero cannot conquer it, but having conquered it one obtains happiness.

[440] Should I wear munja grass? Woe upon life here. Death in battle is better for me than that I should be conquered and live. [441] Plunged into this battle some ascetics and brahmins are not seen, and they do not know the road by which those with good vows go. [442] Seeing this army arrayed all around, and Mara with his elephant, I shall go forth into battle. May he not move me from my place. [443] That army of yours which the world together with the devas cannot overcome, that I will break with wisdom, as if [breaking] an unfired pot with a stone. [444] Having brought my thoughts under control, and making my mindfulness well established, I shall wander from kingdom to kingdom, training many disciples. [445] They, vigilant, and with selves intent, performers of my teaching, will go despite you, where having gone they will not grieve.”

[Mara:] [446] “For seven years I have followed the Buddha step by step. I have not obtained an opportunity against the fully awakened one who possesses mindfulness. [447] A bird circled a stone which looked like fat, thinking ‘Perhaps we shall find something soft here; perhaps there may be something sweet.’ [448] Not finding anything sweet, the bird went away from there. Like a crow attacking a rock and becoming despondent, we attacking Gotama and becoming despondent, will go away.”

[449] The vina fell from the armpit of that one overcome by grief. Then that discouraged yakkha disappeared on that very spot.

[Sn. 425-49, “The Striving,” pp. 51-3.]

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At Savatthi. Now on that occasion the Buddha was instructing the monks with a Dhamma talk concerning Nibbana....

Then it occurred to Mara the Evil One: “This ascetic Gotama is instructing the monks, let me approach Gotama in order to confound them.” Then Mara manifested

himself in the form of a farmer, carrying a large plough on his shoulder, holding a long goad stick, his hair dishevelled, wearing hempen garments, his feet smeared with mud. He approached the Buddha and said: “Maybe you’ve seen my oxen, ascetic?”

“What are oxen to you, Mara?”

“The eye is mine ascetic, forms are mine, eye-contact and its base of consciousness are mine. ... The ear is mine, ascetic,... [etc. for the six senses]. Where can you go to escape from me?”

“The eye is yours, Mara, forms are yours, eye-contact and its base of consciousness are yours. But, Evil One, where there is no eye, no forms, no eye-contact and its base of consciousness..., no ear etc.... – there is no place for you there, Evil One.”

[Mara:] “That of which they say ‘it’s mine,’
 And those who speak in terms of ‘mine’ –
 If your mind exists among these,
 You won’t escape me, ascetic.’

[Buddha:] “That which they speak of is not mine,
 I’m not one of those who speak [of mine].
 You should know thus, O Evil One,
 Even my path you will not see.”

Then Mara the Evil One ... disappeared right there.

[S. I, 114-6, pp. 208-9.]

The Noble Lineage

“There are, monks, these four noble lineages.... What four?

“Here, monks, a monk is content with any kind of robe, and he speaks in praise of contentment with any kind of robe, and he does not engage in a wrong search, in what is improper, for the sake of a robe. If he does not get a robe he is not agitated, and if he gets one he uses it without being tied to it, uninfatuated with it, not blindly absorbed in it, seeing the danger in it, understanding the escape. Yet, because of this, he does not extol himself or disparage others. Any monk who is skilled in this, energetic, clearly comprehending and mindful, is said to be standing in an ancient, pristine, noble lineage.

“Further, monks, a monk is content with any kind of almsfood, with any kind of lodging,... (as above)

“Further, monks, a monk finds delight in cultivation (*bhavana*), is delighted with cultivation, find delight in letting go, is delighted with letting go. Yet, because of this, he does not extol himself or disparage others. Any monk who is skilled in this, energetic, clearly comprehending and mindful, is said to be standing in an ancient, pristine, noble lineage.”

“When, monks, a monk stands in these four noble lineages, if he dwells in the east, the west, the north or the south, he vanquishes discontent, discontent does not vanquish him. For what reason? Because the steadfast one is called ‘he who vanquishes discontent.’” [A. IV. 28, pp. 84-5]

The Noble Quest

Seeing that dwelling in a house is a constriction, a place of dust, and that going-forth is an open-air life, he went forth. [Sn. 406, p. 50]

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“I considered: ‘This dhamma I have reached is deep, hard to see, difficult to awaken to, quiet and excellent, not confined by thought, subtle, sensed by the wise. But people love their place [*alaya*]: they delight and revel in their place. It is hard for people who love, delight and revel in their place to see this ground [*idam tthanam*]: the this-conditioned [*ida paccayata*], conditioned arising [*paticcasamuppada*]. And also hard to see this ground: the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all bases, the fading away of craving, desirelessness, stopping, nibbana. Were I to teach the dhamma and others were not to understand me, that would be tiring and vexing for me.

“Why should I now reveal what I reached with difficulty?

This dhamma is not easily awoken to by those in thrall to desire and hate.

Those dyed by desire, covered by a mass of darkness,

Will not see what goes against the stream, subtle, deep, hard to see and fine.

“On thinking this over, monks, my mind inclined to inaction, not to teaching the dhamma...” [M. 26, i 167-8, p. 260, tr. SB]

Turning the Wheel of Dhamma

This is what I heard. He was staying at Baranasi in the Deer Park at Isipatana. He addressed the group of five:

“One gone forth does not pursue two dead ends. Which two? Infatuation, which is vulgar, uncivilised and meaningless. And mortification, which is painful, uncivilised and meaningless.

“I have awoken to a middle path that does not lead to dead ends. It is a path that generates vision and awareness. It leads to tranquillity, insight, awakening and

release. It has eight branches: appropriate seeing, thinking, talking, acting, working, trying, recollecting, concentrating.

“This is suffering: birth is painful, ageing is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, encountering what is not dear is painful, separation from what is dear is painful, not getting what one wants is painful. This psycho-physical condition is painful.

“This is craving: it is repetitive, it wallows in attachment and greed, obsessively indulging in this and that: craving for stimulation, craving for existence, craving for non-existence.

“This is cessation: the traceless fading away and cessation of that craving, the letting go and abandoning of it, freedom and independence from it.

“And this is the path: the path with eight branches: appropriate seeing, thinking, talking, acting, working, trying, recollecting, concentrating.

“‘Such is suffering. It can be fully known. It has been fully known.’

“‘Such is craving. It can be let go of. It has been let go of.’

“‘Such is cessation. It can be experienced. It has been experienced.’

“‘Such is the path. It can be cultivated. It has been cultivated.’

“There arose in me illumination about things previously unknown.

“As long as my knowledge and vision was not entirely clear about the twelve aspects of these four noble truths, I did not claim to have had a peerless awakening in this world with its humans and celestials, its gods and devils, its ascetics and priests. Only when my knowledge and vision was clear in all these ways, did I claim to have had such awakening.

““The freedom of my mind is unshakable. There will be no more repetitive existence.””

This is what he said. Inspired, the five delighted in his words. While he was speaking, the dispassionate, stainless dhamma eye arose in Kondanna: “Whatever has started can stop.” [Mv. I, 6.16-28, pp. 15-7. Cf. S. V, 420-4, pp. 1843-6, tr. SB]

[*Note: 12 ways = recognition (1), performance (2) and accomplishment (3) of each of the four truths = 12.*]

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“Whoever in the past, the present or the future becomes fully awakened to things does so by becoming fully awakened to the four noble truths” [S. V, 416, p. 1840.].

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“This is suffering, this is craving, this is cessation, this is the path: [in each truth] there are innumerable nuances, innumerable details, innumerable implications” [S. V, 430, p. 1851.]

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“I do not say that the breakthrough to the four noble truths is accompanied by suffering or displeasure. It is accompanied only by happiness and joy.” [S. V, 441, p. 1860.]

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The Buddha compares a person who has not grasped the import of the four truths to “a tuft of cotton wool or kapok,” which is blown hither and thither by the wind. Lacking direction and purpose, such a fickle person is prone “to look up at the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking: ‘This worthy one is surely one who knows, who really sees!’” Yet one who has understood the four truths is compared to “a stone

column sixteen feet high, half of which is sunk in the ground and half of which stands above it.” For no matter how hard the winds blow, such a person does not “shake, quake or tremble” and has no inclination to go seeking wisdom at the feet of every passing guru.

[S. V, 443-6, 1862-4.]

The Mark of Not Self

Again He addressed the group of five monks:

“The body is not self. If it were, it would not get sick. You could tell your body: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’ But because the body is not self, it does get sick. You cannot tell it: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’

“Feelings are not self. If they were, they would not torment you. You could tell your feelings: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’ But because they are not self, they do torment you. You cannot tell them: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’

“Perceptions are not self. If they were, they would not trouble you. You could tell your perceptions: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’ But because they are not self, they do trouble you. You cannot tell them: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’

“Inclinations are not self. If they were, they would not distress you. You could tell your impulses: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’ But because they are not self, they do distress you. You cannot tell them: ‘be like this, don’t be like that.’

“Consciousness is not self. If it were, it would not disturb you. You could tell your consciousness: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’ But because it is not self, it does disturb you. You cannot tell it: ‘be like this’ or ‘don’t be like that.’

“What do you think, monks? Are your body, feelings, perceptions, inclinations and consciousness permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, sir.”

“Does what is impermanent give rise to happiness or suffering?”

“Suffering, sir.”

“Is it right to think of something impermanent and fickle, that gives rise to suffering as: ‘This is mine. I am this. This is my self?’”

“No, sir.”

“Therefore, monks, whether it be a past, present or future body, one’s own or someone else’s body, a gross or subtle body, an inferior or superior body, a distant or close body: each body should be seen with true intelligence, as it really is: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not my self.’

“And so it is with any feeling, perception, inclination or consciousness. Each should be seen with true intelligence, as it really is: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not my self.’

“Seeing things this way, the attentive noble disciple disengages from the body, feelings, perceptions, inclinations, and consciousness. Disengaging, he becomes dispassionate; through dispassion he is freed; he knows: ‘I am free.’ He understands: ‘birth is overcome; the good life has been lived; what is to be done has been done; there will be no more of this again.’”

This is what He said. Inspired, the five monks delighted in His words. And while this discourse was being spoken, through non-clinging the minds of the group of five monks were freed from influences. At that moment there were six arahants in the world. [Mv. I, 6.37-46, pp. 20-1. Tr. SB]

Conditioned Arising

[Sariputta:] “Now this has been said by Him: ‘One who sees conditioned arising sees the Dhamma; and one who sees the Dhamma, sees conditioned arising.’” [M. 28, i. 191, p. 283.]

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“Enough, Vakali! Why do you want to see this foul body? One who sees the Dhamma sees me; one who sees me sees the Dhamma.” [S. III, 120, p. 939.]

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“Let be the past, Udayin, let be the future. I shall teach you the Dhamma: when this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.” [M. 79, ii 32, p. 655.]

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“This conditioned arising is profound and appears profound. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this dhamma that people have become like tangled balls of string, covered with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, ill destiny, ruin and repetition.” [D. 15, ii 55, p. 223.]

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862. Whence arise quarrels, disputes, lamentations and grief, together with avarice also, pride and arrogance, together with slander too? Whence do these arise? Tell me this, pray.

863. “From [what is] dear arise quarrels, disputes, lamentations and grief, together with avarice also, pride and arrogance, together with slander too. Quarrels [and]

disputes are joined with avarice, and there are slanders too, when disputes have arisen.”

864. Where do [things which are] dear have their origin in the world, and whatever greed exists in the world? And where do hope and fulfilment [of hope], which a man has for the future, have their origin?

865. “[Things which are] dear in the world have desire [*chanda*] as their origin and whatever greed [*lobha*] exists in the world. And hope and fulfilment [of hope], which a man has for the future, [also] have their origin in this.”

866. Where does desire have its origin in the world, and whence do decisions arise, [and] anger, and lie-telling and doubt, and also whatever mental states are spoken of by the ascetic?

867. “Desire arises from dependence upon what they call ‘pleasant’ and ‘unpleasant’ in the world. Seeing non-existence and existence in forms, a person makes his decision in the world. 868. “Anger and lie-telling and doubt, and those mental states too [come into existence] when this very pair [pleasant and unpleasant] exist. A doubtful man should train himself in the path of knowledge. The ascetic spoke about mental states from knowledge.”

869. Where do the pleasant and unpleasant have their origin? When what is non-existent do they not come into being? That thing which is “non-existence” and “existence” too, tell me where it has its origin.

870. “The pleasant and the unpleasant have their origin in contact. When contact does not exist, they do not exist. That thing which is ‘non-existence’ and ‘existence’ too, I tell you that this also has its origin in this.”

871. Where does contact have its origin in the world, and whence do possessions too arise? When what does not exist does possessiveness not exist? When what has disappeared do contacts not make contact?

872. “Contacts are dependent upon name and form. Possessions have their origin in greed. When greed does not exist, possessiveness does not exist. When form has disappeared, contacts do not make contact.”

873. For one attained to what state does form disappear? How does happiness or misery disappear also? Tell me, how it disappears. My intention is that we should know this.

874. “He has no [ordinary] perception of perceptions, he has no deranged perception of perceptions, he is not without perception, he has no perception of what has disappeared. For one who has attained to such a state form disappears, for that which is named ‘proliferation’ (*papanca*) has its origin in perception.” [Sn. 862-74, pp. 113-5.]

[This passage suggests 6 links of conditioned arising: 1. name and form; 2. contact; 3. “pleasant” and “unpleasant”; 4. desire/anger/lying/doubt; 5. things which are dear/greed; 6. quarrels, disputes, lamentation etc.]

*

“But, venerable sir, what is the teaching that the Buddha asserts whereby one does not quarrel with anyone in the world? And how is it that perceptions no more underlie that brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, without perplexity, shorn of worry, free from craving for any kind of being?”

[Buddha:] “Monks, as to the source through which perceptions and notions tinged by proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendencies to greed, aversion, views, doubt, conceit, desire for being, and ignorance. This is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malice, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.”

[Mahakaccana:] “Friends, dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What

one feels, that one perceives. What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates. With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions tinged by proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye.” [M. 18, i. 109-12, pp. 202-3.]

Consciousness

[Sati the Fisherman’s son:] “As I understand the dhamma as taught by the Buddha, it is this same consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of rebirths, not another.”

[Buddha:] “What is that consciousness, Sati?”

[Sati:] “It is that which speaks and feels and experiences here and there as the result of good and bad actions.”

[Buddha:] “Misguided man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the dhamma in that way? Misguided man, in many discourses have I not stated consciousness to arise upon conditions, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness?...

“Monks, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye consciousness, etc.... Just as fire is reckoned by the particular condition dependent on which it burns – when fire depends on logs, it is reckoned as a log fire, etc.” [M. 38, i 258-9, pp. 350-1.]

*

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does consciousness come to be? By what is consciousness conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is name-and-form, consciousness comes to be; consciousness has name-and-form as its condition.

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘This consciousness turns back; it does not go further back than name-and-form. It is to this extent that one may be born and age and die, pass away and be reborn, that is, when there is consciousness with name-and-form as its condition, and name-and-form with consciousness as its condition....’ [S. II, 104, p. 602. Cf. D. ii 32, p. 211.]

[NB: in this version of the links of conditioned arising, there are only ten links: the first two links, ignorance and kamma, are not mentioned.]

*

“Well then, friend, I will make up a simile for you... Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with name-and-form as condition, consciousness [comes to be]; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form [come to be]...” [S. II, 114, pp. 608-9.]

*

“And what, monks, is name-and-form? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, attention: this is called name. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements: this is called form. Thus this name and form are together called name-and-form.

“And what, monks, is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness.” [S. II, 3-4, p. 535.]

*

(All this was then undifferentiated. It got differentiated by name and form, so that one could say: “He is so and so, and has such and such a form.” Therefore, at present also all beings are differentiated by name and form, so that one can say: “He is so and so, and has such and such a form.” [*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.7*])

As the flowing rivers disappear into the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine Person, who is greater than the great. [*Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.8*])

*

[Mahakotthita:] “Consciousness, consciousness,” is said, friend. With reference to what is “consciousness” said?”

[Sariputta:] “It knows, it knows [*vijaanaati, vijaanaati*],” friend, that is why “consciousness” is said. What does it know? It knows: “[This is] pleasant”; it knows

“[This is] painful”, it knows: “[This is] neither pleasant nor painful.” “It knows, it knows,” friend, that is why “consciousness” is said.’

[Mahakotthita:] ‘Intelligence and consciousness, friend – are these states conjoined or disjoined? And is it possible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe the difference between them?’

[Sariputta:] ‘Intelligence and consciousness, friend – these states are conjoined not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe the difference between them. For what one intelligently understands, that one knows, and what one knows, that one intelligently understands. ...

‘The difference, friend, between intelligence and consciousness, these states that are conjoined, not disjoined, is this: intelligence is to be cultivated, consciousness is to be fully known.’

[Mahakotthita:] “‘Feeling, feeling,” is said, friend. With reference to what is “feeling” said?’

[Sariputta:] “‘It feels, it feels,” friend; that is why “feeling” is said. What does it feel? It feels pleasure, it feels pain, it feels neither pain nor pleasure.’

[Mahakotthita:] “‘Perception, perception,’ is said, friend. With reference to what is ‘perception’ said?’”

[Sariputta:] “‘It perceives, it perceives,’ friend; that is why ‘perception’ is said. And what does it perceive? It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, and it perceives white. ‘It perceives, it perceives,’ friend; that is why ‘perception’ is said.

“Feeling, perception, and consciousness, friend – these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them. For what one feels, that one perceives; and what one perceives, that one knows. That is why these states are conjoined not disjoined...” [M. 43, i.292-3, pp. 388-9]

Mindfulness

“What is the power of mindfulness? Here, monks, a noble disciple is mindful; he is equipped with the keenest mindfulness and circumspection; he remembers well and keeps in mind what has been said and done long ago.” [A. V, 14, p. 129]

*

“Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of nibbana – namely, the four groundings of recollection.

“A monk abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings,... mind as mind,... dhamma as dhamma.

“And how, monks, does a monk abide contemplating the body as body? Here, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he understands: ‘I breathe in long’; or breathing out long, he understands: ‘I breathe out long.’

“Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: ‘I make a long turn;’ ...

“Again, monks, a monk is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent....

“Just as a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at a crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a monk reviews this same body as consisting of elements... [M 10, i 55-8, pp. 145-8.]

The four groundings: Body, Feelings, Mind, Dhamma. Dhamma = five hindrances, five aggregates, six sense bases, seven factors of awakening (mindfulness, investigation, energy, delight, tranquillity, concentration, equanimity), four noble truths.

Action

“It is intention (*cetana*), monks, that I declare to be action (*kamma*). Having willed, one performs an action of body, speech or mind.” [A. VI, 63, p. 173]

*

[Moliyasivaka:] “Master Gotama, there are some ascetics and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by what was done in the past.’ What does Master Gotama say about this?”

[Buddha:] “Some feelings, Sivaka, arise here originating from bile disorders: that some feelings arise here originating from bile disorders one can know for oneself, and that is considered to be true in the world. Now when those ascetics and brahmins hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by what was done in the past,’ they overshoot what one knows by oneself and they overshoot what is considered to be true in the world. Therefore I say that this is wrong on the part of those ascetics and brahmins.

“Some feelings, Sivaka, arise here originating from phlegm disorders ... from wind disorders ... from an imbalance [of the three ... produced by change of climate ... produced by careless behaviour ... caused by assault ... produced as the result of kamma: how some feelings arise here originating from bile disorders one can know for oneself, and that is considered to be true in the world. Now when those ascetics and brahmins hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by

what was done in the past,' they overshoot what one knows by oneself and they overshoot what is considered to be true in the world. Therefore I say that this is wrong on the part of those ascetics and brahmins..." [S. IV, 229-31, pp. 1278-9.]

*

By action is one a farmer, by action a craftsman,
By action is one a merchant, by action a servant,
By action is one a thief, by action a soldier,
By action is one a priest, by action a ruler,
In this way the wise see action as it really is,
Seeing conditioned arising, understanding result of action.

[Sn. 651-3, p. 84. Tr. Nanavira Thera]

Self and Others

Just as a farmer irrigates his field,
Just as a fletcher fashions an arrow,
Just as a carpenter shapes a piece of wood,
So the sage tames the self.

[Dhp. 80, tr. SB]

*

At Savatthi. Now on that occasion King Pasenadi of Kosala had gone together with Queen Mallika to the upper terrace of the palace. The king said to the queen: "Is there, Mallika, anyone more dear to you than yourself?"

"There is no one, great king, more dear to me than myself. But is there anyone, great king, more dear to you than yourself?"

"For me too, Mallika, there is no one more dear than myself."

Then King Pasenadi descended from the palace and approached the Buddha, and related to him the conversation with Queen Mallika. Then the Buddha recited this verse:

“Having traversed all quarters with the mind,
One finds none anywhere dearer than oneself.
Likewise, each person holds himself most dear;
Hence one who loves himself should not harm others.”

[S. I, 75, pp. 170-1.]

*

“As I [am], so [are] these; as [are] these, so [am] I.” Comparing himself [with others], he should not kill or cause to kill. [Sn. 705, p. 92.]

*

Now at that time a certain monk was suffering from dysentery; he lay fallen in his own excrements. Then the Buddha, as he was touring the lodgings with his attendant Ananda, approached that monk’s dwelling place, and spoke to that monk:

“What is your disease, monk?”

“Lord, I have dysentery.”

“But have you no one to tend you?”

“No, Lord.”

“Why do the monks not tend to you?”

“I, Lord, am of no use to the monks, therefore the monks do not tend to me.”

Then the Buddha addressed the Ven. Ananda: “Go Ananda, bring water, we will bathe this monk.”

The Buddha sprinkled on the water, and the Ven. Ananda washed him over; the Buddha took him by the head, the Ven. Ananda by the feet, and having raised him up, they laid him down on a couch.

Then the Buddha had the monks convened, and asked:

“Why are you not attending to your sick brother, monks?”

“Lord, this monk is of no use to the monks, therefore the monks do not tend to him.”

“Monks, you have not a father, you have not a mother who might tend you. If you, monks, do not tend to each other, then who is there who will tend to you? Whoever, monks, would tend to me, he should tend to the sick.”

[Mv. 26, 1-3, pp. 431-2.]

["For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came to me." Matt. 25: 35-6.]

*

“One should know what it is to extol and what it is to disparage, and, knowing both, one should neither extol nor disparage but should teach only the Dhamma. One should know how to define pleasure, and, knowing that, one should pursue pleasure within oneself. One should not utter covert speech, and one should not utter overt sharp speech. One should speak unhurriedly, not hurriedly. One should not insist on local language, and one should not override normal usage. This is the summary of the exposition of non-conflict.” [M. 139, iii 230, p. 1080.]

*

“Wander forth, monks, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans. And let not two of you go the same way.” [S. I, 105, p. 198.]

The Middle Way

“What has been attained and what is still to be attained – both these are littered with dust for a frail person ... Those who hold training as the essence, or who hold virtue and vow, pure livelihood, celibacy, and service as the essence – this is one dead end. And those with such theories and such views as “There is no fault in sensual desires” – this is the second dead end. Both these dead ends cause the cemeteries to grow, and the cemeteries cause wrong views to grow. By not penetrating these two dead ends some hold back and some go too far. But for those who penetrated them, and were no more found among them, and who did not conceive on this account, there is no round for the manifestation of them.” [Ud. 6.8, p. 92.]

*

[Vacchagotta:] “How is it, Master Gotama, is there a self?”

The Buddha remained silent.

[Vacchagotta:] “Then how is it, Master Gotama, is there no self?”

The Buddha again remained silent.

Vacchagotta got up from his seat and went away.

The Buddha turned to his attendant Ananda and said: “If I had answered, ‘there is a self,’ this would have been siding with those who are eternalists ... and if I had answered, ‘there is no self,’ that would have been siding with those who are nihilists....” [S. IV, 400-1, pp. 1393-4]

*

[Kaccanagotta:] “Venerable Sir, it is said, ‘appropriate seeing, appropriate seeing.’ In what way is there appropriate seeing?”

[Buddha:] “This world, Kaccana, for the most part depends upon a duality – upon the notion of existence and the notion of non-existence. But for one who sees the origin of the world as it is with correct intelligence, there is no notion of non-existence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it is with correct intelligence, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world. ...

“‘All exists’: Kaccana, this is one dead end. ‘All does not exist’” this is another dead end. Without veering towards either of these dead ends, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the middle...” [S. II, 17, p. 544]

*

This humankind is attached to self-production

Or holds to other-production.

Those who have not understood this

Have not seen it as a dart.

But one who sees
Having drawn out the dart,
Does not think, “I am the agent,”
Nor does he think, “Another is the agent.” [Ud. 6.6, p. 91.]

Stream Entry

“Monks, a noble disciple who possesses four things is a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with awakening as his destination.

“What four? Here, monks, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the the Buddha thus: He is an arahant, completely awakened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Awakened One.

“He possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma thus: The dhamma is well expounded by the Buddha, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.

“He possesses confirmed confidence in the Sangha thus: The sangha of the Buddha’s disciples is practising the ... true way; that is the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals ...

“He possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones – unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unmottled, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration. [S. V, 343, p. 1789.]

*

“Sariputta, this is said: ‘The stream, the stream.’ What now, Sariputta, is the stream?”

“This noble eightfold path, venerable sir, is the stream: that is appropriate seeing etc.”

...”Sariputta, this is said: ‘A stream-enterer, a stream-enterer.’ What now, Sariputta, is a stream enterer?”

“One who possesses this noble eightfold path, venerable sir, is called a stream enterer...” [S. V, 347-8, pp. 1792-3]

*

At the same time as his attainment of insight, three things become abandoned: the view of individuality, and doubt, and whatever rules of virtuous conduct and vows (*silabbata not silabbata paramasa*) there may be. He is also completely released from the four bad transitions and [is] not capable of committing the six great crimes. [Sn. 231, p. 29.]

*

There are not only one hundred, or five hundred, but far more men and women lay followers, my disciples, clothed in white, enjoying sensual pleasures, who carry out my instruction, respond to my advice, have gone beyond doubt, become free from perplexity, gained intrepidity and become independent of others in my teaching. [M. 73, i. 491, pp. 596-7.]

*

Now on that occasion Sarakani the Sakyian had died, and the Buddha had declared him to be a stream enterer, no longer bound to the nether world. Thereupon a number of Sakiyans deplored this, saying: “It is wonderful indeed, sir! Now who won’t be a stream-enterer when the Buddha has declared Sarakani to be a stream enterer? Sarakani the Sakiyan was too weak for the training; he drank intoxicating drink!

[When this was reported to the Buddha, he said:] “If one speaking rightly were to say of anyone: ‘He was a lay follower, who had gone for refuge over a long time to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha,’ it is of Sarakani the Sakiyan that one could rightly say this....So how could he go to the nether world?” [S. V, 375, pp. 1811.]

*

“Those who understand clearly the noble truths well taught by the one of deep wisdom, even though they are very negligent [*pamada*], will not take an eighth existence. This outstanding jewel too is in the Sangha; by this truth may there be well-being.” [Sn, v. 230, p. 29.]

The Unconditioned

“There is, monks, an unborn, an unbrought-to-being, an unmade, an unconditioned. If, monks, there were no unborn, unbrought-to-being, unmade, unconditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned. But since there is an unborn, an unbrought-to-being, an unmade, an unconditioned, therefore an escape is discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned.” [Ud. 8.3, p. 103.]

*

“There are, monks, three conditioned marks of the conditioned. What three? Its origination is discerned, its vanishing is discerned, its change while persisting is discerned. These are the three conditioned marks of the conditioned.

“There are, monks, three unconditioned marks of the unconditioned. What three? No origination is discerned, no vanishing is discerned, no change while persisting is discerned. These are the three unconditioned marks of the unconditioned.” [A. III, 47, p. 55.]

*

“At Savatthi. ‘Monks, I will teach you the unconditioned and the path leading to the unconditioned. Listen to that...

“And what, monks, is the unconditioned? The destruction of greed, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion: this is called the unconditioned.

“And what, monks, is the path leading to the unconditioned? Mindfulness directed to the body: this is called the path leading to the unconditioned...” [S. IV, 359, p. 1372]

*

“When, brahmin, a person is impassioned by greed, depraved by hatred, bewildered through delusion, overwhelmed and infatuated by delusion, then he plans for his own harm, for the harm of others, for the harm of both; and he experiences in his mind suffering and grief. But when greed, hatred and delusion have been abandoned, he neither plans for his own harm, nor for the harm of others, nor for the harm of both; and he does not experience in his mind suffering and grief. In this way, brahmin, nibbana is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, worthy of application, to be personally experienced by the wise.” [A. III, 55, p. 57.]

*

God

“The young brahmin Vasettha said: ‘This is the only straight path, this is the direct path, the path of salvation that leads one who follows it to union with Brahma, as is taught by brahmin Pokkharasati!...

“‘But, Vasettha, is there then a single one of these brahmins learned in the three Vedas who has seen Brahma face to face?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’

“‘Well, Vasettha, when these brahmins learned in the Three Vedas teach a path that they do not know or see, saying: “This is the only straight path...”, this cannot possibly be right. Just as a file of blind men go on, clinging to each other, and the first one sees nothing, the middle one sees nothing, and the last one sees nothing – so it is with the talk of these brahmins learned in the Three Vedas.... The talk of these brahmins turns out to be laughable, mere words, empty and vain.’

“‘Vasettha, it is just as if a man were to say: “I am going to seek out and love the most beautiful girl in the country.” They might say to him: “...Do you know what caste she belongs to?” “No.” “Do you know her name, her clan, whether she is short or tall, dark or light-complexioned, or where she comes from?” “No.” And they might say: “Well then, you don’t know or see the one you seek for and desire?” and he would say: “No.” Does not the talk of that man turn out to be stupid?’

“‘Vasettha, it is just as if a man were to build a staircase for a palace at a crossroads. People might say: “This staircase – do you know whether the palace will face east or west, north or south, or whether it will be high, low or of medium height?” and he would say: “No.” And they might say: “Well then, you don’t know or see what kind of a palace you are building a staircase for?” and he would say: “No.” Does not the talk of that man turn out to be stupid?’

“‘Vasettha, it is just as if this River Aciravati were brimful of water and a man should come along wishing to cross over, to get to the other side, and, standing on this bank, were to call out: “Come here, other bank, come here!” What do you think, Vasettha? Would the other bank of the River Aciravati come over to this side on account of that man’s calling, begging, requesting or wheedling?’ [D. 13, i 235-244, pp. 187-90.]

*

“Well, Udayin, what is taught in your teacher’s doctrine?’ ‘It is taught in our teacher’s doctrine: “This is the perfect splendour (*upamo vanno*), this is the perfect splendour!”

“But, Udayin, what is that perfect splendour?’

“Venerable sir, that splendour is the perfect splendour which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime!”

“But, Udayin, what is that perfect splendour which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime?’

“Venerable, sir, that splendour is the perfect splendour which is unsurpassed by any other splendour higher or more sublime!”

“Udayin, you might continue for a long time in this way. [M 79, ii 32-5, pp. 656-8.]

*

‘His form is not to be seen, no one beholds him with the eye. He gets revealed by controlling the heart, the intellect, the mind. Those who know this, are immortal.

‘He [the Self] cannot be reached by speech, by mind, or by the eye. How can it be apprehended except by him who says: “He is.”’

[*Katha Upanishad*. 2.3. 9-12]

Miracles

He was living at Vesali in the grove outside the city to the west.

Now, on that occasion Sunakkhatta, son of the Licchavis, had recently left this dhamma and discipline. He was making this statement before the Vesali assembly:

“The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a dhamma hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of enquiry as it occurs to him, and when he teaches the dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practises it to the complete destruction of suffering.” ...

“Sariputta, the misguided man Sunakkhatta is angry and his words are spoken out of anger. Thinking to discredit me, he actually praises me; for it is praise to say of me: ‘When he teaches the dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practises it to the complete destruction of suffering.’” [M. 12, i. 69, p. 164.]

*

“There are three kinds of miracles, Brahmin. What three? The miracle of supernormal powers, the miracle of thought-reading, and the miracle of instruction.... These, brahmin, are the three kinds of miracles. Of these three, which appeals to you as the most excellent and sublime?”

“As to the miracles of supernormal power and thought-reading, only one who performs them will experience their outcome; they belong only to the one who performs them. These two miracles, Master Gotama, appear to me as having the nature of a conjuror’s trick. But as to the miracle of instruction – this, Master Gotama, appeals to me as the most excellent and sublime among these three.”

“Indeed, brahmin, you have spoken strikingly benefitting words....” [A. III, 60, p. 60]

[In both passages above, the respective texts frame these paragraphs with insistent and copious affirmations that nonetheless the Buddha possesses miraculous powers etc.]

Last Words

“Ananda, it may be that you will think: ‘The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher.’ It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and the rule will, at my passing, be your teacher.” [D. 16, ii 154, pp. 269-70.]

“But, Ananda, what does the order of monks expect of me? I have taught the Dhamma, Ananda, making no ‘inner’ and ‘outer.’ The Tathagata has no ‘teacher’s fist’ in respect of doctrines. If there is anyone who thinks ‘I will take charge of the order,’ or ‘the order should refer to me,’ let him make some statement about the order, but the Tathagata does not think in these terms. So why should the Tathagata make a statement about the order.

“Ananda, I am now old, worn out, venerable, one who has traversed life’s path, I have reached the term of life, which is eighty. Just as an old cart is made to go by being held together by straps, so the Tathagata’s body is kept going by being strapped up. It is only when the Tathagata withdraws his attention from outer signs, and by the cessation of certain feelings, enters into the signless concentration of mind, that his body knows comfort.

“Therefore, Ananda, you should live [with one’s] self [as] an island, [one’s] self [as] a refuge, [with] no other refuge, [with] the Dhamma [as] an island, the Dhamma [as] a refuge, [with] no other refuge.* And how does a monk live like this? Here, Ananda, a monk abides contemplating the body as body, earnestly, clearly aware, mindful and having put aside all hankering and fretting for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind and dhamma. And those who now in my time or afterwards live thus, they will become the highest, if they are desirous of learning.” [D. 16. ii 101, p. 245.]

**atta dipa viharathi atta sarana ananna sarana, dhamma dipa dhamma sarana ananna sarana.*

“Conditioned things break down, tread the path with care.”* [D. 16. ii 156, p. 270.]

**vaya dhamma sankhara appamedena sampadethati*

cf. Horace: "While we are talking envious time is fleeing: seize the day, give no thought to the future." Odes bk. 1, no. 11, l. 7.

Miscellaneous Quotes

“Where do earth, water, fire and air no footing find?
Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul –
Where are ‘name-and-form’ wholly destroyed?

And the answer is:

Where consciousness is signless, boundless, all luminous,
That’s where earth, water, fire and air find no footing,
There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul –
There ‘name-and-form’ are wholly destroyed.
With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed.”

D. 11, 222-3, pp. 179-80; cf. M. 49, 329, p. 428, which in Nanamoli/Bodhi’s tr. we find: “The consciousness that makes no showing [*anidassanam*]. Nor has it to do with finiteness, Not claiming being with respect to all [*sabbato pabham*].” Bodhi: “These lines have been a perennial challenge to Buddhist scholarship, and even Buddhaghosa seems to founder over them.” cf. A 1.6: ‘This mind [*citta*] is luminous, but is defiled by adventitious defilements, etc.’ See Thanissaro, *Handful of Leaves* 3, 1-2. , and his essay “Freedom from Buddha Nature”, Access to Insight, June 5, 2010.]

Cf. The Four Truths

“And what things should be fully known by direct knowledge? The five aggregates affected by clinging...

“And what things should be let go of by direct knowledge? Ignorance and craving for existence...

“And what things should be cultivated by direct knowledge? Calm and insight...

“And what things should be experienced by direct knowledge? True knowledge and liberation...”

[M. 149, iii 289-90, p. 1139]

Sutta Nipata

Sn. 249. Not the flesh of fish, nor fasting, nor nakedness, nor shaven head, matted hair, dirt, nor rough animal skins, nor observance of the fire ceremony, nor even the many penances there are in the world for [gaining] immortality, nor hymns nor oblations, nor the performance of sacrifices at the proper season, purify a mortal who has not crossed beyond doubt.

Sn. 501. Those who wander about in the world, having [only] themselves as a refuge, having nothing, completely freed in every respect – upon them at the right time one should bestow an offering.

Sn. 514. He who has gone to quenching by the path made by himself, Sabhiya, has crossed over doubt, having abandoned both non-existence and existence, has lived the life, whose renewed existence is destroyed, he is a “monk”.

Sn. 576. Just as for ripe fruit there is constantly fear of falling, so for mortals who are born there is constantly fear of death.

Sn. 580. See, while the relatives are actually looking on, wailing much, each one of the mortals is led away like a cow to be slaughtered.

Sn. 645. For whom there is nothing before, or after, or in the middle, having nothing, without grasping, him I call a 41rahman.

Sn. 647. Whoever knows that he has lived before, and sees heaven and hell, and has arrived at the destruction of birth, him I call a 41rahman.

Sn. 705. “As I [am], so [are] these; as [are] these, so [am] I.” Comparing himself [with others], he should not kill or cause to kill.

Sn. 716. ... [The sage] should be [sharp] as a razor’s edge.... (717) He should train himself in [the practice of] solitude... The state of being alone is called sage-hood.

Sn. 720. Know this by the streams in clefts and crevices. [Rivers in] small channels move noisily; the great oceans move in silence.

Sn. 721. What is not full makes a noise. What is full is indeed silent. A fool is like a half-filled pot; a wise man is like a full pool. [Tr. Norman]

*

If body and mind were me/ /I'd come and go like them./If they were something else, //They would say nothing about me.

Nagarjuna MMK 18.1