

PATH OF PRACTICE

PATIPATTIMAGGA

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For those who do not seek to return ~

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Abbreviations & Links

DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i> (The Long-length Discourses)
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> (The Middle-length Discourses)
SN	<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i> (The Connected Discourses)
AN	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i> (The Numerical Discourses)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i> (The Path of the Dhamma)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i> (Exclamations)
It	<i>Itivuttaka</i> (This Was Said)
Snp	<i>Sutta Nipāta</i> (The Discourse Group)
Thag	<i>Theragāthā</i> (Poems of the Elder Monks)
Thig	<i>Therīgāthā</i> (Poems of the Elder Nuns)

References to DN, MN, It are to discourse. Those to Dhp are to verse. References to other texts are to section (*saṃyutta*, *nipāta*, or *vagga*) and discourse. Numbering for SN and AN follows the SuttaCentral [methodology](#).

DhammaTalks	Translations of the Pāli Canon by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu
SuttaCentral	Translations of the Pāli Canon from various sources
DhammaVinaya	For web and e-book formats of this anthology

Preface

Threefold framework

This is an anthology of discourse excerpts from the Pāli Canon – the earliest extant texts attributed to the Buddha, collated according to the framework of virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and discernment (*paññā*). The Buddha repeatedly summarized the path using these categories:

*Virtue, concentration, discernment:
one in whom these are well-developed,
passing beyond Māra's domain,
shines, shines
like the sun.*

[It 59](#)

He emphasized them in his final days:

*Virtue, concentration, discernment,
and unexcelled release:
These qualities have been awakened to
by Gotama, the prestigious.
Directly knowing this, he shows it to the monks—
the awakened one,
the teacher who has made an ending of stress,
the one with eyes,
totally unbound.*

...

Such is virtue, such is concentration, such is discernment. Concentration nurtured with virtue is of great fruit, great reward. Discernment nurtured with concentration is of great fruit, great reward. The mind nurtured with discernment is rightly released from the effluents.

[DN 16 - The Great Total Unbinding](#)

On another occasion, he connected different stages in accomplishment in virtue, concentration, and discernment with the fruits of the path (stream-entry, non-return, arahantship):

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment... With the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, he is a stream-winner, never again destined for states of woe, certain, headed for self-awakening.

...

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment... With the wasting away of the five lower fetters, he is due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world.

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, wholly accomplished in discernment... With the ending of effluents, he dwells in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known and realized them for himself right in the here-&-now.”

[AN 3:87 - One in Training](#)

Gradual training

An experienced reader of the scriptures might wonder why this anthology focuses specifically on this organization of the path instead of a more popular framework such as the Noble Eightfold Path or the Four Noble Truths. To understand the reasoning behind this it can be useful to consider how the Buddha initiated new disciples to his teachings. He typically introduced them to something called the gradual path (*anupubbapaṭipadā*):

“Just as the ocean has a gradual shelf, a gradual slope, a gradual inclination, with a sudden drop-off only after a long stretch; in the same way, this Dhamma & Vinaya has a gradual training, a gradual performance, a gradual practice, with a penetration to gnosis only after a long stretch.”

[Ud 5:5 - Uposatha](#)

So, aiming at Suppabuddha the leper, he gave a step-by-step talk: he proclaimed a talk on generosity, on virtue, on heaven; he declared the drawbacks, degradation, & corruption of sensuality, and the rewards of renunciation. Then when the Blessed One knew that Suppabuddha the leper’s mind was ready, malleable, free from hindrances, elevated, & clear, he then gave the Dhamma-talk peculiar to Awakened Ones: stress, origination, cessation, & path.

[Ud 5:3 – The Leper](#)

Interestingly, the Buddha only expounds the Noble Truths above (what is usually taught first as his teaching nowadays) once he sees that Suppabuddha’s mind is ready to grasp its profundity. For this reason, I have put less emphasis on theoretical aspects of the Dhamma in this anthology and focused more on discourses relevant to training the mind to a level where it is ready to understand such deep truths.

While some discourses only touch on the different factors involved in the training, many others give a more detailed assessment of what is required of a practitioner. None does this better than the Buddha’s [exposition](#) on the fruits of a contemplative life to King Ajātasattu. Here as well, he describes what he discovered as a gradual path, starting from the basic virtues conducive to a fruitful life, to renouncing worldly activities that distract the mind. He then describes the process by which the mental faculties are developed through sense restraint (*indriya saṃvara*), contentedness (*santuṭṭhi*) and mindfulness and alertness (*sati sampajaññā*), leading to abandoning mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and attaining absorption (*jhāna*). With the nourishment of concentration, the mind is then strong and malleable enough to discern the Noble Truths that lead to liberation. It is important to note that even in such a comprehensive discourse, the Buddha does not describe his teaching in enough depth to warrant ignoring other discourses with different emphases. This should become clear through this anthology, where a more detailed and complete representation of the path will be revealed.

For the given reasons above, using this threefold framework of training seems the most appropriate for a practitioner looking to make gradual progress in the path. I have attempted to give as granular a picture as possible by detailing different subsections within the main framework, drawing from a multitude of early discourses so carefully preserved through millennia.

To give better context on the reasons why those who seek their own benefit should follow this path, I have also included a section on the teaching (*dhamma*). Here I introduce action (*kamma*) as the principle used to identify what is and what is not the path, as well as the motivations –

such as transmigration (*saṃsāra*) and Unbinding (*nibbāna*), for pursuing the path in the first place.

Body contemplation

There is an emphasis on body contemplation (*kāyagatāsati*) themes for concentration and investigation in this anthology. Some might find this off-putting, since their experience with meditation may have centered solely on the breath (*ānāpānasati* – one of the many methods of *kāyagatāsati*), goodwill (*mettā bhāvanā*) and recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*). The contemplation of the body in terms of its constituent parts (*kāya-vibhāga*), as a corpse in a charnel ground (*sarīraṃ sivathikāya*), or as properties (*dhātu*) are quite often ignored or at least deprioritized in most circles. By making them my focus I hope to highlight their importance in the path and encourage their cultivation.

With regard to insight, other discourses explain concepts such as dependent co-arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the aggregates (*khandha*) and the sense bases (*āyatana*) in detail, but since body contemplation is the primary [means](#) to achieve such understanding in practice, I have made that my focus. This is done by reflecting on the body's [unpleasant](#) (*asubha*) aspect, to its nature to [break apart](#) (*aniccā*), revealing its lack of substance and how it is [unworthy to take as who you are](#) (*anattā*).

How to use this

On reading this anthology, it is important to note that it is not entirely linear in sequence. Although a high standard of virtue is required to develop concentration and then discernment, as you progress in the path the earlier steps should also become more dependable. For instance, sense restraint makes it [easier](#) to maintain virtuous behavior, while mindfulness is [needed](#) to practice the former at an effective level. Similarly, some practitioners gain insight into phenomena [before](#) they have dependable skills in concentration. That said, it is advisable to focus on your weaknesses in mastering the early stages before attempting to understand the many intricacies of your mind.

I have included an English-Pāli and Pāli-English glossary in the appendix for those unfamiliar with the terminology used.

Who this is for

This is primarily meant for the renunciate looking for tips from the discourses that can be implemented in his or her practice. It is not by any means a comprehensive guide to the discourses, but more a distillation of the essentials – not much more than 1% of the total discourses in the early canon feature here. The whole of the *Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Samyutta* and *Aṅguttara Nikāyas* and the early texts of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (*Dhammapada*, *Udāna*, *Itivuttaka*, *Sutta Nipāta*, *Theragāthā*, *Therīgāthā*) are considered potential source material.

This is best used by readers who have already spent time in study (*pariyatti*) and is looking to focus more on their practice (*paṭipatti*). It can also be helpful for someone who likes to dive right into practice and prefers to keep reading to a minimum. For this type of person, I recommend exploring any topics further if it is not immediately apparent how it connects to the path. I do consider it important to study the discourses, but for some practitioners who have an innate sense of what the path is or a great teacher to guide them, not essential.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Ajahn Geoff (Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu), one of my first teachers and the translator of most of the discourses quoted here. He, more than anyone else, is responsible for sparking my interest in the Pāli Canon and clarifying its intricate details. My heartfelt appreciation also goes out to Ajahn Dtun, who provided the inspiration for the final draft by showing me the importance of focusing solely on what benefits the practice. I would also like to thank Bhante Sujāto – I have sourced [SuttaCentral](#) for discourses not in [DhammaTalks](#).

The compilation would not have reached its present form were it not for Tan Mike (Kusalī Bhikkhu), whose thorough review improved the content as well as its presentation. Tan Alex (Khemarato Bhikkhu) and Max Silverberg also provided useful comments that helped keep the focus on the essentials.

This anthology is available in the [web](#), where e-book formats can be downloaded freely. Mistakes or misquotes, of course, are my own responsibility, and I apologize to the reader in advance. Any feedback, comments, or suggestions are welcome at chulaww@gmail.com.

My hope is that you use this anthology to develop your own practice to a point where there would not be any more need to rely on books, thus gaining an independence in knowing where the Dhamma lies within.

Dhamma – The Teaching

In brief

“It would be good, lord, if the Blessed One would teach me the Dhamma in brief such that, having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.”

“Gotamī, the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead to passion, not to dispassion; to being fettered, not to being unfettered; to accumulating, not to shedding; to self-aggrandizement, not to modesty; to discontent, not to contentment; to entanglement, not to reclusiveness; to laziness, not to aroused persistence; to being burdensome, not to being unburdensome’: You may categorically hold, ‘This is not the Dhamma, this is not the Vinaya, this is not the Teacher’s instruction.’”

“As for the qualities of which you may know, ‘These qualities lead to dispassion, not to passion; to being unfettered, not to being fettered; to shedding, not to accumulating; to modesty, not to self-aggrandizement; to contentment, not to discontent; to reclusiveness, not to entanglement; to aroused persistence, not to laziness; to being unburdensome, not to being burdensome’: You may categorically hold, ‘This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’”

[AN 8:53 – In Brief](#)

Identifying the wise

“It's through discussion that a person's discernment may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning'...”

...

“... there is the case where one individual, through discussion with another, knows this: 'From the way this person rises to an issue, from the way he applies [his reasoning], from the way he addresses a question, he is discerning, not dull. Why is that? He makes statements that are deep, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. He can declare the meaning, teach it, describe it, set it forth, reveal it, explain it, & make it plain. He is discerning, not dull.’”

[AN 4:192 - Traits](#)

Focus on yourself first

“Monks, these four types of individuals are to be found existing in the world. Which four? The one who practices neither for his or her own benefit nor for that of others. The one who practices for the benefit of others but not for his or her own. The one who practices for his or her own benefit but not for that of others. The one who practices for his or her own benefit and for that of others.”

“Just as a firebrand from a funeral pyre—burning at both ends, covered with excrement in the middle—is used as fuel neither in a village nor in the wilderness: I tell you that this is a simile for the individual who practices neither for his or her own benefit nor for that of others. The individual who practices for the benefit of others but not for his or her own is the higher & more refined of these two. The individual who practices for his or her own benefit but not for that of others is the highest & most refined of these three. The individual who practices for his or her own benefit and for that of others is, of these four, the foremost, the chief, the most outstanding, the highest, & supreme. Just as from a cow comes milk; from milk, curds; from curds, butter; from butter, ghee; from ghee, the skimmings of ghee; and of these, the skimmings of ghee are reckoned the foremost—in the same way, of these four, the individual who practices for his or her own benefit and for that of others is the foremost, the chief, the most outstanding, the highest, & supreme.

[AN 4:95 – The Firebrand](#)

SAṂSĀRA – TRANSMIGRATION

Blood

“From an inconceivable beginning comes the wandering-on. A beginning point is not discernible, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. What do you think, monks? Which is greater, the blood you have shed from having your heads cut off while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time, or the water in the four great oceans?”

“As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the blood we have shed from having our heads cut off while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time, not the water in the four great oceans.”

“Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me.

...

“The blood you have shed when, being cows, you had your cow-heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

...

“The blood you have shed when, arrested as thieves plundering villages, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as highway thieves, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as adulterers, you had your heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

“Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes the wandering-on. A beginning point is not discernible, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries—enough to become disenchanted with all fabrications, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released.”

[SN 15:13 - Thirty](#)

Next to nothing

‘Next to nothing, brahmans, is the life of human beings—limited, trifling, of much stress & many despairs. One should touch this (truth) like a sage, do what is skillful, follow the holy life. For one who is born there is no freedom from death.

...

“‘Just as a line drawn in the water with a stick quickly vanishes and does not stay long, in the same way, brahmans, the life of human beings is like a line drawn in the water with a stick...

“‘Just as a river flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it, so that there is not a moment, an instant, a second where it stands still, but instead it goes & rushes & flows, in the same way, brahmans, the life of human beings is like a river flowing down from the mountains...

“‘Just as a strong man forming a drop of spit on the tip of his tongue would spit it out with little effort, in the same way, brahmans, the life of human beings is like a drop of spit—limited, trifling, of much stress & many despairs. One should touch this (truth) like a sage, do what is skillful, follow the holy life. For one who is born there is no freedom from death.

[AN 7:70 - Araka's Instructions](#)

Spears

“Monks, suppose there was a man whose life span was 100 years, who would live to 100. Someone would say to him, ‘Look here, fellow. They will stab you at dawn with 100 spears, at noon with 100 spears, & again at evening with 100 spears. You, thus stabbed day after day with 300 spears, will have a lifespan of 100 years, will live to be 100, and at the end of 100 years you will realize the four noble truths that you have never realized before.’

“Monks, a person who desired his own true benefit would do well to take up (the offer). Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident for the (pain of) blows from spears, swords, & axes. Even if this (offer) were to occur, I tell you that the realization of the four noble truths would not be accompanied by pain & distress. Instead, I tell you, the realization of the four noble truths would be accompanied by pleasure & happiness.

[SN 56:35 - One Hundred Spears](#)

KAMMA – ACTION

Belief in the results of action

“He has right view and is not warped in the way he sees things: ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’

[MN 41 - Brahmins of Sāla](#)

Safeguarding the truth

"Now, Kālāmas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness' — then you should enter & remain in them."

[AN 3:65 - To the Kālāmas](#)

Repeated reflection

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Whenever you want to do a verbal action, you should reflect on it... would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... then any verbal action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... then any verbal action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a verbal action, you should reflect on it... is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a verbal action, you should reflect on it... did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Whenever you want to do a mental action, you should reflect on it... would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... then any mental action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... then any mental action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a mental action, you should reflect on it... is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a mental action, you should reflect on it... did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both?... then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it, you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Rahula, all those brahmins & contemplatives in the course of the past who purified their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

"All those brahmins & contemplatives in the course of the future...

"All those brahmins & contemplatives at present...

"Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself: 'I will purify my bodily actions through repeated reflection... verbal actions... I will purify my mental actions through repeated reflection.' That's how you should train yourself."

[MN 61 – Instructions to Rahula at Mango Stone](#)

Intention as action

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

"And what is the cause by which action comes into play? Contact is the cause by which action comes into play.

"And what is the diversity in action? There is action to be experienced in hell, ... the realm of common animals, ... the realm of the hungry ghosts, ... the human world, ... the world of the devas. This is called the diversity in action.

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

[AN 6:63 – Penetrative](#)

KĀMA – SENSUALITY

Intoxication

“Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: ‘When an untaught, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to aging, not beyond aging, sees another who is aged, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to aging, not beyond aging. If I—who am subject to aging, not beyond aging—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is aged, that would not be fitting for me.’ As I noticed this, the (typical) young person’s intoxication with youth entirely dropped away.

“Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: ‘When an untaught, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to illness, not beyond illness, sees another who is ill, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to illness, not beyond illness. And if I—who am subject to illness, not beyond illness—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is ill, that would not be fitting for me.’ As I noticed this, the healthy person’s intoxication with health entirely dropped away.

“Even though I was endowed with such fortune, such total refinement, the thought occurred to me: ‘When an untaught, run-of-the-mill person, himself subject to death, not beyond death, sees another who is dead, he is repelled, ashamed, & disgusted, oblivious to himself that he too is subject to death, not beyond death. And if I—who am subject to death, not beyond death—were to be repelled, ashamed, & disgusted on seeing another person who is dead, that would not be fitting for me.’ As I noticed this, the living person’s intoxication with life entirely dropped away.

[AN 3:39 – Refinement](#)

Burning with sensual fever

“Māgaṇḍiya, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, and thanks to the medicine he would be cured of his leprosy: well & happy, free, master of himself, going wherever he liked. Then suppose two strong men, having seized hold of him by both arms, were to drag him to a pit of glowing embers. What do you think? Wouldn’t he twist his body this way & that?”

“Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? The fire is painful to the touch, very hot & scorching.”

“Now, what do you think Māgaṇḍiya? Is the fire painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, only now, or was it also that way before?”

“Both now & before it is painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, Master Gotama. It’s just that when the man was a leper ..., his faculties were impaired, which was why, even though the fire was actually painful to the touch, he had the skewed perception of ‘pleasant.’”

“In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, sensual pleasures in the past were painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures in the future will be painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures at present are painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; but when beings are not free from passion for sensual pleasures – devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever – their faculties are impaired, which is why, even though sensual pleasures are actually painful to the touch, they have the skewed perception of ‘pleasant.’

“Now, suppose that there was a leper ... The more he cauterized his body over the pit of glowing embers, the more disgusting, foul-smelling, & putrid the openings of his wounds would become, and yet he would feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction because of the itchiness of his wounds. In the same way, beings not free from passion for sensual pleasures – devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever – indulge in sensual pleasures. The more they indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their sensual craving increases and the more they burn with sensual fever, and yet they feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction dependent on the five strings of sensuality.

“Now, what do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Have you ever seen or heard of a king or king’s minister – enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever – who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Very good, Māgaṇḍiya, Neither have I ... But whatever contemplatives or brahmans who have dwelt or will dwell or are dwelling free from thirst, their minds inwardly at peace, all have done so having realized – as it has come to be – the origination & disappearance, the allure, the danger, & the escape from sensual pleasures, having abandoned sensual craving and removed sensual fever.”

[MN 75 - To Māgaṇḍiya](#)

Allure, drawbacks, escape

"Now what, monks, is the allure of forms? Suppose there were a maiden of the noble caste, the brahman caste, or the householder class, fifteen or sixteen years old, neither too tall nor too short, neither too thin nor too plump, neither too dark nor too pale. Is her beauty & charm at that time at its height?"

"Yes, lord."

"Whatever pleasure & joy arise in dependence on that beauty & charm: That is the allure of forms."

"And what is the drawback of form? There is the case where one might see that very same woman at a later time, when she's eighty, ninety, one hundred years old: aged, roof-rafter crooked, bent-over, supported by a cane, trembling, miserable, broken-toothed, gray-haired, scanty-haired, bald, wrinkled, her body all blotchy. What do you think: Has her earlier beauty & charm vanished, and the drawback appeared?"

"Yes, lord."

"This, monks, is the drawback of forms."

"Again, one might see that very same woman sick, in pain, & seriously ill, lying soiled with her own urine & excrement, lifted up by others, laid down by others. What do you think: Has her earlier beauty & charm vanished, and the drawback appeared?"

"Yes, lord."

"This too, monks, is the drawback of forms.

"Again, one might see that very same woman as a corpse cast away in a charnel ground — one day, two days, three days dead, bloated, livid, & oozing. What do you think: Has her earlier beauty & charm vanished, and the drawback appeared?"

"Yes, lord."

"This too, monks, is the drawback of forms.

"Again, one might see that very same woman as a corpse cast away in a charnel ground picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, & various other creatures... a skeleton smeared with flesh & blood, connected with tendons... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons... a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons... bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions — here a hand bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib, there a breast bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull... the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells... piled up, more than a year old... decomposed into a powder. What do you think: Has her earlier beauty & charm vanished, and the drawback appeared?"

"Yes, lord."

"This too, monks, is the drawback of forms.

"And what, monks, is the escape from forms? The subduing of desire-passion for forms, the abandoning of desire-passion for forms: That is the escape from form.

[MN 13 - The Greater Mass of Stress](#)

Jhāna required to overcome

“Even though a disciple of the noble ones has clearly seen as it has come to be with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, still – if he has not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful qualities, or something more peaceful than that – he can be tempted by sensuality. But when he has clearly seen as it has come to be with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and he has attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful qualities, or something more peaceful than that, he cannot be tempted by sensuality.”

[MN 14 - The Lesser Mass of Stress](#)

Subject to time

... A certain devatā, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entire Tapoda Hot Springs, approached Ven. Samiddhi. On arrival, while standing in the air, she addressed him with this verse:

Without having enjoyed
[sensual pleasures],
you go for alms, monk.
You don't go for alms
after having enjoyed.
Having enjoyed, monk,
then go for alms.
Don't let time pass you by.

[Ven. Samiddhi replied:]
I don't know my time.
 My time
is hidden.
It can't be seen.
That's why, not having enjoyed,
 I go for alms:
Don't let my time pass me by.

Then the devatā, coming down to earth, said to Ven. Samiddhi, "You have gone forth while young, monk — black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life — without having played with sensual pleasures. Enjoy human sensuality, monk. Don't drop what is visible here-&-now in pursuit of what's subject to time."

"My friend, I'm not dropping what's visible here & now in pursuit of what's subject to time. I'm dropping what's subject to time in pursuit of what's visible here & now. For the Blessed One has said that sensuality is subject to time, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks; whereas this Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, visible here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves."

[SN 1:20 – About Samiddhi](#)

NIBBĀNA – UNBINDING

The Dhamma eye

Just as a white cloth with stains removed would rightly take dye, in the same way there arose to Upāli the householder, in that very seat, the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: *Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation*. Then—having seen the Dhamma, having reached the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, gained a footing in the Dhamma, having crossed over & beyond doubt, having had no more questioning—Upāli the householder gained fearlessness and was independent of others with regard to the Teacher's message. [MN 56 - The Teaching to Upāli](#)

The suffering that is extinguished

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then the Blessed One, picking up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, said to the monks, “What do you think, monks? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the great earth?”

“The great earth is far greater, lord. The little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail is next to nothing. It’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth—this little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail—when compared with the great earth.”

“In the same way, monks, for a disciple of the noble ones who is consummate in view, an individual who has broken through (to stream-entry), the suffering & stress totally ended & extinguished is far greater. That which remains in the state of having at most seven remaining lifetimes is next to nothing: It’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth, when compared with the previous mass of suffering. That’s how great the benefit is of breaking through to the Dhamma, monks. That’s how great the benefit is of obtaining the Dhamma eye.”

[SN 13:1 – The Tip of the Fingernail](#)

Hard to fathom

What do you think, Vaccha? If a fire were burning in front of you, would you know that ‘This fire is burning in front of me’?”

“...yes...”

“And if someone were to ask you, Vaccha, ‘This fire burning in front of you, dependent on what is it burning?’: Thus asked, how would you reply?”

“...I would reply, ‘This fire burning in front of me is burning dependent on grass & timber as its sustenance.’”

“If the fire burning in front of you were to go out, would you know that, ‘This fire burning in front of me has gone out’?”

“...yes...”

“And if someone were to ask you, ‘This fire that has gone out in front of you, in which direction from here has it gone? East? West? North? Or south?’: Thus asked, how would you reply?”

“That doesn’t apply, Master Gotama. Any fire burning dependent on a sustenance of grass & timber, being un nourished—from having consumed that sustenance and not being offered any other—is classified simply as ‘out’ [unbound].”

“In the same way, Vaccha, any form by which one describing the Tathāgata would describe him: That the Tathāgata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form, Vaccha, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea. ‘Reappears’ doesn’t

apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

"Any feeling.... Any perception.... Any fabrication...."

"Any consciousness... Freed from the classification of consciousness, Vaccha, the Tathāgata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea.

[MN 72 - To Vacchagotta on Fire](#)

The Unfabricated

"Monks, these three are fabricated characteristics of what is fabricated. Which three? Arising is discernible, passing away is discernible, alteration [other-ness] while staying is discernible.

"Now, these three are unfabricated characteristics of what is unfabricated. Which three? No arising is discernible, no passing away is discernible, no alteration while staying is discernible."

[AN 3:47-48 - Fabricated](#)

Sīla – Virtue

KĀYA SAMĀCĀRO – BODILY CONDUCT

Emulating the arahants

‘As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning the taking of life—abstain from the taking of life. They dwell with their rod laid down, their knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning the taking of life—abstain from the taking of life. I dwell with my rod laid down, my knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning the taking of what is not given—abstain from taking what is not given. They take only what is given, accept only what is given, live not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning the taking of what is not given—abstain from taking what is not given. I take only what is given, accept only what is given, live not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

...

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness—abstain from fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness—abstain from fermented & distilled liquors that cause heedlessness. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

...

“As long as they live, the arahants abstain from dancing, singing, music, watching shows, wearing garlands, beautifying themselves with perfumes & cosmetics. Today I too, for this day & night, abstain from dancing, singing, music, watching shows, wearing garlands, beautifying myself with perfumes & cosmetics. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning high & imposing seats & beds—abstain from high & imposing seats & beds. They make low beds, on a pallet or a spread of straw. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning high & imposing seats & beds—abstain from high & imposing seats & beds. I make a low bed, on a pallet or a spread of straw.’

“Such is the uposatha of the noble ones, Visākhā. When this uposatha of the noble ones is undertaken, it is of great fruit & great benefit, of great glory & great radiance.

[AN 3:70 – The Roots of the Uposatha](#)

Avoid frivolousness

“Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, are addicted to watching shows such as these—dancing, singing, instrumental music, plays, ballad recitations, hand-clapping, cymbals and drums, magic-lantern scenes, acrobatic and conjuring tricks, elephant fights, horse fights, buffalo fights, bull fights, goat fights, ram fights, cock fights, quail fights; fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, war-games, roll calls, battle arrays, and regimental reviews—he abstains from watching shows such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, are addicted to heedless and idle games such as these—eight-row chess, ten-row chess, chess in the air, hopscotch, spillikins, dice, stick games, hand-pictures, ball-games, blowing through toy pipes, playing with toy plows, turning somersaults, playing with toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, toy bows, guessing letters drawn in the air, guessing thoughts, mimicking deformities—he abstains from heedless and idle games such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, are addicted to high and luxurious furnishings such as these—over-sized couches, couches adorned with carved animals, long-haired coverlets, multi-colored patchwork coverlets, white woolen coverlets, woolen coverlets embroidered with flowers or animal figures, stuffed quilts, coverlets with fringe, silk coverlets embroidered with gems; large woolen carpets; elephant, horse, and chariot rugs, antelope-hide rugs, deer-hide rugs; couches with canopies, couches with red cushions for the head and feet—he abstains from using high and luxurious furnishings such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Whereas some contemplatives & brahmans, living off food given in faith, are addicted to scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these—rubbing powders into the body, massaging with oils, bathing in perfumed water, kneading the limbs, using mirrors, ointments, garlands, scents, creams, face-powders, mascara, bracelets, head-bands, decorated walking sticks, ornamented water-bottles, swords, fancy sunshades, decorated sandals, turbans, gems, yak-tail whisks, long-fringed white robes—he abstains from using scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these. This, too, is part of his virtue.

[DN 2 – The Fruits of the Contemplative Life](#)

Brahmacariya – Celibacy

The villager’s way

“As long as they live, the arahants—abandoning uncelibacy—live a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager’s way. Today I too, for this day & night—abandoning uncelibacy—live a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager’s way. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.”

[AN 3:70 – The Roots of the Uposatha](#)

The impure holy life

“There is the case, brahman, where a certain contemplative or brahman, while claiming to be one who rightly follows the holy life, doesn’t actually engage in copulating with a woman but he does consent to being anointed, rubbed down, bathed, or massaged by a woman. He enjoys that, wants more of that, and luxuriates in that. This is a gap, a break, a spot, a blemish of the holy life. He is called one who lives the holy life in an impure way, one who is fettered by the fetter of sexuality. He is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrows, lamentations, pains, griefs, & despairs. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

“... he jokes, plays, and amuses himself with a woman...

“... he stares into a woman’s eyes...

“... he listens to the voices of women outside a wall as they laugh, speak, sing, or cry...

“... he recollects how he used to laugh, converse, and play with a woman...

“... he sees a householder or householder’s son enjoying himself endowed with the five strings of sensuality...

“... he practices the holy life intent on being born in one or another of the deva hosts, (thinking) ‘By this virtue or practice or abstinence or holy life I will be a deva of one sort or another’...

He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

[AN 7:50 – Copulation](#)

Strategies for the celibate life

“What is the reason, Master Bhāradvāja, what is the cause why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives?”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: with regard to women who are old enough to be your mother, establish the attitude you would have toward your mother. With regard to women who are old enough to be your sister, establish the attitude you’d have toward a sister. With regard to women who are young enough to be your daughter, establish the attitude you’d have toward a daughter’...”

“The mind is unruly, Master Bhāradvāja. Sometimes thoughts of greed arise even for women who are old enough to be your mother... your sister... young enough to be your daughter...”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: reflect on this very body, from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin, full of all sorts of unclean things: “In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine’...”

“For those who are developed in body, developed in virtue, developed in mind, developed in discernment, Master Bhāradvāja, that isn’t hard to do. But for those who are undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtue, undeveloped in mind, undeveloped in discernment, that is hard to do. Sometimes when one thinks, ‘Let’s regard this as unattractive,’ it actually comes to be attractive...”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: Keep guarding the doors to your sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, do not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if you were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail you. Practice with restraint. Guard the faculty of the eye. Achieve restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye.

“On hearing a sound with the ear...
“On smelling an aroma with the nose...
“On tasting a flavor with the tongue...
“On feeling a tactile sensation with the body...”

“On cognizing an idea with the intellect, do not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if you were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the intellect—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail you. Practice with restraint. Guard the faculty of the intellect. Achieve restraint with regard to the faculty of the intellect’...”

[SN 35:127 – About Bhāradvāja](#)

Bondage of gender

“A woman attends inwardly to her feminine faculties, her feminine gestures, her feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voice, feminine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, she attends outwardly to masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voices, masculine charms. She is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, she wants to be bonded to what is outside her, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in her femininity, a woman goes into bondage with reference to men. This is how a woman does not transcend her femininity.

“A man attends inwardly to his masculine faculties, masculine gestures, masculine manners, masculine poise, masculine desires, masculine voice, masculine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he attends outwardly to feminine faculties, feminine gestures, feminine manners, feminine poise, feminine desires, feminine voices, feminine charms. He is excited by that, delighted by that. Being excited & delighted by that, he wants to be bonded to what is outside him, wants whatever pleasure & happiness that arise based on that bond. Delighting, caught up in his masculinity, a man goes into bondage with reference to women. This is how a man does not transcend his masculinity. [AN 7:51 - Bondage](#)

VACĪ SAMĀCĀRO – VERBAL CONDUCT

Avoid unskillful speech

“Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Abandoning divisive speech, he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing and pleasing to people at large. This, too, is part of his virtue.

“Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This, too, is part of his virtue. [DN 2 – The Fruits of the Contemplative Life](#)

Worthy conversation

“It isn’t right, monks, that sons of good families, on having gone forth out of faith from home to the homeless life, should get engaged in such topics of conversation: conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state; armies, alarms, & battles; food & drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, & scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women & heroes; the gossip of the street & the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity, the creation of the world & of the sea; talk of whether things exist or not.”

...

“There are these ten topics of (proper) conversation. Which ten? Talk on modesty, contentment, seclusion, non-entanglement, arousing persistence, virtue, concentration, discernment, release, and the knowledge & vision of release. These are the ten topics of conversation.

[AN 10:69 – Topics of Conversation](#)

The well-spoken statement

“Monks, a statement endowed with five factors is well-spoken, not ill-spoken. It is blameless & unfaulted by knowledgeable people. Which five?

“It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of goodwill.”

[AN 5:198 – A Statement](#)

Participating in a discussion

“Monks, it’s through his way of participating in a discussion that a person can be known as fit to talk with or unfit to talk with. If a person, when asked a question, doesn’t give a categorical answer to a question deserving a categorical answer, doesn’t give an analytical answer to a question deserving an analytical answer, doesn’t give a counter-question to a question deserving a counter-question, doesn’t put aside a question deserving to be put aside, then – that being the case – he is a person unfit to talk with.

...

If a person, when asked a question, doesn’t stand by what is possible and impossible, doesn’t stand by agreed-upon assumptions, doesn’t stand by teachings known to be true, doesn’t stand by standard procedure, then – that being the case – he is a person unfit to talk with.

...

If a person, when asked a question, wanders from one thing to another, pulls the discussion off the topic, shows anger & aversion and sulks, then – that being the case – he is a person unfit to talk with.

...

If a person, when asked a question, puts down (the questioner), crushes him, ridicules him, grasps at his little mistakes, then – that being the case – he is a person unfit to talk with.

...

For that’s the purpose of discussion, that’s the purpose of counsel, that’s the purpose of drawing near, that’s the purpose of lending ear: the liberation of the mind through lack of clinging.

[AN 3:68 - Topics for Discussion](#)

Person of integrity

“There is the case where a person of integrity, when asked, doesn’t reveal another person’s bad points, to say nothing of when unasked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person’s bad points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back...

“And further, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals another person’s good points, to say nothing of when asked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of another person’s good points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back...

“And further, a person of integrity, when unasked, reveals his own bad points, to say nothing of when asked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own bad points in full & in detail, without omissions, without holding back...

“And further, a person of integrity, when asked, doesn’t reveal his own good points, to say nothing of when unasked. And, when asked, when pressed with questions, he is one who speaks of his own good points not in full, not in detail, with omissions, holding back.”

[AN 4:73 - A Person of Integrity](#)

Endure any speech

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate.

...

“Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handled saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of goodwill, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with goodwill—abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

[MN 21 – The Simile of the Saw](#)

Nor is silence the way

Not by silence
does someone confused
& unknowing
turn into a sage.

[Dhp 268 – The Judge](#)

Unhurried and adapting

When speaking hurriedly, your body gets tired, your mind gets stressed, your voice gets stressed, your throat gets sore, and your words become unclear and hard to understand.

...

And how do you not insist on local terminology and not override normal usage? It’s when in different localities the same thing is known as a ‘plate’, a ‘bowl’, a ‘cup’, a ‘dish’, a ‘basin’, a ‘tureen’, or a ‘porringer’. And however it is known in those various localities, you speak accordingly, thinking: ‘It seems that the venerables are referring to this.’ That’s how you don’t insist on local terminology and don’t override normal usage.

[MN 139 – Analysis of Non-Conflict](#)

SANTUṬṬHI – CONTENTMENT

Traditions of the noble ones

“There is the case where a monk is content with any old robe cloth at all. He speaks in praise of being content with any old robe cloth at all. He doesn’t, for the sake of robe cloth, do anything

unseemly or inappropriate. Not getting cloth, he isn't agitated. Getting cloth, he uses it unattached to it, uninfatuated, guiltless, seeing the drawbacks (of attachment to it), and discerning the escape from them. He doesn't, on account of his contentment with any old robe cloth at all, exalt himself or disparage others. In this he is diligent, deft, alert, & mindful. This is said to be a monk standing firm in the ancient, original traditions of the noble ones.

“And further, the monk is content with any old almsfood at all...

“And further, the monk is content with any old lodging at all...

[AN 4:28 – The Traditions of the Noble Ones](#)

Only barest necessities

“And how is a monk content? Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with a set of robes to provide for his body and alms food to provide for his hunger. Wherever he goes, he takes only his barest necessities along. This is how a monk is content.

[DN 2 – The Fruits of the Contemplative Life](#)

Proper use of requisites

There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, uses the robe simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame.

...

"Reflecting appropriately, he uses lodging simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for protection from the inclemencies of weather and for the enjoyment of seclusion.

"Reflecting appropriately, he uses medicinal requisites that are used for curing the sick simply to counteract any pains of illness that have arisen and for maximum freedom from disease.

[MN 2 - All the Effluents](#)

When to pursue asceticism

I don't say that all asceticism is to be pursued, nor do I say that all asceticism is not to be pursued. I don't say that all observances should be observed, nor do I say that all observances should not be observed. I don't say that all exertions are to be pursued, nor do I say that all exertions are not to be pursued. I don't say that all forfeiture should be forfeited, nor do I say that all forfeiture should not be forfeited. I don't say that all release is to be used for release, nor do I say that all release is not to be used for release.

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

[AN 10:94 – About Vajjiya](#)

BHOJANE MATTAÑÑUTĀ – MODERATION IN EATING

Simply for survival

“And how does a monk know moderation in eating? There is the case where a monk, considering it appropriately, takes his food not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification, but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, ‘I will destroy old feelings (of hunger) & not create new feelings (from overeating). Thus I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.’ This is how a monk knows moderation in eating. [AN 4:37 – No Falling Away](#)”

One meal in the morning

“As long as they live, the arahants live on one meal a day, abstaining from food at night, refraining from food at the wrong time of day [from noon until dawn]. Today I too, for this day & night, live on one meal, abstaining from food at night, refraining from food at the wrong time of day. By means of this factor I emulate the arahants, and my uposatha will be observed.”

[AN 3:70 – The Roots of the Uposatha](#)

As a son’s flesh

“And how is physical food to be regarded? Suppose a couple, husband & wife, taking meager provisions, were to travel through a desert. With them would be their only baby son, dear & appealing. Then the meager provisions of the couple going through the desert would be used up & depleted while there was still a stretch of the desert yet to be crossed. The thought would occur to them, ‘Our meager provisions are used up & depleted while there is still a stretch of this desert yet to be crossed. What if we were to kill this only baby son of ours, dear & appealing, and make dried meat & jerky. That way—chewing on the flesh of our son—at least the two of us would make it through this desert. Otherwise, all three of us would perish.’ So they would kill their only baby son, loved & endearing, and make dried meat & jerky. Chewing on the flesh of their son, they would make it through the desert. While eating the flesh of their only son, they would beat their breasts, (crying,) ‘Where have you gone, our only baby son? Where have you gone, our only baby son?’ Now what do you think, monks? Would that couple eat that food playfully or for intoxication, or for putting on bulk, or for beatification?”

“No, lord.”

“Wouldn’t they eat that food simply for the sake of making it through that desert?”

“Yes, lord.”

“In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of physical food to be regarded.”

[SN 12:63 – A Son’s Flesh](#)

Content with coarse food

They should be content even with coarse food,
not hoping for lots of flavors.

The mind that's greedy for flavors
doesn't delight in absorption.

[Thag 10:6 – Upasena, Vaṅganta's Son](#)

Not eager for tonics

Whether food was refined or rough,
a little or a lot,
they ate only for sustenance,
without greed or gluttony.

They weren't so very eager
for the requisites of life,
such as tonics and other necessities,
as they were for the ending of defilements.

[Thag 16:10 – Pārāpariya](#)

Drink some water

When eating fresh or dried food,
one shouldn't be overly replete.
A mendicant should wander mindfully,
with unfilled belly, taking limited food.

Four or five mouthfuls before you're full,
drink some water;
this is enough for a resolute mendicant
to live in comfort.

[Thag 17:2 – Sāriputta](#)

JĀGARIYĀNUYOGA – WAKEFULNESS

Devoted to cleansing the mind

“And how is a monk devoted to wakefulness? There is the case where a monk during the day, sitting & pacing back & forth, cleanses his mind of any qualities [hindrances] that would hold the mind in check. During the first watch of the night [dusk to 10 p.m.], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. During the second watch of the night [10 p.m. to 2 a.m.], reclining on his right side, he takes up the lion's posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with his mind set on getting up (either as soon as he awakens or at a particular time). During the last watch of the night [2 a.m. to dawn], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. This is how a monk is devoted to wakefulness. [AN 4:37 – No Falling Away](#)”

Steps to overcome drowsiness

“Well then, Moggallāna, whatever perception you have in mind when drowsiness descends on you, don’t attend to that perception, don’t pursue it. It’s possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then recall to your awareness the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it, re-examine it, & ponder it over in your mind...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then repeat aloud in detail the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then pull both your earlobes and rub your limbs with your hands...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then get up from your seat and, after washing your eyes out with water, look around in all directions and upward to the major stars & constellations...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then attend to the perception of light, resolve on the perception of daytime, (dwelling) by night as by day, and by day as by night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, develop a brightened mind...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then—percipient of what lies in front & behind—set a distance to meditate walking back & forth, your senses inwardly immersed, your mind not straying outwards...

“But if by doing this you don’t shake off your drowsiness, then—reclining on your right side—take up the lion’s posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with your mind set on getting up. As soon as you wake up, get up quickly, with the thought, ‘I won’t stay indulging in the pleasure of lying down, the pleasure of reclining, the pleasure of drowsiness.’ That is how you should train yourself. [AN 7:61 – Nodding](#)

Walking meditation

These are the five rewards for one who practices walking meditation. Which five? He can endure traveling by foot; he can endure exertion; he becomes free from disease; whatever he has eaten & drunk, chewed & savored, becomes well-digested; the concentration he wins while doing walking meditation lasts a long time. [AN 5:29 – Walking](#)

The night is not for sleeping

It's not for sleeping,
the night garlanded
with zodiac stars.
The night, for one who knows,
is for staying awake.

[Thag 2:37 – Soṇa Poṭiriyaputta](#)

What to be mindful of

They awaken, always wide awake:
Gotama's disciples
whose mindfulness, both day & night,
is constantly immersed
in the Buddha.

... in the Dhamma... in the Sangha... in the body.

[Dhp 296-299 – Miscellany](#)

Samādhi – Concentration

INDRIYA SAMVARA – SENSE RESTRAINT

Guarding the sense doors

“And how is a monk one who guard the doors to his sense faculties? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, doesn’t grasp at any theme or variations by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye.

“On hearing a sound with the ear...

“On smelling an aroma with the nose...

“On tasting a flavor with the tongue...

“On touching a tactile sensation with the body...

“On cognizing an idea with the intellect, he doesn’t grasp at any theme or variations by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the intellect—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the intellect. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the intellect.

“Suppose there were a chariot on level ground at four crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with whips lying ready, so that a dexterous driver, a trainer of tamable horses, might mount and—taking the reins with his left hand and the whip with his right—drive out & back, to whatever place & by whichever road he liked; in the same way, the monk trains for the protection of these six senses, for their restraint, for their taming, for their stilling.

[SN 35:239 – The Chariot](#)

Body-mindfulness required

There is the case where a monk, when seeing a form via the eye, is, in the case of pleasing forms, committed to forms and, in the case of displeasing forms, afflicted by forms. He remains with body-mindfulness not present, and with limited awareness. And he does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release & discernment-release where those evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen cease without trace.

“When hearing a sound via the ear...

“When smelling an aroma via the nose...

“When tasting a flavor via the tongue...

“When touching a tactile sensation via the body...

“When cognizing an idea via the intellect, he is, in the case of pleasing ideas, committed to ideas and, in the case of displeasing ideas, afflicted by ideas...

...

“And when a monk dwells in this way, forms overpower him. He does not overpower forms. Sounds... Aromas... Flavors... Tactile sensations... Ideas overpower him. He does not overpower ideas. This is called a monk overpowered by forms... sounds... aromas... flavors... tactile sensations... ideas—one overpowered who does not overpower. He is overpowered by evil, unskillful qualities that defile, that lead to further becoming, that are miserable, that result in suffering & stress, that tend toward future birth, aging, & death. [SN 35:243 - Soggy](#)

Hold the mind back

“Monks, in whatever monk or nun there arises desire, passion, aversion, delusion, or mental resistance with regard to forms cognizable via the eye, he or she should hold the mind in check. (Thinking,) ‘It’s dangerous & dubious, that path, thorny & overgrown, a miserable path, a devious path, impenetrable. It’s a path followed by people of no integrity, not a path followed by people of integrity. It’s not worthy of you,’ he or she should hold the mind in check with regard to forms cognizable via the eye.

“In whatever monk or nun there arises desire, passion, aversion, delusion, or mental resistance with regard to sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body... ideas cognizable via the intellect, he or she should hold the mind in check...

“Suppose that corn had ripened and the watchman was heedless. A corn-eating ox, invading the corn to eat it, would intoxicate itself as much as it liked. In the same way, an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person, not exercising restraint with regard to the six media of sensory contact, intoxicates himself with the five strings of sensuality as much as he likes.

“Now suppose that corn had ripened and the watchman was heedful. The corn-eating ox would invade the corn to eat it, but then the watchman would grab it firmly by the muzzle. Having grabbed it firmly by the muzzle, he would pin it down by the forehead. Having pinned it down by the forehead, he would give it a sound thrashing with a stick. Having given it a sound thrashing with a stick, he would let it go.

“A second time... A third time... Having given it a sound thrashing with a stick, he would let it go.

“As a result, the corn-eating ox—regardless of whether it went to the village or to the wilds, was standing still or lying down—wouldn’t invade the corn again, because it would recall the earlier taste it got of the stick.

“In the same way, when a monk’s mind is held back, thoroughly held back, from the six media of sensory contact, his mind settles inwardly, grows steady, unified, & concentrated.

[SN 35:246 – The Lute](#)

Loss of mindfulness

When you see a sight, mindfulness is lost
as attention latches on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.

[Thag 1:98 - Abhaya](#)

The unfortunate man

But this young man of good family, having gone forth in this way, may be greedy for sensual pleasures, strong in his passions, malevolent in mind, corrupt in his resolves, his mindfulness muddled, unalert, uncentered, his mind scattered, & his faculties uncontrolled. Just as a firebrand from a funeral pyre — burning at both ends, covered with excrement in the middle — is used as fuel neither in a village nor in the wilderness: I tell you that this is a simile for this person. He has missed out on the householder's enjoyments and does not fulfill the purpose of the contemplative life."

He's missed out
on the householder's enjoyment
& the purpose of the contemplative life
— unfortunate man!
Ruining it, he throws it away,
perishes
like a firebrand used at a funeral.
Better to eat an iron ball
— glowing, aflame —
than that, unprincipled &
unrestrained,
he should eat the alms of the country.

[It 91](#)

ANUSSATI – RECOLLECTIONS

Inspire mind when needed

“There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, a fever based on the body arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme. As his mind is directed to any inspiring sign, gladness is born within him. In one who is gladdened, joy is born. In one whose mind is joyful, the body grows serene. His body serene, he feels pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, ‘I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw (my mind from the inspiring sign).’ He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns that ‘I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.’

[SN 47:10 – At the Nun’s Residence](#)

Gladness connected with Dhamma

“There is the case where you recollect the Tathāgata: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.’ At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Tathāgata. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma. In one who is glad, joy arises. In one whose mind is joyful, the body grows serene. His body serene, he feels pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind grows concentrated.

“Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: ‘Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the Buddha.’

“Then there is the case where you recollect the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.’ ...
... he develops the recollection of the Dhamma.’

“Then there is the case where you recollect the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types (of noble disciples) when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples: deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.’ ...
... he develops the recollection of the Saṅgha.’

“Then there is the case where you recollect your own virtues: ‘(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, conducive to concentration.’ ...
... he develops the recollection of virtue.’

“Then there is the case where you recollect your own generosity: ‘It is a gain, a great gain for me, that—among people overcome with the stain of possessiveness—I live at home, my awareness cleansed of the stain of possessiveness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms.’ ...
... he develops the recollection of generosity.’

“Then you should recollect the devas: “There are the Devas of the Four Great Kings, the Devas of the Thirty-three, the Devas of the Hours, the Contented Devas, the Devas who delight in creation, the Devas who wield power over the creations of others, the Devas of Brahmā’s Retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever conviction they were endowed with, so that—when

falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever virtue... learning... generosity... discernment they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well... recollecting the conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, and discernment found both in himself and the devas...
... he develops the recollection of the devas.”

[AN 11:12 - To Mahānāma](#)

To abandon fear

“But, monks, I tell you this: If, when you have gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, there should arise fear, terror, or horripilation, then on that occasion you should recollect me thus: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened... For when you recollect me, monks, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.’”

“If you don’t recollect me, then you should recollect the Dhamma thus: ‘The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One...’

“If you cannot recollect the Dhamma, then you should recollect the Saṅgha thus: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well...’

“Why is that? Because the Tathāgata, worthy & rightly self-awakened, is free of passion, free of aversion, free of delusion. He is fearless, cannot be terrorized, bold, not quick to flee.”

[SN 11:3 - The Top of the Standard](#)

Cultivate goodwill for concentration

"Monks, for one whose awareness-release through good will is cultivated, developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken, eleven benefits can be expected. Which eleven?

"One sleeps easily, wakes easily, dreams no evil dreams. One is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings. The devas protect one. Neither fire, poison, nor weapons can touch one. One's mind gains concentration quickly. One's complexion is bright. One dies unconfused and — if penetrating no higher — is headed for the Brahma worlds.

[AN 11:16 - Goodwill](#)

Similes to recall

If anger arises,
reflect on the [saw simile](#).
If craving for savor,
remember the [son’s-flesh simile](#).

If your mind runs loose
after sensual pleasures

& states of becoming,
quickly restrain it with mindfulness
as you would [a bad ox](#)
[eating grain](#).

[Thag 6:12 - Brahmadaṭṭa](#)

Marana – Death

For frequent reflection

“I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.’ This is the first fact that one should reflect on often....

“I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness’....

“I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death’....

“I will grow different, separate from all that is dear & appealing to me’....

“I am the owner of actions, heir to actions, born of actions, related through actions, and have actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir’....

[AN 5:57 – Subjects for Contemplation](#)

Keep death close

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed the monks. ‘Whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, “O, that I might live for a day & night...for a day...for the interval that it takes to eat a meal...for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal”—they are said to dwell heedlessly. They develop mindfulness of death slowly for the sake of ending the effluents.

‘But whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, “O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food...for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One’s instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal”—they are said to dwell heedfully. They develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents.

[AN 6:19 – Mindfulness of Death](#)

As if your head is on fire

“There is the case where a monk, as day departs and night returns, reflects: ‘Many are the (possible) causes of my death. A snake might bite me, a scorpion might sting me, a centipede might bite me. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me. Stumbling, I might fall; my food, digested, might trouble me; my bile might be provoked, my phlegm... piercing wind forces (in the body) might be provoked. That would be how my death would come about. That would be an obstruction for me.’ Then the monk should investigate: ‘Are there any evil, unskillful qualities unabandoned by me that would be an obstruction for me were I to die in the night?’ If, on reflecting, he realizes that there are evil, unskillful qualities

unabandoned by him that would be an obstruction for him were he to die in the night, then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head, in the same way the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities.

[AN 6:20 – Mindfulness of Death](#)

SATI - MINDFULNESS

Being mindful and alert

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

“And how is a monk alert? There is the case where feelings are known to the monk as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Perceptions are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. This is how a monk is alert.

[SN 47:35 - Mindful](#)

Being ardent

“And how is one ardent? There is the case where a monk, (thinking,) ‘Unarisen evil, unskillful qualities arising in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,’ arouses ardency. (Thinking,) ‘Arisen evil, unskillful qualities not being abandoned in me’... ‘Unarisen skillful qualities not arising in me’... ‘Arisen skillful qualities ceasing in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,’ he arouses ardency. This is how one is ardent.

[SN 16:2 – Without Compunction](#)

Stay in the present

You shouldn’t chase after the past
or place expectations on the future.

What is past
is left behind.

The future
is as yet unreached.

Whatever quality is present
you clearly see right there,
right there.

Not taken in, unshaken,
that’s how you develop the heart.

[MN 131 – An Auspicious Day](#)

Not possible without giving up

“Mendicants, without giving up these six qualities you can’t meditate observing an aspect of the body. What six? Relishing work, talk, sleep, and company, not guarding the sense doors, and eating too much. [AN 6:117 – Observing the Body](#)”

Immersed in the body

“And how is mindfulness immersed in the body developed, how is it pursued, so as to be of great fruit & great benefit?”

“There is the case where a monk—having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building—sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect and establishing mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’ Or breathing in short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in short’; or breathing out short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out short.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.’ And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.”

“And further, when walking, the monk discerns, ‘I am walking.’ When standing, he discerns, ‘I am standing.’ When sitting, he discerns, ‘I am sitting.’ When lying down, he discerns, ‘I am lying down.’ Or however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it...”

“And further, when going forward & returning, he makes himself fully alert; when looking toward & looking away... when bending & extending his limbs... when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe, & his bowl... when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring... when urinating & defecating... when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself fully alert...”

“And further, the monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: ‘In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.’ Just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain—wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice—and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, ‘This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice’; in the same way, the monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up...”

“And further, the monk contemplates this very body—however it stands, however it is disposed—in terms of properties: ‘In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property.’ Just as a dexterous butcher or his apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it up into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body—however it stands, however it is disposed—in terms of properties: ‘In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property’...

“And further, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground—one day, two days, three days dead—bloated, livid, & festering, he applies it to this very body, ‘This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate’...

“Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, & various other creatures... a skeleton smeared with flesh & blood, connected with tendons... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons... a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons... bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions—here a hand bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib, there a chest bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull... the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells... piled up, more than a year old... decomposed into a powder: He applies it to this very body, ‘This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate.’

[MN 119 – Mindfulness Immersed in the Body](#)

As if life depended on it

“Suppose, monks, that a large crowd of people were to come thronging together, saying, ‘The beauty queen! The beauty queen!’ And suppose that the beauty queen was highly accomplished at singing & dancing, so that an even greater crowd would come thronging, saying, ‘The beauty queen is singing! The beauty queen is dancing!’ Then a man would come along, desiring life & shrinking from death, desiring pleasure & abhorring pain. They would say to him, ‘Now look here, mister. You must take this bowl filled to the brim with oil and carry it on your head in between the great crowd & the beauty queen. A man with a raised sword will follow right behind you, and wherever you spill even a drop of oil, right there will he cut off your head.’ Now what do you think, monks? Would that man, not paying attention to the bowl of oil, let himself get distracted outside?”

“No, lord.”

“I have given you this parable to convey a meaning. The meaning is this: The bowl filled to the brim with oil stands for mindfulness immersed in the body. Thus you should train yourselves: ‘We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, hand it the reins, take it as a basis, steady it, consolidate it, and undertake it well.’ That is how you should train yourselves.”

[SN 47:20 – At Sedaka](#)

NĪVARANAPPĀHANA – ABANDONING THE HINDRANCES

Abandoning unskillful thoughts

“There is the case where evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—arise in a monk while he is referring to and attending to a particular theme. He should attend to another theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful. When he is attending to this other theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful, then those evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it. Just as a dexterous carpenter or his apprentice would use a small peg to knock out, drive out, and pull out a large one; in the same way, if evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—arise in a monk while he is referring to and attending to a particular theme, he should attend to another theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful. When he is attending to this other theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful, then those evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it.

“If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to this other theme, connected with what is skillful, he should scrutinize the drawbacks of those thoughts: ‘Really, these thoughts of mine are unskillful, these thoughts of mine are blameworthy, these thoughts of mine result in stress.’ As he is scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts, those evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion, or delusion—are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it. Just as a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, would be horrified, humiliated, and disgusted if the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human being were hung from her neck...

“If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts, he should pay no mind and pay no attention to those thoughts. As he is paying no mind and paying no attention to them, those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it. Just as a man with good eyes, not wanting to see forms that had come into range, would close his eyes or look away...

“If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is paying no mind and paying no attention to those thoughts, he should attend to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts. As he is attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts, those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it. Just as the thought would occur to a man walking quickly, ‘Why am I walking quickly? Why don’t I walk slowly?’ So he walks slowly. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I walking slowly? Why don’t I stand?’ So he stands. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I standing? Why don’t I sit down?’ So he sits down. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I sitting? Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. In this way, giving up the grosser posture, he takes up the more refined one...

“If evil, unskillful thoughts—connected with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts, then—with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he should beat down, constrain, and crush his mind with his awareness. As—with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he is beating down, constraining, and crushing his mind with his awareness, those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned and subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, and concentrates it. Just as a strong man, seizing a weaker man by the head or the throat or the shoulders, would beat him down, constrain, and crush him...

“Now when a monk... attending to another theme... scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts... paying no mind and paying no attention to those thoughts... attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts... beating down, constraining and crushing his mind with his awareness... steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it and concentrates it: He is then called a monk with mastery over the ways of thought sequences. He thinks whatever thought he wants to, and doesn't think whatever thought he doesn't.

[MN 20 – The Relaxation of Thoughts](#)

Food and lack of food

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen? There is the theme of beauty. To foster inappropriate attention to it: This is the food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is the theme of irritation...

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There are boredom, weariness, yawning, drowsiness after a meal, & sluggishness of awareness...

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is non-stillness of awareness...

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are phenomena that act as a foothold for uncertainty...

...

“Now, what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen? There is the theme of unattractiveness. To foster appropriate attention to it: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is awareness-release through goodwill...

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving...

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is stillness of awareness...

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light... [SN 46:51 – Food](#)

Dispelling thoughts gradually

“There are these gross impurities in gold: dirty sand, gravel, & grit. The dirt-washer or his apprentice, having placed (the gold) in a vat, washes it again & again until he has washed them away. When he is rid of them, there remain the moderate impurities in the gold: coarse sand & fine grit. He washes the gold again & again until he has washed them away. When he is rid of them, there remain the fine impurities in the gold: fine sand & black dust. The dirt-washer or his apprentice washes the gold again & again until he has washed them away.

“When he is rid of them, there remains just the gold dust. The goldsmith or his apprentice, having placed it in a crucible, blows on it again & again to blow away the dross. The gold, as long as it has not been blown on again & again to the point where the impurities are blown away, as long as it is not refined & free from dross, is not pliant, malleable, or luminous. It is brittle and not ready to be worked. But there comes a time when the goldsmith or his apprentice has blown on the gold again & again until the dross is blown away. The gold, having been blown on again & again to the point where the impurities are blown away, is then refined, free from dross, pliant, malleable, & luminous. It is not brittle, and is ready to be worked. Then whatever sort of ornament he has in mind—whether a belt, an earring, a necklace, or a gold chain—the gold would serve his purpose.

“In the same way, there are these gross impurities in a monk intent on heightened mind: misconduct in body, speech, & mind. These the monk—aware & able by nature—abandons, destroys, dispels, wipes out of existence. When he is rid of them, there remain in him the moderate impurities: thoughts of sensuality, ill will, & harmfulness... When he is rid of them there remain in him the fine impurities: thoughts of his caste, thoughts of his home district, thoughts related to not wanting to be despised...

“When he is rid of them, there remain only thoughts of the Dhamma. His concentration is neither peaceful nor refined, has not yet attained calm or unification, and is kept in place by the fabrication of forceful restraint. But there comes a time when his mind grows steady inwardly, settles down, grows unified & concentrated. His concentration is peaceful & refined, has attained calm & unification, and is no longer kept in place by the fabrication of forceful restraint. [AN 3:101 – The Dirt-washer](#)

Note what leads to concentration

“Suppose that there is a foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook who has presented a king or a king’s minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He doesn’t take note of his master, thinking, ‘Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry, or he praises that curry. Today my master likes mainly sour curry... bitter curry... peppery curry... sweet curry... alkaline curry... non-alkaline curry... salty curry... non-salty curry...’ As a result, he is not rewarded with clothing or wages or gifts. Why is that? Because the foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook doesn’t take note of his own master.

“In the same way, there is the case where a foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind doesn’t become concentrated, his defilements are not abandoned. He doesn’t take note of that fact. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, his mind doesn’t become concentrated, his defilements are not abandoned. He doesn’t take note of that fact. As a result, he is not rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, nor with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk doesn’t take note of his own mind.

[SN 47:8 – The Cook](#)

When sluggish and restless

“Now, monks, on any occasion when the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to develop calm as a factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is hard to raise up by those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to make a small fire blaze up, were to place wet grass in it, wet cow dung, & wet sticks; were to give it a spray of water and smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would make the small fire blaze up?”

“No, lord.”

...

“Now, on any occasion when the mind is sluggish, that is the right time to develop analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, joy as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is easy to raise up by those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to make a small fire blaze up, were to place dry grass in it, dry cow dung, & dry sticks; were to blow on it with his mouth and not smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would make the small fire blaze up?”

“Yes, lord.”

...

“Now, on any occasion when the mind is restless, that is the wrong time to develop analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, persistence as a factor for awakening, joy as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is hard to still with those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to put out a large fire, were to place dry grass in it, dry cow dung, & dry sticks;

were to blow on it with his mouth and not smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would put it out?”

“No, lord.”

...

“Now, on occasions when the mind is restless, that is the right time to develop calm as a factor for awakening, concentration as a factor for awakening, equanimity as a factor for awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is easy to still with those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to put out a large fire, were to place wet grass in it, wet cow dung, & wet sticks; were to give it a spray of water and smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would put it out?”

“Yes, lord.”

...

“As for mindfulness, I tell you, that serves every purpose.”

[SN 46:53 – Fire](#)

Right pitch for persistence

“Now what do you think, Soṇa? Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the lute?”

“Yes, lord.”

“And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were too taut, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were too loose, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“No, lord.”

“And what do you think? When the strings of your lute were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned to be right on pitch, was your lute in tune & playable?”

“Yes, lord.”

“In the same way, Soṇa, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the faculties (to that), and there pick up your theme.”

[AN 6:55 – About Soṇa](#)

JHĀNA – ABSORPTION

Noise is a thorn

“Monks, there are these ten thorns. Which ten?”

“For one who loves seclusion, love of entanglement is a thorn.

“For one committed to the theme of the unattractive, commitment to the theme of the attractive is a thorn.

“For one guarding the sense doors, watching a show is a thorn.

“For one practicing celibacy, nearness to women is a thorn.

“For the first jhāna, noise is a thorn.

“For the second jhāna, directed thoughts & evaluations are thorns.

“For the third jhāna, rapture is a thorn.

“For the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breaths are thorns.

“For the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling, perception & feelings are thorns.

[AN 10:72 – Thorns](#)

Withstand sense impressions

“A monk endowed with these five qualities is incapable of entering & remaining in right concentration. Which five? He cannot withstand [the impact of] sights... sounds... aromas... tastes... tactile sensations.”

[AN 5:113 – Concentration](#)

Before isolation in wilderness

“Upāli, it’s not easy to endure isolated wilderness & forest lodgings. It’s not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forests, as it were, plunder the mind of a monk who has not gained concentration. Whoever would say, ‘I, without having gained concentration, will spend time in isolated wilderness & forest lodgings,’ of him it can be expected that he will sink to the bottom or float away.

[AN 10:99 – To Upāli](#)

Progression in jhāna

The Blessed One said: “Now what, monks, is five-factored noble right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters and remains in the first jhāna: joy & happiness born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the joy & happiness born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by joy & happiness born from seclusion.

“Just as if a dexterous bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the joy & happiness born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by joy & happiness born from seclusion...

“And further, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters and remains in the second jhāna: joy & happiness born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought and evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the joy & happiness born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by joy & happiness born of concentration.

“Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from east, west, north, or south, and with the skies periodically supplying abundant showers, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, suffuse and fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the joy & happiness born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by joy & happiness born of concentration...

“And further, with the fading of joy, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters and remains in the third jhāna, and of him the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the pleasure divested of joy, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of joy.

“Just as in a blue-, white-, or red-lotus pond, there may be some of the blue, white, or red lotuses which, born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated and pervaded, suffused and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those blue, white, or red lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the pleasure divested of joy. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of joy...

“And further, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness.

“Just as if a man were sitting wrapped from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating his body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness...

“And further, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned by means of discernment.

“Just as if one person were to reflect on another, or a standing person were to reflect on a sitting person, or a sitting person were to reflect on a person lying down; even so, monks, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned by means of discernment... [AN 5:28 – The Factors of Concentration](#)

Entry into emptiness

“Just as this palace of Migāra’s mother is empty of elephants, cattle, & mares, empty of gold & silver, empty of assemblies of women & men, and there is only this non-emptiness—the singleness based on the Saṅgha of monks; even so, Ānanda, a monk—not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of human being—attends to the singleness

based on the perception of wilderness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness.

“He discerns that ‘Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of village are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.’ He discerns that ‘This mode of perception is empty of the perception of village. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.’ Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: ‘There is this.’ And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

“Further, Ānanda, the monk—not attending to the perception of human being, not attending to the perception of wilderness—attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth. Just as a bull’s hide is stretched free from wrinkles with a hundred stakes, even so—without attending to all the ridges & hollows, the river ravines, the tracts of stumps & thorns, the craggy irregularities of this earth—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth...

“Further, Ānanda, the monk – not attending to the perception of wilderness, not attending to the perception of earth – attends to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space... to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness... to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of nothingness... to the singleness based on the perception of the dimension of neither perception-nor non-perception... to the singleness based on the themeless concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its themeless concentration of awareness.”

[MN 121 – The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness](#)

Mastering strength

“A monk endowed with these six qualities is capable of mastering strength in concentration. Which six?

There is the case where a monk is skilled in the attaining of concentration, in the maintenance of concentration, & in the exit from concentration. He is deliberate in doing it, persevering in doing it, and amenable to doing it.

[AN 6:72 - Strength](#)

Paññā – Discernment

DIṬṬHI – VIEWS

Inappropriate attention

“This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’

“As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view ‘I have a self’ arises in him as true & established, or the view ‘I have no self’ ... or the view ‘It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self’ ... or the view ‘It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self’ ... or the view ‘It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self’ arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: ‘This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions—is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity’. This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

...

“He attends appropriately, ‘This is stress’ ... ‘This is the origination of stress’ ... ‘This is the cessation of stress’ ... ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of stress’. As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: self-identification view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the effluents to be abandoned by seeing.

[MN 2 – All the Effluents](#)

Self-identification

“Lord, how does self-identification view no longer come about?”

“There is the case, monk, where a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for people of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—doesn’t assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form. He doesn’t assume feeling to be the self.... doesn’t assume perception to be the self.... doesn’t assume fabrications to be the self.... He doesn’t assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness.

[MN 109 – The Great Full-Moon Night](#)

Dependently originated

When this had been said, the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, “We have each & every one expounded to you in line with our own positions. Now tell us what views you have.”

“Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. This is the sort of view I have.”

“So, householder, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. You thus adhere to that very stress, submit yourself to that very stress.”

“Venerable sirs, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it has come to be, I also discern the higher escape from it as it has come to be.” [AN 10:93 – Views](#)

Existence and non-existence

“By & large, Kaccāna, this world is supported by [takes as its object] a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one.

“By & large, Kaccāna, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings, & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on ‘my self.’ He has no uncertainty or doubt that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It’s to this extent, Kaccāna, that there is right view.

“‘Everything exists’: That is one extreme. ‘Everything doesn’t exist’: That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

...

From birth as a requisite condition, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

[SN 12:15 - To Kaccāna Gotta](#)

KĀYA – BODY

Asubha – Unattractive

Unattractive and loathsome

"'The perception of the unattractive, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. It gains a footing in the Deathless, has the Deathless as its final end': Thus was it said. In reference to what was it said?

"When a monk's awareness often remains steeped in the perception of the unattractive, his mind shrinks away from the completion of the sexual act, bends away, pulls back, and is not drawn in, and either equanimity or loathing take a stance.

...

"'The perception of loathsomeness in food, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit' ...

"When a monk's awareness often remains steeped in the perception of loathsomeness in food, his mind shrinks away from craving for flavors, bends away, pulls back, and is not drawn in, and either equanimity or loathing take a stance. [AN 7:46 - Perceptions](#)

A single body part

There was an heir to the One Awakened,
a monk in the Bhesakaḷā forest,
who suffused this whole earth
with the perception of
 "bones."

Quickly, I'd say, he abandoned
 sensual passion.

[Thag 1:18 – Father of Siṅgāla](#)

Many clans of impurities

Full of the many clans of impurities,
the great manufacturer of excrement,
like a stagnant pool,
 a great tumor,
 great wound,
full of blood & lymph,
immersed in a cesspool,
trickling liquids, the body
is oozing foulness—always.
Bound together with sixty sinews,
plastered with a stucco of muscle,
wrapped in a jacket of skin,

this foul body is of no worth at all.
Linked together with a chain of bones,
stitched together with tendon-threads,
it produces its various postures,
from being hitched up together.

[Thag 10:5 – Kappa](#)

Reflection on drawbacks

“And what is the perception of drawbacks? There is the case where a monk—having gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling—reflects thus: ‘This body has many pains, many drawbacks. In this body many kinds of disease arise, such as: seeing-diseases, hearing-diseases, nose-diseases, tongue-diseases, body-diseases, head-diseases, ear-diseases, mouth-diseases, teeth-diseases, cough, asthma, catarrh, fever, aging, stomach-ache, fainting, dysentery, grippe, cholera, leprosy, boils, ringworm, tuberculosis, epilepsy, skin-diseases, itch, scab, psoriasis, scabies, jaundice, diabetes, hemorrhoids, fistulas, ulcers; diseases arising from bile, from phlegm, from the wind-property, from combinations of bodily humors, from changes in the weather, from uneven care of the body, from attacks, from the result of karma; cold, heat, hunger, thirst, defecation, urination.’ Thus he remains focused on drawbacks with regard to this body.”

[AN 10:60 - To Girimānanda](#)

The aged courtesan

Black was my hair
—the color of bees—
& curled at the tips;
 with age, it looked like coarse hemp.
The Truth-speaker’s word
 doesn’t change.

Fragrant, like a perfumed basket
filled with flowers: my coiffure.
 With age it smelled musty,
 like animal fur...

Thick & lush, like a well-tended grove,
made splendid, the tips elaborate
with comb & pin.
 With age, it grew thin
 & bald here & there...

Adorned with gold & delicate pins,
it was splendid, ornamented with braids.
 Now, with age,
 that head has gone bald...

Curved, as if well-drawn by an artist,
my brows were once splendid.
 With age, they droop down in folds...

Radiant, brilliant like jewels,
my eyes: elongated, black—deep black.
 With age, they're no longer splendid...

Like a delicate peak, my nose
was splendid in the prime of my youth.
 With age, it's like a long pepper...

Like bracelets—well-fashioned, well-finished—
my ears were once splendid.
 With age, they droop down in folds...

Like plantain buds in their color,
my teeth were once splendid.
 With age, they're broken & yellowed...

Like that of a cuckoo in the dense jungle,
flitting through deep forest thickets:
sweet was the tone of my voice.
 With age, it cracks here & there...

Smooth—like a conch shell well-polished—
my neck was once splendid.
 With age, it's broken down, bent...

Like rounded door-bars—both of them—
my arms were once splendid.
 With age, they're like dried up pāṭalī trees...

Adorned with gold & delicate rings,
my hands were once splendid.
 With age, they're like onions & tubers...

Swelling, round, firm, & high,
both my breasts were once splendid.
 In the drought of old age, they dangle
 like empty old water bags...

Like a sheet of gold, well-burnished,
my body was splendid.
Now it's covered with very fine wrinkles...

Smooth in their lines, like an elephant's trunk,
both my thighs were once splendid.

With age, they're like knotted bamboo...

Adorned with gold & delicate anklets,
my calves were once splendid.

With age, they're like sesame sticks...

As if they were stuffed with soft cotton,
both my feet were once splendid.

With age, they're shriveled & cracked...

Such was this physical heap,
now: decrepit, the home of pains, many pains.

A house with its plaster all fallen off.

The Truth-speaker's word
doesn't change.

[Thig 13:1 – Ambapāli](#)

Enough to beguile a fool

See this fancy puppet,
a body built of sores, diseased, obsessed over,
which doesn't last at all.

See this fancy puppet,
with its gems and earrings; it is bones wrapped with skin,
made pretty by its clothes.

Rouged feet
and powdered face may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.

Hair in eight braids
and eyeliner may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.

A rotting body all adorned
like a freshly painted makeup box may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.

[Thag 17:3 – Ānanda](#)

A fools' delight

I, Kulla, went to a charnel ground
and saw a woman's body abandoned there,
discarded in a cemetery,
full of worms that devoured.

“See this bag of bones, Kulla—
diseased, filthy, rotten,
oozing and trickling,
a fool’s delight.”

Taking the teaching as a mirror
for realizing knowledge and vision,
I examined this body,
hollow, inside and out.

[Thag 6:4 – Kulla](#)

Isn’t seen for what it is

Whether walking, standing,
sitting, or lying down,
it flexes & stretches:

 This is the body’s movement.

Joined together with tendons & bones,
plastered over with muscle & skin,
hidden by complexion,
 the body isn’t seen
 for what it is:

filled with intestines, filled with stomach,
with the lump of the liver,
bladder, lungs, heart,
kidneys, spleen,
mucus, sweat, saliva, fat,
blood, synovial fluid, bile, & oil.

On top of that,
in nine streams,
filth is always flowing from it—
from the eyes: eye secretions,
from the ears: ear secretions,
from the nose: mucus,
from the mouth it vomits:

 now vomit,
 now phlegm,
 now bile;

from the body: beads of sweat.

And on top of that,
its hollow head is filled with brains.
The fool, beset by ignorance,
thinks it beautiful,
but when it lies dead,
 swollen, livid,
 cast away in a charnel ground,

even relatives don't care for it.
Dogs feed on it,
jackals, wolves, & worms.
Crows & vultures feed on it,
along with any other animals there.

Having heard the Awakened One's words,
the discerning monk
comprehends, for he sees it
 for what it is:
"As this is, so is that.
As that, so this."
Within & without,
he should let desire for the body
 fade away.

...

This two-footed thing is cared for,
filthy, evil-smelling,
filled with various carcasses,
oozing out here & there:
Whoever would think,
on the basis of a body like this,
to exalt himself or disparage another—
 What is that if not blindness?

[Snp 1:11 – Victory](#)

Turn body inside out

Why cling to this rotting body so foul,
stinking of fluids,
a horrifying water-bag of corpses,
always oozing, full of filth?

Knowing it like I do, what's the point?
A carcass is vile, smeared with flesh and blood,
food for birds and swarms of worms—
why have we been given it?

Before long the body, bereft of consciousness,
is carried out to the charnel ground,
to be tossed aside like an old log
by relatives in disgust.

When they've tossed it away in the charnel ground,
to be eaten by others, your own parents
bathe themselves, disgusted;
what then of people at large?

They're attached to this hollow carcass,
this mass of sinews and bone;
this rotting body
full of saliva, tears, feces, and pus.

If anyone were to dissect it,
turning it inside out,
the intolerable stench
would disgust even their own mother.

[Thig 16:1 – Samedhā](#)

Anattā – Not Self

Subject to dissolution

“Now, Aggivessana, this body—endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother & father, nourished with rice & porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion—should be envisioned as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. In one who envisions the body as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self, any desire for the body, attraction to the body, following after the body is abandoned.

[MN 74 – To LongNails](#)

Like a useless scrap of wood

All too soon, this body
will lie on the ground
 cast off,
bereft of consciousness,
like a useless scrap
 of wood.

[Dhp 41 – The Mind](#)

Stay uninvolved with the body

Those who hold to this body as mine
—blind fools, people run-of-the-mill—
fill the horrific cemetery,
taking on further becoming.
Those who stay uninvolved with this body
—as they would with a serpent
 smeared with dung—
disgorging the root of becoming,
will, without effluent,
 totally unbind.

[Thag 10:5 – Kappa](#)

It should not be mine

If one were to have
mindfulness always
established, continually
immersed in the body,
 (thinking,
“It should not be,
it should not occur to me;
it will not be,
it will not occur to me”-
 there,
in that step-by-step dwelling,
 one in no long time
 would cross over
 attachment.

[Ud 7:8 – Kaccāna](#)

Discarding properties

“And what is the earth property? The earth property can be either internal or external. What is the internal earth property? Anything internal, within oneself, that’s hard, solid, & sustained (by craving): head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or anything else internal, within oneself, that’s hard, solid, and sustained: This is called the internal earth property. Now both the internal earth property & the external earth property are simply earth property. And that should be seen as it has come to be with right discernment: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.’ When one sees it thus as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the earth property and discards the earth property from the mind.

“And what is the liquid property? The liquid property may be either internal or external. What is the internal liquid property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that’s liquid, watery, & sustained: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or anything else internal, within oneself, that’s liquid, watery, & sustained: This is called the internal liquid property... discards the liquid property from the mind.

“And what is the fire property? The fire property may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that’s fire, fiery, & sustained: that by which (the body) is warmed, aged, & consumed with fever; and that by which what is eaten, drunk, chewed, & savored gets properly digested; or anything else internal, within oneself, that’s fire, fiery, & sustained: This is called the internal fire property... discards the fire property from the mind.

“And what is the wind property? The wind property may be either internal or external. What is the internal wind property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that’s wind, windy, &

sustained: up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the stomach, winds in the intestines, winds that course through the body, in-and-out breathing, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's wind, windy, & sustained: This is called the internal wind property... discards the wind property from the mind.”

[MN 140 – Analysis of the Properties](#)

VEDANĀ – FEELING

Dependent on the body

“As a monk is dwelling thus mindful & alert—heedful, ardent, & resolute—a feeling of pleasure arises in him. He discerns that ‘A feeling of pleasure has arisen in me. It is dependent on a requisite condition, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on this body. Now, this body is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen. Being dependent on a body that is inconstant, fabricated, & dependently co-arisen, how can this feeling of pleasure that has arisen be constant?’ He remains focused on inconstancy with regard to the body & to the feeling of pleasure. He remains focused on dissolution... dispassion... cessation... relinquishment with regard to the body & to the feeling of pleasure. As he remains focused on inconstancy... dissolution... dispassion... cessation... relinquishment with regard to the body & to the feeling of pleasure, he abandons any passion-obsession for the body & the feeling of pleasure.

“As he is dwelling thus mindful & alert—heedful, ardent, & resolute—a feeling of pain arises in him. He discerns that ‘A feeling of pain has arisen in me... he abandons any resistance-obsession for the body & the feeling of pain.

“As he is dwelling thus mindful & alert—heedful, ardent, & resolute—a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain arises in him. He discerns that ‘A feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain has arisen in me... he abandons any ignorance-obsession for the body & the feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

“Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he discerns that it is inconstant, not grasped at, not relished. Sensing a feeling of pain... Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he discerns that it is inconstant, not grasped at, not relished. Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain... Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. When sensing a feeling limited to the body, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to the body.’ When sensing a feeling limited to life, he discerns that ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to life.’ He discerns that ‘With the break-up of the body, after the termination of life, all that is experienced, not being relished, will grow cold right here.’

[SN 36:7 – Sick Ward](#)

Physical and mental

The Blessed One said, “When touched with a feeling of pain, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical & mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, were to shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pains of two arrows...

“As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is resistant. Any resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he delights in sensuality. Why is that? Because the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person does not discern any escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is delighting in sensuality, any passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling. As he does not discern the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling, then any ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

“Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it as though joined with it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it as though joined with it. This is called an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person joined with birth, aging, & death; with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is joined, I tell you, with suffering & stress.

“Now, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones, when touched with a feeling of pain, does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. So he feels one pain: physical, but not mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, did not shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pain of only one arrow...

“As he is touched by that painful feeling, he is not resistant. No resistance-obsession with regard to that painful feeling obsesses him. Touched by that painful feeling, he does not delight in sensuality. Why is that? Because the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns an escape from painful feeling aside from sensuality. As he is not delighting in sensuality, no passion-obsession with regard to that feeling of pleasure obsesses him. He discerns, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling. As he discerns the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, and escape from that feeling, no ignorance-obsession with regard to that feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain obsesses him.

“Sensing a feeling of pleasure, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of pain, he senses it disjoined from it. Sensing a feeling of neither-pleasure-nor-pain, he senses it disjoined from it. This is called a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones disjoined from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is disjoined, I tell you, from suffering & stress.”

[SN 36:6 – The Arrow](#)

Whatever is felt

“Knowing that
whatever is felt—
pleasure, pain,
neither pleasure nor pain,
within or without—
is stressful;
seeing
 its deceptive nature,

its dissolving,
its passing away
at each contact,
each
contact,
he knows it right there:
With just the ending of feeling,
there is no stress
coming into play.

[Snp 3:12 – The Contemplation of Dualities](#)

VIÑÑĀNA – CONSCIOUSNESS

As not-self

As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ānanda, “In many ways the body has been pointed out, revealed, and announced by the Blessed One (with these words): ‘For this reason the body is not-self.’ Can consciousness in the same way be declared, taught, described, set forth, revealed, explained, & made plain (with these words): ‘For this reason consciousness is not-self?’”

“It can... Doesn’t eye-consciousness arise in dependence on the eye & forms?”

“Yes, friend.”

“And if the cause & reason for the arising of eye-consciousness were to cease totally everywhere, totally in every way without remainder, would eye-consciousness be discerned?”

“No, friend.”

...

“Doesn’t ear-consciousness arise in dependence on the ear & sounds?” ...

“Doesn’t nose-consciousness arise in dependence on the nose & aromas?” ...

“Doesn’t tongue-consciousness arise in dependence on the tongue & flavors?” ...

“Doesn’t body-consciousness arise in dependence on the body & tactile sensations?” ...

Doesn’t intellect-consciousness arise in dependence on the intellect & ideas?”

“Yes, friend.”

“And if the cause & reason for the arising of intellect-consciousness were to cease totally everywhere, totally in every way without remainder, would intellect-consciousness be discerned?”

“No, friend.”

“It’s in this way, friend, that consciousness has been pointed out, revealed, and announced by the Blessed One: ‘For this reason consciousness is not-self.’”

[SN 35:234 – With Udāyī](#)

Transcending pride

The perception of not-self in what is stressful, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. It gains a footing in the deathless, has the deathless as its final end': Thus was it said. In reference to what was it said?

“When a monk’s awareness often remains steeped in the perception of not-self in what is stressful, his heart is devoid of I-making & my-making with regard to this conscious body and externally with regard to all themes, has transcended pride, is at peace, and is well released.

[AN 7:46 - Perceptions](#)

When one doesn’t intend

Staying near Sāvattḥī ... (the Blessed One said,) “Monks, what one intends, what one arranges, and what one obsesses about: This is a support for the stationing of consciousness. There being a support, there is a landing of consciousness. When that consciousness lands and grows, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. When there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. Such is the origination of this entire mass of suffering & stress.

...

“But when one doesn’t intend, arrange, or obsess (about anything), there is no support for the stationing of consciousness. There being no support, there is no landing of consciousness. When that consciousness doesn’t land & grow, there is no production of renewed becoming in the future. When there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering & stress.”

[SN 12:38 - Intention](#)

Neither here nor there

“Then, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor there nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress.”

[Ud 1:10 - Bāhiya](#)

Glossary

English – Pāli

action: <i>kamma</i>	intellect: <i>manas</i>
aggregate: <i>khandha</i>	intention: <i>cetanā</i>
alertness: <i>sampajañña</i>	mind: <i>citta</i>
appropriate attention: <i>yoniso manasikāra</i>	not-self: <i>anatta</i>
awakening: <i>bodhi</i>	obsession: <i>anusaya</i>
awareness-release: <i>cetovimutti</i>	origination: <i>samudaya</i>
consciousness: <i>viññāna</i>	perception: <i>saññā</i>
contemplative: <i>samaṇa</i>	persistence: <i>virīya</i>
conviction: <i>saddhā</i>	phenomenon: <i>dhamma</i>
cosmos: <i>loka</i>	property: <i>dhātu</i>
dimension: <i>āyatana</i>	quality: <i>dhamma</i>
directed thought: <i>vitakka</i>	release: <i>vimutti</i>
discern: <i>pajānāti</i>	resolve: <i>saṅkappa</i>
discernment: <i>paññā</i>	self-awakening: <i>sambodhi</i>
discernment-release: <i>paññāvimutti</i>	self-identification: <i>sakkhāya</i>
disenchantment: <i>nibbidā</i>	sensuality: <i>kāma</i>
dispassion: <i>virāga</i>	skillful: <i>kusala</i>
effluent: <i>āsava</i>	stream-entry: <i>sotāpatti</i>
emptiness: <i>suññatā</i>	stress: <i>dukkha</i>
evaluation: <i>vicāra</i>	sustenance: <i>upādāna</i>
fabricated: <i>saṅkhata</i>	theme: <i>nimitta</i>
fabrication: <i>saṅkhāra</i>	tranquility: <i>samatha</i>
gnosis: <i>añña</i>	unbinding: <i>nibbāna</i>
goodwill: <i>mettā</i>	unfabricated: <i>asaṅkhata</i>
inconstant: <i>anicca</i>	world: <i>loka</i>

Aggregate: *Khandha*. Physical and mental phenomena as they are directly experienced; the raw material for a sense of self: *rūpa*—physical form; *vedanā*—feeling-tones of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain; *saññā*—perception, mental label; *saṅkhāra*—fabrication, thought construct; and *viññāna*—sensory consciousness, the act of taking note of sense data and ideas as they occur.

Becoming: *Bhava*. A sense of identity within a particular world of experience – a process that begins within the mind and that allows for physical and mental birth on any of three levels: the level of sensuality, form, and formlessness.

Clinging: *Upādāna*. Takes four forms: to sensuality, to habits & practices, to views, and to theories about the self.

Effluent: *Āsava*. Four qualities—sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance—that “flow out” of the mind and create the flood (*ogha*) of the round of death & rebirth.

Fabrication: *Saṅkhāra*. Literally means “putting together”, and carries connotations of jerry-rigged artificiality. It is applied to physical and to mental processes, as well as to the products of those processes. Various words and phrases have been suggested as renderings, such as “formation”, “determination”, “force”, and “constructive activity”. However, “fabrication”, in both of its senses, as the process of fabrication and the fabricated things that result, seems the best equivalent for capturing the connotations as well as the denotations of the term.

Fetter: *Samyojana*. The ten fetters that bind the mind to the round of death and rebirth are identity views, uncertainty, grasping at habits and practices, sensual passion, irritation, passion for form, passion for formlessness, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

Inconstant: *Anicca*. The usual rendering is “impermanent”. However, the antonym of the term, *nicca*, carries connotations of constancy and reliability; and as *anicca* is used to emphasize the point that conditioned phenomena are unreliable as a basis for true happiness, this seems a useful rendering for conveying this point.

Obsession: *Anusaya*. Usually translated as “underlying tendency” or “latent tendency”. These translations are based on the etymology of the term, which literally means, “to lie down with”. However, in actual usage, the related verb (*anuseti*) means to be obsessed with something, for thoughts to return and “lie down with it” (or, in our idiom, to “dwell on it”) over and over again.

Stress: *Dukkha*. Traditionally translated in the commentaries as, “that which is hard to bear,” is notorious for having no truly equivalent word, but stress – in its basic sense as a strain on body and mind, seems as close as it can get. In the Canon, *dukkha* applies both to physical and to mental phenomena, ranging from the intense stress of acute anguish or pain to the innate burdensomeness of even the most subtle mental or physical fabrications.

Transmigration: *Samṣāra*. The process of wandering through repeated states of becoming, with their attendant death and rebirth.

Unbinding: *Nibbāna*. Literally, the “unbinding” of the mind from passion, aversion, and delusion, and from the entire round of death and rebirth. As this term also denotes the extinguishing of a fire, it carries connotations of stilling, cooling, and peace.

Pāli – English

Arahant: A “worthy one” or “pure one”; a person whose mind is free of defilement and thus not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

Brahmā: A deva inhabitant of the higher heavenly realms of form or formlessness.

Brāhman: A member of the priestly caste, which claimed to be the highest caste in India, based on birth. In a specifically Buddhist usage, “brāhman” can also mean an arahant, conveying the point that excellence is based not on birth or race, but on the qualities attained in the mind.

Deva(-tā): Literally, “shining one.” A being on the subtle levels of sensuality, form, or formlessness, living either in terrestrial or heavenly realms.

Dhamma: (1) Event, action, (2) a phenomenon in and of itself, (3) mental quality, (4) doctrine, teaching, (5) unbinding (although there are passages describing unbinding as the abandoning of all dhammas).

Gotama: The Buddha’s clan name.

Jhāna: Mental absorption. A state of strong concentration focused on a single sensation or mental notion.

Kamma: (1) Intentional action, (2) the results of intentional actions.

Māra: The personification of evil and temptation.

Pāli: The language of the oldest extant Canon of the Buddha’s teachings.

Saṅgha: On the conventional level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns. On the noble level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry.

Tathāgata: Literally, one who has “become authentic (tatha-āgata)” or who is “truly gone (tathā-gata)”: an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his arahant disciples.

Uposatha: Observance day, the day of the new and of the full moon; traditionally, in India, a time of special spiritual practices. The Buddha adopted this as the day for reciting the Pāṭimokkha.

Vinaya: The monastic discipline, whose rules and traditions comprise six volumes in printed text. The Buddha’s own term for the religion he taught was, “This Dhamma-Vinaya.”