

The Pali Canon

Selected Passages

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

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The City

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

So too, bhikkhus, I saw the ancient path, the ancient road travelled by the Fully Awakened Ones of the past. And what is that ancient path, that ancient road? It is just this noble eightfold path; that is: appropriate seeing, thinking, talking, acting, working, trying, recollecting, concentrating. I followed that path and by doing so I have directly known aging and death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation.... [S II 105-6 Tr. Bodhi]

The Raft

Suppose, bhikkhus, a man in the course of a journey saw a great expanse of water, whose near shore was dangerous and fearful and whose further shore

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

No, venerable sir.

By doing what would that man be doing what should be done with the raft? Having arrived at the far shore, he might think thus: 'This raft has been very helpful to me, suppose I were to haul it onto the dry land or set it adrift in the water, and then go wherever I want.' Now, bhikkhus, it is by so doing that the man would be doing what should be done with that raft. So I have shown you how the dhamma is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.

Bhikkhus, when you know the dhamma to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even good states (*dhamma*), how much more so bad states (*adhamma*). [M 22, i. 135. tr. Nanamoli/Bodhi - abridged]

The Ocean

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

... Just as whatever great rivers there are - the Ganges, the Yamuna, the Aciravati, the Sarabhu, and the Mahi - on reaching the great ocean lose

their former names and identities and are just called 'the great ocean,' so also those of the four castes - nobles, brahmins, merchants and workers - having gone forth from home to the homeless state in the Dhamma and Discipline, abandon their former names and identities and are just called 'recluses, the followers of the Sakyan Son.'

...Just as the great ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, so also this Dhamma and Discipline has one taste, the taste of liberation. [Udana 5.5, tr. Ireland - abridged]

The Noble Quest

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

Why should I now reveal what I reached with difficulty?

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

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

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

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

Turning the Wheel of Dhamma

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

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

“I have awoken to a middle path that does not lead to dead ends. It is a path that generates vision and awareness. It leads to tranquillity, insight, awakening and release. It has eight branches: appropriate seeing, thinking, talking, acting, working, trying, recollecting, concentrating.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“There arose in me illumination about things previously unknown.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Buddha compares a person who has not grasped the import of the four truths to “a tuft of cotton wool or kapok,” which is blown hither and thither by the wind. Lacking direction and purpose, such a fickle person is prone “to look up at the face of another ascetic or brahmin, thinking: ‘This worthy one is surely one who knows, who really sees!’” Yet one who has understood the four truths is compared to “a stone column sixteen feet high, half of which is sunk in the ground and half of which stands above it.” For no matter how hard the winds blow, such a person does not “shake, quake or tremble” and has no inclination to go seeking wisdom at the feet of every passing guru [quoted passages from S. V 443-6, tr. Bodhi]

The Mark of Not Self

Again He addressed the group of five monks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Impermanent, sir.”

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

“Suffering, sir.”

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

“No, sir.”

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

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

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

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

Conditioned Arising

One who sees conditioned arising sees the dhamma; and one who sees the dhamma, sees conditioned arising. [M 28, i. 191]

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

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This conditioned arising is profound and appears profound. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this dhamma that people have become like tangled balls of string, covered with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, ill destiny, ruin and repetition. [D15, ii 55]

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

863. 'From [what is] dear arise quarrels, disputes, lamentations and grief, together with avarice also, pride and arrogance, together with slander too. Quarrels [and] disputes are joined with avarice, and there are slanders too, when disputes have arisen.'

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

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

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

867. 'Desire arises from dependence upon what they call 'pleasant' and 'unpleasant' in the world. Seeing non-existence and existence in forms, a person makes his decision in the world.

868. 'Anger and lie-telling and doubt, and those mental states too [come into existence] when this very pair [pleasant and unpleasant] exist. A doubtful man should train himself in the path of knowledge. The ascetic spoke about mental states from knowledge.'

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

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

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

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

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

874. 'He has no [ordinary] perception of perceptions, he has no deranged perception of perceptions, he is not without perception, he has no perception of what has disappeared. For one who has attained to such a state form disappears, for that which is named 'proliferation' (*papanca*) has its origin in perception.'

[Sn. 862-74, tr. Norman]

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

'Monks, as to the source through which perceptions and notions tinged by proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendencies to greed, aversion, views, doubt, conceit, desire for being, and ignorance. This is the end of resorting to

rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malice, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.'

[Mahakaccana:] 'Friends, dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What one feels, that one perceives. What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates. With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions tinged by proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye.'

[M. 18 "Honeyball", i. 109 - 112, tr. Nanamoli/Bodhi]

Consciousness

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

Buddha: 'What is that consciousness, Sati?'

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

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

‘Bhikkhus, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye consciousness, etc.... Just as fire is reckoned by the particular condition dependent on which it burns – when fire depends on logs, it is reckoned as a log fire, etc.’ [M. 38 i 258-9 Tr. Nanamoli/Bodhi (abridged)]

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

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

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

Well then, friend, I will make up a simile for you... Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with name-and-form as condition, consciousness [comes to be]; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form [come to be]... [S II 115, Tr Bodhi]

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And what, bhikkhus, is name-and-form? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, attention: this is called name. The four great elements and the form

derived from the four great elements: this is called form. Thus this name and form are together called name-and-form.

And what, bhikkhus, is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness. [S II 3-4, Tr. Bodhi]

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All this was then undifferentiated. It got differentiated by name and form, so that one could say: "He is so and so, and has such and such a form."

Therefore, at present also all beings are differentiated by name and form, so that one can say: "He is so and so, and has such and such a form."

[*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.7*]

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

Mindfulness/Recollection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action [*kamma*]

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

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

“Some feelings, Sivaka, arise here originating from phlegm disorders ... from wind disorders ... from an imbalance [of the three ... produced by change of climate ... produced by careless behaviour ... caused by assault ... produced as the result of kamma: how some feelings arise here originating from bile disorders one can know for oneself, and that is considered to be true in the world. Now when those ascetics and brahmins hold such a doctrine and view as this: ‘Whatever a person experiences, whether it be pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, all that is caused by what was done in the past,’ they overshoot what one knows by oneself and they overshoot what is considered to be true in the world. Therefore I say that this is wrong on the part of those ascetics and brahmins...” [S. IV 229-31, Tr. Bodhi]

By action is one a farmer, by action a craftsman,
By action is one a merchant, by action a servant,
By action is one a thief, by action a soldier,
By action is one a priest, by action a ruler,

In this way the wise see action as it really is,
Seeing conditioned arising, understanding result of action.

[Sn. 651-3. Tr. Nanavira]

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

[Dhp. 80 tr. SB]

Middle Way

This humankind is attached to self-production
Or holds to other-production.
Those who have not understood this
Have not seen it as a dart.

But one who sees
Having drawn out the dart,
Does not think, "I am the agent,"
Nor does he think, "Another is the agent."

[Ud. 6.6 Tr. Ireland]

What has been attained and what is still to be attained – both these are littered with dust for a frail person ... Those who hold training as the essence, or who hold virtue and vow, pure livelihood, celibacy, and service as the essence – this is one extreme. And those with such theories and such views as "There is

no fault in sensual desires” – this is the second extreme. Both these extremes cause the cemeteries to grow, and the cemeteries cause wrong views to grow. By not penetrating these two extremes some hold back and some go too far. But for those who penetrated them, and were no more found among them, and who did not conceive on this account, there is no round for the manifestation of them. [Ud. 6.8 Tr. Ireland]

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

The Declared and the Undeclared

The world is eternal; the world is not eternal.

The world is finite; the world is infinite.

The soul is the same as the body; the soul is one thing and the body another.

After death a Tathagata exists; after death a Tathagata does not exist; after death a Tathagata both exists and does not exist; after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist.

“The Buddha does not declare these to me, and I do not approve of and accept the fact that he does not declares these to me. Only if he declares to me

either 'the world is eternal' or 'the world is not eternal' etc, then I will lead the spiritual life under him. If he does not, then I will abandon the training."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...then, Malunkyaputta, you will not be ‘of that’. When you are not ‘of that’ then you will not be ‘in that’. When you are not ‘in that’, then you will be neither here nor hereafter nor in between the two. This is the end of suffering.” [S IV. 73, Tr. Bodhi Cf. *Udana* 1, 10]

Stream Entry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*

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

*

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

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

The Unconditioned

“There is, monks, a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned. If, monks, there were no not-born, not-brought-to-being, not-made, not-conditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned. But since there is a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned, therefore an escape is discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned.” [*Udana* 8.3, Tr. Ireland]

*

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

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

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

*

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

And the answer is:

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

[D. 11, 222-3, tr. Walshe; cf. M. 49, 329, which in Nanamoli/Bodhi's tr. we find: "The consciousness that makes no showing [*anidassanam*]. Nor has it to do with finiteness, Not claiming being with respect to all [*sabbato pabham*]." Bodhi: "These lines have been a perennial challenge to Buddhist scholarship, and even Buddhaghosa seems to founder over them." cf. A 1.6: "This mind [*citta*] is luminous, but is defiled by adventitious defilements, etc." See Thanissaro, *Handful of Leaves* 3, 1-2.]

God

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

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

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

"Vasettha, it is just as if a man were to say: "I am going to seek out and love the most beautiful girl in the country." They might say to him: "...Do you know what caste she belongs to?" "No." "Do you know her name, her clan, whether she is short or tall, dark or light-complexioned, or where she

comes from?" "No." And they might say: "Well then, you don't know or see the one you seek for and desire?" and he would say: "No." Does not the talk of that man turn out to be stupid?'

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

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

*

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

"But, Udayin, what is that perfect splendour?'

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

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

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

"Udayin, you might continue for a long time in this way. [M 79, ii 32-5, Tr. Nanamoli/Bodhi]

*

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

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

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

Sunakkhatta

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

Now, on that occasion Sunakkhatta, son of the Licchavis, had recently left this dhamma and discipline. He was making this statement before the Vesali assembly: “The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a dhamma hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of enquiry as it occurs to him, and when he teaches the dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practises it to the complete destruction of suffering.” ...

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

Last Words

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

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

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

**vaya dhamma sankhara appamedena sampadethati*

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

Sutta Nipata

Sn. 249. Not the flesh of fish, nor fasting, nor nakedness, nor shaven head, matted hair, dirt, nor rough animal skins, nor observance of the fire ceremony, nor even the many penances there are in the world for [gaining]

immortality, nor hymns nor oblations, nor the performance of sacrifices at the proper season, purify a mortal who has not crossed beyond doubt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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