

# Theravāda Buddhism

## *Selections from the Pāli Canon*

### I. The Four Noble Truths

*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*  
(*Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*)  
(The First Sermon of the Buddha)

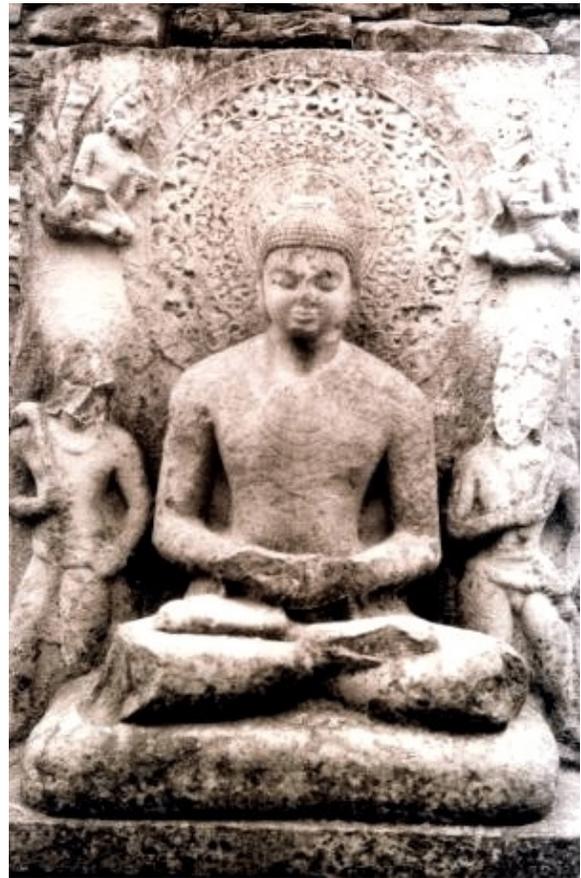
Thus have I heard. The Blessed One was once living in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers) near Bārānasi (Benares). There he addressed the group of five bhikkhus:

"Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be practised by one who has gone forth from the household life. What are the two? There is devotion to the indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, common, the way of ordinary people, unworthy and unprofitable; and there is devotion to self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable.

"Avoiding both these extremes, the Tathāgata has realized the Middle Path: it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna*. And what is that Middle Path. . . ? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the Middle Path realized by the Tathāgata, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna*.

"The Noble Truth of suffering (*Dukkha*) is this: Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; association with the unpleasant is suffering; dissociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering—in brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering.

"The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering is this: It is this thirst (craving) [*Taṇhā*] which produces re-existence and re-becoming, bound up with passionate greed. It finds fresh delight now here and now there,

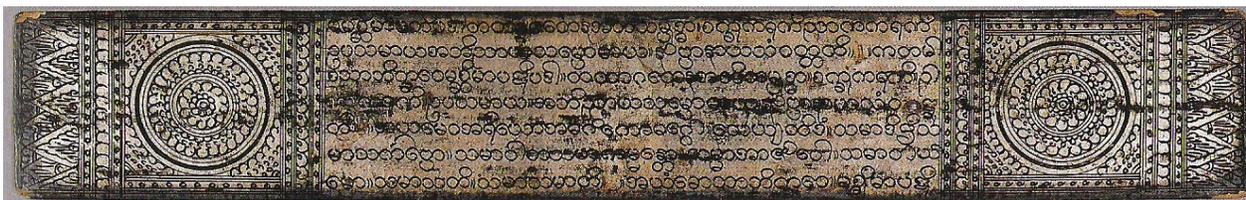


namely, thirst for sense-pleasures; thirst for existence and becoming; and thirst for non-existence (self-annihilation).

"The Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering is this: It is the complete cessation of that very thirst, giving it up, renouncing it, emancipating oneself from it, detaching oneself from it.

"The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering is this: It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path, namely right view; right thought; right speech, right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; right concentration.

"This is the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha*): such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, should be fully understood': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with



Manuscript of *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* in Pali. Black Burmese script on palm leaf.

regard to things not heard before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, has been fully understood': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of suffering': such was the vision . . . 'This Origin of suffering, as a noble truth, should be abandoned': such was the vision, . . . 'This Origin of suffering, as a noble truth, has been abandoned': such was the vision, . . . with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering': such was the vision. . . 'This cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be realized': such was the vision, . . . 'This Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been realized': such was the vision, . . . with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering': such was the vision, . . . 'This Path leading to the Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be followed (cultivated)': such was the vision, . . . 'This Path leading to the Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been followed (cultivated)': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

"As long as my vision of true knowledge was not fully clear in these *three* aspects, in these twelve ways, regarding the Four Noble Truths, I did not claim to have realized the perfect Enlightenment that is supreme in the world with its gods, with its Maras and Brahmas, in this world with its recluses and brāhmaṇas, with its princes and men. But when my vision of true knowledge was fully clear in these three aspects, in these twelve ways, regarding the Four Noble Truths, then I claimed to have realized the perfect Enlightenment that is supreme in the world with its gods, its Maras and Brahmas, in this world with its recluses and brāhmaṇas, with its princes and men. And a vision of true knowledge arose in me thus: My heart's deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no more re-becoming (rebirth).

This the Blessed One said. The group of five bhikkhus was glad, and they rejoiced at his words.

(*Saṃyutta nikāya*, LVI, 11)

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## II. The Three Characteristics

### *The Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic*

(*Anatta-lakkhana Sutta*)

(The Second Sermon of the Buddha)

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five: "Bhikkhus." — "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this.

"Bhikkhus, form (*rūpa*) is not-self. Were form self, then this form would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of form: 'Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus.' And since form is not-self, so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of form: 'Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus.'

"Bhikkhus, feeling (*vedanā*) is not-self. . .

"Bhikkhus, perception (*saññā*) is not-self. . .

"Bhikkhus, determinations (*saṅkhāra*) are not-self. . .

"Bhikkhus, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is not self. Were consciousness self, then this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of consciousness: 'Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus.' And since consciousness is not-self, so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of consciousness: 'Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus.'

"Bhikkhus, how do you conceive it: is form permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, venerable Sir."

"Now is what is impermanent painful or pleasant?"

"Painful, venerable Sir."

"Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this is I, this is my self'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"Is feeling permanent or impermanent?..."

"Is perception permanent or impermanent?..."

"Are determinations permanent or impermanent?..."

"Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, venerable sir."

"Now is what is impermanent pleasant or painful?"

"Painful, venerable sir."

"Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this is I, this is my self'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"So, bhikkhus any kind of form whatever, whether past, future or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself.'

"Any kind of feeling whatever...

"Any kind of perception whatever...

"Any kind of determination whatever...

"Any kind of consciousness whatever, whether past, future or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near must, with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not my self.'

"Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds estrangement in form, he finds estrangement in feeling, he finds estrangement in perception, he finds estrangement in determinations, he finds estrangement in consciousness.

"When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of passion, he is liberated. When liberated, there is knowledge that he is liberated. He understands: 'Birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, the hearts of the bhikkhus of the group of five were liberated from taints through clinging no more.

(*Saṅgīyutta-Nikāya*, XXII, 59.)

#### *The Discourse on the Orderliness of the Dhamma*

(*Dhamma-niyama Sutta*)

"Monks, whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands — this steadfastness of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: All processes are inconstant (*anicca*).

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All processes are inconstant (*anicca*).

"Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands — this steadfastness of the

Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: All processes are stressful (*dukkha*).

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All processes are stressful (*dukkha*).

"Whether or not there is the arising of Tathāgatas, this property stands — this steadfastness of the Dhamma, this orderliness of the Dhamma: All phenomena are not-self (*anatta*).

"The Tathāgata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All phenomena are not-self (*anatta*)."

(*Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, III, 134)

#### *Dialogue Between King Milinda and Nāgasena*

Said the king, "Bhante<sup>1</sup> Nāgasena, will you converse with me?"

"Your majesty, if you will converse with me as the wise converse, I will; but if you converse with me as kings converse, I will not."

"Bhante Nāgasena, how do the wise converse?"

"Your majesty, when the wise converse, whether they become entangled by their opponents' arguments or extricate themselves, whether they or their opponents are convicted of error, whether their own superiority or that of their opponents is established, nothing in all this can make them angry. Thus, your majesty; do the wise converse."

"And how, bhante, do kings converse?"

"Your majesty, when kings converse, they advance a proposition, and whoever opposes it, they order his punishment, saying, 'Punish this fellow!' Thus, your majesty, do kings converse."

"Bhante, I will converse as the wise converse, not as kings do. Let your worship converse in all confidence. Let your worship converse as unrestrainedly as if with a priest or a novice or a lay disciple or a keeper the monastery grounds. Be not afraid!"

"Very well, your majesty," said the elder in assent.

(*Milindapañha*, 28)

<sup>1</sup>Bhante is a respectful title.

Then drew near Milinda the king to where the venerable Nāgasena was; and having drawn near, he greeted the venerable Nāgasena; and having passed the compliments of friendship and civility, he sat down respectfully at one side. And the venerable Nāgasena returned the greeting; by which, verily, he won the heart of king Milinda.

And Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows: —

“How is your reverence called? Bhante, what is your name?”

“Your majesty, I am called Nāgasena; my fellow-priests, your majesty, address me as Nāgasena: but whether parents give one the name Nāgasena, or Sūrasena, or Virasena, or Sihasena, it is, nevertheless, your majesty, but a way of counting, a term, an appellation, a convenient designation, a mere name, this Nāgasena; for there is no Self here to be found.”

Then said Milinda the king, —

“Listen to me, my lords, ye five hundred Yonakas, and ye eighty thousand priests! Nāgasena here says thus: ‘There is no Self here to be found.’ Is it possible, pray, for me to assent to what he says?”

And Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows: —

“Bhante Nāgasena, if there is no Self to be found, who is it then furnishes you priests with the priestly requisites, — robes, food, bedding, and medicine, the reliance of the sick? who is it makes use of the same? who is it keeps the precepts? who is it applies himself to meditation? who is it realizes the Paths, the Fruits, and Nirvana? who is it destroys life? who is it takes what is not given him? who is it commits immorality? who is it tells lies? who is it drinks intoxicating liquor? who is it commits the five crimes that constitute ‘proximate karma’?<sup>2</sup> In that case, there is no merit; there is no demerit; there is no one who does or causes to be done meritorious or demeritorious deeds; neither good nor evil deeds can have any fruit or result. Bhante Nāgasena, neither is he a murderer who kills a priest, nor can you priests, bhante Nāgasena, have any teacher, preceptor, or ordination. When you say, ‘My fellow-priests, your majesty, address me as Nāgasena,’ what then is this Nāgasena? Pray, bhante, is the hair of the head Nāgasena?”

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<sup>2</sup>By *proximate karma* is meant karma that ripens in the next existence.

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is the hair of the body Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Are nails . . . teeth . . . skin . . . flesh . . . sinews . . . bones . . . marrow of the bones . . . kidneys . . . heart . . . liver . . . pleura . . . spleen . . . lungs . . . intestines . . . mesentery . . . stomach . . . faeces . . . bile . . . phlegm . . . pus . . . blood . . . sweat . . . fat . . . tears . . . lymph . . . saliva . . . snot . . . synovial fluid . . . urine . . . brain of the head Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is now, bhante, form (*rūpa*) Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is sensation (*vedanā*) Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is perception (*saññā*) Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Are the predispositions (*saṅkhāra*) Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is consciousness (*viññāṇa*) Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Are, then, bhante, form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), the predispositions (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) unitedly Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Is it, then, bhante, something besides form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), the predispositions (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which is Nāgasena?”

“Nay, verily, your majesty.”

“Bhante, although I question you very closely, I fail to discover any Nāgasena. Verily, now, bhante, Nāgasena is a mere empty sound. What Nāgasena is there here? Bhante, you speak a falsehood, a lie: there is no Nāgasena.”

Then the venerable Nāgasena spoke to Milinda the king as follows: —

“Your majesty, you are a delicate prince, an exceedingly delicate prince; and if, your majesty, you walk in the middle of the day on hot sandy ground, and, you tread on rough grit, gravel, and sand, your feet become sore, your body tired, the mind is oppressed, and the body-consciousness suffers. Pray, did you come afoot, or riding?”

“Bhante, I do not go afoot: I came in a chariot.”

“Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot. Pray, your majesty, is the pole the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is the axle the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

Are the wheels the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is the chariot-body the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is the banner-staff the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is the yoke the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Are the reins the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is the goading-stick the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Pray, your majesty, are pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins, and goad unitedly the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Is it, then, your majesty, something else besides pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins, and goad which is the chariot?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“Your majesty, although I question you very closely, I fail to discover any chariot. Verily now, your majesty, the word chariot is a mere empty sound. What chariot is there here? Your majesty, you speak a falsehood, a lie: there is no chariot. Your majesty, you are the chief king in all the continent of India; of whom are you afraid that you speak a lie? Listen to me, my lords, ye five hundred Yonakas, and ye eighty thousand priests! Milinda the king here says thus: ‘I came in a chariot,’ and being requested, ‘Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot,’ he fails to produce any chariot. Is it possible, pray, for me to assent to what he says?”

When he had thus spoken, the five hundred Yonakas applauded the venerable Nāgasena and spoke to Milinda the king as follows: —

“Now, your majesty, answer, if you can.”

Then Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows: —

“Bhante Nāgasena, I speak no lie: the word ‘chariot’ is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, and name for pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, and banner-staff.”

“Thoroughly well, your majesty, do you understand a chariot. In exactly the same way, your majesty, in respect of me, Nāgasena is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, mere name for the hair of my head, hair of my body . . . brain of the head,

form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), the predispositions (*sañkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). But in the absolute sense there is no Self here to be found. And the priestess Vajirā, your majesty, said as follows in the presence of The Blessed One: —

“Even as the word of “chariot” means  
That members join to frame a whole;  
So when the Groups (*Khandha*) appear to view,  
We use the phrase, “A living being.””

“It is wonderful, bhante Nāgasena! It is marvellous, bhante Nāgasena! Brilliant and prompt is the wit of your replies. If The Buddha were alive, he would applaud. Well done, well done, Nāgasena! Brilliant and prompt is the wit of your replies.”

(*Milindapañha*, 25)

Buddhaghōṣa’s Commentary:

Just as the word “chariot” is but a mode of expression for axle, wheels, chariot-body, pole, and other constituent members, placed in a certain relation to each other, but when we come to examine the members one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no chariot; and just as the word “house” is but a mode of expression for wood and other constituents of a house, surrounding space in a certain relation, but in the absolute sense there is no house; and just as the word “fist” is but a mode of expression for the fingers, the thumb, etc., in a certain relation; and the word “lute” for the body of the lute, strings, etc.; “army” for elephants, horses, etc.; “city” for fortifications, houses, gates, etc.; “tree” for trunk, branches, foliage, etc., in a certain relation, but when we come to examine the parts one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no tree; in exactly the same way the words “living entity” and “Self” are but a mode of expression for the presence of the five attachment groups, but when we come to examine the elements of being one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no living entity there to form a basis for such figments as “I am,” or “I”; in other words, that in the absolute sense there is only name and form. The insight of him who perceives this is called knowledge of the truth.

He, however, who abandons this knowledge of the truth and believes in a living entity must assume either that this living entity will perish or that it will not

perish. If he assume that it will not perish, he falls into the heresy of the persistence of existences; or if he assume that it will perish, he falls into that of the annihilation of existences. And why do I say so? Because, just as sour cream has milk as its antecedent, so nothing here exists but what has its own antecedents. To say, "The living entity persists," is to fall short of the truth; to say, "It is annihilated," is to outrun the truth. Therefore has The Blessed One said: —

"There are two heresies, O monks, which possess both gods and men, by which some fall short of the truth, and some outrun the truth; but the intelligent know the truth.

"And how, O monks, do some fall short of the truth?

"O priests, gods and men delight in existence, take pleasure in existence, rejoice in existence, so that when the Doctrine for the cessation of existence is preached to them, their minds do not leap toward it, are not favorably disposed toward it, do not rest in it, do not adopt it.

"Thus, O monks, do some fall short of the truth.

"And how, O monks, do some outrun the truth?

"Some are distressed at, ashamed of, and loathe the existence, and welcome the thought of non-existence, saying, 'See here! When they say that on the dissolution of the body this Self is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist, after death, that is good, that is excellent, that is as it should be.'

"Thus, O monks, do some outrun the truth.

"And how, O monks, do the intelligent know the truth?

"We may have, O monks, a priest who knows things as they really are, and knowing things as they really are, he is on the road to aversion for things, to absence of passion for them, and to cessation from them.

"Thus, O monks, do the intelligent know the truth."

(*Visuddhi-Magga* ch. 18.)

### *The Great Causes Discourse*

(*Mahānidāna Sutta*)

"In regard to the Self, Ānanda, what are the views held concerning it?

"In regard to the Self, Ānanda, either one holds the view that sensation (*vedanā*) is the Self, saying, 'Sensation is my Self;'

"Or, in regard to the Self, Ānanda, one holds the view, 'Verily, sensation is not my Self; my Self has no sensation;'

"Or, in regard to the Self, Ānanda, one holds the view, 'Verily, neither is sensation my Self, nor does my Self have no sensation. My Self has sensation; my Self possesses the faculty of sensation.'

"In the above case, Ānanda, where it is said, 'Sensation is my Self,' reply should be made as follows: 'Brother, there are three sensations: the pleasant sensation, the unpleasant sensation, and the indifferent sensation. Which of these three sensations do you hold to be the Self?'

"Whenever, Ānanda, a person experiences a pleasant sensation, he does not at the same time experience an unpleasant sensation, nor does he experience an indifferent sensation; only the pleasant sensation does he then feel. Whenever, Ānanda, a person experiences an unpleasant sensation, he does not at the same time experience a pleasant sensation, nor does he experience an indifferent sensation; only the unpleasant sensation does he then feel. Whenever, Ānanda, a person experiences an indifferent sensation, he does not at the same time experience a pleasant sensation, nor does he experience an unpleasant sensation; only the indifferent sensation does he then feel.

"Now pleasant sensations, Ānanda, are transitory, are due to causes, originate by dependence, and are subject to decay, disappearance, effacement, and cessation; and unpleasant sensations, Ānanda, are transitory, are due to causes, originate by dependence, and are subject to decay, disappearance, effacement, and cessation. While this person is experiencing a pleasant sensation, he thinks, 'This is my Self.' And after the cessation of this same pleasant sensation, he thinks, 'My Self has passed away.' While he is experiencing an unpleasant sensation, he thinks, 'This is my Self.' And after the cessation of this same unpleasant sensation, he thinks, 'My Self has passed away.' And while he is experiencing an indifferent sensation, he thinks, 'This is my Self.' And after the cessation of this same indifferent sensation, he thinks, 'My Self has passed away.' So that he who says, 'Sensation is my Self,' holds the view that even during his lifetime, his Self is transitory, that it is pleasant,

unpleasant, or mixed, and that it is subject to rise and disappearance.

“Accordingly, Ānanda, it is not possible to hold the view, ‘Sensation is my Self.’

“In the above case, Ānanda, where it is said, ‘Verily sensation is not my Self; my Self has no sensation,’ reply should be made as follows: ‘But, brother, where there is no sensation, is there any “I am”?’”

“Nay, verily, Reverend Sir.”

“Accordingly, Ānanda, it is not possible to hold the view, ‘Verily, sensation is not my Self; my Self has no sensation.’

“In the above case, Ānanda, where it is said, ‘Verily, neither is sensation my Self, nor does my Self have no sensation. My Self has sensation; my Self possesses the faculty of sensation,’ reply should be made as follows: ‘Suppose, brother, that utterly and completely, and without remainder, all sensation were to cease — if there were nowhere any sensation, pray, would there be anything, after the cessation of sensation, of which it could be said, “This am I”?’”

“Nay, verily, Reverend Sir.”

“Accordingly, Ānanda, it is not possible to hold the view, ‘Verily, neither is sensation my Self, nor does my Self have no sensation. My Self has sensation; my Self possesses the faculty of sensation.’

“From the time, Ānanda, a monk no longer holds the view that sensation is the Self, no longer holds the view that the Self has no sensation; no longer holds the view that the Self has sensation, possesses the faculty of sensation, he ceases to attach himself to anything in the world, and being free from attachment, he is never agitated, and being never agitated, he attains to Nirvana in his own person; and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that he has lived the holy life, that he has done what it behooved him to do, and that he is no more for this world.

“Now it is impossible, Ānanda, that to a mind so freed a monk should attribute the heresy that the saint exists after death, or that the saint does not exist after death, or that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death.

“And why do I say so?”

“Because, Ānanda, after a monk has been freed by a thorough comprehension of affirmation and

affirmation's range, of predication and predication's range, of declaration and declaration's range, of knowledge and knowledge's field of action, of rebirth and what rebirth affects, it is impossible for him to attribute such a heretical lack of knowledge and perception to a monk similarly freed.”

(*Dīgha-Nikāya*, 15)

### III. Dependent Origination

#### *The Middle Doctrine*

(*Kaccāna Sutta*)

The world, for the most part, O Kaccāna, holds either to a belief in being or to a belief in non-being. But, for one who in the light of the highest knowledge, O Kaccāna, considers how the world arises, belief in the non-being of the world passes away. And for one who in the light of the highest knowledge, O Kaccāna, considers how the world ceases, belief in the being of the world passes away. The world, O Kaccāna, is for the most part bound up in a seeking, attachment, and proclivity [for the groups], but a monk does not sympathize with this seeking and attachment, nor with the mental affirmation, proclivity, and prejudice which affirms a Self. He does not doubt or question that it is only evil that springs into existence, and only evil that ceases from existence, and his conviction of this fact is dependent on no one besides himself. This, O Kaccāna, is what constitutes Right Belief.

That things have being, O Kaccāna, constitutes one extreme of doctrine; that things have no being is the other extreme. These extremes, O Kaccāna, have been avoided by The Tathāgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches:

On ignorance (*avijjā*) depends karma;

On karma depends consciousness (*viññāṇa*);

On consciousness depend name and form (*nāma-rūpa*);

On name and form depend the six organs of sense (*saḷāyatana*);

On the six organs of sense depends contact (*phassa*);

On contact depends sensation (*vedanā*);

On sensation depends desire (*taṇhā*);

On desire depends attachment (*upādāna*);

On attachment depends existence (*bhava*);

On existence depends birth (*jāti*);

On birth depend old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise.

But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance ceases karma;

On the cessation of karma ceases consciousness;

On the cessation of consciousness cease name and form;

On the cessation of name and form cease the six organs of sense;

On the cessation of the six organs of sense ceases contact;

On the cessation of contact ceases sensation;

On the cessation of sensation ceases desire;

On the cessation of desire ceases attachment;

On the cessation of attachment ceases existence;

On the cessation of existence ceases birth;

On the cessation of birth ceases old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery cease.

(*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, XXII, 90.)

#### From Ignorance as a Requisite Condition

(*Avijjāpaccaya Sutta*)

Thus have I heard.

On a certain occasion The Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattthi in Jetavana monastery in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. And there the Blessed One addressed the monks.

"Monks," said he.

"Lord," said the monks to The Blessed One in reply.

And The Blessed One spoke as follows:

"O monks, on ignorance (*avijjā*) depends karma. . . .

Thus does his entire aggregation of misery arise."

"Reverend Sir, what are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One. "O monk, to say: 'What are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death?' and to say: 'Old age and death are one thing, but it is another thing which has old age and death,' is to say the same thing in different ways. If, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life. Both these extremes, O monk, have been avoided by The Tathāgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: 'On birth depend old age and death.'"

"Reverend Sir, what is birth? and what is it has birth?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One. "O monk, to say: 'What is birth? and what is it has birth?' and to say: 'Birth is one thing, but it is another thing which has birth,' is to say the same thing in different ways. If, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life. Both these extremes, O monk, have been avoided by The Tathāgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: 'On existence (*bhava*) depends birth.'"

"Reverend Sir, what is existence (*bhava*)? . . . attachment (*upādāna*)? . . . desire (*taṇhā*)? . . . sensation (*vedanā*)? . . . contact (*phassa*)? . . . the six organs of sense (*saḷāyatana*)? . . . name and form (*nāma-rūpa*)? . . . consciousness (*viññāṇa*)? . . . karma? and what is it has karma?"

"The question is not rightly put," said The Blessed One. "O monk, to say: 'What is karma? and what is it has karma?' and to say: 'Karma is one thing, but it is another thing which has karma,' is to say the same thing in different ways. If, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul and the body are identical, then there is no religious life; or if, O monk, the dogma obtain that the soul is one thing and the body another, then also there is no religious life. Both these extremes, O monk, have been avoided by The Tathāgata, and it is a middle doctrine he teaches: 'On ignorance (*avijjā*) depends karma.'"

"But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance, O monk, all these refuges, puppet-shows, resorts, and writhings, — to wit: What are old age and death? and what is it has old age and death? or, old age and death are one thing, but it is another thing which has old age and death; or, the soul and the body are identical, or the soul is one thing, and the body another, — all, such refuges of whatever kind are abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a palmyra-tree, and become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future.

"But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance, O monk, all these refuges, puppet-shows, resorts, and writhings, — to wit: What is birth (*jāti*)? . . . existence? . . . attachment? . . . desire? . . . sensation? . . . contact? . . . the six organs of sense? . . . name and

form? . . . consciousness? . . . karma? and what is it has karma? or, karma is one thing, but it is another thing which has karma; or, the soul and the body are identical, or the soul is one thing and the body another, — all such refuges are abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a palmyra-tree, and become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future.”

(*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, XII, 35.)

Buddhaghoṣa's Commentary:

Inasmuch as it is dependently on each other and in unison and simultaneously that the factors which constitute dependence originate the elements of being, therefore did The Sage call these factors Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

For the ignorance etc. which have been enumerated as constituting dependence, when they originate any of the elements of being, namely, karma and the rest, can only do so when dependent on each other and in case none of their number is lacking. Therefore it is dependently on each other and in unison and simultaneously that the factors which constitute dependence originate the elements of being, not by a part of their number nor by one succeeding the other. Accordingly The Sage, skillful in the art of discovering the signification of things, calls this dependence by the name of Dependent Origination.

And in so doing, by the first of these two words is shown the falsity of such heresies as that of the persistence of existences, and by the second word, a rejection of such heresies as that existences cease to be, while by both together is shown the truth.

*By the first:* — The word “Dependent” (*paṭicca*), as exhibiting a full complement of dependence and inasmuch as the elements of being are subject to that full complement of dependence, shows an avoidance of such heresies as that of the persistence of existences, the heresies, namely, of the persistence of existences, of uncaused existences, of existences due to an overruling power, of self-determining existences. For what have persistent existences, uncaused existences, etc., to do with a full complement of dependence?

*By the second word:* — The word “Origination” (*samuppāda*), as exhibiting an origination of the elements of being and inasmuch as the elements of being originate by means of a full complement of dependence, shows a rejection of such heresies as that of the annihilation of existences, the heresies, namely, of the

annihilation of existences, of nihilism, of the inefficacy of karma. For if the elements of being are continually originating by means of an antecedent dependence, whence can we have annihilation of existence, nihilism, and an inefficacy of karma?

*By both together:* — By the complete phrase “Dependent Origination” (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) inasmuch as such and such elements of being come into existence by means of an unbroken series of their full complement of dependence, the truth, or middle course, is shown. This rejects the heresy that he who experiences the fruit of the deed is the same as the one who performed the deed, and also rejects the converse one that he who experiences the fruit of a deed is different from the one who performed the deed, and leaning not to hold either of these popular hypotheses, holds fast by nominalism.

(*Visuddhi-Magga* ch. 17.)

## IV. Karma and Rebirth

### *Rebirth is Not Transmigration*

Said the king: “Bhante Nāgasena, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating?”

“Yes, your majesty. Rebirth takes place without anything transmigrating.”

“How, bhante Nāgasena, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating? Give an illustration.”

“Suppose, your majesty, a man were to light a light from another light; pray, would the one light have passed over [transmigrated] to the other light?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“In exactly the same way, your majesty, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating.”

“Give another illustration.”

“Do you remember, your majesty, having learnt, when you were a boy, some verse or other from your professor of poetry?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Pray, your majesty, did the verse pass over [transmigrate] to you from your teacher?”

“Nay, verily, bhante.”

“In exactly the same way, your majesty, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating.”

“You are an able man, bhante Nāgasena.”

(*Milindapañha*, 71)

"Bhante Nāgasena," said the king, "what is it that is born into the next existence?"

"Your majesty," said the elder, "it is name and form that is born into the next existence."

"Is it this same name and form that is born into the next existence?"

"Your majesty, it is not this same name and form that is born into the next existence; but with this name and form, your majesty, one does a deed—it, may be good, or it may be wicked—and by reason of this deed another name and form is born into the next existence."

"Bhante, if it is not this same name and form that is born into the next existence, is one not freed from one's evil deeds?"

"If one were not born into another existence," said the elder, "one would be freed from one's evil deeds; but, your majesty, inasmuch as one is born into another existence, therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"Give an illustration."

"Your majesty, it is as if a man were to take away another man's mangoes, and the owner of the mangoes were to seize him, and show him to the king, and say, 'Sire, this man hath taken away my mangoes'; and the other were to say, 'Sire, I did not take away this man's mangoes. The mangoes which this man planted were different mangoes from those which I took away. I am not liable to punishment.' Pray, your majesty, would the man be liable to punishment?"

"Assuredly, bhante, would he be liable to punishment."

"For what reason?"

"Because, in spite of what he might say, he would be liable to punishment for the reason that the last mangoes derived from the first mangoes."

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, with this name and form one does a deed — it may be good, or it may be wicked — and by reason of this deed another name and form is born into the next existence. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"Give another illustration."

"Your majesty, it is as if a man were to take away the rice of another man, . . . were to take away the sugar-cane, . . . Your majesty, it is as if a man were to light a fire in the winter-time and warm himself, and were to go off without putting it out. And then the fire were to bum another man's field, and the owner of the field were to seize him, and show him to the king, and say, 'Sire, this man has burnt up my field'; and the other

were to say, 'Sire, I did not set this man's field on fire. The fire which I failed to put out was a different one from the one which has burnt up this man's field. I am not liable to punishment.' Pray, your majesty, would the man be liable to punishment?"

"Assuredly, bhante, would he be liable to punishment."

"For what reason?"

"Because, in spite of what he might say, the man would be liable to punishment for the reason that the last fire derived from the first fire."

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, with this name and form one does a deed — it may be good, or it may be wicked — and by reason of this deed another name and form is born into the next existence. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"Give another illustration."

"Your majesty, it is as if a man were to ascend to the top storey of a house with a light, and eat there; and the light in burning were to set fire to the thatch; and the thatch in burning were to set fire to the house; and the house in burning were to set fire to the village; and the people of the village were to seize him, and say, 'Why, O man, did you set fire to the village?' and he were to say, 'I did not set fire to the village. The fire of the lamp by whose light I ate was a different one from the one which set fire to the village'; and they, quarreling, were to come to you. Whose cause, your majesty, would you sustain?"

"That of the people of the village, bhante."

"And why?"

"Because, in spite of what the man might say, the latter fire sprang from the former."

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, although the name and form which is born into the next existence is different from the name and form which is to end at death, never

theless, it is sprung from it. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"Give another illustration."

"Your majesty, it is as if a man were to choose a young girl in marriage, and having paid the purchase-money, were to go off; and she subsequently were to grow up and become marriageable; and then another man were to pay the purchase-money for her, and marry her; and the first man were to return, and say, 'O man, why did you marry my wife?' and the other were to say, 'I did not marry your wife. The young, tender girl whom you chose in marriage, and for whom you

paid purchase-money, was a different person from this grown-up and marriageable girl whom I have chosen in marriage, and for whom I have paid purchase-money'; and they, quarreling, were to come to you. Whose cause, your majesty, would you sustain?"

"That of the first man."

"And why?"

"Because, in spite of what the second man might say, the grown-up girl sprang from the other."

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, although the name and form which is born into the next existence is different from the name and form which is to end at death, nevertheless, it is sprung from it. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"Give another illustration."

"Your majesty, it is as if a man were to buy from a cowherd a pot of milk, and were to leave it with the cowherd, and go off, thinking he would come the next day and take it. And on the next day it were to turn into sour cream; and the man were to come back, and say, 'Give me the pot of milk.' And the other were to show him the sour cream; and the first man were to say, 'I did not buy sour cream from you. Give me the pot of milk.' And the cowherd were to say, 'While you were gone, your milk turned into sour cream'; and they, quarreling, were to come to you. Whose cause, your majesty, would you sustain?"

"That of the cowherd, bhante."

"And why?"

"Because, in spite of what the man might say, the one sprang from the other."

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, although the name and form which is born into the next existence is different from the name and form which is to end at death, nevertheless, it is sprung from it. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

"You are an able man, bhante Nāgasena."

(*Milindapañha*, 46)

Buddhaghosa's Commentary:

It is only elements of being possessing a dependence that arrive at a new existence: none transmigrated from the last existence, nor are they in the new existence without causes contained in the old. By this is said that it is only elements of being, with form or without, but possessing a dependence, that arrive at a new existence. There is no entity, no living principle; no elements of being transmigrated from the last existence into the

present one; nor, on the other hand, do they appear in the present existence without causes in that one. This we will now make plain by considering birth and death as they occur every day among men.

For when, in any existence, one arrives at the gate of death, either in the natural course of things or through violence; and when, by a concourse of intolerable, death-dealing pains, all the members, both great and small, are loosened and wrenched apart in every joint and ligament; and the body, like a green palm-leaf exposed to the sun, dries up by degrees; and the eyesight and the other senses fail; and the power of feeling, and the power of thinking, and vitality are making the last stand in the heart — then consciousness residing in that last refuge, the heart, continues to exist by virtue of karma, otherwise called the predispositions (*sañkhāra*). This karma, however, still retains something of what it depends on, and consists of such former deeds as were weighty, much practised, and are now close at hand; or else this karma creates a reflex of itself or of the new mode of life now being entered upon, and it is with this as its object that consciousness continues to exist.

Now while the consciousness still subsists, inasmuch as desire and ignorance have not been abandoned and the evil of the object is hidden by that ignorance, desire inclines the consciousness to the object; and the karma that sprang up along with the consciousness impels it toward the object. This consciousness being in its series thus inclined toward the object by desire, and impelled toward it by karma, like a man who swings himself over a ditch, by means of a rope hanging from a tree on the hither bank, quits its first resting-place and continues to subsist in dependence on objects of sense, and other things, and either does or does not light on another resting-place created by karma. Here the former consciousness, from its passing out of existence, is called passing away, and the latter, from its being reborn into a new existence, is called rebirth. But it is to be understood that this latter consciousness did not come to the present existence from the previous one, and also that it is only to causes contained in the old existence, namely, to karma called the predispositions (*sañkhāra*), to inclination, an object, etc., that its present appearance is due.

As illustrations here may serve

Echoes and other similes.

Nor sameness, nor diversity,

Can from that series take their rise.

As illustrations of how consciousness does not come over from the last existence into the present, and how it springs up by means of causes belonging to the former existence, *here may serve echoes*, light, the impressions of a seal, and reflections in a mirror. For as echoes, light, the impressions of a seal, and shadows have sound etc. for their causes, and exist without having come from elsewhere, just so is it with this mind. . . .

He, then, that has no clear idea of death and does not master the fact that death everywhere consists in the dissolution of the Groups (*Khandha*), he comes to a variety of conclusions, such as, "A living entity dies and transmigrates into another body."

He that has no clear idea of rebirth and does not master the fact that the appearance of the Groups everywhere constitutes rebirth, he comes to a variety of conclusions; such as, "A living entity is born and has obtained a new body." . . .

Therefore have the ancients said:

"The Groups (*Khandha*) break up, and only they,' the wise say,  
 'And death consisteth in their dissolution.'  
 The thoughtful men of insight sees them vanish;  
 They're like the jewel shattered by the diamond."  
 (*Visuddhi-Magga* ch. 17.)

## V. Nirvana

### *Breaking the Cycle* (*Udaya Sutta*)

[The Buddha:]

Over and over, the seeds all get planted;  
 Over and over, the rain-god sprinkles rain.  
 Over and over, the farmer farms the field;  
 Over and over, the food grows in the realm.

Over and over, beggars do their begging;  
 Over and over, the givers give out gifts.  
 Over and over, the giver who has given;  
 Over and over, goes to a better place.

Over and over, he tires and he struggles;  
 Over and over, the fool goes to the womb.  
 Over and over, he's born and he dies;  
 Over and over, they bear him to his grave.

But one who's wisdom is wide as the earth  
 Is not born over and over,  
 For he's gained the path  
 Of not becoming over again.

(*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, VII, 12.)

### *The Fire Sermon* (*Ādittapariyāya-sutta*)

Thus have I heard. The Blessed One was once living at Gayasla in Gaya with a thousand bhikkhus. There he addressed the bhikkhus:

"Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what is the all that is burning? "Bhikkhus, the eye is burning, visible forms are burning, visual consciousness is burning, visual impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the visual impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

"The ear is burning, sounds are burning, auditory consciousness is burning, auditory impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the auditory impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

"The nose is burning, odours are burning, olfactory consciousness is burning, olfactory impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the olfactory impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

"The tongue is burning, flavours are burning, gustative consciousness is burning, gustative impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the gustative impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

"The body is burning, tangible things are burning, tactile consciousness is burning, tactile impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the tactile sensation, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

"The mind is burning, mental objects (ideas, etc.) are burning, mental consciousness is burning, mental impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the mental impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

"Bhikkhus, a learned and noble disciple, who sees (things) thus, becomes dispassionate with regard to the eye, becomes dispassionate with regard to visible forms, becomes dispassionate with regard to the visual consciousness, becomes dispassionate with regard to the visual impression, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the visual impression, with regard to that too he becomes dispassionate. He becomes dispassionate with regard to the ear, with regard to sounds. . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the nose. . . with regard to odours. . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the tongue . . . with regard to flavours. . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the body. . . with regard to tangible things. . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the mind, becomes dispassionate with regard to mental objects (ideas, etc.), becomes dispassionate with regard to mental consciousness, becomes dispassionate with regard to mental impression, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of mental impression, with regard to that too he becomes dispassionate.

"Being dispassionate, he becomes detached; through detachment he is liberated. When liberated there is knowledge that he is liberated. And he knows: Birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived, what has to be done is done, there is no more left to be done on this account."

This the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they rejoiced at his words.

While this exposition was being delivered, the minds of those thousand bhikkhus were liberated from impurities, without attachment.

(*Samyutta-Nikāya*, XXXV, 28)

### *Universal Love*

(*Metta-sutta*)

He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of Calm should act (thus):

He should be able, upright, perfectly upright, compliant, gentle, and humble.

Contented, easily supported, with few duties, of simple livelihood, controlled in senses, discreet, not impudent, he should not be greedily attached to families.

He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him. (Then he should cultivate his thoughts thus:)

May all beings be happy and secure; may their minds be contented.

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, long (or tall), stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded!

Let not one deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or ill will let not one wish any harm to another.

Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below and across—without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. Whether one stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is the Sublime State in this life.

Not falling into wrong views, virtuous and endowed with Insight, one gives up attachment to sense-desires. Verily such a man does not return to enter a womb again.

(*Suttanipāta*, I. 8)

## VI. Meditation

### *The Foundations of Mindfulness*

(*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*)

(Abridged)

Thus have I heard. The Blessed One was once living among the Kurus, at Kammassadamma, a market town of the Kuru people. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus and spoke as follows:

"This is the only way, Bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of *Nibbāna*, namely the Four Foundations (four forms of Presence) of Mindfulness. What are the four?

"Here a bhikkhu, ardent, clearly comprehending things and mindful, lives observing (the activities of) the body, having overcome covetousness and repugnance towards the world (of body); observing feelings, having overcome covetousness and repugnance towards the world (of feelings). . . observing (the activities of) the mind, having overcome covetousness and repugnance towards the world (of mind); observing mental objects, having overcome covetousness and repugnance towards the world (of mental objects)."

#### (I. BODY)

"And how does a bhikkhu live observing (the activities of) the body?

##### [1. *Breathing*]

"Here Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to some empty place, sits down, with his legs crossed, keeps his body straight and his mindfulness alert.

"Ever mindful he breathes in, and ever mindful he breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, he knows 'I am breathing in a long breath'; breathing out a long breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a long breath'; breathing in a short breath, he knows 'I am breathing in a short breath'; breathing out a short breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a short breath.'

"Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe in'; thus he trains himself. 'Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe out': thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe in': thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe out': thus he trains himself. . . .

"Thus he lives observing (the activities of) the body internally, or . . . externally, or . . . both internally and externally. He lives also observing origination-factors in the body, or dissolution-factors in the body, or origination-and-dissolution factors in the body. Or his mindfulness is established to the extent necessary just for knowledge and awareness that the body exists and

he lives unattached, and clings to naught in the world. In this way Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing (the activities of) the body.

##### [2. *Postures of the body*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows when he is going, 'I am going.' He knows when he is standing, 'I am standing.' He knows when he is sitting, 'I am sitting.' He knows when he is lying down, 'I am lying down.' Or he knows just how his body is disposed.

"Thus he lives observing (the activities of) the body internally, or externally. . . .

##### [3. *Full Attention*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu applies full attention either in going forward or back; in looking straight on or looking away; in bending or in stretching; in wearing robes or carrying the bowl; in eating, drinking, chewing or savouring; in attending to the calls of nature; in walking, in standing, in sitting; in falling asleep, in waking; in speaking or in keeping silence. In all these he applies full attention.

"Thus he lives observing (the activities of) the body.

##### [4. *Repulsiveness of the body*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on this very body enveloped by the skin and full of manifold impurity, from the sole up, and from the top of the hair down, thinking thus: 'There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine.'

"Just as if there were a double-mouthed provision-bag full of various kinds of grain such as hill paddy, paddy, green gram, cow-peas, sesamum and husked rice, and a man with sound eyes, having opened that bag, were to reflect thus: This is hill paddy, this is paddy, this is green gram, this is cow-pea, this is sesamum, this is husked rice, just so, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on this very body enveloped by the skin and full of manifold impurity, from the sole up, and from the top of the hair down, thinking thus: There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth. . . synovial fluid, urine. "Thus he lives observing the body. . . .

[5. *Material Elements*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reflects on this very body, as it is, and it is constituted, by way of the material elements: 'There are in this body the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, the element of wind.'

"Just as if, Bhikkhus, a clever cow-butcher or his apprentice, having slaughtered a cow and divided it into portions, would be sitting at the junction of four high roads; in the same way, a bhikkhu reflects on this very body, as it is, and it is constituted, by way of the material elements: 'There are in this body the elements of earth, water, fire and wind.'

"Thus he lives observing the body. . . .

[6. *Nine Cemetery Objects*]

(1) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body dead one, two, or three days, swollen, blue and festering, thrown on to the cemetery, so he applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, my own body, too, is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it.'

"Thus he lives observing the body. . . .

(2) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery, being eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or by different kinds of worms, so he applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, my own body, too, is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it.'

"Thus he lives observing the body. . . .

(3) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to a skeleton with some flesh and blood attached to it, held together by the tendons. . . .

(4) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to a skeleton, blood-besmeared and without flesh, held together by the tendons. . . .

(5) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together by the tendons. . . .

(6) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to disconnected bones, scattered in all directions here a bone of the hand, there a bone of the foot, a shin bone, a thigh bone, the pelvis, spine and skull. . . .

(7) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to bleached bones of conch-like colour. . . .

(8) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to bones, more than a year old, lying in a heap. . . .

(9) "And further, Bhikkhus, just as a bhikkhu sees a body thrown on to the cemetery reduced to bones rotten and become dust. . . so he applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, my own body, too, is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it.'

"Thus he lives observing the body. . . ."

## II. FEELINGS

"And how Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live observing feelings?

"Here, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu when experiencing a pleasant feeling knows: 'I experience a pleasant feeling'; when experiencing a painful feeling, he knows: 'I experience a painful feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant nor-painful feeling, he knows: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling.' When experiencing a pleasant worldly feeling, he knows: 'I experience a pleasant worldly feeling'; when experiencing a pleasant spiritual feeling, he knows: 'I experience a pleasant spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a painful worldly feeling, he knows: 'I experience a painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a painful spiritual feeling, he knows: 'I experience a painful spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful worldly feeling, he knows: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling, he knows: 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling.'

"He lives in this way observing feelings internally, . . . or externally, or . . . internally and externally. He lives observing origination-factors in feelings, or dissolution-factors in feelings, or origination-and-dissolution factors in feelings. Or his mindfulness is established to the extent necessary just for knowledge and awareness that feeling exists, and he lives unattached, and clings to naught in the world. In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing feelings. "

## III. MIND

"And how, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live observing mind?

"Here Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows the mind with lust, as being with lust; the mind without lust, as being without lust; the mind with hate, as being with hate; the mind without hate, as being without hate; the mind with ignorance, as being with ignorance; the mind without ignorance, as being without ignorance; the shrunken state of mind as the shrunken state; the distracted state of mind as the distracted state; the developed state of mind as the developed state; the undeveloped state of mind as the undeveloped state; the state of mind with some other mental state superior to it, as being the state with something mentally superior to it; the state of mind with no other mental state superior to it, as being the state with nothing mentally superior to it; the concentrated state of mind as the concentrated state; the unconcentrated state of mind as the unconcentrated state; the liberated state of mind as the liberated state; and the unliberated state of mind as the unliberated state.

"He lives in this way observing the mind internally, or externally, or internally and externally.

"He lives observing origination-factors in mind or dissolution-factors in mind or origination-and-dissolution-factors in mind. Or his mindfulness is established to the extent necessary just for knowledge and awareness that mind exists, and he lives unattached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing mind."

## IV. MENTAL OBJECTS

"And how, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live observing mental objects?

[*Five Hindrances*]

"Here, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing the Five Hindrances as mental objects.

"How, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live observing the Five Hindrances as mental objects?

(1) "Here, Bhikkhus, when sense-desire is present, a bhikkhu knows:

'Sense-desire is in me,' or when sense-desire is not present, he knows: 'There is no sense-desire in me.' He knows how the non-arisen sense-desire arises; he knows how the arisen sense-desire disappears; and" he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sense-desire comes to be.

(2) "When anger is present, he knows: 'Anger is in me. . . .'

(3) "When torpor and languor are present,' he knows: 'Torpor and languor are in me. . . .'

(4) "When restlessness and worry are present, he knows: 'Restlessness and worry are in me. . . .'

(5) "When doubt is present, he knows: 'Doubt is in me,' or when doubt is not present, he knows, 'There is no doubt in me.' He knows how the non-arisen doubt arises; he knows how the arisen doubt disappears; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned doubt comes to be.

"In this way he lives observing mental objects internally, or externally, or internally and externally. He lives observing origination-factors in mental objects, or dissolution-factors in mental objects, or origination-and-dissolution-factors in mental objects. Or his mindfulness is established to the extent necessary just for knowledge and awareness that mental objects exist, and he lives unattached and clings to naught in the world. In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing the five hindrances as mental objects.

[*Five Aggregates*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing the five aggregates of clinging as mental objects.

"How, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live observing (contemplating) the five aggregates of clinging as mental objects?

"Here, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu thinks: Thus is material form; it arises in this way; and it disappears in this way. Thus is feeling; it arises in this way; and it disappears in this way. Thus is perception; it arises in this way; and it disappears in this way. Thus are mental formations; they arise in this way; and they disappear in this way. Thus is consciousness; it arises in this way; and it disappears in this way.

"Thus he lives contemplating mental objects internally, etc. . . .'. In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the five aggregates of clinging as mental objects.

[*Six Sense-Bases*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the six internal and the six external sense-bases as mental objects.

"How, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating the six internal and the six external sense-bases as mental objects?

"Here, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows the eye and visual forms, and the fetter that arises dependent on both (the eye and forms); he knows how the non-arisen fetter arises; he knows how the arisen fetter disappears; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be. "He knows the ear and sounds. . . the nose and smells. . . the tongue and flavors. . . the body and tangible objects. . . the mind and mental objects, and the fetter that arises dependent on both; he knows how the non-arisen fetter arises; he knows how the arisen fetter disappears; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be.

"In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating mental objects internally, etc. . . . In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the six internal and the six external sense-bases as mental objects.

[*Seven Factors of Enlightenment*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment as mental objects.

"How Bhikkhus does a bhikkhu live observing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment as mental objects?

(1) "Here Bhikkhus, when the Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is present, the bhikkhu knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is in me'; or when the Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness arises; and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness comes to be.

(2) "When the Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects is present, the bhikkhu knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects arises and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of the Investigation of mental objects comes to be.

(3) "When the Enlightenment-factor of Energy is present, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Energy is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of Energy is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Energy is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen

Enlightenment-factor of Energy arises, and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of Energy comes to be.

(4) "When the Enlightenment-factor of Joy is present, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Joy is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of Joy is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Joy is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of Joy arises and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of Joy comes to be.

(5) "When the Enlightenment-factor of Relaxation (of body and mind) is present, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Relaxation is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of Relaxation is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Relaxation is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of Relaxation arises, and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of the Relaxation comes to be.

(6) "When the Enlightenment-factor of Concentration is present, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Concentration is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of Concentration is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Concentration is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of Concentration arises, and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of Concentration comes to be.

(7) "When the Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity is present, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity is in me'; when the Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity is absent, he knows: 'The Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity is not in me'; and he knows how the non-arisen Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity arises, and how perfection in the development of the arisen Enlightenment-factor of Equanimity comes to be.

"Thus he lives observing mental objects internally, etc. . . . Thus, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives observing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment as mental objects.

[*Four Noble Truths*]

"And further, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the Four Noble Truths as mental objects.

"How Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating the Four Noble Truths as mental objects?

"Here, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows, 'This is *Dukkha* (suffering),' according to reality; he knows, 'This is the Origin of *Dukkha*,' according to reality; he knows, 'This the Cessation of *Dukkha*,' according to reality; he

knows, 'This is the Path leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*,' according to reality.

"Thus he lives contemplating mental objects internally, etc. . . . In this way, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating the Four Noble Truths as mental objects.

"Bhikkhus, whosoever practices these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for seven years, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge (Arahantship), here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

"Bhikkhus, let alone seven years. Should any person practice these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for six years. . . for five years . . . four years. . . three years. . . two years. . . one year, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

"Bikkhus, let alone a year. Should any person practice these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for seven months. . . for six months. . . five months. . . four months. . . three months. . . two months. . . a month. . . half a month, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-entering.

"Bhikkhus, let alone half a month. Should any person practise these four Foundations of Mindfulness, in this manner, for a week, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

"Because of this was it said: 'This is the only way, Bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of *Nibbāna*, namely the four Foundations of Mindfulness.'"

This the Blessed One said. Satisfied, the Bhikkhus rejoiced at his words.

(*Majjhima Nikāya*, Sutta No. 10, abridged)

Selections from  
*The Dhammapada*

1

All (mental) states have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief, and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts, with a defiled mind, then suffering follows one even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.

2

All (mental) states have mind as their forerunner, mind is their chief, and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts, with a pure mind, happiness follows one as one's shadow that does not leave one.

3

'He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me': the hatred of those who harbour such thoughts is not appeased.

5

Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world; it is appeased by love. This is an eternal Law.

24

Whosoever is energetic, mindful, pure in conduct, discriminating, self-restrained, right-living, vigilant, his fame steadily increases.

25

By endeavour, diligence, discipline, and self-mastery, let the wise man make (of himself) an island that no flood can overwhelm.

26

Fools, men of little intelligence, give themselves over to negligence, but the wise man protects his diligence as a supreme treasure.

27

Give not yourselves unto negligence; have no intimacy with sense pleasures. The man who meditates with diligence attains much happiness.

33

This fickle, unsteady mind, difficult to guard, difficult to control, the wise man makes straight, as the fletcher the arrow.

35

Hard to restrain, unstable is this mind; it flits wherever it lists. Good it is to control the mind. A controlled mind brings happiness.

38

He whose mind is unsteady, he who knows not the Good Teaching, he whose confidence wavers, the wisdom of such a person does not attain fullness.

47

The man who gathers only the flowers (of sense pleasures), whose mind is entangled, death carries him away as a great flood a sleeping village.

50

One should not pry into the faults of others, into things done and left undone by others. One should rather consider what by oneself is done and left undone.

61

If, as one fares, one does not find a companion who is better or equal, let one resolutely pursue the solitary course; there can be no fellowship with the fool.

67

That deed is not well done, which one regrets when it is done and the result of which one experiences weeping with a tearful face.

81

Even as a solid rock is unshaken by the wind, so are the wise unshaken by praise or blame.

82.

Even as a lake, deep, extremely clear and tranquil, so do the wise become tranquil having heard the Teaching.

85

Few among men are they who cross to the further shore. The others merely run up and down the bank on this side.

90

For him, who has completed the journey, who is sorrowless, wholly set free, and rid of all bonds, for such a one there is no burning (of the passions).

94

He whose senses are mastered like horses well under the charioteer's control, he who is purged of pride, free from passions, such a steadfast one even the gods envy (hold dear).

96

Calm is the thought, calm the word and deed of him who, rightly knowing, is wholly freed, perfectly peaceful and equipoised.

103

One may conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, yet he is the best of conquerors who conquers himself.

111

Though one may live a hundred years with no true insight and self-control, yet better, indeed, is a life of one day for a man who meditates in wisdom.

119

It is well with the evil-doer until his evil (deed) ripens. But when his evil (deed) bears fruit, he then sees its ill effects.

120

It is ill, perhaps, with the doer of good until his good deed ripens. But when it bears fruit, then he sees the happy results.

129

All tremble at weapons; all fear death. Comparing others with oneself, one should not slay, nor cause to slay.

131

He who, seeking his own happiness, torments with the rod creatures that are desirous of happiness, shall not obtain happiness hereafter.

159

If a man practices himself what he admonishes others to do, he himself, being well-controlled, will have control over others. It is difficult, indeed, to control oneself.

160

Oneself is one's own protector (refuge); what other protector (refuge) can there be? With oneself fully controlled, one obtains a protection (refuge) which is hard to gain.

165

By oneself indeed is evil done and by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone and by oneself indeed is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one can purify another.

167

Do not follow mean things. Do not dwell in negligence. Do not embrace false views. So the world (i.e. *Samsāra*, the cycle of existence and continuity) is not prolonged.

171

Come, behold this world, how it resembles an ornamented royal chariot, in which fools flounder, but for the wise there is no attachment to it.

178

Better is the gain of Entering the Stream than sole sovereignty over the earth, than going to heaven, than rule supreme over the entire universe.

183

Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind, this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.

184

The most excellent ascetic practice is patience and forbearance. '*Nibbāna* is supreme', say the Buddhas. He indeed is no recluse who harms another; nor is he an ascetic who hurts others.

185

To speak no ill, to do no harm, to practice restraint according to the fundamental precepts, to be moderate in eating, to live in seclusion, to devote oneself to higher consciousness, this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.

201

The conqueror begets enmity; the defeated lie down in distress. The peaceful rest in happiness, giving up both victory and defeat.

204

Health is the best gain; contentment is the best wealth. A trusty friend is the best kinsman; *Nibbāna* is the supreme bliss.

223

Conquer anger by love, evil by good; conquer the miser with liberality, and the liar with truth.

231

Be on your guard against physical agitation; be controlled in body. Forsaking bodily misconduct, follow right conduct in body.

232

Be on your guard against verbal agitation; be controlled in words. Forsaking wrong speech, follow right ways in words.

233

Be on your guard against mental agitation; be controlled in thoughts. Forsaking evil thoughts, follow right ways in thoughts.

234

The wise are controlled in deed, controlled in words, controlled in thoughts, verily, they are fully controlled.

239

By degrees, little by little, from moment to moment, a wise man removes his own impurities, as a smith removes the dross of silver.

251

There is no fire like lust. There is no grip like hate. There is no net like delusion. There is no river like craving.

274

This is the only Way. There is no other for the purification of Vision. Follow this Way: this is the bewilderment of Māra (Evil).

275

Following this Way you shall make an end of suffering. This verily is the Way declared by me when I had learnt to remove the arrow (of suffering).

276

You yourselves should make the effort; the Awakened Ones are only teachers. Those who enter this Path and who are meditative, are delivered from the bonds of Māra (Evil).

277

'All conditioned things are impermanent (*anicca*)', when one sees this in wisdom, then one becomes dispassionate towards the painful. This is the Path to Purity.

278

'All conditioned things are *dukkha* (Ill)', when one sees this in wisdom, then he becomes dispassionate towards the painful. This is the Path to Purity.

279

'All states (*dhamma*) are without self (*anattā*)', when one sees this in wisdom, then he becomes dispassionate towards the painful. This is the Path to Purity.

281

Watchful of speech, well restrained in mind, let him do no evil with the body; let him purify these three ways of action, and attain the Path made known by the Sages.

335

Whosoever in this world is overcome by this wretched clinging thirst, his sorrows grow like Birana grass after rain.

336

But whosoever in this world overcomes this wretched craving so difficult to overcome, his sorrows fall away from him like water-drops from a lotus (leaf).

338

As a tree cut down sprouts forth again if its roots remain uninjured and strong, even so when the propensity to craving is not destroyed, this suffering arises again and again.

348

Free thyself from the past, free thyself from the future, free thyself from the present. Crossing to the farther shore of existence, with mind released

everywhere, no more shalt thou come to birth and decay.

362

He who is controlled in hand, controlled in foot, controlled in speech, and possessing the highest control (of mind), delighted within, composed, solitary and contented, him they call a bhikkhu.

367

He who has no attachment whatsoever to Name and Form (mind and body), and he who does not grieve over what there is not, he indeed is called a bhikkhu.

368

The bhikkhu, who abides in loving-kindness, who is delighted in the Teaching of the Buddha, attains the State of Calm, the happiness of stilling the conditioned things.

385

He for whom there exists neither this shore nor the other, nor both, he who is undistressed and unbound, him I call a brāhman.

387

The sun glows by day; the moon shines by night; in his armour the warrior glows. In meditation shines the brāhman. But all day and night, shines with radiance the Awakened One (*Buddha*).

420

He whose destiny neither the gods nor demigods nor men do know, he who has destroyed defilements and become worthy, him I call a brāhman.

423

He who knows former lives, who sees heaven and hell, who has reached the end of births and attained to super-knowledge, the sage, accomplished with all accomplishments, him I call a brāhman

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*The Last Words of the Buddha*  
(*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*)

Then the Blessed One addressed the Venerable Ānanda: 'It may be, Ānanda, that to some of you the thought may come:

"Here are (we have) the Words of the Teacher who is gone; our Teacher we have with us no more". But Ānanda, it should not be considered in this light. What I have taught and laid down, Ānanda, as Doctrine (*Dhamma*) and Discipline (*Vinaya*), this will be your teacher when I am gone.

Just as, Ānanda, the bhikkhus now address one another with the word "Friend" (*Āvuso*), they should not do so when I am gone. A senior bhikkhu, Ānanda, may address a junior by his name, his family name or with the word "Friend"; a junior bhikkhu should address a senior as "Sir" (*Bhante*) or "Venerable" (*Āyasmā*).

'If the Sangha (the Community, the Order) should wish it, Ānanda, let them, when I am gone, abolish the lesser and minor precepts (rules).

'When I am gone, Ānanda, the highest penalty<sup>3</sup> should be imposed on the Bhikkhu Channa.'

'But, Sir, what is the highest penalty?'

'Let the Bhikkhu Channa say what he likes, Ānanda; the bhikkhus should neither speak to him; nor advise him, nor exhort him.'<sup>4</sup>

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: 'It may be, Bhikkhus, that there may be doubt or perplexity in the mind of . even one bhikkhu about the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Sangha, or the Path, or the Practice. Ask Bhikkhus. Do not reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought: "Our Teacher was face to

face with us; we could not ask the Blessed One when we were face to face with him". '

When this was said, the bhikkhus remained silent.

A second time and a third time too the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus . . . as above.

The bhikkhus remained silent even for the third time.

Then the Blessed One addressed them and said: 'It may be, Bhikkhus, that you put no questions out of reverence for your Teacher. Then, Bhikkhus, let friend speak to friend.'<sup>5</sup>

Even at this, those bhikkhus remained silent.

Then the Venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: 'It is wonderful, Sir. It is marvellous, Sir. I have this faith, Sir, in the community of bhikkhus here, that not even one of them has any doubt or perplexity about the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Sangha, or the Path, or the Practice.'

'You speak "'out of faith, Ānanda. But in this matter, Ānanda, the Tathāgata (i.e. Buddha) knows, and knows for certain, that in this community of bhikkhus there is not even one bhikkhu who has any doubt or perplexity about the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Sangha, or the Path, or the Practice. Indeed, Ānanda, even the lowest in spiritual attainments among these five hundred bhikkhus is a Stream-entrant (*Sotāpanna*), not liable to fall (into lower states), is assured, and is bound for Enlightenment.'

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'Then, Bhikkhus, I address you now:

Transient are conditioned things. Try to accomplish your aim with diligence.'

These were the last words of the Tathāgata.

(*Dīgha-Nikāya*, 16)

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<sup>3</sup>Literally: 'Divine penalty', *Brahma-daṇḍa*.

<sup>4</sup>Channa was the close companion and charioteer of Prince Siddhārtha before he became the Buddha. Later he entered the Order of the Sangha, was egoistically proud because of his close association with the Master. He tended to be obstinate and self-willed, lacking in proper *esprit de corps* and often behaving perversely. After the *Parinirvāna* (death) of the Buddha, when Ānanda visited Channa and pronounced on him this penalty of a complete social boycott, even his proud spirit was tamed, he became humble, his eyes were opened. Later he mended his ways and became an Arahant, and the penalty automatically lapsed.

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<sup>5</sup>The Idea is that if they did not like to put any questions to the Buddha out of respect for their Teacher, a bhikkhu should whisper the question to his friend, and then the latter could ask it on his behalf.

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