

# FIFTEEN SUTRAS FROM THE OLD WAY

Selected and introduced by  
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## SELECTIONS FROM THE OLD WAY

### INTRODUCTION

In Hokyoki (the journal of his studies in China with his teacher Rujing) Dogen wrote:

*“I asked: What is dropping off body and mind?  
The Master said: dropping off body and mind is zazen. When you do just sitting you are free from the five sense desires and the five hindrances.*

*I asked: Is this freedom from the five sense desires and the five hindrances the same as what the sutra schools are talking about? Does it mean we are to be practitioners of both the great and the lesser vehicles?*

*The Master said: Descendants of Ancestors should not exclude the teachings of either vehicle. If students ignore the Tathagata’s sacred teachings how can they become the descendants of Buddha Ancestors?”*

Dogen-Zenji and Suzuki-roshi both always emphasized that our Soto Zen way rests firmly on all the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. Although we make an effort not to be caught and bound by the written versions of Buddha’s teachings, rather to understand personally, through the process of our practice, the real point of those teachings, we certainly do not disregard them. Our practice begins and ends with deep respect for Buddha and for the lineage of teachers that follow his way. And so our Zen Center Five Root Study Curriculum begins with a study of Buddha’s life and of the earliest layer of teachings given by Buddha to his students during his historical lifetime.

Zen students sometimes have a problem appreciating sutras from the “Old Way” (the Pali Canon and the Sanskrit Agamas with their Chinese translations, that originate in that earliest period of the written teachings) because they can seem at first reading very narrow-minded or one-sided. The sutras may sometimes appear to be indicating that “wholesome” states of mind are good and “unwholesome” states of mind are bad or inferior - that one should think a certain way and not another way or be a certain way and not another way. The sutras may sometimes appear to be indicating, contrary to the Mahayana emphasis that Nirvana and Samsara are not inherently different, that Nirvana is the goal and Samsara is another state from which we need to escape; and the sutras may sometimes appear to be saying that monks and nuns are worthwhile people while “worldings” are foolish and not to be taken seriously. The language and assumptions of these sutras, in other words, can seem almost the opposite of the style and doctrine of the Zen and other Mahayana schools. But this is only on the surface. Once we see that the purpose - awakening and enduring happiness and benefit for all - is exactly the same, and that the underlying teaching of the Four Truths and the Path is exactly the same, and once we understand the reasons for and contexts of the different styles of presentation, it is easy to suspend these problems and see the benefit in the teachings these old sutras present.

The Zen school grew up as a specialty within a developed Buddhism. Most early Zen students (including Dogen-Zenji) were well grounded in traditional Buddhist doctrine and practice before they began their Zen studies, and the Zen style of presentation assumes this background. So it is understandable that in its effort to point to the ultimate teaching, the Zen approach often fails to

offer students some explicit basic grounding in essential Buddhist thought and practice. Studying and practicing the sutras from the “Old Way” can help Western students, who may not already have a grounding in Dharma before they come to Zen to fill in this gap. In addition the old sutras, more than the Zen materials or the Mahayana sutras, give the student a much clearer sense of Shakyamuni Buddha as a person, an actual teacher with problems and with students who had problems. It seems beneficial to me that Western Zen students have an appreciation for Buddha in this way.

With all this, however, it is necessary still to be clear that for a Zen student these sutras require a degree of interpretation and updating. In our study of them we will approach them from a Zen viewpoint and try to understand them in the context of our own lives and practice as they actually are.

The present volume represents an ongoing attempt at what we hope will eventually become a Zen Center compendium of important sutras from the “Old Way.” I have consulted with many Buddhist teachers in compiling this volume. I am particularly indebted to teachers from the Western Buddhist Order and Amaravati Monastery in England, who shared with me a feeling for particular sutras that are important in their practice. I have also relied heavily on Thich Nhat Hanh who has presented in his many books his own translations of “Old Way” sutras, with a Mahayana viewpoint. The early canon is of course vast and we cannot hope to make any selection from it that will do justice to the entirety of its contents. It is my wish to eventually make a selection that will include the key teachings of Buddha as we understand them, and will in addition give a sense of the Buddha’s personality and approach to the practice. I hope the student will benefit from the present selection.

In the case of sutras that have been translated into English several times, I have chosen the version that seemed best to me.

## Sutra on Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma

I wanted to include this sutra because it is traditionally said to be the first teaching the Buddha spoke after awakening. It was delivered to the Buddha's first audience - the Five Ascetics who abandoned him when he let go of the practice of austerities before sitting under the Bodhi tree. Other sutras tell us that just after his awakening the Buddha was convinced by some gods that it would be a good idea for him to teach because there were others who might be able to understand and benefit from his experience. The Buddha thought first to teach his former teachers, but they had already died. The next best thing, he thought, would be to teach the Five Ascetics, so he went out in search of them. On the way, incidentally, he met a mendicant and proclaimed to him his insight. The mendicant was unimpressed, wished the Buddha good luck, and went on. When the Buddha finally encountered the Five Ascetics, they initially tried to shun him, but they finally did listen to his teaching, and, as this sutra attests, one of them, Kondanna, became the first person to really understand and penetrate for himself the Buddha's message. The important teaching here is of the Middle Way - understood in this sutra as a way of living that avoids both attachment to sense desire, on the one hand, and indulgence in self denial, on the other. The teaching of the Middle Way is often given, alternately, as the mediating path between two extreme philosophical-existential views: neither attachment to a view of existence nor attachment to a view of non-existence (see the "Sutra on a Discourse to Kaccayana" page 38). The sutra also states for the first time the Four Noble Truths.

## The Sutra on Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was staying in the Deer Park at Isipatana, near Varanasi. There he addressed the bhikkhus of the Group of Five thus: ‘There are two extremes which should not be followed, bhikkhus, by someone who has gone forth: Devotion to pursuing sense pleasure, which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble and produces no useful result; and devotion to self-denial, which is painful, ignoble and produces no useful result. Avoiding both these extremes, bhikkhus, the Middle Way that a Tathagata has Awakened to gives vision and insight knowledge, and leads to peace, profound understanding, full realization and to Nibbana. And what is the Middle Way that a Tathagata has Awakened to which gives vision and insight knowledge, and leads to peace, profound understanding, full realization and to Nibbana? It is the Noble Eightfold Path - that is to say: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Collectedness. This is the Middle Way that a Tathagata has Awakened to.

“Bhikkhus, there is this Noble Truth about dissatisfaction. Birth is problematic; aging is hard; dying is also hard to bear. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are all painful. Association with what you dislike is unpleasant; being apart from what you like is unpleasant; not getting what you want is unpleasant. In brief, the five grasped aggregates are unsatisfactory.

“Bhikkhus, there is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. It is desire, which gives rise to fresh birth, bound up with relish and passion, running here and there, delighting in this and in that; in other words, sense desire, desire for existing and desire for extinction.

“Bhikkhus, there is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. It is the complete fading away and cessation of this desire, its abandonment and relinquishment; the freedom from, and discarding of it.

“Bhikkhus, there is the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering. It is the Noble Eightfold Path; namely, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Collectedness.

“There is this Noble Truth of suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. This Noble Truth must be penetrated to by fully understanding suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. This Noble Truth has been penetrated to by fully understanding Suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before.

“There is this Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering:.. Such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. This Noble Truth must be penetrated to by abandoning the Origin of Suffering... This Noble Truth has been penetrated to by abandoning the Origin of Suffering:.. such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before.

“There is this Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. This Noble Truth must be penetrated to by realizing the Cessation of suffering... This Noble Truth has been penetrated to by realizing the Cessation of Suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before.

“There is this Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. This Noble Truth must be penetrated to by cultivating the Path... This Noble Truth has been penetrated to by cultivating the Path: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before.

“As long, Bhikkhus, as these Four Noble Truths in their twelve aspects were not seen clearly as they are, I did not declare to the world -- with its devas, maras and brahmas, with its samanas and brahmins, its monarchs and ordinary folk -- that I had realized the complete and perfect Awakening. But as soon as these Four Noble Truths in their twelve aspects were seen clearly as they are, then I taught the world --

with its devas, maras and brahmas, its samanas and brahmins, its monarchs and ordinary folk -- that I had realized the complete and perfect Awakening. The knowledge and the vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is my deliverance. This is the last birth. There is no further becoming'".

Thus spoke the Blessed One, and the Group of five bhikkhus were gladdened and they approved of his words. Now while this discourse was being delivered, an untarnished and clear insight into Dhamma arose in Venerable Kondanna thus: "Whatever has the nature to arise, has the nature to cease."

When the Wheel of Dhamma had been set rolling by the Blessed One, the devas off the earth raised the cry: "At Varanasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by any samana, or brahmin, or deva, or mara, or brahma, or anyone in the world." When they heard what the earth devas had said, the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings cried out with one voice: "At Varanasi..." When they heard the cry of the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings, then the devas of the realm of the Thirty-three cried out with one voice... When they heard the cry of the Thirty-Three devas, the Yama devas cried out with one voice... When they heard the cry of the Yama devas, the Tusita devas cried out with one voice... When they heard the cry of the Tusita devas, the Nimmanarati devas cried out with one voice... When they heard the cry of the Nimmanarati devas the Paranimmitavasavatti devas cried out with one voice. When they heard the cry of the Paranimmitavasavatti devas, the Brahmakayika devas took up the cry: "At Varanasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by any samana, or brahmin, or deva, or mara, or brahma, or anyone in the world." So indeed in that hour, at that moment, the word traveled up to the realm of the highest divinities. And this ten-thousandfold world-system shook and rocked and quaked. And a great measureless radiance, surpassing the very nature of the devas, was displayed in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered the great exclamation: "Truly, it is the good Kondanna who has understood, it is the good Kondanna who has understood." Thus it was that the name of Venerable Kondanna became: Anna-Kondanna -- Kondanna who understands.

This concludes the Discourse on the Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Truth.

## The Finger Snap

This sutra was suggested to me by my friends in the Western Buddhist Order. It is an example of a reference in the Pali literature that directly points to the Mahayana, bolstering the view, held by many scholars, as well as by many traditional Mahayanists, that there really isn't a discontinuity between the Buddha of the Pali texts and the Buddha of the Mahayana. Here the Buddha says that mind is luminous, that luminosity is the very nature of mind. This is almost the same thing, it seems to me, as Mahayana teachings about Buddha-nature, which say that the actual nature of each existent thing is Buddha, and that practice is a question not of changing or improving something, but rather of returning to a nature we already possess. In this sutra the Buddha goes on to say that suffering and ignorance are not inherent to humans; they are "defilements from without," which is to say adventitious taints not inherent to our minds but caused by foolish and misguided activity. So, if we can "cultivate our mind" and prune these taints back, we can return to our original luminous nature. This sounds very much like our Zen way. I like this sutra because it makes very clear the fact that mind is something we can work with, and when we do this we are not going against the grain.

## The Finger Snap

This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without. But this the uneducated manyfolk understands not as it really is. Wherefore for the uneducated manyfolk there is no cultivation of the mind, I declare.

This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is cleansed of taints that come from without. This the educated disciple understands as it really is. Wherefore, for the educated disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare.

Monks, if for just the lasting of a finger-snap a monk indulges a thought of goodwill, such a one is to be called a monk. Not empty of result is his musing. He abides doing the Master's bidding. He is one who takes good advice, and he eats the country's alms-food to some purpose. What then should I say of those who make much of such a thought?

Monks, if for just the lasting of a finger-snap a monk cultivates a thought of goodwill, such a one is to be called a monk. Not empty of result is his musing. He abides doing the Master's bidding. He is one who takes advice and he eats the country's alms-food to some purpose. What then should I say of those who make much of such a thought?

Monks, if for just the lasting of a finger-snap a monk gives attention to a thought of goodwill, such a one is to be called a monk. Not empty of result is his musing. He dwells doing the Master's bidding. He is one who takes advice, and he eats the country's alms-food to some purpose. What then should I say of those who make much of such a thought?

Monks, whatsoever things are evil, have part in evil, are on the side of evil: -- all such have mind for their causing. First arises mind as the forerunner of them, and those evil things follow after.

Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of evil states, if not yet arisen, or to cause the waning of good states, if already arisen, as negligence. In him who is negligent evil states, if not already arisen, do arise, and good states, if arisen, do wane.

Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of good states, if not yet arisen, or to cause the waning of evil states, if already arisen, as earnestness. In him who is earnest good states, if not yet arisen, do arise, and evil states, if arisen, do wane.

Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of evil states, if not yet arisen, or to cause to cause the waning of good states, if arisen, as indolence. In him who is indolent evil states, not yet arisen, do arise, and good states, if arisen, do wane."

## Those of Kesaputta

This sutra gives us a good idea of what things were like in the time of the Buddha: many spiritual teachers with bands of followers teaching here and there. Common people must have been pretty confused about what the truth was and in this sutra some of them ask the Buddha how they are to determine what is true and what isn't. The Buddha tells them very clearly: don't take it on tradition and don't take it on the strength of the charisma of the teacher. Test out the teaching yourself, and if it proves useful, then and only then believe it and put it into practice. This practical attitude toward faith (that there is faith but that it is based on experimentation and intelligence rather than emotion and suspension of intelligence) is something uniquely emphasized by the Buddha, I think

## Those of Kesaputta

Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion the Exalted One, while going about his rounds among the Kosalans with a great company of monks, came to Kesaputta, a district of the Kosalans.

Now the Kalamas of Kesaputta heard it said that Gotama the recluse, the Sakyans' son who went forth as a wanderer from the Sakyan clan, had reached Kesaputta.

And this good report was noised abroad about Gotama, that Exalted One, thus. He it is the Exalted One, Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One, perfect in knowledge and practice, and so forth.... It were indeed a good thing to get sight of such arahants!

So the Kalamas of Kesaputta came to see the Exalted One. On reaching him, some saluted the Exalted One and sat down at one side: some greeted the Exalted One courteously, and after the exchange of greetings and courtesies sat down at one side: some raising their joined palms to the Exalted One sat down at one side, some proclaimed their name and clan and did likewise; while others without saying anything just sat down at one side. Then as they thus sat the Kalamas of Kesaputta said this to the Exalted One:

Sir, certain recluses and brahmins come to Kesaputta. As to their own view, they proclaim and expound it in full; but as to the view of others, they abuse it, revile it, depreciate and cripple it. Moreover, sir, other recluses and brahmins, on coming to Kesaputta, do likewise. When we listen to them, sir, we have doubt and wavering as to which of these worthies is speaking truth and which speaks falsehood.

“Yes, Kalamas, you may well doubt, you may well waver. In a doubtful matter wavering does arise.

“Now look you, Kalamas. Be ye not misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Be not misled by proficiency in the collections, nor by mere logic or inference, nor after considering reasons, nor after reflection on and approval of some theory, nor because it fits becoming, nor out of respect for a recluse (who holds it). But Kalamas, when you know for yourselves: These things are unprofitable, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the intelligent; these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow, - then indeed do ye reject them Kalamas.

“Now what think ye, Kalamas?, When greed arises within a man, does it arise to his profit or to his loss?”

“To his loss, sir.”

“Now, Kalamas, does not this man, thus become greedy, being overcome by greed and losing control of his mind, -- does he not kill a living creature, take what is not given, go after another's wife, tell lies and lead another into such a state as causes his loss and sorrow for a long time?”

“He does, sir.”

“Now what think ye, Kalamas? When malice arises within a man, does it arise to his profit or to his loss?”

“To his loss, sir.”

“Now, Kalamas, does not this man, thus become malicious, being overcome by malice and losing control of his mind, -- does he not kill a living creature, take what is not given, and the rest, and lead another into such a state as causes his loss and sorrow for a long time?”

“He does indeed, sir.”

“Now what think ye, Kalamas? When delusion arises within a man, does it arise to his profit or to his loss?”

“To his loss, sir.”

“And does not this man, thus deluded... likewise mislead another to his loss and sorrow for a long time?”

“He does, sir.”

“Well then, Kalamas, what think ye? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?”

“Unprofitable, sir.”

“Are they blameworthy or not?”

“Blameworthy, sir.”

“Are they censured by the intelligent or not?”

“They are censured, sir.”

“If performed and undertaken, do they conduce to loss and sorrow or not?”

“They conduce to loss and sorrow, sir. It is just so, methinks.”

“So then, Kalamas, as to my words to you just now: Be ye not misled by proficiency in the collections nor by mere logic or inference, not after considering reasons, nor after reflection on and approval of some theory, nor because it fits becoming, nor out of respect for a recluse (who holds it). But, Kalamas, when you know for yourselves: These things are unprofitable, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the intelligent, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow, -- then indeed do ye reject them; such was my reason for uttering those words.

“Come now, Kalamas, be ye not... so misled. But if at any time ye know of yourselves: These things are profitable, they are blameless, they are praised by the intelligent: these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to profit and happiness, -- then, Kalamas, do ye, having undertaken them, abide therein.

“Now what think ye, Kalamas? When freedom from greed arises in a man, does it arise to his profit or his loss?”

“To his profit, sir.”

“Does not this man, not being greedy, not overcome by greed, having his mind under control, -- does he not cease to slay and so forth: does he not cease to mislead another into a state that shall be to his loss and sorrow for a long time?”

“He does, sir.”

“Now what think ye, Kalamas? When freedom from malice arises within a man, does it arise to his profit or his loss?”

“To his profit, sir!”

“Does not this man, not being malicious, not being overcome by malice, but having his mind under control, -- does he not cease to slay and so forth? Does he not lead another into such a state as causes his profit and happiness for a long time?”

“He does, sir.”

“And is it not the same with regard to freedom from illusion?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then Kalamas, what think ye? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?”

“Profitable, sir.”

“Are they blameworthy or not?”

“They are not, sir.”

“Are they censured or praised by the intelligent?”

“They are praised, sir.”

“When performed and undertaken, do they conduce to happiness or not?”

“They do conduce to happiness, sir.”

“It is just so methinks.

“So then, Kalamas, as to my words to you just now: ‘Be ye not misled but when ye know for yourselves: These things are profitable and conduce to happiness... do ye undertake them and abide therein,’ such was my reason for uttering them.

“Now, Kalamas, he who is a disciple freed from coveting and malevolence, who is not bewildered but self-controlled and mindful, with a heart possessed by goodwill, by compassion... possessed by sympathy, by equanimity (that is widespread, grown great and boundless, free from enmity and oppression),-- such a one abides suffusing one quarter of the world therewith, likewise the second, third and fourth quarter of the world. And in like manner above, below, across, everywhere, for all sorts and conditions, he abides suffusing the whole world with a heart possessed by... equanimity that is widespread, grown great and boundless, free from enmity and oppression. By that disciple whose heart is thus free from enmity, free from oppression, untainted and made pure, by such in this very life four comforts are attained thus:

‘If there be a world beyond, if there be fruit and ripening of deeds done well or ill, then, when the body breaks up after death, I shall be reborn in the Happy Lot, in the Heaven World.’ This is the first comfort he attains.

‘If however, there be no world beyond, no fruit and ripening of deeds done well or ill, yet in this very life do I hold myself free from enmity and oppression, sorrowless and well.’ This is the second comfort he attains.

‘Though as result of action, ill be done by me, yet do I plan no ill to anyone. And if I do no ill, how can sorrow touch me?’ This is the third comfort he attains.

‘But if, as result of action, no ill be done by me, then in both ways do I behold myself utterly pure.’ This is the fourth comfort he attains.

“Thus Kalamas, that disciple whose heart is free from enmity, free from oppression, untainted and made pure, in this very life attains these four comforts.”

“So it is, Exalted One. So it is, Wellfarer. That disciple... in this very life attains these four comforts (and they repeated all that had been said).

“Excellent, sir! We here do go for refuge to the Exalted One, to Dhamma and to the Order of Monks. May the Exalted One accept us as lay-followers from this day forth so long as life shall last, who have so taken refuge.”

## Meghiya Sutta

This sutra is one of my favorites, and I never tire of reading it and speaking about it. It shows the sensitivity with which the Buddha relates to his students, with plenty of patience, letting people find out for themselves what they need, and letting them make their own mistakes when necessary. Meghiya is a very enthusiastic and impetuous student: he sees a pleasant grove of mango trees and immediately wants to go to meditate there. The Buddha doesn't think he's ready for it yet, and hints as much, but Meghiya insists and the Buddha doesn't want to dampen his enthusiasm. Meghiya goes to meditate but can't concentrate at all. I love Meghiya's reaction here: rather than getting depressed or discouraged he thinks it's just a surprising and a marvelous thing that he can't concentrate! He rushes back to Buddha to tell him about this astonishing result and Buddha gives him some good teaching. And this is the other reason why I love this sutra: for Buddha tells Meghiya that there are four things to do to get ready to meditate and the first of these four is to develop "a lovely relationship," that is, a beautiful friendship in the Dharma. I often feel that we emphasize many things in Dharma practice - meditation, ethical conduct, energy, and so on - things that are of course crucial, but I wonder whether we emphasize enough the importance of our relationships. The teacher-student relationship is very important but there are many other relationships that sustain and inspire our lifetime path. Having a good friend in the Dharma, someone who loves us and wants us to practice, and isn't afraid to tell us, gently, when we're off, is a marvelous, and, as the Buddha shows here, necessary thing.

## Meghiya

Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying at Calika, on Calika Hill. Now on that occasion the venerable Meghiya was in attendance, on the Exalted One. Then the venerable Meghiya came to The Exalted One, and on coming to him saluted him and stood at one side. As he thus stood he said to the Exalted One: “I desire, sir, to enter Jantu village for alms-quest.”

“Do whatever you think it the time for, Meghiya.”

So the venerable Meghiya, robing himself in the forenoon and taking bowl and robe, entered Jantu village in quest of alms-food and after questing for alms-food there returned after his rounds, and after eating his meal went toward the bank of the river Kimikala, and on reaching it, while taking exercise, by walking up and down and to and fro, he saw a lovely, delightful mango-grove. At the sight of it he thought: “Truly lovely and delightful is this mango-grove! A proper place surely is this for a clansman for striving (for concentration). If the Exalted One would give me leave, I would come here to this mango-grove to strive for concentration.”

So the venerable Meghiya went to the Exalted One and sat down at one side, and as he sat thus he told the Exalted One (of his find and what he had thought) and said: “If the Exalted One gives me leave, I would go to that mango-grove to strive for concentration.”

At these words the Exalted One said to the venerable Meghiya: “Wait a little, Meghiya. I am alone till some other monk arrives.”

Then a second time the venerable Meghiya said to the Exalted One, “Sir, the Exalted One has nothing further to be done, has nothing more to add to what he has done. But for me, sir, there is more yet to be done, there is more to be added to what I have done. If the Exalted One gives me leave, I would go to that mango-grove to strive for concentration.”

Then a second time the Exalted One replied. “Wait a little Meghiya. I am alone till some other monk arrives.”

Then yet a third time the venerable Meghiya made his request and the Exalted One replied “Well what can I say when you talk of striving for concentration? Do what you think it the time for, Meghiya.”

Accordingly the venerable Meghiya rose from his seat, saluted the Exalted One with his right side and went away to that mango-grove, and on reaching it plunged into it and sat down for the midday rest at the foot of a certain tree.

Now as the venerable Meghiya was staying in that mango-grove there came habitually upon him three evil, unprofitable forms of thought, to wit: thoughts lustful, thoughts malicious and thoughts harmful.

Then the venerable Meghiya thought thus: “It is strange in truth! It is a wonderful thing, in truth, that I who in faith went forth from home to the homeless should thus be assailed by these three evil unprofitable forms of thought, to wit: thoughts lustful, thoughts malicious and thoughts harmful!” So at eventide he arose from his solitude and went to the Exalted One and on coming to him ... said, “Sir, while I have been staying in that mango-grove there came habitually to me three evil, unprofitable forms of thought ... Then, sir, I thought it is strange, in truth! It is wonderful in truth that I ... should be assailed thus!”

“Meghiya, when the heart’s release is immature, five things conduce to its maturity. What five?”

“Herein, Meghiya, a monk has a lovely intimacy, a lovely friendship, a lovely comradeship. When the heart’s release is immature this is the first thing that conduces to its maturity. Then again, Meghiya, a monk is virtuous he abides restrained with the restraint of the obligations, he is perfect in the practice of right behaviour, sees danger in trifling faults, he undertakes and trains himself in the ways of training. When the heart’s release is immature this, Meghiya, is the second thing that conduces; to its maturity.

Then again, Meghiya, as regards talk that is serious and suitable for opening up the heart and conduces to downright revulsion, to dispassion. to ending, to calm, to comprehension, to perfect insight, to nibbana,

that is to say, talk about wanting little, about contentment, about solitude, about avoiding society, about putting forth energy; talk about virtue, concentration of mind and wisdom, talk about release, knowledge and insight of release, - such talk as this the monk gets at pleasure, without pain and without stint. When the heart's release is immature, Meghiya, this is the third thing that conduces to its maturity.

Then again, Meghiya, a monk abides resolute in energy for the abandoning of unprofitable things, for the acquiring of profitable things, he is stout and strong in effort, not laying aside the burden in things profitable. When the heart's release is immature, Meghiya, this is the fourth thing that conduces to its maturity.

Then again, Meghiya, a monk is possessed of insight, endowed with the insight that goes on to discern the rise and fall, with the Ariyan penetration which goes on to penetrate the perfect ending of Ill. When the heart's release is immature, Meghiya, this is the fifth thing, and these are the five things that conduce to its maturity.

Now, Meghiya, this may be looked for by a monk who has a lovely intimacy, a lovely friendship, a lovely comradeship, -- that he will become virtuous, will abide restrained by the restraint of the obligations, be perfect in the practice of right behaviour, see danger in trifling faults, undertake and train himself in the ways of training. This, Meghiya, may be looked for by a monk ... that he will become virtuous ... that he will undertake ... the ways of training, that he will get at pleasure, without pain and without stint, such talk as is serious ... about concentration of mind ... insight of release. This, Meghiya, may be looked for ... that he will abide resolute in energy ... not laying aside the burden in things profitable. This, Meghiya, may be looked for ... that he will be possessed of insight ... to penetrate to the perfect ending of Ill.

Moreover, Meghiya, by the monk who is established in these five conditions, four other things are to be made to grow, thus: The (idea of the) unlovely is to be made to grow for the abandoning of lust; amity is to be made to grow for the abandoning of malice; mindfulness of inbreathing and outbreathing is to be made to grow for the suppression of discursive thought; the consciousness of impermanence is to be made to grow for the uprooting of the pride of egoism. In him, Meghiya, who is conscious of impermanence the consciousness of what is not the self is established. He who is conscious of what is not the self wins the uprooting of the pride of egoism in this very life, namely, he wins nibanna."

Thereupon the Exalted One ... gave utterance to this verse of uplift:

*Thoughts trite and subtle, taking shape, cause mind to be elated.  
Man, ignorant of these, with whirling brain, strays to and fro;  
But knowing them, ardent and mindful, checks these thoughts of mind.  
When mind's elation cometh not to pass, th' enlightened sage  
Abandons utterly these thoughts of mind, that none remain.*

Zoketsu's alternate version of the verse:

*Confused thoughts excite the mind,  
The whirling brain wobbles.  
But knowing thoughts for what they are quiets them.  
When the mind is quiet and thoughts don't disturb,  
There is peace.*

## Sutra on the Parable of the Saw

This sutra is full of stories and similes the burden of which is that as practitioners of the Way we have to be very patient with others, especially when they complain about us or do things we don't like. It's easy enough to be kind and nice when things are going well, the Buddha says, but what about when unwanted circumstances arise or when our reputation is being impeached. As is frequently the case in the old sutras, the Buddha gives this teaching in response to an incident that arose in the sangha. It seems there was a monk named Moliya Phagguna who was getting too close to a community of nuns. Whenever anyone spoke ill of the nuns Phagguna became angry and when anyone spoke ill of Phagguna in the nuns presence they became angry. There was nothing, of course, wrong with the mutual regard that Phagguna and the nuns had for each other - but that they became angry and defensive on each other's behalf was a problem the Buddha felt he needed to address, because this habit of righteousness and seemingly justifiable ill-will is a pitfall of the Way. No matter what anyone says or does, the Buddha teaches Phagguna, we must practice compassion and patience, never uttering a harsh word. To make his point, the Buddha tells the humorous story of the woman Vedehika, who enjoyed an enviable reputation as a gentle and mild person, but was shown to be in fact quite violent when pushed into it by a persistent and clever servant. In several similes toward the end of the sutra the Buddha says we should be like the earth and like space: you can't defile the earth by spitting or urinating on it and you can't paint a picture on space. So the heart of a developed practitioner should be as wide and as deep as space or earth, and not subject to ill will no matter what happens.

## **Kakacupama Sutta**

### **The Simile of the Saw**

THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

Now on that occasion the venerable Moliya Phagguna was associating overmuch with bhikkhunis. He was associating so much with bhikkhunis that if any bhikkhu spoke dispraise of those bhikkhunis in his presence, he would become angry and displeased and would rebuke him; and if any bhikkhu spoke dispraise of the venerable Moliya Phagguna in those bhikkhunis' presence, they would become angry and displeased and would rebuke him. So much was the venerable Moliya Phagguna associating with bhikkhunis.

Then a certain bhikkhu went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and told the Blessed One what was taking place.

Then the Blessed One addressed a certain bhikkhu thus: "Come, bhikkhu, tell the bhikkhu Moliya Phagguna in my name that the Teacher calls him." – "Yes, venerable sir," he replied, and he went to the venerable Moliya Phagguna and told him: "The Teacher calls you, friend Phagguna." – "Yes, friend," he replied, and he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. The Blessed One asked him:

"Phagguna, is it true that you are associating overmuch with bhikkhunis; that you are associating so much with bhikkhunis that if any bhikkhu speaks dispraise of those bhikkhunis in your presence, you become angry and displeased and rebuke him. Are you associating so much with bhikkhunis as it seems?" – "Yes, venerable sir." – "Phagguna, are you not a clansman who has gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness?" – "Yes, venerable sir."

"Phagguna, it is not proper for you, a clansman gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, to associate overmuch with bhikkhunis. Therefore, if anyone speaks dispraise of those bhikkhunis in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected, and I shall utter no evil words; I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate.' That is how you should train, Phagguna.

"If anyone gives those bhikkhunis a blow with his hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus. 'My mind will be unaffected...' If anyone speaks dispraise in your presence, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected...' if anyone should give you a blow with his hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife, you should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life. And herein you should train thus: 'My mind will be unaffected, and I shall utter no evil words; I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate.' That is how you should train, Phagguna."

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus, there was an occasion when the bhikkhus satisfied my mind. Here I addressed the bhikkhus thus: 'Bhikkhus, I eat at a single session. By so doing, I am free from illness and affliction, and I enjoy health, strength, and a comfortable abiding. Come, bhikkhus, eat at a single session. By so doing, you will be free from illness and affliction, and you will enjoy health, strength, and a comfortable abiding.' And I had no need to keep on instructing those bhikkhus; I had only to arouse mindfulness in them. Suppose there were a chariot on even ground at the crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with goad lying ready, so that a skilled trainer, a charioteer of horses to be tamed, might mount it, and taking the reins in his left hand and the goad in his right hand, might drive out and back by any road whenever he likes. So too, I had no need to keep on instructing those bhikkhus; I had only to arouse mindfulness in them.

“Therefore, bhikkhus, abandon what is unwholesome and devote yourselves to wholesome states, for that is how you will come to growth, increase, and fulfillment in this Dhamma and Discipline. Suppose there were a big sala-tree grove near a village or town, and it was choked with castor-oil weeds, and some man would appear desiring its good, welfare, and protection. He would cut down and throw out the crooked saplings that robbed the sap, and he would clean up the interior of the grove and tend the straight well-formed saplings, so that the sala-tree grove later on would come to growth, increase, and fulfillment. So too, bhikkhus, abandon what is unwholesome and devote yourselves to wholesome states, for that is how you will come to growth, increase, and fulfillment in this Dhamma and Discipline.

“Formerly, bhikkhus, in this same Savatthi there was a housewife named Vedehika. And good report about Mistress Vedehika had spread thus: ‘Mistress Vedehika is kind, Mistress Vedehika is gentle, Mistress Vedehika is peaceful.’ Now Mistress Vedehika had a maid named Kali who was clever, nimble, and neat in her work. The maid Kali thought: ‘A good report about my lady has spread thus: “Mistress Vedehika is kind, Mistress Vedehika is gentle, Mistress Vedehika is peaceful.” How is it now, while she does not show anger, is it nevertheless actually present in her or is it absent? Or else is it just because my work is neat that my lady shows no anger though it is actually present in her? Suppose I test my lady.’

“So the maid Kali got up late. The Mistress Vedehika said: ‘Hey, Kali!’ - ‘What is it, madam?’ - ‘What is the matter that you get up so late?’ - ‘Nothing is the matter, madam.’ - ‘Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up so late!’ and she was angry and displeased, and she scowled. Then the maid Kali thought: ‘The fact is that while my lady does not show anger, it is actually present in her, not absent; and it is just because my work is neat that my lady shows no anger though it is actually present in her, not absent. Suppose I test my lady a little more.’

“So the maid Kali got up later in the day- Then Mistress Vedehika said: ‘Hey, Kali!’ - ‘What is it, madam?’ - ‘What is the matter that you get up later in the day?’ - ‘Nothing is the matter, madam.’ - ‘Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up later in the day!’ and she was angry and displeased, and she spoke words of displeasure. Then the maid Kali thought: ‘The fact is that while my lady does not show anger, it is actually present in her, not absent. Suppose I test my lady a little more.’

“So the maid Kali got up still later in the day. Then Mistress Vedehika said: ‘Hey, Kali!’ - ‘What is it, madam?’ - ‘What is the matter that you get up still later in the day?’ - ‘Nothing, is the matter, madam.’ - ‘Nothing is the matter, you wicked girl, yet you get up still later in the day!’ and she was angry and displeased and she took a rolling-pin, gave her a blow on the head and cut her head.

“Then the maid Kali, with blood running from her cut head, denounced her mistress to the neighbours: ‘See ladies, the kind lady’s work! See, ladies, the gentle lady’s work! See, ladies, the peaceful lady’s work! How can she become angry and displeased with her only maid for getting up late? How can she take a rolling-pin, give her a blow on the head, and cut her head?’ Then later on a bad report about Mistress Vedehika spread thus: ‘Mistress Vedehika is rough, Mistress Vedehika is violent. Mistress Vedehika is merciless.’

“So too, bhikkhus, some bhikkhu is extremely kind, extremely gentle, extremely peaceful, so long as disagreeable courses of speech do not touch him. But it is when disagreeable courses of speech touch him that it can be understood whether that bhikkhu is really kind, gentle, and peaceful. I do not call a bhikkhu easy to admonish who is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only for the sake of getting robes, almsfood, a resting place, and medicinal requisites. Why is that? Because that bhikkhu is not easy to admonish nor makes himself easy to admonish when he gets no robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal requisites. But when a bhikkhu is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish because he honours, respects and reveres the Dhamma, him I call easy to admonish. Therefore, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘We shall be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish because we honour, respect, and revere the Dhamma.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you,

their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, suppose a man came with a hoe and a basket and said: ‘I shall make this great earth to be without earth.’ He would dig here and there, strew the soil here and there. spit here and there, and urinate here and there, saying: ‘Be without earth, be without earth.’ What do you think, Bhikkhus? Could that man make this great earth to be without earth?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Why is that?” - “Because this great earth is deep and immense; it cannot possibly be made to be without earth. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment.”

“So too, bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech...Herein, Bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to the earth, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, Bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, suppose a man came with crimson, turmeric, indigo, or carmine and said: ‘I shall draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space.’ What do you think, bhikkhus? Could that man draw pictures and make pictures appear on empty space?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Why is that?” - “Because empty space is formless and invisible; he cannot possibly draw pictures, there or make pictures appear there. Eventually this man would reap only weariness and disappointment.”

“So too, bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech ... Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected ... and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to empty space, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ ..That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, suppose a man came with a blazing grass-torch and said.. ‘I shall heat up and burn away the river Ganges with this blazing grass-torch.’ What do you think bhikkhus? Could that man heat up and burn away the river Ganges with that blazing grass-torch?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Why is that?” - “Because the river Ganges is deep and immense; it cannot possibly be heated up and burned away with a blazing grass-torch. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment.”

“So too, bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech... Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected ... and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to the river Ganges, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, suppose there were a catskin bag that was rubbed, well-rubbed, thoroughly well-rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling, rid of crackling, and a man came with a stick or a potsherd and said.. ‘There is this catskin bag that is rubbed ... rid of rustling, rid of crackling. I shall make it rustle and crackle.’ What do you think, bhikkhus? Could that man make it rustle or crackle with the stick or the potsherd?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Why is that?” - “Because that catskin bag being rubbed ... rid of rustling, rid of crackling, cannot possibly be made to rustle or crackle with the stick or the potsherd. Eventually the man would reap only weariness and disappointment.”

“So too, bhikkhus, there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. When. others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with

inner hate.. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus, ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind similar to a catskin bag, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: ‘Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Therefore, bhikkhus, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

## The Elder Sutra and The Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone

These sutras both make the point that the sphere of our practice is, radically, in the present moment. It's not that we try to pretend the past didn't exist or the future will not exist. Rather we see that the past and the future manifest as experiences in the present moment, and as such we work with them clearly right now, without too much regret or worry. The present moment itself can be misunderstood and we can be swept away by it in a kind of dim hedonism if we don't understand and appreciate impermanence and the practice of awareness. Thich Nhat Hanh comments extensively on both these texts in his little book "Our Appointment with Life" (Parallax Press, 1990).

# The Elder Sutra

## Theranamo Sutta

Translated from the Chinese

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying at the monastery in the Jeta Grove, in the town of Sravasti. At that time there was a monk named Thera (Elder), who always preferred to be alone. Whenever he could, he praised the practice of living alone. He sought alms alone and sat in meditation alone.

One time a group of bhikkhus came to the Lord, paid their respect by prostrating at his feet, stepped to one side, sat down at a distance, and said, “Blessed One, there is an elder by the name of Thera who only wants to be alone. He always praises the practice of living alone. He goes into the village alone to seek alms, returns home from the village alone, and sits in meditation alone.”

The Lord Buddha told one of the bhikkhus, “Please go to the place where the monk Thera lives and tell him I wish to see him.”

The bhikkhu obeyed. When the monk Thera heard the Buddha’s wish, he came without delay, prostrated at the feet of the Buddha, stepped to one side, and sat down at a distance. Then the Blessed One asked the monk Thera, “Is it true that you prefer to be alone, praise the life of solitude, go for alms alone, come back from the village alone, and sit in meditation alone?”

The monk Thera replied, “It is true, Blessed One.”

Buddha asked the monk Thera. “How do you live alone?”

The monk Thera replied, “I live alone; no one else lives with me. I praise the practice of being alone. I go for alms alone, and I come back from the village alone. I sit in meditation alone. That is all.”

The Buddha taught the monk as follows. “It is obvious that you like the practice of living alone. I do not want to deny that, but I want to tell you that there is a wonderful way to be alone. It is the way of deep observation to see that the past no longer exists and the future has not yet come, and to dwell at ease in the present moment, free from desire. When a person lives in this way, he has no hesitation in his heart. He gives up all anxieties and regrets, lets go of all binding desires, and cuts the fetters which prevent him from being free. This is called ‘the better way to live alone.’ There is no more wonderful way of being alone than this.”

Then the Blessed One recited this gatha:

In observing life deeply,  
It is possible to see clearly all that is.  
Not enslaved by anything,  
It is possible to put aside all craving.  
The result is a life of peace and joy.  
This is truly to live alone.

Hearing the Lord’s words, the monk Thera was delighted. He prostrated respectfully to the Buddha and departed.

# The Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone

## Bhaddekaratta Sutta

Translated from the Pali

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying at the monastery in the Jeta Grove, in the town of Sravasti. He called all the monks to him and instructed them, “Bhikkhus!”

And the bhikkhus replied, “We are here.”

The Blessed One taught. “I will teach you what is meant by ‘knowing the better way to live alone.’ I will begin with an outline of the teaching, and then I will give a detailed explanation. Bhikkhus, please listen carefully.”

“Blessed One, we are listening.”

The Buddha taught:

Do not pursue the past.  
Do not lose yourself in the future.  
The past no longer is.  
The future has not yet come.  
Looking deeply at life as it is  
In the very here and now,  
The practitioner dwells  
In stability and freedom.  
We must be diligent today.  
To wait until tomorrow is too late.  
Death comes unexpectedly.  
How can we bargain with it?  
The sage calls a person who knows  
How to dwell in mindfulness  
Night and day  
“One who knows  
the better way to live alone.”

“Bhikkhus, what do we mean by ‘pursuing the past’? When someone thinks about the way his body was in the past, the way his feelings were in the past, the way his perceptions were in the past, the way his mental factors were in the past, the way his consciousness was in the past; when he thinks about these things and his mind is burdened by and attached to these things which belong to the past, then that person is pursuing the past.

“Bhikkhus, what is meant by ‘not pursuing the past’? When someone thinks about the way his body was in the past, the way his feelings were in the past, the way his perceptions were in the past, the way his mental factors were in the past, the way his consciousness was in the past; when he thinks about these things but his mind is neither enslaved by nor attached to these things which belong to the past, then that person is not pursuing the past.

“Bhikkhus, what is meant by ‘losing yourself in the future’? When someone thinks about the way his body will be in the future, the way his feelings will be in the future, the way his perceptions will be in the future, the way his mental factors will be in the future, the way his consciousness will be in the future; when he thinks about these things and his mind is burdened by and daydreaming about these things which belong to the future, then that person is losing himself in the future.

“Bhikkhus, what is meant by ‘not losing yourself in the future’? When someone thinks about the way his body will be in the future, the way his feelings will be in the future, the way his perceptions will be in the future, the way his mental factors will be in the future, the way his consciousness will be in the future: when he thinks about these things but his mind is not burdened by or daydreaming about these things which belong to the future, then he is not losing himself in the future.

“Bhikkhus, what is meant by ‘being swept away by the present’? When someone does not study or learn anything about the Awakened One, or the teachings of love and understanding, or the community that lives in harmony and awareness; when that person knows nothing about the noble teachers and thinks, ‘This body is myself; I am this body. These feelings are myself; I am these feelings. This perception is myself; I am this mental factor. This consciousness is myself; I am this consciousness,’ then that person is being swept away by the present.

“Bhikkhus, what is meant by ‘not being swept away by the present’? When someone studies and learns about the Awakened One, the teachings of love and understanding, and the community that lives in harmony and awareness; when that person knows about noble teachers and their teachings, practices these teachings, and does not think ‘This body is myself; I am this body. These feelings are myself; I am these feelings. This perception is myself; I am this perception. This mental factor is myself; I am this mental factor. This consciousness is myself; I am this consciousness,’ then that person is not being swept away by the present.

“Bhikkhus, I have presented the outline and the detailed explanation of knowing the better way to live alone.”

Thus the Buddha taught, and the bhikkhus were delighted to put his teachings into practice.

## Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing

This short sutra is a companion to the “Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.” In it the practice of working mindfully with the breath is taught as the way to fully develop the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which in turn will give rise to the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, which themselves will bring about awakening. The sutra lists sixteen steps for working with the breath, beginning with mindful awareness of breathing in and breathing out, up to letting go of everything with each breath. It’s interesting to study these sixteen steps but, as with the “Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness” itself, we may, in actual practice, come up with a simpler way. The opening of the sutra provides an interesting footnote about the way the sangha was organized in Buddha’s time. There it says that the large assembly was divided into groups, each senior practitioner taking responsibility to instruct ten or twenty or thirty or forty junior practitioners. All gathered together on the Full Moon night after the ceremony ending the Rains Retreat to hear the Buddha preach this text. Thich Nhat Hanh has a commentary on this sutra in “Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing” (Parallax Press, 1988; reprinted in 1990 by Parallax as “Breathe! You Are Alive”).

# The Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing

## Section One

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was staying in Savatthi in the Eastern Park with many well-known and accomplished disciples, including Sariputta, Mahamoggallana, Mahakassapa, Mahakaccayana, Mahakotthita, Mahakappina, Mahacunda, Anuruddha, Rewata and Ananda. The senior bhikkhus in the community were diligently instructing bhikkhus who were new to the practice - some instructing ten students, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty; and this way the bhikkhus new to the practice gradually made great progress.

That night the moon was full and the Pavarana Ceremony was held to mark the end of the rainy season retreat. Lord Buddha, the Awakened One, was sitting in the open and his disciples were gathered around him. After looking over the assembly, he began speaking:

“O bhikkhus, I am pleased to observe the fruit you have attained in your practice. And I know you can make even more progress. What you have not yet attained, you can attain. What you have not yet realized, you can realize perfectly. [To encourage your efforts] I will stay here until the next full moon day.”

When they heard that the Lord Buddha was going to stay at Savatthi for another month, bhikkhus throughout the country began traveling there to study with him. The senior bhikkhus continued teaching the bhikkhus new to the practice even more ardently. Some were instructing ten students, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty. With this help, the newer bhikkhus were able, little by little, to continue their progress in understanding.

When the next full moon day arrived, the Buddha, seated under the open sky, looked over the assembly of bhikkhus and began speaking:

“O bhikkhus, our community is pure and good. At its heart it is without useless and boastful talk, and therefore it deserves to receive offerings and be considered a field of merit. Such a community is rare, and any pilgrim who seeks it, no matter how far he must travel will find it worthy.

“O bhikkhus, there are bhikkhus in this assembly who have already realized the fruit of Arahathood, destroyed every root of affliction, laid aside every burden, and attained right understanding and emancipation. There are also bhikkhus who have already cut off the first five internal formations and realized the fruit of never returning to the cycle of birth and death.

“There are those who have thrown off the first three internal formations and realized the fruit of returning once more. They have cut off the roots of greed, hatred, and ignorance, and only need to return to the cycle of birth and death one more time. There are those who have thrown off the three internal formations and attained the fruit of stream enterer, heading steadily to the Awakened State. There are those who practice the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. There are those who practice the Four Right Efforts and those who practice the Four Bases of Success. There are those who practice the Five Faculties, those who practice the Five Powers, those who practice the Seven Factors of Awakening, and those who practice the Noble Eightfold Path. There are those who practice loving kindness, those who practice compassion, those who practice joy, and those who practice equanimity. There are those who practice the Nine Contemplations, and those who practice the Observation of Impermanence. There are also bhikkhus already practicing full awareness of breathing.

## Section Two

“O bhikkhus, the method of being fully aware of breathing, if developed and practiced continuously, will have great rewards and bring great advantages. It will lead to success in practicing the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. If the method of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness is developed and practiced continuously, it will lead to success in the practice of the Seven Factors of Awakening. The

Seven Factors of Awakening, if developed and practiced continuously, will give rise to Understanding and Liberation of the Mind.

“What is the way to develop and practice continuously the method of Full Awareness of Breathing so that the practice will be rewarding and offer great benefit?”

“It is like this, bhikkhus: the practitioner goes into the forest or to the foot of a tree, or to any deserted place, and sits stably in the lotus position, holding his body quite straight. Breathing in, he knows that he is breathing in; and breathing out, he knows that he is breathing out.

1. 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.’
2. 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.’
3. ‘I am breathing in and am aware of my whole body. I am breathing out and am aware of my whole body.’ This is how he practices.
4. ‘I am breathing in and making my whole body calm and at peace. I am breathing out and making my whole body calm and at peace.’ This is how he practices.
5. ‘I am breathing in and feeling joyful. I am breathing out and feeling joyful.’ This is how he practices.
6. ‘I am breathing in and feeling happy. I am breathing out and feeling happy.’ He practices like this.
7. ‘I am breathing in and am aware of the activities of the mind in me. I am breathing out and am aware of the activities of the mind in me.’ He practices like this.
8. ‘I am breathing in and making the activities of the mind in me calm and at peace. I am breathing out and making the activities of the mind in me calm and at peace.’ He practices like this.
9. ‘I am breathing in and am aware of my mind. I am breathing out and am aware of my mind.’ He practices like this.
10. ‘I am breathing in and making my mind happy and at peace. I am breathing out and making my mind happy and at peace.’ He practices like this.
11. ‘I am breathing in and concentrating my mind. I am breathing out and concentrating my mind.’ He practices like this.
12. ‘I am breathing in and liberating my mind. I am breathing out and liberating my mind.’ He practices like this.
13. ‘I am breathing in and observing the impermanent nature of all dharmas. I am breathing out and observing the impermanent nature of all dharmas.’ He practices like this.
14. ‘I am breathing in and observing the fading of all dharmas. I am breathing out and observing the fading of all dharmas.’ He practices like this.
15. ‘I am breathing in and observing liberation. I am breathing out and observing liberation.’ He practices like this.
16. ‘I am breathing in and observing letting go. I am breathing out and observing letting go.’ He practices like this.

“The Full Awareness of Breathing, if developed and practiced continuously according to these instructions will be rewarding and of great benefit.

## Section Three

“In what way does one develop and continuously practice the Full Awareness of Breathing, in order to succeed in the practice of The Four Establishments of Mindfulness?”

“When the practitioner breathes in or breathes out a long or a short breath, aware of his breath or his whole body, or aware that he is making his whole body calm and at peace, he abides peacefully in the observation of the body in the body, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. In this case, breathing in and breathing out with Full Awareness belong to the first Establishment of Mindfulness, namely the body.

“When the practitioner breathes in or out with the awareness of joy or happiness, or awareness of the activities of the mind; when the practitioner breathes in or out in order to make the activities of his mind calm and at peace, at that time he abides peacefully in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. This exercise of breathing with awareness belongs to the second Establishment of Mindfulness, namely the feelings.

“When the practitioner breathes in or breathes out with the awareness of the mind, or to make the mind calm and at peace, to collect the mind in concentration, or to free and liberate the mind, at that time he abides peacefully in the observation of the mind in the mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life. Without full awareness of breathing, there can be no development of meditative stability and understanding.

“When the practitioner breathes in or breathes out and contemplates the essential impermanence or the essential fading of all dharmas or liberation or letting go, at that time he abides peacefully in the awareness of the objects of the mind in the objects of the mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life.

“The practice of Full Awareness of Breathing, if developed and practiced continuously, will lead to perfect accomplishment of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

## Section Four

“Moreover, if they are developed and continuously practiced, the Four Establishments of Mindfulness will lead to perfect abiding in the Seven Factors of Awakening. How is this so?”

“When the Practitioner can maintain, without distraction, the practice of observing the body in the body, the feelings in the feelings, the mind in the mind, and the objects of mind in the objects of mind, persevering, fully awake, clearly understanding his state, gone beyond all attachment and aversion to this life, with unwavering, steadfast, imperturbable meditative stability, he will attain the first Factor of Awakening, namely full attention. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can abide in meditative stability without being distracted and can investigate every dharma, every object of mind that arises, then the second Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in him, the factor of investigating dharmas. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can observe and investigate every dharma in a sustained, persevering, and steadfast way, without being distracted, the third Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in him, the factor of energy. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner has reached a stable, imperturbable abiding in the stream of practice, the fourth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in him, the factor of joy. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner can abide undistractedly in the state of joy, he will feel his body and mind light and at peace. At this point the fifth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed, the factor of ease. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When both body and mind are at ease, the practitioner can easily enter into concentration. At that time the sixth Factor of Awakening will be born and developed in him, the factor of concentration. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“When the practitioner is abiding in concentration with deep calmness, he will cease discriminating and comparing. At that time the seventh factor of Awakening is released, born and developed in him, the factor of letting go. When this factor is developed, it will come to perfection.

“This is how the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, if developed and practiced continuously, will lead to perfect abiding in the Seven Factors of Awakening.

## **Section Five**

“How will the Seven Factors of Awakening, if developed and practiced continuously, lead to the perfect accomplishment of true understanding and complete liberation?”

“If the practitioner follows the path of the Seven Factors of Awakening, living in quiet seclusion, observing and contemplating the fading of all dharmas, he will develop the capacity of letting go. This will be a result of following the path of the Seven Factors of Awakening and will lead to the perfect accomplishment of true understanding and complete liberation.”

## **Section Six**

This is what the Lord, the Awakened One, said: and everyone in the assembly felt gratitude and delight at having heard his teachings.

## Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness

This sutra is basic to Zen practice. It is the ballast and ground that holds the Mahayanistic enthusiasm to save all beings and the Ancestral insistence on realizing the non-dual nature of our daily life. If we didn't have the simple practice of mindfulness, beginning with mindfulness of the body and the breath, to balance these things, we'd have a hard time keeping our practice on track over time. In this sutra Buddha makes the astonishing statement that mindfulness is the "only way" to awakening; and he goes on to outline a complete course of practice in which, ultimately, we realize the highest meaning of the Noble Truths and so complete our path. Mindfulness practice begins with just being present with our breath, letting go of all else, and then extending this simple sense of presence to our whole body, and from there to our emotional life, and through that to the deepest ways in which we hold ourselves hostage to our suffering. I have always been impressed that the sutra spends most of its words on the first of the four foundations, mindfulness of the body. I think this one is the most important. We return to it again and again. Without it it's much too difficult to work with our heart and mind: we'd just get tripped up. So the craft of mindfulness of the body is I think a continual basis for us - it keeps us on an even keel with ourselves. We are always looking for something further, something we don't have, something that will improve us. This sutra makes it very obvious that it will never work to try to leap from where we are to elsewhere. Practice must always start and end with right here, right now, just being clearly aware, with honesty and accuracy and acceptance, without desire for anything else, in the body, in the feelings, in the heart and mind. There are various traditions of working with this sutra. I believe that it is most effective to take a part or parts of the sutra to concentrate on; it's not necessary to take it literally as something we are to try to do, step by step from beginning to end.

# The Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness (Version one)

*Satipatthana Sutta* (Theravada) from *Majjhima Nikaya*, number 10. Translated from the Pali by Thich Nhat Hanh and Annabel Lally.

## Section One

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when he was living at Kammassadharma, a market town of the Kuru people. The Buddha addressed the bhikkhus, “O bhikkhus.”

And the bhikkhus replied, “Venerable Lord.”

The Buddha said. “Bhikkhus, there is a most wonderful way to help living beings realize purification, overcome directly grief and sorrow, end pain and anxiety, travel the right path and realize nirvana. This way is the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

“What are the Four Establishments?”

1. “Bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
2. “He remains established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
3. “He remains established in the observation of the mind in the mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.
4. “He remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.

## Section Two

“And how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the body in the body?”

“He goes to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down cross-legged in the lotus position, holds his body straight, and establishes mindfulness in front of him. He breathes in, aware that he is breathing in. He breathes out, aware that he is breathing out. When he breathes in a long breath, he knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath.’ When he breathes out a long breath, he knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath.’ When he breathes in a short breath, he knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath.’ When he breathes out a short breath, he knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“He uses the following practice: ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body.’ And then, ‘Breathing in, I calm the activities of my body. Breathing out, I calm the activities of my body.’

“Just as a skilled turner knows when he makes a long turn, ‘I am making a long turn,’ and knows when he makes a short turn, ‘I am making a short turn.’ so a practitioner, when he breathes in a long breath, knows, ‘I am breathing in a long breath,’ and when he breathes in a short breath knows, ‘I am breathing in a short breath,’ when he breathes out a long breath, knows, ‘I am breathing out a long breath,’ and when he breathes out a short breath knows, ‘I am breathing out a short breath.’

“He uses the following practice: ‘Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing in, I calm the activities of my body. Breathing out, I calm the activities of my body.’

“This is how a practitioner observes the body in the body. He observes the inside of the body or the outside of the body, or both the inside and the outside of the body. He observes the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here.’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He maintains the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Moreover, when a practitioner walks, he is aware, ‘I am walking.’ When he is standing, he is aware, ‘I am standing.’ When he is sitting, he is aware, ‘I am sitting.’ When he is lying down, he is aware, ‘I am lying down.’ In whatever position his body happens to be, he is aware of the position of his body.

“This is how a practitioner observes the body in the body. He observes the inside of the body or the outside of the body, or both the inside of the body and the outside of the body. He observes the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here.’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He maintains the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Moreover when the practitioner is going forward or backward, he applies full awareness to his going forward or backward. When he looks in front or looks behind, bends down or stands up, he also applies full awareness to what he is doing. He applies full awareness to wearing the sanghati robe or carrying the alms bowl. When he eats or drinks, chews or savors the food, he applies full awareness to all this. When passing excrement or urinating, he applies full awareness to this. When he walks, stands, lies down, sits, sleeps or wakes up, speaks or is silent, he shines his awareness on all this.

“Further, the practitioner meditates on his very own body from the soles of the feet upwards and then from the hair on top of the head downward, a body contained inside the skin and full of all the impurities which belong to the body: ‘Here is the hair of the head, the hairs on the body, the nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.’

“Bhikkhus, imagine a sack which can be opened at both ends, containing a variety of grains – brown rice, wild rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame, white rice. When someone with good eyesight opens the bag, he will review it like this: ‘This is brown rice, this is wild rice, these are mung beans, these are kidney beans, these are sesame seeds, this is white rice.’ Just so the practitioner passes in review the whole of his body from the soles of the feet to the hair on the top of the head, a body enclosed in a layer of skin and full of all the impurities which belong to the body: ‘Here is the hair of the head, the hairs on the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body; observation of the body from the inside or from the outside, or both from the inside and from the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Further in whichever position his body happens to be, the practitioner passes in review the elements which constitute the body: ‘In this body is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

“As a skilled butcher or an apprentice butcher, having killed a cow, might sit at the crossroads to divide the cow into many parts, the practitioner passes in review the elements which comprise his very own body: ‘Here in this body are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body: observation of the body from the inside or from the outside, or observation of the body both from the inside and from the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground and lying there for one, two, or three days – bloated, blue in color, and festering, and he observes, ‘This body of mine is of the same nature. It will end up in the same way; there is no way it can avoid that state.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the body from the inside or from the outside, or observation of the body both from the inside and from the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground, pecked at by crows, eaten by hawks, vultures, and jackals, and infested with maggots and worms, and he observes, ‘This body of mine is of the same nature, it will end up in the same way, there is no way it can avoid that state.’

“This is how practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body; observation of the body from the inside or from the outside, or observation of the body both from the inside and from the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; it is just a skeleton with a little flesh and blood sticking to it, and the bones are held together by the ligaments, and he observes, ‘This body of mine is of the same nature. It will end up in the same way. There is no way it can avoid that state.’

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; it is just a skeleton, no longer adhered to by any flesh, but still smeared by a little blood, the bones still held together by the ligaments...

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; it is just a skeleton, no longer adhered to by any flesh nor smeared by any blood, but the bones are still held together by the ligaments...

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body to a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; all that is left is a collection of bones scattered here and there; in one place a hand bone, in another a shin bone, a thigh bone, a pelvis, a spinal column, a skull...

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; all that is left is a collection of bleached bones, the color of shells...

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground; it has been lying there for more than one year and all that is left is a collection of dried bones...

“Further, the practitioner compares his own body with a corpse which he imagines he sees thrown onto a charnel ground, all that is left is the dust which comes from the rotted bones and he observes, ‘This body of mine is of the same nature, it will end up in the same way. There is no way it can avoid that state.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, observation of the body from inside the body or from the outside of the body, or observation of the body from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the body or the process of dissolution in the body or both in the process coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is a body here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the body in the body, O bhikkhus.”

### **Section Three**

“Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings?

“Whenever the practitioner has a pleasant feeling, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a pleasant feeling.’ Whenever he has a painful feeling, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a painful feeling.’ Whenever he experiences a feeling which is neither pleasant nor painful, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a neutral feeling.’ When he experiences a pleasant feeling based in the body, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a pleasant feeling based in the body.’ When he experiences a pleasant feeling based in the mind, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a pleasant feeling based in the mind.’ When he experiences a painful feeling based in the body, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a painful feeling based in the body.’ When he experiences a painful feeling based in the mind, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a painful feeling based in the mind.’ When he experiences a neutral feeling based in the body, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a neutral feeling based in the body.’ When he experiences a neutral feeling based in the mind, he is aware, ‘I am experiencing a neutral feeling based in the mind.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the feelings in the feelings, observation of the feelings from inside of the feelings or outside of the feelings, or observation of the feelings from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the feelings or the process of dissolution in the feelings or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is feeling here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the feelings in the feelings, O bhikkhus.

### **Section Four**

“Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the mind in the mind?

“When his mind is desiring, the practitioner is aware, ‘My mind is desiring.’ When his mind is not desiring, he is aware, ‘My mind is not desiring.’ When his mind is hating something he is aware, ‘My mind is hating.’ When his mind is not hating, he is aware, ‘My mind is not hating.’ When his mind is in a state of ignorance, he is aware, ‘My mind is in a state of ignorance.’ When his mind is not in a state of ignorance, he is aware, ‘My mind is not in a state of ignorance.’ When his mind is tense, he is aware, ‘My mind is tense.’ When his mind is not tense, he is aware, ‘My mind is not tense.’ When his mind is distracted, he is aware, ‘My mind is distracted.’ When his mind is not distracted, he is aware, ‘My mind is not distracted.’ When his mind has a wider scope, he is aware, ‘My mind has widened in scope.’ When his mind has a narrow scope he is aware, ‘My mind has become narrow in scope.’ When his mind is capable of reaching a higher state, he is aware, ‘My mind is capable of reaching a higher state.’ When his

mind is not capable of reaching a higher state, he is aware, ‘My mind is not capable of reaching a higher state.’ When his mind is composed, he is aware, ‘My mind is composed.’ When his mind is not composed, he is aware, ‘My mind is not composed.’ When his mind is free, he is aware, ‘My mind is free.’ When his mind is not free, he is aware, ‘My mind is not free.’

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the mind in the mind, observation of the mind from inside of the mind or outside of the mind, or observation of the mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the mind or the process of dissolution in the mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. This is how to practice observation of the mind in the mind, O bhikkhus.

## Section Five

“Bhikkhus, how does a practitioner remain established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind?

“First of all, he observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Hindrances. How does he observe this?

1. “When sensual desire is present in him, he is aware, ‘Sensual desire is present in me.’ Or when sensual desire is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Sensual desire is not present in me.’ When sensual desire begins to arise, he is aware of it. When already arisen sensual desire is abandoned, he is aware of it. When sensual desire already abandoned will not arise again in the future, he is aware of it.

2. “When anger is present in him, he is aware, ‘Anger is present in me.’ When anger is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Anger is not present in me.’ When anger begins to arise, he is aware of it. When already arisen anger is abandoned, he is aware of it. When anger already abandoned will not arise again in the future, he is aware of it.

3. “When dullness and drowsiness are present in him, he is aware, ‘Dullness and drowsiness are present in me.’ When dullness and drowsiness are not present in him, he is aware, ‘Dullness and drowsiness are not present in me.’ When dullness and drowsiness begin to arise, he is aware of it. When already arisen dullness and drowsiness are abandoned, he is aware of it. When dullness and drowsiness already abandoned will not arise again in the future, he is aware of it.

4. “When agitation and remorse are present in him, he is aware, ‘Agitation and remorse are present in me.’ When agitation and remorse are not present in him, he is aware, ‘Agitation and remorse are not present in me.’ When agitation and remorse begin to arise, he is aware of it. When already arisen agitation and remorse are abandoned, he is aware of it. When agitation and remorse already abandoned will not arise again in the future, he is aware of it.

5. “When doubt is present in him, he is aware, ‘Doubt is present in me.’ When doubt is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Doubt is not present in me.’ When doubt begins to arise, he is aware of it. When already arisen doubt is abandoned, he is aware of it. When doubt already abandoned will not arise again in the future, he is aware of it.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind: observation of the objects of mind from inside the objects of mind or outside the objects of mind, or observation of the objects of mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the objects of mind or the process of dissolution in the objects of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is an object of the mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration.

That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Hindrances, O bhikkhus.

“Further, the practitioner observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Aggregates of Clinging. How does he observe this?

“He observes like this: ‘Such is form. Such is the arising of form. Such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling. Such is the arising of feeling. Such is the disappearance of feeling. Such is perception. Such is the arising of perception. Such is the disappearance of perception. Such are mental formations. Such is the arising of mental formations. Such is the disappearance of mental formations. Such is consciousness. Such is the arising of consciousness. Such is the disappearance of consciousness.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Aggregates of Clinging: observation of the objects of mind from inside the objects of mind or outside the objects of mind, or observation of the objects of mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the object of mind or the process of dissolution in the object of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is an object of mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Five Aggregates, O bhikkhus.

“Further, bhikkhus, the practitioner observes the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the six sense organs and the six sense objects. How does he observe this?

“He is aware of the eyes and aware of the form, and he is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. He is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and he is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“The practitioner is aware of the ears and aware of the sound, and he is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. He is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and he is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“The practitioner is aware of the nose and aware of the smell, and he is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. He is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and he is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“The practitioner is aware of the tongue and aware of the taste, and he is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. He is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and he is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“The practitioner is aware of the body and aware of the object touched, and he is aware of the internal formations which are produced in dependence on these two things. He is aware of the birth of a new internal formation and is aware of abandoning an already produced internal formation, and he is aware when an already abandoned internal formation will not arise again.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the six sense organs and the six sense objects: observation of the objects of mind from inside the objects of mind or outside the objects of mind, or observation of the objects of mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the object of mind or the process of dissolution in the object of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is an object of mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation,

free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the six sense organs and the six sense objects, O bhikkhus.

“Further, bhikkhus, the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Seven Factors of Awakening.

“How does he remain established in the practice of observation of the Seven Factors of Awakening?

1. “When the factor of awakening, mindfulness, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Mindfulness is present in me.’ When mindfulness is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Mindfulness is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born mindfulness is being born and when already-born mindfulness is perfectly developed.

2. “When the factor of awakening, investigation-of-phenomena, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Investigation-of-phenomena is present in me.’ When investigation-of-phenomena is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Investigation-of-phenomena is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born investigation-of-phenomena is being born and when already-born investigation-of-phenomena is perfectly developed.

3. “When the factor of awakening, energy, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Energy is present in me.’ When energy is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Energy is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born energy is being born and when already-born energy is perfectly developed.

4. “When the factor of awakening, joy, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Joy is present in me.’ When joy is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Joy is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born joy is being born and when already-born joy is perfectly developed.

5. “When the factor of awakening, ease, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Ease is present in me.’ When ease is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Ease is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born ease is being born and when already-born ease is perfectly developed.

6. “When the factor of awakening, concentration, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Concentration is present in me.’ When concentration is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Concentration is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born concentration is being born and when already-born concentration is perfectly developed.

7. “When the factor of awakening, letting go, is present in him, he is aware, ‘Letting go is present in me.’ When letting go is not present in him, he is aware, ‘Letting go is not present in me.’ He is aware when not-yet-born letting go is being born and when already-born letting-go is perfectly developed.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Seven Factors of Awakening, observation of the objects of mind from inside the objects of mind or outside the objects of mind, or observation of the objects of mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the object of mind or the process of dissolution in the object of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, ‘There is an object of mind here,’ until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Seven Factors of Awakening, O bhikkhus.

“Further, bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Four Noble Truths.

“How, bhikkhus, does the practitioner remain established in the observation of the Four Noble Truths?

“A practitioner is aware ‘This is suffering,’ as it arises. He is aware, ‘This is the cause of the suffering,’ as it arises. He is aware, ‘This is the end of suffering,’ as it arises. He is aware, ‘This is the path which leads to the end of suffering,’ as it arises.

“This is how the practitioner remains established in the observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Four Noble Truths, observation of the objects of mind from inside the

objects of mind or outside the objects of mind, or observation of the objects of mind from both the inside and the outside. He remains established in the observation of the process of coming-to-be in the objects of mind or the process of dissolution in the objects of mind or both in the process of coming-to-be and the process of dissolution. Or he is mindful of the fact, 'There is an object of mind here,' until understanding and full awareness come about. He remains established in the observation, free, not caught up in any worldly consideration. That is how to practice observation of the objects of mind in the objects of mind with regard to the Four Noble Truths, O bhikkhus.

## Section Six

“Bhikkhus, he who practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for seven years can expect one of two fruits - the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone seven years, bhikkhus, whoever practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for six, five, four, three, two years or one year, can also expect one of two fruits - either the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone one year, bhikkhus, whoever practices in the Four Establishments of Mindfulness for seven, six, five, four, three, or two months, one month or half a month, can also expect one of two fruits - either the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“Let alone half a month, bhikkhus, whoever practices the Four Establishments of Mindfulness one week, can also expect one of two fruits - either the highest understanding in this very life or, if there remains some residue of affliction, he can attain the fruit of no-return.

“That is why we said that this path, the path of the four grounds for the establishment of mindfulness, is *the most wonderful path*, which helps beings realize purification, transcend grief and sorrow, destroy pain and anxiety, travel the right path, and realize nirvana.”

The bhikkhus were delighted to hear the teaching of the Buddha. They took it to heart and began to put it into practice.

Trans. by Thich Nhat Hanh in TRANSFORMATION AND HEALING, PARALLAX PRESS, 1990. uSutra on a Discourse to  
Kaccayana

This sutra, from the Samyutta Nikaya, is translated by Professor David Kalupahana in his book “Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way” (SUNY, 1986). Professor Kalupahana asserts in the lengthy introduction to that book that the philosophy of Nagarjuna has its source in this sutra, and that rather than being an argument against the teaching and practice of the Old Way, Nagarjuna’s philosophy is in fact a fleshing out and an elaboration on the implications of what is already found there. I agree. There is clearly much implied in this brief sutra. Here the two extreme views that are sometimes taught as psychological extremes (see “Sutra on Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma” page 1) are taught as philosophical-existential extremes upon which the psychological extremes are based: the views of existence and non-existence. As practitioners we see clearly that it isn’t accurate to see ourselves or the world now or in the future as non-existent, since we know by our experience that something really does exist and continues

to arise as existence; on the other hand it is not accurate to see ourselves or the world as existent, because we see by our experience that moment after moment we cease to exist, there is nothing substantial to grasp, we pass away. How do we resolve this seeming paradox? The sutra says nothing, only proceeds to detail the traditional process of dependent co-arising or causality. This is the resolution of the seeming dilemma: existence and non-existence as fixed states are the extremes: that all co-arises in mutual interdependence, that all is constantly caused and causing in an infinite net of happening, is the Middle Way. From here Nagarjuna begins his effort to show that causality itself is all that there is, and that causality cannot be isolated or identified. Thus the Madhyamika, on which the Zen school, to a great extent, is based, comes to be.

## Kaccayanagotta Sutta

Thus have I heard: The Blessed one was once living at Sravasti, in the monastery of Anathapindika, in Jeta's Grove. At that time the venerable Kaccayana of that clan came to visit him, and saluting him, sat down at one side. So seated, he questioned the Exalted one: "Sir, people speak of 'right view, right view.' To what extent is there a right view?"

"This world, Kaccayana, is generally inclined towards two views: existence and non-existence. To one who perceives with right wisdom the uprising of the world as it has come to be, the notion of non-existence in the world does not occur. Kaccayana, to one who perceives with right wisdom the ceasing of the world as it has come to be, the notion of existence in the world does not occur.

"The world, for the most part, Kaccayana, is bound by approach, grasping and inclination. A person who does not follow that approach and grasping, that determination of mind, that inclination and disposition, who does not cling to or adhere to a view: 'This is my self', who thinks: 'suffering that is subject to arising arises; suffering that is subject to ceasing, ceases,' such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed. Herein, that person's knowledge is not other-dependent. Thus far, Kaccayana, there is 'right view.'

'Everything exists,' -- this, Kaccayana, is one extreme.

'Everything does not exist,' -- this, Kaccayana, is the second extreme.

"Kaccayana, without approaching either extreme, the Tathagata teaches you a doctrine by the middle.

"Dependent upon ignorance arise dispositions; dependent upon dispositions arise consciousness; dependent upon consciousness arises the psychophysical personality; dependent upon the psychophysical personality arise the six senses; dependent upon the six senses arises contact; dependent upon contact arises feeling; dependent upon feeling arises craving; dependent upon craving arises grasping; dependent upon grasping arises becoming; dependent upon becoming arises birth; dependent upon birth arise old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. Thus arises his entire mass of suffering. However, from the utter fading away and ceasing of ignorance, there is ceasing of dispositions; from the ceasing of dispositions, there is ceasing of consciousness; from the ceasing of consciousness, there is ceasing of the psychophysical personality; from the ceasing of the psychophysical personality there is ceasing of the six senses; from the ceasing of the six senses, there is ceasing of contact; from the ceasing of contact, there is ceasing of feeling; from the ceasing of feeling, there is ceasing of craving; from the ceasing of craving, there is ceasing of grasping; from the ceasing of grasping, there is ceasing of becoming; from the ceasing of becoming, there is ceasing of birth; from the ceasing of birth, there is ceasing of old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. And thus there is the ceasing of this entire mass of suffering."

## The Simile of the Snake

This sutra makes the important point that there is a right way and a wrong way to understand the Teaching, and that if you understand it in the wrong way it can be dangerous. It's like going snake hunting, the Buddha says: -if you pick up the snake carelessly it can bite you, but if you know the proper way to pick it up you'll be unharmed. In this case the Buddha is speaking to the monk Arittha, who insisted that the Buddha did not teach that sensual attachment was dangerous. In no uncertain terms the Buddha tells Arittha that he did in fact teach that sensual attachment is dangerous. In his commentary on this text, given in "Cultivating the Mind of Love" (Parallax Press, 1996), Thich Nhat Hanh points out that the Buddha did not feel that the sensual world was in and of itself a problem; rather the problem comes with the unskillful way in which we relate to it. This is a subtle point and it is easy for us to make the mistake of either being frightened of the sensual world or of indulging in it carelessly. In neither of these extreme approaches do we actually enjoy this beautiful world as it actually is; we only avoid it or get burned out on it. I think that Arittha's mistaken view was causing him to do the latter, and the Buddha wanted to straighten him out before too much damage was done. This sutra also contains the famous simile of the Teaching as a raft that gets us to the other, peaceful, shore from this shore of suffering. It makes no sense, once we arrive, to continue to carry the raft around on our shoulder; now we can let it go and roam freely. Superficially, this simile seems to tell us that once we are enlightened we can dispense with the Teaching altogether, but I do not think this is what is meant. Rather (and this is I think the point this sutra is making in many different ways) we need to see that the teaching is not a viewpoint, not something to be grasped and become attached to and identified with. Quite the opposite in fact. We need to understand the Teaching as the disentanglement of all views, the letting go of any sense at all of "me" or "mine". So though superficially this simile of the raft seems to be quite different from Dogen-zenji's idea of practice itself as realization, or continuous practice, to me it is not really different. To me the burden of Dogen-zenji's teaching is to make clear in many ways that the path is not a particular cognizable thing, and that it is basically ungraspable. Through devotion to the particular forms of our practice we come to see that everything is our practice; this is roaming free on the other shore.

## 22 Alagaddupama Sutta The Simile of the Snake

(SETTING)

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

2. Now on that occasion a pernicious view had arisen in a bhikkhu named Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, thus: "As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them."

3. Several bhikkhus, having heard about this, went to the bhikkhu Arittha and asked him: "Friend Arittha, is it true that such a pernicious view has arisen in you?"

"Exactly so, friends. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them."

Then these bhikkhus, desiring to detach him from that pernicious view, pressed and questioned and cross-questioned him thus: "Friend Arittha, do not say so. Do not misrepresent the Blessed One; it is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not speak thus. For in many discourses the Blessed One has stated how obstructive things are obstructions, and how they are able to obstruct one who engages in them. The Blessed One has stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them. With the simile of the skeleton ... with the simile of the piece of meat ... with the simile of the grass torch ... with the simile of the pit of coals ... with the simile of the dream ... with the simile of the borrowed goods ... with the simile of the tree laden with fruit ... with the simile of the slaughterhouse ... with the simile of the sword stake ... with the simile of the snake's head, the Blessed One has stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them."

Yet although pressed and questioned and cross-questioned by them in this way, the bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, still obstinately adhered to that pernicious view and continued to insist upon it.

4. Since the bhikkhus were unable to detach him from that pernicious view, they went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, they sat down at one side and told him all that had occurred, adding: "Venerable sir, since we could not detach the bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, from this pernicious view, we have reported this matter to the Blessed One."

5. Then the Blessed One addressed a certain bhikkhu thus: "Come, bhikkhu, tell the bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, in my name that the Teacher calls him." - "Yes, venerable sir," he replied, and he went to the bhikkhu Arittha and told him: "The Teacher calls you, friend Arittha."

"Yes, friend," he replied, and he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. The Blessed One then asked him: "Arittha, is it true that the following pernicious view has arisen in you: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them'?"

"Exactly so, venerable sir. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, those things called obstructions by the Blessed One are not able to obstruct one who engages in them."

6. "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 how obstructive things are obstructions, and how they are able to obstruct one who engages in them? I have stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them. With the simile of the skeleton ... with the simile of the piece of meat ... with the simile of the grass torch ... with the simile of the pit of coals ... with the simile of the dream ... with the simile of the borrowed goods ... with the simile of the tree

laden with fruit ... with the simile of the slaughterhouse ... with the simile of the sword stake ... with the simile of the snake's head, I have stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them. But you, misguided man, have misrepresented us by your wrong grasp and injured yourself and stored up much demerit; for this will lead to your harm and suffering for a long time."

7. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus, what do you think? Has this bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, kindled even a spark of wisdom in this Dhamma and Discipline?"

"How could he, venerable sir? No, venerable sir."

When this was said, the bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, sat silent, dismayed, with shoulders drooping and head down, glum, and without response. Then, knowing this, the Blessed One told him: "Misguided man, you will be recognised by your own pernicious view. I shall question the bhikkhus on this matter."

8. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus, do you understand the Dhamma taught by me as this bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, does when he misrepresents us by his wrong grasp and injures himself and stores up much demerit?"

"No, venerable sir. For in many discourses the Blessed One has stated how obstructive things are obstructions, and how they are able to obstruct one who engages in them. The Blessed One has stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them. With the simile of the skeleton ... with the simile of the snake's head, the Blessed One has stated ... how great is the danger in them."

"Good, bhikkhus. It is good that you understand the Dhamma taught by me thus. For in many discourses I have stated how obstructive things are obstructions, and how they are able to obstruct one who engages in them. I have stated how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them. With the simile of the skeleton ... with the simile of the snake's head, I have stated ... how great is the danger in them. But this bhikkhu Arittha, formerly of the vulture killers, misrepresents us by his wrong grasp and injures himself and stores up much demerit; for this will lead to this misguided man's harm and suffering for a long time.

9. "Bhikkhus, that one can engage in sensual pleasures without sensual desires, without perceptions of sensual desire, without thoughts of sensual desire - that is impossible."

#### (THE SIMILE OF THE SNAKE)

10. "Here, bhikkhus, some misguided men learn the Dhamma - discourses, stanzas, expositions, verses, exclamations, sayings, birth stories, marvels, and answers to questions - but having learned the Dhamma, they do not examine the meaning of those teachings with wisdom. Not examining the meaning of those teachings with wisdom, they do not gain a reflective acceptance of them. Instead they learn the Dhamma only for the sake of criticising others and for winning in debates, and they do not experience the good for the sake of which they learned the Dhamma. Those teachings, being wrongly grasped by them, conduce to their harm and suffering for a long time. Why is that? Because of the wrong grasp of those teachings.

"Suppose a man needing a snake, seeking a snake, wandering in search of a snake, saw a large snake and grasped its coils or its tail. It would turn back on him and bite his hand or his arm or one of his limbs, and because of that he would come to death or deadly suffering. Why is that? Because of his wrong grasp of the snake. So too, here some misguided men learn the Dhamma ... Why is that? Because of the wrong grasp of those teachings.

11. "Here, bhikkhus, some clansmen learn the Dhamma - discourses ... answers to questions - and having learned the Dhamma, they examine the meaning of those teachings with wisdom. Examining the

meaning of those teachings with wisdom, they gain a reflective acceptance of them. They do not learn the Dhamma for the sake of criticising others and for winning in debates, and they experience the good for the sake of which they learned the Dhamma. Those teachings, being rightly grasped by them, conduce to their welfare and happiness for a long time. Why is that? Because of the right grasp of those teachings.

“Suppose a man needing a snake, seeking a snake, wandering in search of a snake, saw a large snake and caught it rightly with a cleft stick, and having done so, grasped it rightly by the neck. Then although the snake might wrap its coils round his hand or his arm or his limbs, still he would not come to death or deadly suffering because of that. Why is that? Because of his right grasp of the snake. So too, here some clansmen learn the Dhamma... Why is that? Because of the right grasp of those teachings.

12. “Therefore, bhikkhus, when you understand the meaning of my statements, remember it accordingly; and when you do not understand the meaning of my statements, then ask either me about it or those bhikkhus who are wise.

#### (THE SIMILE OF THE RAFT)

13. “Bhikkhus, I shall show you how the Dhamma is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.” - “Yes, venerable sir,” the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

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

“No, venerable Sir.”

“By doing what would that man be doing what should be done with that raft? Here, bhikkhus, when that man got across and had arrived at the far shore, he might think thus: ‘This raft has been very helpful to me, since supported by it and making an effort with my hands and feet, I got safely across to the far shore. 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 that 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.

14. “Bhikkhus, when you know the Dhamma to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even good states, how much more so bad states.

#### (STANDPOINTS FOR VIEWS)

15. “Bhikkhus, there are these six standpoints for views. What are the six? Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ He regards feeling thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ He regards perception thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ He regards

formations thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’ He regards what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self. And this standpoint for views, namely, ‘This is self, this the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’ - this too he regards thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

16. “Bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards feeling thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards perception thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards formations thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ He regards what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ And this standpoint for views, namely, ‘The self and the world are the same; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’ - this too he regards thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

17. “Since he regards them thus, he is not agitated about what is non-existent.

(AGITATION)

18. When this was said, a certain bhikkhu asked the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, can there be agitation about what is nonexistent externally?”

“There can be, bhikkhu,” the Blessed One said. “Here, bhikkhu, someone thinks thus: ‘Alas, I had it! Alas, I have it no longer! Alas, may I have it! Alas, I do not get it!’ Then he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught. That is how there is agitation about what is non-existent externally.”

19. “Venerable sir, can there be no agitation about what is non-existent externally?”

“There can be, bhikkhu,” the Blessed One said. “Here, bhikkhu, someone does not think thus: ‘Alas I had it! Alas, I have it no longer! Alas, may I have it! Alas, I do not get it!’ Then he does not sorrow, grieve, and lament, he does not weep beating his breast and become distraught. That is how there is no agitation about what is non-existent externally.”

20. “Venerable sir, can there be agitation about what is nonexistent internally?”

“There can be, bhikkhu,” the Blessed One said. “Here, bhikkhu, someone has the view: ‘This is self, this the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity.’ He hears the Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata teaching the Dhamma for the elimination of all standpoints, decisions, obsessions, adherences, and underlying tendencies, for the stilling of all formations, for the relinquishing of all attachments, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nibbana. He thinks thus: ‘So I shall be annihilated! So I shall perish! So I shall be no more!’ Then he sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught. That is how there is agitation about what is non-existent internally.”

21. “Venerable sir, can there be no agitation about what is non-existent internally?”

“There can be, bhikkhu,” the Blessed One said. “Here, bhikkhu, someone does not have the view: ‘The self and the world are the same ... I shall endure as long as eternity.’ He hears the Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata teaching the Dhamma for the elimination of all standpoints, decisions, obsessions, adherences, and underlying tendencies, for the stilling of all formations, for the relinquishing of all attachments, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nibbana. He does not think thus: ‘So I shall be annihilated! So I shall perish! So I shall be no more!’ Then he does not sorrow, grieve, and lament, he does not weep beating his breast and become distraught. That is how there is no agitation about what is non-existent internally.

(IMPERMANENCE AND NOT SELF)

22. “Bhikkhus, you may well acquire that possession that is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and that might endure as long as eternity. But do you see any such possession, bhikkhus?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Good, bhikkhus. I too do not see any possession that is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and that might endure as long as eternity.

23. “Bhikkhus, you may well cling to that doctrine of self that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who clings to it. But do you see any such doctrine of self, bhikkhus?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Good, bhikkhus. I too do not see any doctrine of self that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who clings to it.

24. “Bhikkhus, you may well take as a support that view that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who takes it as a support. But do you see any such support of views, bhikkhus?” - “No, venerable sir.” - “Good, bhikkhus. I too do not see any support of views that would not arouse sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who takes it as a support.

25. “Bhikkhus, there being a self, would there be what belongs to my self? - “Yes, venerable sir.” - “Or, there being what belongs to a self, would there be my self?” - “Yes, venerable sir.” - “Bhikkhus, since a self and what belongs to a self are not apprehended as true and established, then this standpoint for views, namely, ‘The self and the world are the same; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’ - would it not be an utterly and completely foolish teaching?”

“What else could it be, venerable sir? It would be an utterly and completely foolish teaching.”

26. “Bhikkhus, what do you think? Is material form permanent or impermanent?” - “Impermanent, venerable sir.” - “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” - “Suffering, venerable sir.” - “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’” - “No, venerable sir.”

“Bhikkhus, what do you think? Is feeling ... Is perception... Are formations ... Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?” - “Impermanent, venerable sir.” - “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” - “Suffering, venerable sir.” - “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’” - “No, venerable sir.”

27. “Therefore, bhikkhus, any kind of material form whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all material form should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ Any kind of feeling whatever ... Any kind of perception whatever ... Any kind of formations whatever ... Any kind of consciousness whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all consciousness should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

28. “Seeing thus, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with material form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with formations, disenchanted with consciousness.

29. “Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being!’

(THE ARAHANT)

30. “Bhikkhus, this bhikkhu is called one whose shaft has been lifted, whose trench has been filled in, whose pillar has been uprooted, one who has no bar, a noble one whose banner is lowered, whose burden is lowered, who is unfettered.

31. “And how is the bhikkhu one whose shaft has been lifted? Here the bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance, has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, done away with it, so that it is no longer subject to future arising. That is how the bhikkhu is one whose shaft has been lifted.

32. “And how is the bhikkhu one whose trench has been filled in? Here the bhikkhu has abandoned the round of births that brings renewed being, has cut it off at the root ... so that it is no longer subject to future arising. That is how the bhikkhu is one whose trench has been filled in.

33. “And how is the bhikkhu one whose pillar has been uprooted? Here the bhikkhu has abandoned craving, has cut it off at the root ... so that it is no longer subject to future arising. That is how the bhikkhu is one whose pillar has been uprooted.

34. “And how is the bhikkhu one who has no bar? Here the bhikkhu has abandoned the five lower fetters, has cut them off at the root ... so that they are no longer subject to future arising. That is how the bhikkhu is one who has no bar.

35. “And how is the bhikkhu a noble one whose banner is lowered, whose burden is lowered, who is unfettered? Here a bhikkhu has abandoned the conceit ‘I am,’ has cut it off at the root ... so that it is no longer subject to future arising. That is how the bhikkhu is a noble one whose banner is lowered, whose burden is lowered, who is unfettered.

36. “Bhikkhus, when the gods with Indra, with Brahma and with Pajapati seek a bhikkhu who is thus liberated in mind, they do not find [anything of which they could say]: ‘The consciousness of one thus gone is supported by this.’ Why is that? One thus gone, I say, is untraceable here and now.

#### (MISREPRESENTATION OF THE TATHAGATA)

37. “So saying, bhikkhus, so proclaiming, I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and brahmins thus: ‘The recluse Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.’ As I am not, as I do not proclaim, so have I been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and brahmins thus: ‘The recluse Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.’

38. “Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering. If others abuse, revile, scold, and harass the Tathagata for that, the Tathagata on that account feels no annoyance, bitterness, or dejection of the heart. And if others honour, respect, revere, and venerate the Tathagata for that, the Tathagata on that account feels no delight, joy, or elation of the heart. If others honour, respect, revere, and venerate the Tathagata for that, the Tathagata on that account thinks thus: ‘They perform such services as these for the sake of what had earlier come to be fully understood.

39. “Therefore, bhikkhus, if others abuse, revile, scold, and harass you, on that account you should not entertain any annoyance, bitterness, or dejection of the heart. And if others honour, respect, revere, and venerate you, on that account you should not entertain any delight, joy, or elation of the heart. If others honour, respect, revere, and venerate you, on that account you should think thus: ‘They perform such services as these for the sake of what had earlier come to be fully understood.’

#### (NOT YOURS)

40. “Therefore, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. What is it that is not yours? Material form is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. Feeling is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. Perception is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. Formations are not yours. Abandon them. When you have abandoned them, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. Consciousness is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.

41. “Bhikkhus, what do you think? If people carried off the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in this Jeta Grove, or burned them, or did what they liked with them, would you think: ‘People are carrying us off or burning us or doing what they like with us’?” - “No, venerable sir. Why not? Because that is neither our self nor what belongs to our self.” - “So too, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. What is it that is not yours? Material form is not yours ... Feeling is not yours ... Perception is not yours ... Formations are not yours ... Consciousness is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.

(IN THIS DHAMMA)

42. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear, open, evident, and free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear, open, evident, and free of patchwork, there is no [future] round for manifestation in the case of those bhikkhus who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge.

43. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear ... free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear ... free of patchwork, those bhikkhus who have abandoned the five lower fetters are all due to reappear spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes] and there attain final Nibbana, without ever returning from that world.

44. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear ... free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear ... free of patchwork, those bhikkhus who have abandoned three fetters and attenuated lust, hate, and delusion are all once-returners, returning once to this world to make an end of suffering.

45. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear ... free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear ... free of patchwork, those bhikkhus who have abandoned three fetters are all stream-enterers, no longer subject to perdition, bound [for deliverance] and headed for enlightenment.

46. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear ... free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear...free of patchwork, those bhikkhus who are Dhamma-followers or faith-followers are all headed for enlightenment.

47. “Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is clear, open, evident, and free of patchwork. In the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear, open, evident, and free of patchwork, those who have sufficient faith in me, sufficient love for me, are all headed for heaven.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Trans. by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi in THE MIDDLE LENGTH DISCOURSES OF THE BUDDHA, WISDOM, 1995.

## Two Kinds of Thought

The story of the life of the Buddha isn't given chronologically in the Pali canon. You have to piece it together from various things the Buddha says here and there, reminiscing as he taught his disciples. One year, preparing for Rohatsu sesshin, I was looking for a sutra that dealt with the way the Buddha practiced as he approached enlightenment, and I discovered this text. In it, very simply, the Buddha describes the way he prepared his mind to take the bodhi seat. He saw, he says, that there were two kinds of thought in his mind: self-centered thoughts of attachment, and self-releasing thoughts of letting go. He saw that the former sorts of thoughts led to suffering for himself and others, while the latter did not lead to suffering, and instead promoted wisdom. He also realized that we become what we are based on our habit of thought. And so he trained himself to release his attachment and emphasize letting go. Doing this his mind was calmer and he was able to achieve concentration and ultimately the insight that came to him on enlightenment morning. In the sutra he tells this story to the assembled practitioners and assures them that he has opened up for them a safe path toward happiness. At the very end of the sutra he points them toward some good places to do their sitting practice. "Meditate, bhikkhus; do not delay or else you will regret it," he says.

## 19 *Dvedhavitakka Sutta* Two Kinds of Thought

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus." - "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, it occurred to me: 'Suppose that I divide my thoughts into two classes.' Then I set on one side thoughts of sensual desire, thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of cruelty, and I set on the other side thoughts of renunciation, thoughts of non-ill will, and thoughts of non-cruelty.

3. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of sensual desire arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbana.' When I considered: 'This leads to my own affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to others' affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to the affliction of both,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbana,' it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of sensual desire arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

4-5. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of ill will arose in me ... a thought of cruelty arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of cruelty has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbana.' When I considered thus ... it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of cruelty arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

6. "Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of sensual desire, he has abandoned the thought of renunciation to cultivate the thought of sensual desire, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of sensual desire. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of ill will ... upon thoughts of cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of non-cruelty to cultivate the thought of cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of cruelty.

7. "Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the crops thicken, a cowherd would guard his cows by constantly tapping and poking them on this side and that with a stick to check and curb them. Why is that? Because he sees that he could be flogged, imprisoned, fined, or blamed [if he let them stray into the crops]. So too I saw in unwholesome states danger, degradation, and defilement, and in wholesome states the blessing of renunciation, the aspect of cleansing.

8. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of renunciation arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of renunciation has arisen in me. This does not lead to my own affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both; it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to Nibbana. If I think and ponder upon this thought even for a night, even for a day, even for a night and day, I see nothing to fear from it. But with excessive thinking and pondering I might tire my body, and when the body is tired, the mind becomes strained, and when the mind is strained, it is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind internally, quieted it, brought it to singleness, and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind should not be strained.

9-10. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of non-ill will arose in me ... a thought of non-cruelty arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of non-cruelty has arisen in me. This does not lead to my own affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both; it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to Nibbana. If I think and ponder upon this thought even for a night, even for a day, even for a night and day, I see nothing to fear from it. But with excessive thinking and pondering I might tire my body, and when the body is tired, the mind becomes strained, and when the mind is strained,

it is far from concentration! So I steadied my mind internally, quieted it, brought it to singleness, and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind should not be strained.

11, “Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of renunciation, he has abandoned the thought of sensual desire to cultivate the thought of renunciation, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of renunciation. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of non-ill will ... upon thoughts of non-cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of cruelty to cultivate the thought of non-cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of non-cruelty.

12. “Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all the crops have been brought inside the villages, a cowherd would guard his cows while staying at the root of a tree or out in the open, since he needs only to be mindful that the cows are there; so too, there was need for me only to be mindful that those states were there.

13. “Tireless energy was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was tranquil and untroubled, my mind concentrated and unified.

14-23. “Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first jhana ... I directly knew: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’

24. “This was the third true knowledge attained by me in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.

25. “Suppose, bhikkhus, that in a wooded range there was a great low-lying marsh near which a large herd of deer lived. Then a man appeared desiring their ruin, harm, and bondage, and he closed off the safe and good path that led to their happiness, and he opened up a false path, and he put out a decoy and set up a dummy so that the large herd of deer might later come upon calamity, disaster, and loss. But another man came desiring their good, welfare, and protection, and he reopened the safe and good path that led to their happiness, and he closed off the false path, and he removed the decoy and destroyed the dummy, so that the large herd of deer might later come to growth, increase, and fulfilment.

26. “Bhikkhus, I have given this simile in order to convey a meaning. This is the meaning: ‘The great low-lying marsh’ is a term for sensual pleasures. ‘The large herd of deer’ is a term for beings. ‘The man desiring their ruin, harm, and bondage’ is a term for Mara the Evil One. ‘The false path’ is a term for the wrong eightfold path, that is: wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration. ‘The decoy’ is a term for delight and lust. ‘The dummy’ is a term for ignorance. ‘The man desiring their good, welfare, and protection’ is a term for the Tathagata, accomplished and fully enlightened. ‘The safe and good path that led to their happiness’ is a term for the Noble Eightfold Path, that is: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

“So, bhikkhus, the safe and good path that leads to happiness has been reopened by me, the wrong path has been closed off, the decoy removed, the dummy destroyed.

27. “What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, that I have done for you, bhikkhus. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts. Meditate, bhikkhus, do not delay or else you will regret it later. This is our instruction to you.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

## Angulimala Sutta

This sutra tells a famous and colorful story that happened during the Buddha's lifetime. It's a wonderful sutra for contemplating karma, and for thinking about what it takes to let go of old bad habits, and what the results of doing that can be. Angulimala gets tricked into becoming a fierce murderer - in a way it's not really his fault. Yet he himself does the murderer's acts and reaps the murderer's karma. When he meets the Buddha he's suddenly startled into deep self-awareness. He sees deeply what he is and what he is doing and seeing it at this depth pulls him up short and causes him immediately to stop. Stopping and practicing, he turns his karma around and becomes a good person. Notice that his old karma doesn't get wiped away by his enlightenment. Even though he is an Arhat he still suffers as a result of what he had done before, but now he can bear this suffering without making more suffering, and he is purified.

## 86 Angulimala Sutta On Angulimala

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One Was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

2. Now on that occasion there was a bandit in the realm of King Pasenadi of Kosala named Angulimala, who was murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Villages, towns, and districts were laid waste by him. He was constantly murdering people and he wore their fingers as a garland.

3. Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. When he had wandered for alms in Savatthi and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he set his resting place in order, and taking his bowl and outer robe, set out on the road leading towards Angulimala. Cowherds, shepherds, and ploughmen passing by saw the Blessed One walking along the road leading towards Angulimala and told him: "Do not take this road, recluse. On this road is the bandit Angulimala who is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Villages, towns, and districts have been laid waste by him. He is constantly murdering people and he wears their fingers as a garland. Men have come along this road in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty, but still they have fallen into Angulimala's hands." When this was said the Blessed One went on in silence.

For the second time ... For the third time the cowherds, shepherds, and ploughmen told this to the Blessed One, but still the Blessed One went on in silence.

4. The bandit Angulimala saw the Blessed One coming in the distance. When he saw him, he thought: "it is wonderful, it's marvellous! Men have come along this road in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty, but still they have fallen into my hands. And now this recluse comes alone, unaccompanied, as if driven by fate. Why shouldn't I take this recluse's life?" Angulimala then took up his sword and shield, buckled on his bow and quiver, and followed close behind the Blessed One.

5. Then the Blessed One performed such a feat of supernormal power that the bandit Angulimala, though walking as fast as he could, could not catch up with the Blessed One, who was walking at his normal pace. Then the bandit Angulimala thought: "It is wonderful, it is marvellous! Formerly I could catch up even with a swift elephant and seize it; I could catch up even with a swift horse and seize it; I could catch up even with a swift chariot and seize it; I could catch up even with a swift deer and seize it; but now, though I am walking as fast as I can, I cannot catch up with this recluse who is walking at his normal pace!" He stopped and called out to the Blessed One: "Stop, recluse! Stop, recluse!"

"I have stopped, Angulimala, you stop too."

Then the bandit Angulimala thought: "These recluses, sons of the Sakyans, speak truth, assert truth; but though this recluse is still walking, he says: 'I have stopped, Angulimala, you stop too.' Suppose I question this recluse."

6. Then the bandit Angulimala addressed the Blessed One in stanzas thus:

"While you are walking, recluse, you tell me you have stopped;  
But now, when I have stopped, you say I have not stopped.  
I ask you now, O recluse, about the meaning:  
How is it that you have stopped and I have not?"

"Angulimala, I have stopped forever,  
I abstain from violence towards living beings;  
But you have no restraint towards things that live:  
That is why I have stopped and you have not."  
"Oh, at long last this recluse, a venerated sage,

Has come to this great forest for my sake.  
Having heard your stanza teaching me the Dhamma,  
I will indeed renounce evil forever.”

So saying, the bandit took his sword and weapons  
And flung them in a gaping chasm’s pit;  
The bandit worshipped the Sublime One’s feet,  
And then and there asked for the going forth.

The Enlightened One, the Sage of Great Compassion,  
The Teacher of the world with [all] its gods,  
Addressed him with these words, “Come, bhikkhu.”  
And that was how he came to be a bhikkhu.

7. Then the Blessed One set out to wander back to Savatthi with Angulimala as his attendant. Wandering by stages, he eventually arrived at Savatthi, and there he lived at Savatthi in Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s Park.

8. Now on that occasion great crowds of people were gathering at the gates of King Pasenadi’s inner palace, very loud and noisy, crying: “Sire, the bandit Angulimala is in your realm; he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings! Villages, towns, and districts have been laid waste by him! He is constantly murdering people and he wears their fingers as a garland! The king must put him down!”

9. Then in the middle of the day King Pasenadi of Kosala drove out of Savatthi with a cavalry of five hundred men and set out for the park. He drove thus as far as the road was passable for carriages, and then he dismounted from his carriage and went forward on foot to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, he sat down at one side, and the Blessed One said to him: “What is it, great king? Is King Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha attacking you, or the Licchavis of Vesali, or other hostile kings?”

10. “Venerable sir, King Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha is not attacking me, nor are the Licchavis of Vesali, nor are other hostile kings. But there is a bandit in my realm named Angulimala, who is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Villages, towns, and districts have been laid waste by him. He is constantly murdering people and he wears their fingers as a garland. I shall never be able to put him down, venerable sir.”

11. “Great king, suppose you were to see that Angulimala had shaved off his hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and gone forth from the home life into homelessness; that he was abstaining from killing living beings, from taking what is not given and from false speech; that he was refraining from eating at night, ate only in one part of the day, and was celibate, virtuous, of good character. If you were to see him thus, how would you treat him?”

“Venerable sir, we would pay homage to him, or rise up for him, or invite him to be seated; or we would invite him to accept robes, almsfood, a resting place, or medicinal requisites; or we would arrange for him lawful guarding, defence, and protection. But, venerable sir, he is an immoral man, one of evil character. How could he ever have such virtue and restraint?”

12. Now on that occasion the venerable Angulimala was sitting not far from the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One extended his right arm and said to King Pasenadi of Kosala: “Great king, this is Angulimala.”

Then King Pasenadi was frightened, alarmed, and terrified. Knowing this, the Blessed One told him: “Do not be afraid, great king, do not be afraid. There is nothing for you to fear from him.”

Then the king’s fear, alarm, and terror subsided. He went over to the venerable Angulimala and said: “Venerable sir is the noble lord really Angulimala?”

“Yes, great king.”

“Venerable sir, of what family is the noble lord’s father? Of what family is his mother?”

“My father is a Gagga, great king; my mother is a Mantani.”

“Let the noble lord Gagga Mantaniputta rest content. I shall provide robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal requisites for the noble lord Gagga Mantaniputta.”

13. Now at that time the venerable Angulimala was a forest dweller, an almsfood eater, a refuse-rag wearer, and restricted himself to three robes. He replied: “Enough, great king, my triple robe is complete.”

King Pasenadi then returned to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said: “It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous how the Blessed One tames the untamed, brings peace to the unpeaceful, and leads to Nibbana those who have not attained Nibbana. Venerable sir, we ourselves could not tame him with force and weapons, yet the Blessed One has tamed him without force or weapons. And now, venerable sir, we depart. We are busy and have much to do.”

“Now is the time, great king, to do as you think fit.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala rose from his seat, and after paying homage to the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, he departed.

14. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Angulimala dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. As he was wandering for alms from house to house in Savatthi, he saw a certain woman giving birth to a deformed child. When he saw this, he thought: “How beings are afflicted! Indeed, how beings are afflicted!”

When he had wandered for alms in Savatthi and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said: “Venerable sir, in the morning I dressed, and taking my bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. As I was wandering for alms from house to house in Savatthi, I saw a certain woman giving birth to a deformed child. When I saw that, I thought: ‘How beings are afflicted! Indeed, how beings are afflicted!’”

15. “In that case, Angulimala, go into Savatthi and say to that woman: ‘Sister, since I was born, I do not recall that I have ever intentionally deprived a living being of life. By this truth, may you be well and may your infant be well!’”

“Venerable sir, wouldn’t I be telling a deliberate lie, for I have intentionally deprived many living beings of life?”

“Then, Angulimala, go into Savatthi and say to that woman: ‘Sister, since I was born with the noble birth, I do not recall that I have ever intentionally deprived a living being of life. By this truth, may you be well and may your infant be well!’”

“Yes, venerable sir,” the venerable Angulimala replied, and having gone into Savatthi, he told that woman: “Sister, since I was born with the noble birth, I do not recall that I have ever intentionally deprived a living being of life. By this truth, may you be well and may your infant be well!” Then the woman and the infant became well.

16. Before long, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent and resolute, the venerable Angulimala, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, here and now entered upon and abided in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness. He directly knew: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.” And the venerable Angulimala became one of the arahants.

17. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Angulimala dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. Now on that occasion someone threw a clod and hit the venerable Angulimala’s body, someone else threw a stick and hit his body, and someone else threw a potsherd and hit his body. Then, with blood running from his cut head, with his bowl broken, and with his outer robe torn, the venerable Angulimala went to the Blessed One. The Blessed One saw him coming in the distance and told him: “Bear it, brahmin! Bear it, brahmin! You are experiencing here and now the result of deeds

because of which you might have been tortured in hell for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years.”

18. Then, while the venerable Angulimala was alone in retreat experiencing the bliss of deliverance, he uttered this exclamation:

“Who once did live in negligence  
And then is negligent no more,  
He illuminates the world  
Like the moon freed from a cloud.

Who checks the evil deeds he did  
By doing wholesome deeds instead,  
He illuminates the world  
Like the moon freed from a cloud.

The youthful bhikkhu who devotes  
His efforts to the Buddha’s teaching,  
He illuminates the world  
Like the moon freed from a cloud.

Let my enemies hear discourse on the Dhamma,  
Let them be devoted to the Buddha’s teaching,  
Let my enemies wait on those good people  
Who lead others to accept the Dhamma.

Let my enemies give ear from time to time  
And hear the Dhamma of those who preach forbearance,  
Of those who speak as well in praise of kindness,  
And let them follow up that Dhamma with kind deeds.

For surely then they would not wish to harm me,  
Nor would they think of harming other beings,  
So those who would protect all, frail or strong,  
Let them attain the all-surpassing peace.

Conduit-makers guide the water,  
Fletchers straighten out the arrow-shaft,  
Carpenters straighten out the timber,  
But wise men seek to tame themselves.

There are some that tame with beatings,  
Some with goads and some with whips;  
But I was tamed by such alone  
Who has no rod nor any weapon.

‘Harmless’ is the name I bear,  
Though I was dangerous in the past.  
The name I bear today is true:  
I hurt no living being at all.

And though I once lived as a bandit  
With the name of ‘Finger-garland,’

One whom the great flood swept along,  
I went for refuge to the Buddha.

And though I once was bloody-handed  
With the name of 'Finger-garland,'  
See the refuge I have found:  
The bond of being has been cut.

While I did many deeds that lead  
To rebirth in the evil realms,  
Yet their result has reached me now,  
And so I eat free from debt.

They are fools and have no sense  
Who give themselves to negligence,  
But those of wisdom guard diligence  
And treat it as their greatest good.

Do not give way to negligence  
Nor seek delight in sensual pleasures,  
But meditate with diligence  
So as to reach the perfect bliss.

So welcome to that choice of mine  
And let it stand, it was not ill made;  
Of all the Dhammas known to men  
I have come to the very best.

So welcome to that choice of mine  
And let it stand, it was not ill made;  
I have attained the triple knowledge  
And done all that the Buddha teaches.”

## The Metta Sutta

This sutra was introduced into the Green Gulch Sutra book some years ago when Sojun-sensei led a practice period at Green Gulch with my assistance. As we considered a good theme for the practice period we hit on compassion, and we worked on this translation, taking the existing translations and trying to bring them more into line with our Zen way. It was my thought at the time that Zen literature didn't emphasize enough the heart side or our practice, the side of loving beings and practicing with the warmth that that love implies. Zen literature, though clearly based on the Mahayana ideal of the bodhisattva, who works endlessly for the benefit of others, tends to emphasize the teachings on emptiness and non-duality. The tone of the literature tends to be rather spare, humorous, and even a little rough. While I have always found this style appealing, because it dispenses with a sentimentality that can be, I think, counterproductive for practice, it can also be seen as a little cold. So during that practice period and for many others afterward, we chanted the Metta Sutta daily. It's pretty hard to repeat every day the section that says "even as a mother at the risk of her life watches over and protects her only child so with a boundless mind should we cherish all living beings" and be mean to others or think it's OK to justify or cultivate a dislike for the people you practice with. I think this sutra is the basis for the various practices we sometimes do to cultivate loving-kindness.

## The Metta Sutta

This is what should be accomplished by the one who is wise, who seeks the good and has obtained peace.

Let one be strenuous, upright and sincere. Without pride, easily contented and joyous; let one not be submerged by the things of the world; let one not take upon oneself the burden of riches; let one's senses be controlled; let one be wise but not puffed up, and let one not desire great possessions even for one's family.

Let one do nothing that is mean or that the wise would reprove.

May all beings be happy.

May they be joyous and live in safety.

May all living beings, whether weak or strong, in high, middle or low realms of existence, small or great, visible or invisible, near or far, born or to be born, may all beings be happy.

Let no one deceive another, nor despise any being in any state; let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another.

Even as a mother at the risk of her life watches over and protects her only child, so with a boundless mind should one cherish all living beings, suffusing love over the entire world, above, below and all around without limit; so let one cultivate an infinite good will toward the whole world.

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, during all one's waking hours let one cherish the thought that this way of living is the best in the world.

Abandoning vague discussions, having a clear vision, freed from sense appetites, one who is made perfect will never again know rebirth in the cycle of creation of suffering for ourselves or others.

This sutra, which tells of the Buddha's life and teachings during his last days, is one of the most important texts in the entire canon. It is very moving to see how the Buddha goes about preparing the sangha for his passing, giving them teachings about how to keep the peace and stay in touch after he is gone, and repeating the most important teachings he had given all his life. I find many of the details illuminating and touching: how the Buddha is careful to point out that no blame is to be assigned to the person who fed him the food that brought on his final illness; how Ananda in his enthusiasm fails to take the hint and make the request for the Buddha to live a little longer; how plans for the disposition of the Buddha's remains must wait until Mahakasyapa (the Arhat who is said to begin the Zen lineage) arrives. I hope that as time goes on we will develop a tradition of studying this sutra every year around the time of Buddha's Parinirvana Day (February 15) and that we will perform the pageant, based on this text, each year at that time.

## *16 Mahaparinibbana Sutta:* *The Great Passing* The Buddha's Last Days

1.1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. Once the Lord was staying at Rajagaha on the mountain called Vultures' Peak. Now just then King Ajatasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha wanted to attack the Vajjians. He said: 'I will strike the Vajjians who are so powerful and strong, I will cut them off and destroy them, I will bring them to ruin and destruction!'

1.2. And King Ajatasattu said to his chief minister the Brahmin Vassakara: 'Brahmin, go to the Blessed Lord, worship him with your head to his feet in my name, ask if he is free from sickness or disease, if he is living at ease, vigorously and comfortably, and then say: "Lord, King Ajatasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha wishes to attack the Vajjians and says: 'I will strike the Vajjians. . .bring them to ruin and destruction!'" And whatever the Lord declares to you, report that faithfully back to me, for Tathagatas never lie.'

1.3. 'Very good, Sire', said Vassakara and, having had the state carriages harnessed, he mounted one of them and drove in state from Rajagaha to Vultures' Peak, riding as far as the ground would allow, then continuing on foot to where the Lord was. He exchanged courtesies with the Lord, then sat down to one side and delivered the King's message.

1.4. Now the Venerable Ananda was standing behind the Lord, fanning him. And the Lord said: 'Ananda, have you heard that the Vajjians hold regular and frequent assemblies?' 'I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'Ananda, as long as the Vajjians hold regular and frequent assemblies they may be expected to prosper and not decline. Have you heard that the Vajjians meet in harmony, break up in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony?' 'I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'Ananda, as long as the Vajjians meet in harmony, break up in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they may be expected to prosper and not decline. Have You heard that the Vajjians do not authorise what has not been authorised already, and do not abolish what has been authorised, but proceed according to what has been authorised by their ancient tradition?' 'I have, Lord.' ... 'Have you heard that they honour, respect, revere and salute the elders among them, and consider them worth listening to? ... that they do not forcibly abduct others' wives and daughters and compel them to live with them?.. that they honour, respect, revere and salute the Vajjian shrines at home and abroad, not withdrawing the proper support made and given before?... that proper provision is made for the safety of Arahants, so that such Arahants may come in future to live there, and those already there may dwell in comfort?' 'I have, Lord.'

'Ananda, so long as such proper provision is made,...the Vajjians may be expected to prosper and not decline.'

1-5- Then the Lord said to the Brahmin Vassakara: 'Once, Brahmin, when I was at the Sarandada Shrine in Vesali, I taught the Vajjians these seven principles for preventing decline, and as long as they keep to these seven principles, as long as these principles remain in force, the Vajjians may be expected to prosper and not decline.'

At this, Vassakara replied: 'Reverend Gotama, if the Vajjians keep to even one of these principles, they may be expected to prosper and not decline - far less all seven. Certainly the Vajjians will never be conquered by King Ajatasattu by force of arms, but only by means of propaganda and setting them, against one another. And now, Reverend Gotama, may I depart? I am busy and have much to do.' 'Brahmin, do as you think fit.' Then Vassakara, rejoicing and delighted at the Lord's words, rose from his seat and departed.

1.6. Soon after Vassakara had gone, the Lord said: 'Ananda, go to whatever monks there are round about Rajagaha, and summon them to the assembly hall.' 'Very good, Lord', said Ananda, and did so.

Then he came to the Lord, saluted him, stood to one side and said: ‘Lord, the order of monks is assembled. Now is the time for the Lord to do as he sees fit.’ Then the Lord rose from his seat, went to the assembly hall, sat down on the prepared seat, and said: ‘Monks, I will teach you seven things that are conducive to welfare. Listen, pay careful attention, and I will speak.’ ‘Yes, Lord’, said the monks, and the Lord said:

‘As long as the monks hold regular and frequent assemblies, they may be expected to prosper and not decline. As long as they meet in harmony, break up in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they may be expected to prosper and not decline. As long as they do not authorise what has not been authorised already, and do not abolish what has been authorised, but proceed according to what has been authorised by the rules of training... ; as long as they honour, respect, revere and salute the elders of long standing who are long ordained, fathers and leaders of the order... ; as long as they do not fall prey to desires which arise in them and lead to rebirth... ; as long as they are devoted to forest-lodgings... ; as long as they preserve their personal mindfulness, so that in future the good among their companions will come to them, and those who have already come will feel at ease with them ... ; as long as the monks hold to these seven things and are seen to do so, they may be expected to prosper and not decline.

1.7. ‘I will tell you another seven things conducive to welfare ... As long as monks do not rejoice, delight and become absorbed in works, ...in chattering,. . . in sleeping,...in company,. . . in evil desires,. . . in mixing and associating with evil friends,. . . as long as they do not rest content with partial achievements . . . ; as long as the monks hold to these seven things and are seen to do so, they may be expected to prosper and not decline.

1.8. ‘I will tell you another seven things conducive to welfare. .. As long as monks continue with faith, with modesty, with fear of doing wrong, with learning, with aroused vigour, with established mindfulness, with wisdom...

1.9. ‘I will tell you another seven things ... As long as monks develop the enlightenment-factors of mindfulness, of investigation of phenomena, of energy, of delight, of tranquillity, of concentration, of equanimity...

1.10. ‘I will tell you another seven things ... As long as monks develop the perception of impermanence, of non-self, of impurity, of danger, of overcoming, of dispassion, of cessation, ... they may be expected to prosper and not decline.

1.11. ‘Monks, I will tell you six things that are conducive to communal living ... As long as monks both in public and in private show loving-kindness to their fellows in acts of body, speech and thought,. . . share with their virtuous fellows whatever they receive as a rightful gift, including the contents of their alms-bowls, which they do not keep to themselves,. . .keep consistently, unbroken and unaltered those rules of conduct that are spotless, leading to liberation, praised by the wise unstained and conducive to concentration, and persist therein with their fellows both in public and in private,... continue in that noble view that leads to liberation, to the utter destruction of suffering, remaining in such awareness with their fellows both in public and in private... As long as monks hold to these six things and are seen to do so, they may be expected to prosper and not decline.’

1.12. And then the Lord, while staying at Vultures’ Peak, gave a comprehensive discourse: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from the corruptions, that is, from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance.’

1.13. And when the Lord had stayed at Rajagaha as long as he wished, he said to the Venerable Ananda: ‘Come, Ananda, let us go to Ambalathika.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord went there with a large company of monks.

1.14. And the Lord stayed in the royal park at Ambalathika, and there he delivered a comprehensive discourse: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom...’

1.15. Having stayed at Ambalatthika as long as he wished, the Lord said to Ananda: ‘Let us go to Nalanda’, and they did so. At Nalanda the Lord stayed in Pavarika’s mango-grove.

1.16. Then the Venerable Sariputta came to see the Lord, saluted him, sat down to one side, and said: ‘It is clear to me, Lord, that there never has been, will be or is now another ascetic or Brahmin who is better or more enlightened than the Lord.’

‘You have spoken boldly with a bull’s voice, Sariputta, you have roared the lion’s roar of certainty! How is this? Have all the Arahant Buddhas of the past appeared to you, and were the minds of all those Lords open to you, so as to say: “These Lords were of such virtue, such was their teaching, such their wisdom, such their way, such their liberation”?’ ‘No, Lord.’

‘And have you perceived all the Arahant Buddhas who will appear in the future ...?’ ‘No, Lord.’

‘Well then, Sariputta, you know me as the Arahant Buddha, and do you know: “The Lord is of such virtue, such is his teaching, such his wisdom, such his way, such his liberation”?’ ‘No, Lord.’

‘So, Sariputta, you do not have knowledge of the minds of the Buddhas of the past, the future or the present. Thus, Sariputta, have you not spoken boldly with a bull’s voice and roared the lion’s roar of certainty with your declaration?’

1.17. ‘Lord, the minds of the Arahant Buddhas of the past, future and present are not open to me. But I know the drift of the Dhamma. Lord, it is as if there were a royal frontier city, with mighty bastions and a mighty encircling wall in which was a single gate, at which was a gatekeeper, wise, skilled and clever, who kept out strangers and let in those he knew. And he, constantly patrolling and following along a path, might not see the joins and clefts in the bastion, even such as a cat might creep through. But whatever larger creatures entered or left the city, must all go through this very gate. And it seems to me, Lord, that the drift of the Dhamma is the same. All those Arahant Buddhas of the past attained to supreme enlightenment by abandoning the five hindrances, defilements of mind that weaken the understanding, having firmly established the four foundations of mindfulness in their minds, and realised the seven factors of enlightenment as they really are. All the Arahant Buddhas of the future will do likewise, and you, Lord, who are now the Arahant, fully-enlightened Buddha, have done the same.’

1.18. Then, while staying at Nalanda, in Pavarika’s mango-grove, the Lord gave a comprehensive discourse to the monks. ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom...’ (*as verse 12*).

1.19. And having stayed at Nalanda as long as he wished the Lord said to Ananda: ‘Let us go to Pataligama.’ And they did so.

1.20. At Pataligama they heard say: ‘The Lord has arrived here’. And the lay-followers of Pataligama came to the Lord, saluted him, sat down to one side, and said: ‘May the Lord consent to stay at our rest-house!’ And the Lord consented by silence.

1.21. Understanding his consent, they rose from their seats, saluted the Lord and, passing him by to the right, went to the rest-house and strewed the floor, prepared seats, provided a water-pot and filled the oil-lamp. Then they went to the Lord, saluted him, stood to one side and said: ‘All is ready at the rest-house, Lord. Now is the time to do as the Lord wishes.’

1.22. Then the Lord dressed, took his robe and bowl, and went with his monks to the rest-house, where he washed his feet, went in and sat down facing east, with his back against the central pillar. And the monks, having washed their feet, went in and sat down with their backs to the west wall, facing east, and with the Lord sitting in front of them. And the lay-followers of Pataligama, having washed their feet, went in and sat down with their backs to the east wall, facing west and with the Lord before them.

1.23. Then the Lord addressed the lay-followers of Pataligama: ‘Householders, there are these five perils to one of bad morality, of failure in morality. What are they? In the first place, he suffers great loss of property through neglecting his affairs. In the second place, he gets a bad reputation for immorality and misconduct. In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brahmins, householders or ascetics, he does so diffidently and shyly. In the fourth place, he dies confused. In the

fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in an evil state, a bad fate, in suffering and hell. These are the five perils to one of bad morality.

1.24. ‘And, householders, there are these five advantages to one of good morality and of success in morality. What are they? In the first place, through careful attention to his affairs he gains much wealth. In the second place, he gets a good reputation for morality and good conduct. In the third place, whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Brahmins, householders or ascetics, he does so with confidence and assurance. In the fourth place, he dies unconfused. In the fifth place, after death, at the breaking-up of the body, he arises in a good place, a heavenly world. These are the five advantages to one of good morality, and of success in morality.’

1.25. Then the Lord instructed, inspired, fired and delighted the lay-followers of Pataligama with talk on Dhamma until far into the night. Then he dismissed them, saying: ‘Householders, the night is nearly over. Now it is time for you to do as you think fit.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, they said and, rising and saluting the Lord, they passed him by to the right and departed. And the Lord spent the remainder of the night in the rest-house left empty by their departure.

1.26. Now at this time Sunidha and Vassakara, the Magadhan ministers, were building a fortress in Pataligama as a defence against the Vajjians. And at that time a multitude of thousands of devas were taking up lodging in Pataligama. And in the parts where powerful devas settled, they caused the minds of the most powerful royal officials to pick those sites for their dwellings, and where middle and lower-ranking devas settled, so too they caused the minds of royal officials of corresponding grade to pick those sites for their dwellings.

1.27. And the Lord, with his divine eye surpassing that of humans, saw the thousands of devas taking up residence in Pataligama. And, getting up at break of day, he said to the venerable Ananda: ‘Ananda, who is building a fortress at Pataligama?’ ‘Lord, Sunidha and Vassakara, the Magadhan ministers, are building a fortress against the Vajjians.’

1.28. ‘Ananda, just as if they had taken counsel with the Thirty-Three Gods, Sunidha and Vassakara are building a fortress at Pataligama. I have seen with my divine eye how thousands of devas were taking up lodging there... (*as verse 26*). Ananda, as far as the Ariyan realm extends, as far as its trade extends, this will be the chief city, Pataliputta, scattering its seeds far and wide. And Pataliputta will face three perils: from fire, from water and from internal dissension.’

1.29. Then Sunidha and Vassakara called on the Lord and, having exchanged courtesies, stood to one side and said: ‘May the Reverend Gotama accept a meal from us tomorrow with his order of monks!’ And the Lord consented by silence.

1.30. Understanding his consent, Sunidha and Vassakara went home and there had a fine meal of hard and soft food prepared. When it was ready, they reported to the Lord: ‘Reverend Gotama, the meal is ready.’ Then the Lord, having dressed in the morning, took his robe and bowl, went with the order of monks to the residence of Sunidha and Vassakara, and sat down on the prepared seat. Then Sunidha and Vassakara served the Buddha and his order of monks with choice soft and hard foods till they were satisfied. And when the Lord took his hand away from the bowl they sat down on low stools to one side.

1.31. And as they sat there, the Lord thanked them with these verses:

‘In whatever realm the wise man makes his home,  
He should feed the virtuous leaders of the holy life.

Whatever devas there are who report this offering,  
They will pay him respect and honour for this.

They tremble for him as a mother for her son,  
And he for whom devas tremble ever happy is.’

Then the Lord rose from his seat and took his departure.

1.32. Sunidha and Vassakara followed closely behind the Lord, saying: ‘Whichever gate the ascetic Gotama goes out by today, that shall be called the Gotama gate; and whichever ford he uses to cross the Ganges, that shall be called the Gotama ford.’ And so the gate by which the Lord went out was called the Gotama Gate.

1.33. And then the Lord came to the River Ganges. And just then, the river was so full that a crow could drink out of it. And some people were looking for a boat, and some were looking for a raft, and some were binding together a raft of reeds to get to the other side. But the Lord, as swiftly as a strong man might stretch out his flexed arm or flex it again, vanished from this side of the Ganges and reappeared with his order of monks on the other shore.

1.34. And the Lord saw those people who were looking for a boat, looking for a raft, and binding together a raft of reeds to get to the other side. And seeing their intentions, he uttered this verse on the spot:

‘When they want to cross the sea, the lake or pond,  
People make a bridge or raft - the wise have crossed already.’

[*End of first recitation -section*]

2.1. The Lord said to Ananda: ‘Let us go to Kotigama.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord went with a large company of monks to Kotigama, and stayed there.

2.2. Then the Lord addressed the monks thus: ‘Monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that I as well as you have for a long time run on and gone round the cycle of birth-and-death. What are they? By not understanding the Noble Truth of Suffering we have fared on, by not understanding the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, of the Cessation of Suffering, and of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering we have fared on round the cycle of birth-and-death. And by the understanding, the penetration of the same Noble Truth of Suffering, of the Origin of Suffering, of the Cessation of Suffering and of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, the craving for becoming has been cut off, the support of becoming has been destroyed, there is no more re-becoming.’

2.3. The Lord having said this, the Well-Farer having spoken, the Teacher said:

‘Not seeing the Four Noble Truths as they are,  
Having long traversed the round from life to life,  
These being seen, becoming’s supports pulled up,  
Sorrow’s root cut off, rebirth is done.’

2.4. Then the Lord, while staying at Kotigama, gave a comprehensive discourse: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from the corruptions, that is, from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance.’

2.5. When the Lord had stayed at Kotigama as long as he wished, he said: ‘Ananda, let us go to Nadika.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord went with a large company of monks to Nadika, where he stayed at the Brick House.

2.6. And the Venerable Ananda came to the Lord, saluted him, sat down to one side, and said: ‘Lord, the monk Salha and the nun Nanda have died at Nadika. What rebirth have they taken after death? The lay-follower Sudatta and the laywoman-follower Sujata, the lay-followers Kakudha, Kalinga, Nikata, Katissabha, Tuttha, Santuttha, Bhadda and Subhadda have all died in Nadika. What rebirths have they taken?’

2.7. ‘Ananda, the monk Salha, by the destruction of the corruptions, attained in this life, through his own super-knowledge, the uncorrupted liberation of mind, the liberation by wisdom. The nun Nanda, by the destruction of the five lower fetters, has been spontaneously reborn, and will gain Nibbana from that state without returning to this world. The lay-follower Sudatta, by the destruction of three fetters and the reduction of greed, hatred and delusion, is a Once-Returner who will come back once more to this world, and then make an end of suffering. The laywoman-follower Sujata, by the destruction of three fetters, is a Stream-Winner, incapable of falling into states of woe, certain of attaining Nibbana. The lay-follower Kakudha, by the destruction of the five lower fetters, has been spontaneously reborn, and will gain Nibbana from that state without returning to this world. Likewise Kalinga, Nikata, Katissabha, Tuttha, Santuttha, Bhadda and Subhadda. Ananda, in Nadika more than fifty lay-followers have by the destruction of the five lower fetters been spontaneously reborn, and will gain Nibbana from that state without returning to this world. Rather more than ninety, by the destruction of three fetters and the reduction of greed, hatred and delusion, are Once-Returners who will come back once more to this world and then make an end of suffering. And, well over five hundred, by the destruction of three fetters, are Stream-Winners, incapable of falling into states of woe, certain of attaining Nibbana.

2.8. ‘Ananda, it is not remarkable that that which has come to be as a man should die. But that you should come to the Tathagata to ask the fate of each of those who have died, that is a weariness to him. Therefore, Ananda, I will teach you a way of knowing Dhamma, called the Mirror of Dhamma, whereby the Ariyan disciple, if he so wishes, can discern of himself: “I have destroyed hell, animal-rebirth, the realm of ghosts, all downfall, evil fates and sorry states. I am a Stream-Winner, incapable of falling into states of woe, certain of attaining Nibbana.”

2.9. ‘And what is this Mirror of Dhamma by which he can know this? Here, Ananda, this Ariyan disciple is possessed of unwavering confidence in the Buddha, thus: “This Blessed Lord is an Arahant, a fully-enlightened Buddha, endowed with wisdom and conduct, the Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds, incomparable Trainer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, enlightened and blessed.” He is possessed of unwavering faith in the Dhamma, thus: “Well-proclaimed by the Lord is the Dhamma, visible here and now, timeless, inviting inspection, leading onward, to be comprehended by the wise each one for himself.” He is possessed of unwavering confidence in the Sangha, thus: “Well-directed is the Sangha of the Lord’s disciples, of upright conduct, on the right path, on the perfect path; that is to say the four pairs of persons the eight kinds of humans. The Sangha of the Lord’s disciples is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of veneration, an unsurpassed field of merit in the world. And he is possessed of morality dear to the Noble Ones, unbroken, without defect, unspotted, without inconsistency, liberating, uncorrupted, and conducive to concentration.

‘This, Ananda, is the Mirror of Dhamma, whereby the Ariyan disciple ... can discern of himself: “I have destroyed hell ... I am a Stream-Winner, . . . certain of attaining Nibbana.”’ (as verse 8)

2.10. Then the Lord, staying at Nadika in the Brick House, gave a comprehensive discourse to the monks: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. . .’ (as verse 2.4).

2.11. And when the Lord had stayed at Nadika as long as he wished, ... he went with a large company of monks to Vesali, where he stayed at Ambapali’s grove.

2.12. And there the Lord addressed the monks: ‘Monks, a monk should be mindful and clearly aware, this is our charge to you!

‘And how is a monk mindful?... Here, a monk abides contemplating the body as body, earnestly, clearly aware, mindful and having put away all hankering and fretting for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind and mind-objects. That is how a monk is mindful.

2.13. ‘And how is a monk clearly aware? Here, a monk, when going forward or backward, is aware of what he is doing; in looking forward or back he is aware of what he is doing; in bending and stretching he is aware of what he is doing; in carrying his inner and outer robe and bowl he is aware of what he is doing; in eating, drinking, chewing and savouring he is aware of what he is doing; in passing excrement or urine he is aware of what he is doing; in walking, standing, sitting or lying down, in keeping awake, in speaking

or in staying silent, he is aware of what he is doing. That is how a monk is clearly aware. A monk should be mindful and clearly aware, this is our charge to you!’

2.14. Now Ambapali the courtesan... heard that the Lord had arrived at Vesali and was staying at her grove. She had the best carriages made ready and drove from Vesali to her park. She drove as far as the ground would allow, then alighted and went on foot to where the Lord was. She saluted the Lord and sat down to one side, and as she sat, the Lord instructed, inspired, fired and delighted her with a talk on Dhamma. And being thus delighted, Ambapali said: ‘Lord, may the Lord consent to take a meal from me tomorrow with his order of monks!’ The Lord consented by silence, and Ambapali, understanding his acceptance, rose from her seat, saluted the Lord and, passing him by to the right, departed.

2.15. And the Licchavis of Vesali heard that the Lord had arrived at Vesali and was staying at Ambapali’s grove. So they had the best carriages made ready and drove out of Vesali. And some of the young Licchavis were all in blue, with blue make-up,... blue clothes and blue adornment, while some were in yellow, some in red, some in white, with white makeup, white clothes and white adornment.

2.16. And Ambapali met the young Licchavis axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke. And they said to her: ‘Ambapali, why do you drive up against us like that?’ ‘Because, young sirs, the Blessed Lord has been invited by me for a meal with his order of monks.’

‘Ambapali, give up this meal for a hundred thousand pieces!’ ‘Young sirs, if you were to give me all Vesali with its revenues I would not give up such an important meal!’

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying: ‘We’ve been beaten by the mango-woman, we’ve been cheated by the mango-woman!’ And they set out for Ambapali’s grove.

2.17. And the Lord, having seen the Licchavis from afar, said: ‘Monks, any of you who have not seen the Thirty-Three Gods, just look at this troop of Licchavis! Take a good look at them, and you will get an idea of the Thirty-Three Gods!’

2.18. Then the Licchavis drove in their carriages as far as the ground would allow, then they alighted and went on foot to where the Lord was, saluted him and sat down to one side. And as they sat, the Lord instructed, inspired, fired and delighted them with a talk on Dhamma. And being thus delighted, they said: ‘Lord, may the Lord consent to take a meal from us tomorrow with his order of monks!’ ‘But, Licchavis, I have already accepted a meal for tomorrow from the courtesan Ambapali!’

And the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying: ‘We’ve been beaten by the mango-woman, we’ve been cheated by the mango-woman!’ Then, having rejoiced and delighted in his talk, they rose from their seats, saluted the Lord and, passing him by on the right, departed.

2.19. And Ambapali, when night was nearly over, having had choice hard and soft food prepared at her home, announced to the Lord that the meal was ready. Having, dressed and taken robe and bowl, the Lord went with the order of monks to Ambapali’s residence and sat down on the prepared seat. And she served the Buddha and his monks with choice hard and soft food till they were satisfied. And when the Lord had taken his hand from the bowl, Ambapali took a low stool and sat down to one side. So seated, she said: ‘Lord, I give this park to the order of monks with the Buddha as its head.’ The Lord accepted the park, and then he instructed, inspired, fired and delighted her with a talk on Dhamma, after which he rose from his seat and departed.

2.20. Then, while staying at Vesali, the Lord delivered a comprehensive discourse to the monks: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom.. .’ (*as verse 2.4*).

2.21. And when the Lord had stayed at Ambapali’s grove as long as he wished, . . . he went with a large company of monks to the little village of Beluva, where he stayed.

2.22. There the Lord said to the monks: ‘You, monks, should go to anywhere in Vesali where you have friends or acquaintances or supporters, and spend the Rains there. I shall spend the Rains here in Beluva.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, replied the monks, and they did so, but the Lord spent the Rains in Beluva.

2.23. And during the Rains the Lord was attacked by a severe sickness, with sharp pains as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully, clearly aware and without complaining. He thought: 'It is not fitting that I should attain final Nibbana without addressing my followers and taking leave of the order of monks. I must hold this disease in check by energy and apply myself to the force of life.' He did so, and the disease abated.

2.24. Then the Lord, having recovered from his sickness, as soon as he felt better, went outside and sat on a prepared seat in front of his dwelling. Then the Venerable Ananda came to him, saluted him, sat down to one side and said: 'Lord, I have seen the Lord in comfort, and I have seen the Lord's patient enduring. And, Lord, my body was like a drunkard's. I lost my bearings and things were unclear to me because of the Lord's sickness. The only thing that was some comfort to me was the thought: "The Lord will not attain final Nibbana until he has made some statement about the order of monks."' "

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

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

2.26. 'Therefore, Ananda, you should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a monk live as an island unto himself, . . . with no other refuge? Here, Ananda, a monk abides contemplating the body as body, earnestly, clearly aware, mindful and having put away all hankering and fretting for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind and mind-objects. That, Ananda, is how a monk lives as an island unto himself, . . . with no other refuge. And those who now in my time or afterwards live thus, they will become the highest, if they are desirous of learning.'

*[End of second recitation-section]*

3.1. Then the Lord, rising early, dressed, took his robe and bowl, and entered Vesali for alms. Having eaten on his return from the alms-round, he said to the Venerable Ananda: 'Bring a mat, Ananda. We will go to the Capala Shrine for the siesta.' 'Very good, Lord', said Ananda, and, getting a mat, he followed behind.

3.2. Then the Lord came to the Capala Shrine, and sat down on the prepared seat. Ananda saluted the Lord and sat down to one side, and the Lord said: 'Ananda, Vesali is delightful, the Udena Shrine is delightful, the Gotamaka Shrine is delightful, the Sattambaka Shrine is delightful, the Bahuputta Shrine is delightful, the Capala Shrine is delightful.

3.3. 'Ananda, whoever has developed the four roads to power, practised them frequently, made them his vehicle, made them his base, established them, become familiar with them and properly undertaken them, could undoubtedly live for a century, or the remainder of one. The Tathagata has developed these powers.... properly undertaken them. And he could, Ananda, undoubtedly live for a century, or the remainder of one.'

3.4. But the Venerable Ananda, failing to grasp this broad hint, this dear sign, did not beg the Lord: 'Lord, may the Blessed Lord stay for a century, may the Well-Farer stay for a century for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans', so much was his mind possessed by Mara.

3.5. And a second time..., and a third time... (*as verses 3-4*).

3.6. Then the Lord said: ‘Ananda, go now and do what seems fitting to you.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda and, rising from his seat, he saluted the Lord, passed by on the right and sat down under a tree some distance away.

3.7. Soon after Ananda had left, Mara the Evil One came to the Lord, stood to one side, and said: ‘Lord, may the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbana, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbana. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbana. Because the Blessed Lord has said this: “Evil One, I will not take final Nibbana till I have monks and disciples who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, knowers of the Dhamma, trained in conformity with the Dhamma, correctly trained and walking in the path of the Dhamma, who will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; till they shall be able by means of the Dhamma to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dhamma of wondrous effect.”

3.8. ‘And now, Lord, the Blessed Lord has such monks and disciples. May the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbana, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbana. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbana. And the Blessed Lord has said: “I will not take final Nibbana till I have nuns and female disciples who are accomplished,.. till I have laymen-followers...till I have laywomen-followers...” (*as verse 7*). May the Blessed Lord now take final Nibbana ... And the Blessed Lord has said: “Evil One, I will not take final Nibbana till this holy life has been successfully established and flourishes, is widespread, well-known far and wide, well-proclaimed among mankind everywhere.” And all this has come about. May the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbana, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbana. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbana.’

3.9. At this the Lord said to Mara: ‘You need not worry, Evil One. The Tathagata’s final passing will not be long delayed. Three months from now, the Tathagata will take final Nibbana.’

3.10. So the Lord, at the Capala Shrine, mindfully and in full awareness renounced the life-principle, and when this occurred there was a great earthquake, terrible, hair-raising and accompanied by thunder. And when the Lord saw this he uttered this verse:

‘Gross or fine, things become the sage abjured.  
Calm, composed, he burst becoming’s shell.’

3.11. And the Venerable Ananda thought: ‘It is marvellous, it is wonderful how this great earthquake arises, this terrible earthquake, so dreadful and hair-raising, accompanied by thunder! Whatever can have caused it?’

3.12. He went to the Lord, saluted him, sat down to one side, and asked him that question.

3.13. ‘Ananda, there are eight reasons, eight causes for the appearance of a great earthquake. This great earth is established on water, the water on the wind, the wind on space. And when a mighty wind blows, this stirs up the water, and through the stirring-up of the water the earth quakes. That is the first reason.

3.14. ‘In the second place there is an ascetic or Brahmin who has developed psychic powers, or a mighty and Powerful deva whose earth-consciousness is weakly developed and his water-consciousness is immeasurable, and he makes the earth shudder and shake and violently quake. That is the second reason.

3.15. ‘Again, when a Bodhisatta descends from the Tusita Heaven, mindful and clearly aware, into his mother’s womb, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes. That is the third reason.

3.16. ‘Again, when the Bodhisatta emerges from his mother’s womb, mindful and clearly aware, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes. That is the fourth reason.

3.17. ‘Again, when the Tathagata gains unsurpassed enlightenment, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes. That is the fifth reason.

3.18. ‘Again, when the Tathagata sets in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes. That is the sixth reason.

3.19. ‘Again, when the Tathagata, mindful and clearly aware, renounces the life-principle, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes.

3.20. ‘Again, when the Tathagata gains the Nibbana element without remainder then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes. That is the eighth reason. These, Ananda, are the eight reasons, the eight causes for the appearance of a great earthquake.

3.21. ‘Ananda, these eight [kinds of] assemblies. What are they? They are the assembly of Khattiyas, the assembly of Brahmins, the assembly of householders, the assembly of ascetics, the assembly of devas of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, the assembly of the Thirty-Three Gods, the assembly of maras, the assembly of Brahmas.

3.22. ‘I remember well, Ananda, many hundreds of assemblies of Khattiyas that I have attended; and before I sat down with them, spoke to them or joined in their conversation, I adopted their appearance and speech, whatever it might be. And I instructed, inspired, fired and delighted them with a discourse on Dhamma. And as I spoke with them they did not know me and wondered: “Who is it that speaks like this - a deva or a man?” And having thus instructed them, I disappeared, and still they did not know: “He who has just disappeared - was he a deva or a man?”

3.23. ‘I remember well many hundreds of assemblies of Brahmins, of householders, of ascetics, of devas of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, of the Thirty-Three Gods, of maras, of Brahmas... and still they did not know: “He who has just disappeared - was he a deva or a man?” Those, Ananda, are the eight assemblies.

3.24. ‘Ananda, there are eight stages of mastery. What are they?

3.25. ‘Perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms, limited and beautiful or ugly, and in mastering these, one is aware that one knows and sees them. That is the first stage.

3.26. ‘Perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms, unlimited and beautiful or ugly... (*as verse 25*). That is the second stage.

3.27. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms, limited and beautiful or ugly... (*as verse 25*). That is the third stage.

3.28. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms, unlimited and beautiful or ugly, and in mastering these, one is aware that one knows and sees them. That is the fourth stage.

3.29. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are blue, of blue colour, of blue lustre. just as a flax flower which is blue, of blue colour, of blue lustre, or a Benares cloth smoothed on both sides that is blue,. . . so one perceives external forms that are blue,... and in mastering these, one is aware that one knows and sees them. That is the fifth stage.

3.30. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are yellow. . . Just as a kannikara flower which is yellow,. . . or a Benares cloth that is yellow, so one perceives external forms that are yellow ... That is the sixth stage.

3.31. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are red ... just as a hibiscus flower which is red,. - or a Benares cloth which is red- ..so one perceives external forms that are red ... That is the seventh stage.

3.32. ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are white, of white colour, of white lustre, just as the morning-star Osadhi is white,... or a Benares cloth smoothed on both sides that is white,...so not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are white,...and in mastering these, one is aware that one knows and sees them. That is the eighth stage of mastery. These, Ananda, are the eight stages of mastery.

3.33. ‘There are, Ananda, these eight liberations. What are they? Possessing form, one sees forms. That is the first. Not perceiving material forms in oneself, one sees them outside. That is the second. Thinking: “It is beautiful”, one becomes intent on it. That is the third. By completely transcending all perception of matter,... thinking: “Space is infinite”, one enters and abides in the Sphere of Infinite Space. That is the fourth. By transcending the Sphere of Infinite Space, thinking: “Consciousness is infinite”, one enters and abides in the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness. That is the fifth. By transcending the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, thinking: “There is no thing”, one enters and abides in the Sphere of No-Thingness. That is the sixth. By transcending the Sphere of No-Thingness, one reaches and abides in the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception. That is the seventh. By transcending the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception, one enters and abides in the Cessation of Perception and Feeling. That is the eighth liberation (*as Sutta 15, verse 35*).

3.34. ‘Ananda, once I was staying at Uruvela on the bank of the River Neranjara, under the Goatherd’s Banyan-tree, when I had just attained supreme enlightenment. And Mara the Evil One came to me, stood to one side and said: “May the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbana, may the Well-Farer now attain final Nibbana. Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbana.”

3.35. ‘At this I said to Mara: “Evil One, I will not take final Nibbana till I have monks and disciples who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, knowers of the Dhamma,...(*as verse 7*), till I have nuns..., laymen-followers, laywomen-followers who will ... teach the Dhamma of wondrous effect. I will not take final Nibbana till this holy life has been successfully established and flourishes, is widespread, well-known far and wide, well-proclaimed among mankind everywhere.”

3.36. ‘And just now, today, Ananda, at the Capala Shrine, Mara came to me, stood to one, side and said: “Lord, may the Blessed Lord now attain final Nibbana ... Now is the time for the Blessed Lord’s final Nibbana.”

3.37. ‘And I said: “You need not worry, Evil One. Three months from now the Tathagata will take final Nibbana.” So now, today, Ananda, at the Capala Shrine, the Tathagata has mindfully and in full awareness renounced the life-principle.’

3.38. At this the Venerable Ananda said: ‘Lord, may the Blessed Lord stay for a century, may the Well-Farer stay for a century for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans!’ ‘Enough, Ananda! Do not beg the Tathagata, it is not the right time for that!’

3.39. And a second and a third time the Venerable Ananda made the same request.

‘Ananda, have you faith in the Tathagata’s enlightenment?’ ‘Yes, Lord.’

‘Then why do you bother the Tathagata with your request up to three times?’

3.40. ‘But Lord, I have heard from the Lord’s own lips, I have understood from the Lord’s own lips: “Whoever has developed the four roads to power ... could undoubtedly live for a century, or for the remainder of one.”’

‘Have you faith, Ananda?’ ‘Yes, Lord.’

‘Then, Ananda, yours is the fault, yours is the failure that, having been given such a broad hint, such a clear sign by the Tathagata, you did not understand and did not beg the Tathagata to stay for a century ... if, Ananda, you had begged him, the Tathagata would twice have refused you, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, yours is the fault, yours is the failure.

3.41. ‘Once, Ananda, I was staying at Rajagaha, at the Vultures’ Peak. And there I said: “Ananda, Rajagaha is delightful, the Vultures’ Peak is delightful. Whoever has developed the four roads to power ... could undoubtedly live for a century.. .”(as verse 3). But you, Ananda, in spite of such a broad hint did not understand and did not beg the Tathagata to stay for a century...

3.42. ‘Once I was staying at Rajagaha in the Banyan Park..., at Robbers’ Cliff..., at the Satapanni Cave on the side of Mount Vebhara..., at the Black Rock on the slope of Mount Isigili. . . , at the slope by the

Snakes' Pool in Cool Wood,... at the Tapoda Park..., at the Squirrels' Feeding-Ground in Veluvana..., in Jivaka's mango-grove..., and also at Rajagaha in the Maddakucchi deer-park.

3.43. 'At all these places I said to you: "Ananda, this place is delightful. . . ."'

3.44. "'Whoever has developed the four roads to power... could undoubtedly live for a century. . . ." (as verse 3).

3.45. 'Once I was at Vesali at the Udena Shrine...

3.46. 'Once I was at Vesali at the Gotamaka Shrine..., at the Sattambaka Shrine..., at the Bahuputta Shrine..., at the Sarandada Shrine...

3.47. 'And now today at the Capala Shrine I said: "These places are delightful. Ananda, whoever has developed the four roads to power ... could undoubtedly live for a century, or the remainder of one. The Tathagata has developed these powers ... and he could, Ananda, undoubtedly live for a century, or the remainder of one."

'But you, Ananda, failing to grasp this broad hint, this clear sign, did not beg the Tathagata to stay for a century. If, Ananda, you had begged him, the Tathagata would twice have refused you, but the third time he would have consented.

3.48. 'Ananda, have I not told you before: All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer change, separation and alteration? So how could this be possible? Whatever is born, become, compounded, is liable to decay - that it should not decay is impossible. And that has been renounced, given up, rejected, abandoned, forsaken: the Tathagata has renounced the life-principle. The Tathagata has said once for all: "The Tathagata's final passing will not be long delayed. Three months from now the Tathagata will take final Nibbana." That the Tathagata should withdraw such a declaration in order to live on, is not possible. Now come, Ananda, we will go to the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest.' 'Very good, Lord!'

3.49. And the Lord went with the Venerable Ananda to the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest. When he got there, he said: 'Ananda, go and gather together all the monks living in the vicinity of Vesali, and get them to come to the assembly hall.' 'Very good, Lord', said Ananda, and did so. He then returned to the Lord, saluted him, stood to one side and said: 'Lord, the order of monks is gathered together. Now is the time for the Lord to do as he wishes.'

3.50. Then the Lord entered the assembly hall and sat down on the prepared seat. Then he said to the monks: 'Monks, for this reason those matters which I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learnt by you, practised, developed and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans. And what are those matters... ? They are: The four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four roads to power, the five spiritual faculties, the five mental powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the Noble Eightfold Path.

3.51. Then the Lord said to the monks: 'And now, monks, I declare to you - all conditioned things are of a nature to decay - strive on untiringly. The Tathagata's final passing will not be long delayed. Three months from now the Tathagata will take his final Nibbana.'

Thus the Lord spoke. The Well-Farer having thus spoken, the Teacher said this:

'Ripe I am in years. My life-span's determined.  
Now I go from you, having made myself my refuge.  
Monks, be untiring, mindful, disciplined,  
Guarding your minds with well-collected thought.  
He who, tireless, keeps to law and discipline,  
Leaving birth behind will put an end to woe.'

[End of third recitation-section]

4.1. Then the Lord, having risen early and dressed, took his robe and bowl and went into Vesali for alms. Having returned from the alms-round and eaten, he looked back at Vesali with his ‘elephant-look’ and said: ‘Ananda, this is the last time the Tathagata will look upon Vesali. Now we will go to Bhandagama.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord proceeded with a large company of monks to Bhandagama, and stayed there.

4.2. And there the Lord addressed the monks: ‘It is, monks, through not understanding, not penetrating four things that I as well as you have for a long time fared on round the cycle of rebirths. What are the four? Through not understanding the Ariyan morality, through not understanding the Ariyan concentration, through not understanding the Ariyan wisdom, through not understanding the Ariyan liberation, I as well as you have for a long time fared on round the cycle of rebirths. And it is by understanding and penetrating the Ariyan morality, the Ariyan concentration, the Ariyan wisdom and the Ariyan liberation that the craving for becoming has been cut off, the tendency towards becoming has been exhausted, and there will be no more rebirth.’

4.3. Thus the Lord spoke. The Well-Farer having thus spoken, the Teacher said this:

‘Morality, samadhi, wisdom and final release,  
These glorious things Gotama came to know.  
The Dhamma he’d discerned he taught his monks:  
He whose vision ended woe to Nibbana’s gone.’

4.4. Then the Lord, while staying at Bhandagama, delivered a comprehensive discourse: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from the corruptions, that is, from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance.’

4.5. And when the Lord had stayed at Bhandagama for as long as he wished, he said: ‘Ananda, let us go to Hatthigama, ... to Ambagama,... to Jambugama,...’ giving the same discourse at each place. Then he said: ‘Ananda, let us go to Bhoganagara.’

4.6. ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord went with a large company of monks to Bhoganagara.

4.7. At Bhoganagara the Lord stayed at the Ananda Shrine. And here he said to the monks: ‘Monks, I will teach you four criteria. Listen, pay close attention, and I will speak.’ ‘Yes, Lord’, replied the monks.

4.8. ‘Suppose a monk were to say: “Friends, I heard and received this from the Lord’s own lips: this is the Dhamma, this is the discipline, this is the Master’s teaching”, then, monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is not the word of the Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk”, and the matter is to be rejected. But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is the word of the Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this monk.” This is the first criterion.

4.9. ‘Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there is a community with elders and distinguished teachers. I have heard and received this from that community”, then, monks, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words ... (as verse 4.8). That is the second criterion.

4.10. ‘Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there are many elders who are learned, bearers of the tradition, who know the Dhamma, the discipline, the code of rules. . .” (as verse 4.8). This is the third criterion.

4.11. ‘Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there is one elder who is learned ... I have heard and received this from that elder...” (as verse 4.8). But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas and the discipline, then the conclusion must be: ‘Assuredly this is the word of the Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this monk.’

4.12. Then the Lord, while staying at Bhoganagara, delivered a comprehensive discourse: ‘This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom...’

4.13. And when the Lord had stayed at Bhoganagara for as long as he wished, he said: ‘Ananda, let us go to Pava.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord went with a large company of monks to Pava, where he stayed at the mango-grove of Cunda the smith.

4.14. And Cunda heard that the Lord had arrived at Pava and was staying at his mango-grove. So he went to the Lord saluted him and sat down to one side, and the Lord instructed, inspired, fired and delighted him with a talk on Dhamma.

4.15. Then Cunda said: ‘May the Lord accept a meal from me tomorrow with his order of monks!’ And the Lord consented by silence.

4.16. And Cunda, understanding his consent, rose from his seat, saluted the Lord and, passing by to the right, departed.

4.17. And as the night was ending Cunda had a fine meal of hard and soft food prepared with an abundance of ‘pig’s delight’ and when it was ready he reported to the Lord: ‘Lord, the meal is ready.’

4.18. Then the Lord, having dressed in the morning, took his robe and bowl and went with his order of monks to Cunda’s dwelling, where he sat down on the prepared seat and said: ‘Serve the “pig’s delight” that has been prepared to me, and serve the remaining hard and soft food to the order of monks.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Cunda, and did so.

4.19. Then the Lord said to Cunda: ‘Whatever is left over of the “pig’s delight” you should bury in a pit, because, Cunda, I can see none in this world with its devas, maras and Brahmas, in this generation with its ascetics and Brahmins, its princes and people who, if they were to eat it, could thoroughly digest it except the Tathagata.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Cunda and, having buried the remains of the ‘pig’s delight’ in a pit, he came to the Lord, saluted him and sat down to one side. Then the Lord, having instructed, inspired, fired and delighted him with a talk on Dhamma, rose from his seat and departed.

4.20. And after having eaten the meal provided by Cunda, the Lord was attacked by a severe sickness with bloody diarrhoea, and with sharp pains as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully and clearly aware, and without complaint. Then the Lord said: ‘Ananda, let us go to Kusinara.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda.

Having eaten Cunda’s meal (this I’ve heard),  
He suffered a grave illness, painful, deathly;  
From eating a meal of ‘pig’s delight’  
Grave sickness assailed the Teacher.  
Having purged, the Lord then said:  
‘Now I’ll go to Kusinara town.’

4.21. Then turning aside from the road, the Lord went to the foot of a tree and said: ‘Come, Ananda, fold a robe in four for me: I am tired and want to sit down.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and did so.

4.22. The Lord sat down on the prepared seat and said: ‘Ananda, bring me some water: I am thirsty and want to drink.’ Ananda replied: ‘Lord, five hundred carts have passed this way. The water is churned up by their wheels and is not good, it is dirty and disturbed. But, Lord, the River Kakuttha nearby has

clean water, pleasant, cool, pure, with beautiful banks, delightful. There the Lord shall drink the water and cool his limbs.’

4.23. A second time the Lord said: ‘Ananda, bring me some water. ...’, and Ananda replied as before.

4.24. A third time the Lord said: ‘Ananda, bring me some water: I am thirsty and want to drink.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda and, taking his bowl, he went to the stream. And that stream whose water had been churned up by the wheels and was not good, dirty and disturbed, as Ananda approached it began to flow pure, bright and unsullied.

4.25. And the Venerable Ananda thought: ‘Wonderful, marvellous are the Tathagata’s great and mighty powers! This water was churned up by wheels..., and at my approach it flows pure, bright and unsullied!’ He took water in his bowl, brought it to the Lord and told him of his thought, saying: ‘May the Lord drink the water, may the Well-Farer drink!’ And the Lord drank the water.

4.26. At that moment Pukkusa the Malla, a Pupil of Alara Kalama, was going along the main road from Kusinara to Pava. Seeing the Lord sitting under a tree, he went over, saluted him and sat down to one side. Then he said: ‘It is wonderful, Lord, it is marvellous how calm these wanderers are!

4.27. ‘Once, Lord, Alara Kalama was going along the main road and, turning aside, he went and sat down under a nearby tree to take his siesta. And five hundred carts went rumbling by very close to him. A man who was walking along behind them came to Alara Kalama and said: “Lord, did you not see five hundred carts go by?” “No, friend, I did not.” “But didn’t you hear them, Lord?” “No, friend, I did not.” “Well, were you asleep, Lord?” “No, friend, I was not asleep.” “Then, Lord, were you conscious?” “Yes, friend”. “So, Lord, being conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard five hundred carts passing close by you, even though your outer robe was bespattered with dust?” “That is so, friend.”

‘And that man thought: “It is wonderful, it is marvellous! These wanderers are so calm that though conscious and awake, a man neither saw nor heard five hundred carts passing close by him!” And he went away praising Alara Kalama’s lofty powers.’

4.28. ‘Well, Pukkusa, what do you think? What do you consider is more difficult to do or attain to - while conscious and awake not to see or hear five hundred carts passing nearby or, while conscious and awake, not to see or hear anything when the rain-god streams and splashes, when lightning flashes and thunder crashes?’

4.29. ‘Lord, how can one compare not seeing or hearing five hundred carts with that - or even six, seven, eight, nine or ten hundred, or hundreds of thousands of carts to that? To see or hear nothing when such a storm rages is more difficult...’

4.30. ‘Once, Pukkusa, when I was staying at Atuma, at the threshing-floor, the rain-god streamed and splashed, lightning flashed and thunder crashed, and two farmers, brothers, and four oxen were killed. And a lot of people went out of Atuma to where the two brothers and the four oxen were killed.

4.31. ‘And, Pukkusa, I had at that time gone out of the door of the threshing-floor and was walking up and down outside. And a man from the crowd came to me, saluted me and stood to one side. And I said to him:

4.32. “‘Friend, why are all these people gathered here?’” “‘Lord, there has been a great storm and two farmers, brothers, and four oxen have been killed. But you, Lord, where have you been?’” “‘I have been right here, friend.’” “‘But what did you see, Lord?’” “‘I saw nothing, friend.’” “‘Or what did you hear, Lord?’” “‘I heard nothing, friend.’” “‘Were you sleeping, Lord?’” “‘I was not sleeping, friend.’” “‘Then, Lord, were you conscious?’” “‘Yes, friend.’” “‘So, Lord, being conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard the great rainfall and floods and the thunder and lightning?’” “‘That is so, friend.’”

4.33. ‘And, Pukkusa, that man thought: “It is wonderful, it is marvellous! These wanderers are so calm that they neither see nor hear when the rain-god streams and splashes, lightning flashes and thunder crashes!” Proclaiming my lofty powers, he saluted me, passed by to the right and departed.’

4.34. At this, Pukkusa the Malla said: ‘Lord, I reject the lofty Powers of Alara Kalama as if they were blown away by a mighty wind or carried off by a swift stream or river! Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if someone were to set up what had been knocked down, or to point out the way to one who had got lost, or to bring an oil lamp into a dark place, so that those with eyes could see what was there. Just so the Blessed Lord has expounded the Dhamma in various ways. And I, Lord, go for refuge to the Blessed Lord, the Dhamma and the Sangha. May the Blessed Lord accept me from this day forth as a lay-follower as long as life shall last!’

4.35. Then Pukkusa said to one man: ‘Go and fetch me two fine sets of robes of cloth-of-gold, burnished and ready to wear.’ ‘Yes, Lord’, the man replied, and did so. And Pukkusa offered the robes to the Lord, saying: ‘Here, Lord, are two fine sets of robes of cloth-of-gold. May the Blessed Lord be graciously pleased to accept them!’ ‘Well then, Pukkusa, clothe me in one set and Ananda in the other.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Pukkusa, and did so.

4.36. Then the Lord instructed, inspired, fired and delighted Pukkusa the Malla with a talk on Dhamma. Then Pukkusa rose from his seat, saluted the Lord, passed by to the right, and departed.

4.37. Soon after Pukkusa had gone, Ananda, having arranged one set of the golden robes on the body of the Lord, observed that against the Lord’s body it appeared dulled. And he said: ‘It is wonderful, Lord, it is marvellous how clear and bright the Lord’s skin appears! It looks even brighter than the golden robes in which it is clothed.’ ‘Just so, Ananda. There are two occasions on which the Tathagata’s skin appears especially clear and bright. Which are they? One is the night in which the Tathagata gains supreme enlightenment, the other is the night when he attains the Nibbana-element without remainder at his final passing. On these two occasions the Tathagata’s skin appears especially clear and bright.

4.38. ‘Tonight, Ananda, in the last watch, in the sal-grove of the Mallas near Kusinara, between two sal-trees, the Tathagata’s final passing will take place. And now, Ananda, let us go to the River Kakuttha.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda.

Two golden robes were Pukkusa’s offering:  
Brighter shone the Teacher’s body than its dress.

4.39. Then the Lord went with a large number of monks to the River Kakuttha. He entered the water, bathed and drank and, emerging, went to the mango grove, where he said to the Venerable Cundaka: ‘Come, Cundaka, fold a robe in four for me. I am tired and want to lie down.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Cundaka, and did so.

4.40. Then the Lord adopted the lion-posture, lying on his right side, placing one foot on the other, mindfully and with clear awareness bearing in mind the time of awakening. And the Venerable Cundaka sat down in front of the Lord.

4.41. The Buddha having gone to Kakuttha the river  
With its clear, bright and pleasant waters,  
Therein the Teacher plunged his weary body.  
Tathagata - without an equal in the world.  
Surrounded by the monks whose head he was.  
The Teacher and Lord, Preserver of Dhamma,  
To the Mango Grove the great Sage went,  
And to Cundaka the monk he said:  
‘On a fourfold robe I’ll lie down.’  
And thus adjured by the great Adept,  
Cundaka placed the fourfold robe.  
The Teacher laid his weary limbs to rest  
While Cundaka kept watch beside him.

4.42. Then the Lord said to the Venerable Ananda: ‘It might happen, Ananda, that Cunda the smith should feel remorse, thinking: “It is your fault, friend Cunda, it is by your misdeed that the Tathagata gained final, Nibbana after taking his last meal from you!” But Cunda’s remorse should be expelled in this way: “That is your merit, Cunda, that is your good deed, that the Tathagata gained final Nibbana after taking his last meal from you! For, friend Cunda, I have heard and understood from the Lord’s own lips that these two alms-givings are of very great fruit, of very great result, more fruitful and advantageous than any other. Which two? The one is the alms-giving after eating which the Tathagata attains supreme enlightenment, the other that after which he attains the Nibbana-element without remainder at his final passing. These two alms-givings are more fruitful and profitable than all others. Cunda’s deed is conducive to long life, to good looks, to happiness, to fame, to heaven and to lordship.” In this way, Ananda, Cunda’s remorse is to be expelled.’

4.43. Then the Lord, having settled this matter, at that time uttered this verse:

‘By giving, merit grows, by restraint, hatred’s checked.  
He who’s skilled abandons evil things.  
As greed, hate and folly wane, Nibbana’s gained.’

*[End of the fourth recitation-section, concerning Alara]*

5.1. The Lord said: ‘Ananda, let us cross the Hirannavati River and go to the Mallas’ sal-grove in the vicinity of Kusinara.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and the Lord, with a large company of monks, crossed the river and went to the sal-grove. There the Lord said: ‘Ananda, prepare me a bed between these twin sal-trees with my head to the north. I am tired and want to lie down.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda, and did so. Then the Lord lay down on his right side in the lion-posture, placing one foot on the other, mindful and clearly aware.

5.2. And those twin sal-trees burst forth into an abundance of untimely blossoms, which fell upon the Tathagata’s body, sprinkling it and covering it in homage. Divine coral-tree flowers fell from the sky, divine sandal-wood powder fell from the sky, sprinkling and covering the Tathagata’s body in homage. Divine music and song sounded from the sky in homage to the Tathagata.

5.3. And the Lord said: ‘Ananda, these sal-trees have burst forth into an abundance of untimely blossoms ... Divine music and song sound from the sky in homage to the Tathagata. Never before has the Tathagata been so honoured, revered, esteemed, worshipped and adored. And yet, Ananda, whatever monk, nun, male or female lay-follower dwells practising the Dhamma properly, and perfectly fulfils the Dhamma-way, he or she honours the Tathagata, reveres and esteems him and pays him the supreme homage. Therefore, Ananda, “We will dwell practising the Dhamma properly and perfectly fulfil the Dhamma-way” - this must be your watchword.’

5.4. Just then the Venerable Upavana was standing in front of the Lord, fanning him. And the Lord told him to move: ‘Move aside, monk, do not stand in front of me.’ And the Venerable Ananda thought: ‘This Venerable Upavana has for long been the Lord’s attendant, keeping close at hand, at his beck and call. And now in his last hour the Lord tells him to stand aside and not stand in front of him. Why ever does he do that?’

5.5. And he asked the Lord about this. ‘Ananda, the devas from ten world-spheres have gathered to see the Tathagata. For a distance of twelve yojanas around the Mallas’ sal-grove near Kusinara there is not a space you could touch with the point of a hair that is not filled with mighty devas, and they are grumbling: “We have come a long way to see the Tathagata. It is rare for a Tathagata, a fully-enlightened Buddha, to arise in the world, and tonight in the last watch the Tathagata will attain final Nibbana, and this mighty monk is standing in front of the Lord, preventing us from getting a last glimpse of the Tathagata!”’

5.6. ‘But, Lord, what kind of devas can the Lord perceive?’ Ananda, there are sky-devas whose minds are earth-bound, they are weeping and tearing their hair, raising their arms, throwing themselves down and twisting and turning, crying: “All too soon the Blessed Lord is passing away, all too soon the Well-Farer is passing away, all too soon the Eye of the World is disappearing!” And there are earth-devas whose

minds are earth-bound, who do likewise. But those devas who are free from craving endure patiently, saying: “All compounded things are impermanent - what is the use of this?”

5.7. ‘Lord, formerly monks who had spent the Rains in various places used to come to see the Tathagata, and we used to welcome them so that such well-trained monks might see you and pay their respects. But with the Lord’s passing, we shall no-longer have a chance to do this.’

5.8. ‘Ananda, there are four places the sight of which should arouse emotion in the faithful. Which are they? “Here the Tathagata was born” is the first. “Here the Tathagata attained supreme enlightenment” is the second. “Here the Tathagata set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma” is the third. “Here the Tathagata attained the Nibbana-element without remainder” is the fourth. And, Ananda, the faithful monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers will visit those places. And any who die while making the pilgrimage to these shrines with a devout heart will, at the breaking-up of the body after death, be reborn in a heavenly world.

5.9. ‘Lord, how should we act towards women?’ ‘Do not see them, Ananda.’ ‘But if we see them, how should we behave, Lord?’ ‘Do not speak to them, Ananda.’ ‘But if they speak to us, Lord, how should we behave?’ ‘Practise mindfulness, Ananda.’

5.10. ‘Lord, what shall we do with the Tathagata’s remains?’ ‘Do not worry yourselves about the funeral arrangements, Ananda. You should strive for the highest goal, devote yourselves to the highest goal, and dwell with your minds tirelessly, zealously devoted to the highest goal. There are wise Khattiyas, Brahmins and householders who are devoted to the Tathagata: they will take care of the funeral.’

5.11. ‘But, Lord, what are we to do with the Tathagata’s remains?’ ‘Ananda, they should be dealt with like the remains of a wheel-turning monarch.’ ‘And how is that, Lord?’ ‘Ananda, the remains of a wheel-turning monarch are wrapped in a new linen-cloth. This they wrap in teased cotton wool, and this in a new cloth. Having done this five hundred times each, they enclose the king’s body in an oil-vat of iron, which is covered with another iron pot. Then having made a funeral-pyre of all manner of perfumes they cremate the king’s body, and they raise a stupa at a crossroads. That, Ananda, is what they do with the remains of a wheel-turning monarch, and they should deal with the Tathagata’s body in the same way. A stupa should be erected at the crossroads for the Tathagata. And whoever lays wreaths or puts sweet perfumes and colours there with a devout heart, will reap benefit and happiness for a long time.

5.12. ‘Ananda, there are four persons worthy of a stupa. Who are they? A Tathagata, Arahant, fully-enlightened Buddha is one, a Pacceka Buddha is one, a disciple of the Tathagata is one, and a wheel-turning monarch is one. And why is each of these worthy of a stupa? Because, Ananda, at the thought: “This is the stupa of a Tathagata, of a Pacceka Buddha, of a disciple of the Tathagata, of a wheel-turning monarch”, people’s hearts are made peaceful, and then, at the breaking-up of the body after death they go to a good destiny and rearise in a heavenly world. That is the reason, and those are the four who are worthy of a stupa.’

5.13. And the Venerable Ananda went into his lodging and stood lamenting, leaning on the door-post: ‘Alas, I am still a learner with much to do! And the Teacher is passing away, who was so compassionate to me!’

Then the Lord enquired of the monks where Ananda was, and they told him. So he said to a certain monk: ‘Go, monk, and say to Ananda from me: “Friend Ananda, the Teacher summons you.”’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said the monk, and did so. ‘Very good, friend’, Ananda replied to that monk, and he went to the Lord, saluted him and sat down to one side.

5.14. And the Lord said: ‘Enough, Ananda, do not weep and wail! Have I not already told you that all things that are pleasant and delightful are changeable, subject to separation and becoming other? So how could it be, Ananda - since whatever is born, become, compounded is subject to decay - how could it be that it should not pass away? For a long time, Ananda, you have been in the Tathagata’s presence, showing loving-kindness in act of body, speech and mind, beneficially, blessedly, whole-heartedly and

unstintingly. You have achieved much merit, Ananda. Make the effort, and in a short time you will be free of the corruptions.

5.15. Then the Lord addressed the monks: ‘Monks, all those who were Arahant fully-enlightened Buddhas in the past have had just such a chief attendant as Ananda, and so too will those Blessed Lords who come in the future. Monks, Ananda is wise. He knows when it is the right time for monks to come to see the Tathagata, when it is the right time for nuns, for male lay-followers, for female lay-followers, for kings, for royal ministers, for leaders of other schools, and for their pupils.

5.16. ‘Ananda has four remarkable and wonderful qualities. What are they? If a company of monks comes to see Ananda, they are pleased at the sight of him, and when Ananda talks Dhamma to them they are pleased, and when he is silent they are disappointed. And so it is, too, with nuns, with male and female lay-followers. And these four qualities apply to a wheel-turning monarch: if he is visited by a company Of Khattiyas, of Brahmins, of householders, or of ascetics, they are pleased at the sight of him and when he talks to them, and when he is silent they are disappointed. And so too it is with Ananda.’

5.17. After this the Venerable Ananda said: ‘Lord, may the Blessed Lord not pass away in this miserable little town of wattle-and-daub, right in the jungle in the back of beyond! Lord, there are other great cities such as Campa, Rajagaha, Savatthi, Saketa, Kosambi or Varanasi. In those places there are wealthy Khattiyas, Brahmins and householders who are devoted to the Tathagata, and they will provide for the Tathagata’s funeral in proper style.’

‘Ananda don’t call it a miserable little town of wattle-and-daub, right in the jungle in the back of beyond!

5.18. ‘Once upon a time, Ananda, King Mahasudassana was a wheel-turning monarch, a rightful and righteous king, who had conquered the land in four directions and ensured the security of his realm, and who possessed the seven treasures. And, Ananda, this King Mahasudassana had this very Kusinara, under the name of Kusavati, for his capital. And it was twelve yojanas long from east to west, and seven yojanas wide from north to south. Kusavati was rich, prosperous and well-populated, crowded with people and well-stocked with food. Just as the deva-city of Alakamanda is rich, prosperous and well-populated, crowded with yakkhas and well-stocked with food, so was the royal city of Kusavati. And the city of Kusavati was never free of ten sounds by day or night: the sound of elephants, horses, carriages, kettle-drums, side-drums, lutes, singing, cymbals and gongs, with cries of “Eat, drink and be merry!” as tenth.

5.19. ‘And now, Ananda, go to Kusinara and announce to the Mallas of Kusinara: “Tonight, Vasettas in the last watch, the Tathagata will attain final Nibbana. Approach him, Vasetthas, approach him, lest later you should regret it, saying: ‘The Tathagata passed away in our parish, and we did not take the opportunity to see him for the last time!’”’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Ananda and, taking robe and bowl, he went with a companion to Kusinara.

5.20. Just then the Mallas of Kusinara were assembled in their meeting-hall on some business. And Ananda came to them and delivered the Lord’s words.

5.21. And when they heard Ananda’s words, the Mallas, with their sons, daughters-in-law and wives were struck with anguish and sorrow, their minds were overcome with grief so that they were all weeping and tearing their hair ... Then they all went to the sal-grove where the Venerable Ananda was.

5.22. And Ananda thought: ‘If I allow the Mallas of Kusinara to salute the Lord individually, the night will have passed before they have all paid homage. I had better let them pay homage family by family, saying: “Lord, the Malla so-and-so with his children, his wife, his servants and his friends pays homage at the Lord’s feet.”’ And so he presented them in that way, and thus allowed all the Mallas of Kusinara to pay homage to the Lord in the first watch.

5.23. And at that time a wanderer called Subhadda was in Kusinara, and he heard that the ascetic Gotama was to attain final Nibbana in the final watch of that night. He thought: ‘I have heard from venerable wanderers, advanced in years, teachers of teachers, that a Tathagata, a fully-enlightened.

Buddha, only rarely arises in the world. And tonight in the last watch the ascetic Gotama will attain final Nibbana. Now a doubt has arisen in my mind, and I feel sure that the ascetic Gotama can teach me a doctrine to dispel that doubt.'

5.24. So Subhadda went to the Mallas' sal-grove, to where the Venerable Ananda was, and told him what he had thought: 'Reverend Ananda, may I be permitted to see the ascetic Gotama?' But Ananda replied: 'Enough, friend Subhadda, do not disturb the Tathagata, the Lord is weary.' And Subhadda made his request a second and a third time, but still Ananda refused it.

5.25. But the Lord overheard this conversation between Ananda and Subhadda, and he called to Ananda: 'Enough, Ananda, do not hinder Subhadda, let him see the Tathagata. For whatever Subhadda asks me he will ask in quest of enlightenment and not to annoy me, and what I say in reply to his questions he will quickly understand.' Then Ananda said: 'Go in, friend Subhadda, the Lord gives you leave.'

5.26. Then Subhadda approached the Lord, exchanged courtesies with him, and sat down to one side, saying: 'Venerable Gotama, all those ascetics and Brahmins who have orders and followings, who are teachers, well-known and famous as founders of schools, and popularly regarded as saints, like Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambali, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sanjaya Belatthaputta and the Nigantha Nataputta - have they all realised the truth as they all make out, or have none of them realised it, or have some realised it and some not?' 'Enough, Subhadda, never mind whether all, or none, or some of them have realised the truth. I will teach you Dhamma, Subhadda. Listen, pay close attention, and I will speak.' 'Yes, Lord', said Subhadda, and the Lord said:

5.27. 'In whatever Dhamma and discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, no ascetic is found of the first, the second, the third or the fourth grade. But such ascetics can be found, of the first, second, third and fourth grade in a Dhamma and discipline where the Noble Eightfold Path is found. Now, Subhadda, in this Dhamma and discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is found, and in it are to be found ascetics of the first, second, third and fourth grade. Those other schools are devoid of [true] ascetics; but if in this one the monks were to live the life to perfection, the world would not lack for Arahants.'

Twenty-nine years of age I was  
When I went forth to seek the Good.  
Now over fifty years have passed  
Since the day that I went forth  
To roam the realm. of wisdom's law  
Outside of which no ascetic is  
[First, second, third or fourth degree].  
Other schools of such are bare,  
But if here monks live perfectly,  
The world won't lack for Arahants.'

5.28. At this the wanderer Subhadda said: 'Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if someone were to set up what had been knocked down, or to point out the way to one who had got lost, or to bring an oil lamp into a dark place, so that those with eyes could see what was there, just so the Blessed Lord has expounded the Dhamma in various ways. And I, Lord, go for refuge to the Blessed Lord, the Dhamma and the Sangha. May I receive the going-forth in the Lord's presence! May I receive ordination!'

5.29. 'Subhadda, whoever, coming from another school, seeks the going-forth and ordination in this Dhamma and discipline, must wait four months on probation. And at the end of four months, those monks who are established in mind... may let him go forth and give him ordination to the status of a monk. However, there can be a distinction of persons.'

'Lord, if those coming from other schools must wait four months on probation,...I will wait four years, and then let them give me the going-forth and the ordination!' But the Lord said to Ananda: 'Let Subhadda go forth!' 'Very good, Lord', said Ananda.

5.30. And Subhadda said to the Venerable Ananda: ‘Friend Ananda, it is a great gain for you all, it is very profitable for you, that you have obtained the consecration of discipleship in the Teacher’s presence.’

Then Subhadda received the going-forth in the Lord’s presence, and the ordination. And from the moment of his ordination the Venerable Subhadda, alone, secluded, unwearying, zealous and resolute, in a short time attained to that for which young men of good family go forth from the household life into homelessness, that unexcelled culmination of the holy life, having realised it here and now by his own insight, and dwelt therein: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further here.’ And the Venerable Subhadda became another of the Arahants. He was the last personal disciple of the Lord.

*[End of the fifth recitation-section (Hirannavati)]*

6.1. And the Lord said to Ananda: ‘Ananda, it may be that you will think: “The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher!” It should not be seen like this, Ananda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher.

6.2. ‘And whereas the monks are in the habit of addressing one another as “friend”, this custom is to be abrogated after my passing. Senior monks shall address more junior monks by their name, their clan or as “friend”, whereas more junior monks are to address their seniors either as “Lord”, or as “Venerable Sir”.

6.3. ‘If they wish, the order may abolish the minor rules after my passing.

6.4. ‘After my passing, the monk Channa is to receive the Brahma-penalty.’ ‘But, Lord, what is the Brahma-penalty?’ ‘Whatever the monk Channa wants or says, he is not to be spoken to, admonished or instructed by the monks.’

6.5. Then the Lord addressed the monks, saying: ‘It may be, monks, that some monk has doubts or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, or about the path or the practice. Ask, monks! Do not afterwards feel remorse, thinking: “The Teacher was there before us, and we failed to ask the Lord face to face!”’ At these words the monks were silent. The Lord repeated his words a second and a third time, and still the monks were silent. Then the Lord said: ‘Perhaps, monks, you do not ask out of respect for the Teacher. Then, monks, let one friend tell it to another.’ But still they were silent.

6.6. And the Venerable Ananda said: ‘It is wonderful, Lord, it is marvellous! I clearly perceive that in this assembly there is not one monk who has doubts or uncertainty...’ ‘You, Ananda, speak from faith. But the Tathagata knows that in this assembly there is not one monk who has doubts or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Sangha or about the path or the practice. Ananda, the least one of these five hundred monks is a Stream-Winner, incapable of falling into states of woe, certain of Nibbana.’

6.7. Then the Lord said to the monks: ‘Now, monks, I declare to you: all conditioned things are of a nature to decay - strive on untiringly.’ These were the Tathagata’s last words.

6.8. Then the Lord entered the first jhana. And leaving that he entered the second, the third, the fourth jhana. Then leaving the fourth jhana he entered the Sphere of Infinite Space, then the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, then the Sphere of Nothingness, then the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception, and leaving that he attained the Cessation of Feeling and Perception.

Then the Venerable Ananda said to the Venerable Anuruddha: ‘Venerable Anuruddha, the Lord has passed away.’ ‘No, friend Ananda, the Lord has not passed away, he has attained the Cessation of Feeling and Perception.’

6.9. Then the Lord, leaving the attainment of the Cessation of Feeling and Perception, entered the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception, from that he entered the Sphere of No-Thingness, the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, the Sphere of Infinite Space. From the Sphere of Infinite Space he entered the fourth jhana, from there the third, the second and the first jhana. Leaving the first jhana, he entered the second, the third, the fourth jhana. And, leaving the fourth jhana, the Lord finally passed away.

6.10. And at the Blessed Lord's final passing there was a great earthquake, terrible and hair-raising, accompanied by thunder. And Brahma Sahampati uttered this verse:

‘All beings in the world, all bodies must break up:  
Even the Teacher, peerless in the human world,  
The mighty Lord and perfect Buddha's passed away.’

And Sakka, ruler of the devas, uttered this verse:

‘Impermanent are compounded things, prone to rise and fall,  
Having risen, they're destroyed, their passing truest bliss.’

And the Venerable Anuruddha uttered this verse:

‘No breathing in and out - just with steadfast heart  
The Sage who's free from lust has passed away to peace.  
With mind unshaken he endured all pains:  
By Nibbana the Illumined's mind is freed.’

And the Venerable Ananda uttered this verse:

‘Terrible was the quaking, men's hair stood on end,  
When the all-accomplished Buddha passed away.’

And those monks who had not yet overcome their passions wept and tore their hair, raising their arms, throwing themselves down and twisting and turning, crying: ‘All too soon the Blessed Lord has passed away, all too soon the Well-Farer has passed away, all too soon the Eye of the World has disappeared!’ But those monks who were free from craving endured mindfully and clearly aware, saying: ‘All compounded things are impermanent - what is the use of this?’

6.11. Then the Venerable Anuruddha said: ‘Friends, enough of your weeping and wailing! Has not the Lord already told you that all things that are pleasant and delightful are changeable, subject to separation and to becoming other? So why all this, friends? Whatever is born, become, compounded is subject to decay, it cannot be that it does not decay. The devas, friends, are grumbling.’

‘Venerable Anuruddha, what kind of devas are you aware of?’ ‘Friend Ananda, there are sky-devas whose minds are earth-bound they are weeping and tearing their hair ... And there are earth-devas whose minds are earth-bound, they do likewise. But those devas who are free from craving endure patiently, saying: “All compounded things are impermanent. What is the use of this?”’

6.12. Then the Venerable Anuruddha and the Venerable Ananda spent the rest of the night in conversation on Dhamma. And the Venerable Anuruddha said: ‘Now go, friend Ananda, to Kusinara and announce to the Mallas: “Vasetthas, the Lord has passed away. Now is the time to do as you think fit.”’ ‘Yes, Lord’, said Ananda, and having dressed in the morning and taken his robe and bowl, he went with a companion to Kusinara. At that time the Mallas of Kusinara were assembled in their meeting-hall on some business. And the Venerable Ananda came to them and delivered the Venerable Anuruddha's message. And when they heard the Venerable Ananda's words, the Mallas ... were struck with anguish and sorrow, their minds were overcome with grief so that they were all tearing their hair...

6.13. Then the Mallas ordered their men to bring perfume and wreaths, and gather all the musicians together. And with the perfumes and wreaths, and all the musicians, and with five hundred sets of garments they went to the sal-grove where the Lord's body was lying. And there they honoured, paid respects, worshipped and adored the Lord's body with dance and song and music, with garlands and scents, making awnings and circular tents in order to spend the day there. And they thought: ‘It is too late to cremate the Lord's body today. We shall do so tomorrow.’ And so, paying homage in the same way, they waited for a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth day.

6.14. And on the seventh day the Mallas of Kusinara thought: 'We have paid sufficient honour with song and dance... to the Lord's body, now we shall burn his body after carrying him out by the south gate.' Then eight Malla chiefs, having washed their heads and put on new clothes, declared: 'Now we will lift up the Lord's body', but found they were unable to do so. So they went to the Venerable Anuruddha and told him what had happened: 'Why can't we lift up the Lord's body?' 'Vasetthas, your intention is one thing, but the intention of the devas is another.'

6.15. 'Lord, what is the intention of the devas?' Vasetthas, your intention is, having paid homage to the Lord's body with dance and song..., to burn his body after carrying him out by the south gate. But the devas' intention is, having paid homage to the Lord's body with heavenly dance and song..., to carry him to the north of the city, bring him in through the north gate and bear him through the middle of the city and out through the eastern gate to the Mallas' shrine of Makuta-Bandhana, and there to burn the body.' 'Lord, if that is the devas' intention, so be it!'

6.16. At that time even the sewers and rubbish-heaps of Kusindra were covered knee-high with coral-tree flowers. And the devas as well as the Mallas of Kusindra honoured the Lord's body with divine and human dancing, song...; and they carried the body to the north of the city, brought it in through the north gate, through the middle of the city and out through the eastern gate to the Mallas' shrine of Makuta-Bandhana, where they set the body down.

6.17. Then they asked the Venerable Ananda: 'Lord, how should we deal with the body of the Tathagata?' 'Vasetthas, you should deal with the Tathagata's body as you would that of a wheel-turning monarch.' 'And how do they deal with that, Lord?'

'Vasetthas, the remains are wrapped in a new linen-cloth. This they wrap in teased cotton-wool... ; then having made a funeral-pyre of all manner of perfumes, they cremate the king's body and they raise a stupa at a cross roads. . .'

6.18. Then the Mallas ordered their men to bring their teased cotton-wool. And they dealt with the Tathagata's body accordingly...

6.19. Now just then the Venerable Kassapa the Great... was travelling along the main road from Pava to Kusinara with a large company of about five hundred monks. And leaving the road, the Venerable Kassapa the Great sat down under a tree. And a certain Ajivika chanced to be coming along the main road towards Pava, and he had picked a coral-tree flower in Kusinara. The Venerable Kassapa saw him coming from afar, and said to him: 'Friend, do you know our Teacher?' 'Yes, friend, I do. The ascetic Gotama passed away a week ago. I picked this coral-tree flower there.' And those monks who had not yet overcome their passions wept and tore their hair... But those monks who were free from craving endured mindfully and clearly aware, saying: 'All compounded things are impermanent - what is the use of this?'

6.20. And sitting in the group was one Subhadda, who had gone forth late in life, and he said to those monks: 'Enough, friends, do not weep and wail! We are well rid of the Great Ascetic. We were always bothered by his saying: "It is fitting for you to do this, it is not fitting for you to do that!" Now we can do what we like, and not do what we don't like!'

But the Venerable Kassapa the Great said to the monks: 'Friends, enough of your weeping and wailing! Has not the Lord already told you that all things that are pleasant and delightful are changeable, subject to separation and becoming other? So why all this, friends? Whatever is born, become, compounded is subject to decay, it cannot be that it does not decay.'

6.21. Meanwhile four Malla chiefs, having washed their heads and put on new clothes, said: 'We will light the Lord's funeral pyre', but they were unable to do so. They went to the Venerable Anuruddha and asked him why this was. 'Vasetthas, your intention is one thing, but that of the devas is another.' 'Well, Lord, what is the intention of the devas?' 'Vasetthas, the devas' intention is this: "The Venerable Kassapa the Great is coming along the main road from Pava to Kusinara with a large company of five hundred monks. The Lord's funeral pyre will not be lit until the Venerable Kassapa the Great has paid homage with his head to the Lord's feet.'" 'Lord, if that is the devas' intention, so be it!'

6.22. Then the Venerable Kassapa the Great went to the Mallas' shrine at Makuta-Bandhana to the Lord's funeral pyre and, covering one shoulder with his robe, joined his hands in salutation, circumambulated the pyre three times and, uncovering the Lord's feet, paid homage with his head to them, and the five hundred monks did likewise. And when this was done, the Lord's funeral pyre ignited of itself.

6.23. And when the Lord's body was burnt, what had been skin, under-skin, flesh, sinew, or joint-fluid, all that vanished and not even ashes or dust remained, only the bones remained. Just as when butter or oil is burnt, no ashes or dust remain, so it was with the Lord's body..., only the bones were left. And all the five hundred garments, even the innermost and the outermost cloth, were burnt up. And when the Lord's body was burnt up, a shower of water from the sky, and another which burst forth from the sal-trees extinguished the funeral pyre. And the Mallas of Kusinara poured perfumed water over it for the same purpose. Then the Mallas honoured the relics for a week in their assembly hall, having made a lattice-work of spears and an encircling wall of bows, with dancing, singing, garlands and music.

6.24. And King Ajatasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha heard that the Lord had passed away at Kusinara. And he sent a message to the Mallas of Kusinara: 'The Lord was a Khattiya and I am a Khattiya. I am worthy to receive a share of the Lord's remains. I will make a great stupa for them.' The Licchavis of Vesali heard, and they sent a message: 'The Lord was a Khattiya and we are Khattiyas. We are worthy to receive a share of the Lord's remains, and we will make a great stupa for them.' The Sakyas of Kapilavatthu heard, and they sent a message: 'The Lord was the chief of our clan. We are worthy to receive a share of the Lord's remains, and we will make a great stupa for them.' The Bulayas of Allakappa and the Koliyas of Ramagama replied similarly. The Brahmin of Vethadipa heard, and he sent a message: 'The Lord was a Khattiya, I am a Brahmin...', and the Mallas of Pava sent a message: 'The Lord was a Khattiya, we are Khattiyas. We are worthy to receive a share of the Lord's remains, and we will make a great stupa for them.'

6.25. On hearing all this, the Mallas of Kusinara addressed the crowd, saying: 'The Lord passed away in our parish. We will not give away any share of the Lord's remains.' At this the Brahmin Dona addressed the crowd in this verse:

'Listen, lords, to my proposal.  
Forbearance is the Buddha's teaching.  
It is not right that strife should come  
From sharing out the best of men's remains.  
Let's all be joined in harmony and peace,  
In friendship sharing out portions eight:  
Let stupa far and wide be put up,  
That all may see - and gain in faith!'

'Well then, Brahmin, you divide up the remains of the Lord in the best and fairest way!' 'Very good, friends', said Dona. And he made a good and fair division into eight portions, and then said to the assembly: 'Gentlemen, please give me the urn, and I will erect a great stupa for it.' So they gave Dona the urn.

6.26. Now the Moriyas of Pippalavana heard of the Lord's passing, and they sent a message: 'The Lord was a Khattiya and we are Khattiyas. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Lord's remains, and we will make a great stupa for them.'

'There is not a portion of the Lord's remains left, they have all been divided up. So you must take the embers.' And so they took the embers.

6.27. Then King Ajatasattu of Magadha built a great stupa for the Lord's relics at Rajagaha. The Licchavis of Vesali built one at Vesali, the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu built one at Kapilavatthu, the Bulayas of Allakappa built one at Allakappa, the Koliyas of Ramagama built one at Ramagama, the Brahmin of Vethadipa built one at Vethadipa, the Mallas of Pava built one at Pava, the Mallas of Kusinara built a

great stupa for the Lord's relics at Kusinara, the Brahmin Dona built a great stupa for the urn, and the Moriyas of Pippalavana built a great stupa for the embers at Pippalavana. Thus, eight stupas were built for the relics, a ninth for the urn, and a tenth for the embers. That is how it was in the old days.

6.28. Eight portions of relics there were of him,  
The All-Seeing One. Of these, seven remained  
In Jambudipa with honour. The eighth  
In Ramagama's kept by naga kings.  
One tooth the Thirty Gods have kept,  
Kalinga's kings have one, the nagas too.  
They shed their glory o'er the fruitful earth.  
Thus the Seer's honoured by the honoured.  
Gods and nagas, kings, the noblest men  
Clasp their hands in homage, for hard it is  
To find another such for countless aeons.

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