

**An Anthology of 50 Discourses**

**From the Samyutta Nikaya**

**Translation from Pali to English by Bhikkhu Sujato**

**Edited by Rev. Dhammabodhi**

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## Preface

Three significant breakthroughs have been made in the study of early Buddhism over roughly the past 25 years. The work of Indologist Johannes Bronkhorst has revealed that early Buddhism emerged out of the city-state culture of Greater Magadha (500BC-322BC) in northeast India during the second urbanization of India.<sup>1</sup> According to Bronkhorst Greater Magadha was geographically and culturally distinct from the network of villages that made up the Vedic cultural zone of northwest India. The implication of this finding is that *Buddhism did not emerge out of Hinduism* as has been previously and widely thought. Therefore, early Buddhism should be seen on its own terms instead of as an offshoot of early Vedic Culture. It was not until the Mauryan Empire (322BC-184BC) when the city-state culture of Greater Magadha spread to the west that Buddhist monastics, along with Jain teachers and other wandering ascetics, mixed with Brahmin priests.

Thai Forest monk Bhikkhu Sujato's work has revealed that the *Samyutta Nikaya* (Linked Discourses) from the Pali Canon has significant overlap in content with the *Samyukta Agama* (Linked Discourses) from the Sanskrit canon of the Sarvastivada school (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD) that has been translated into Classical Chinese. Since no other collections of teachings in the extant early canons have nearly the same amount of overlap, Sujato posits that the *Samyutta Nikaya* and the *Samyukta Agama* point back to a common earlier source while the other collections in the extant early canons are later regional developments.<sup>2</sup> Sujato's work has also shown that the teachings on the 16 exercises of mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*) from the *Samyutta Nikaya* represent what the Buddha taught for meditation practice whereas the Discourse on Mindfulness Meditation (*Satipatthana Sutta* MN.10) from the *Majjhima Nikaya* is a later discourse.<sup>3</sup> This overturns the commonly held view of convert Buddhists in the U.S. that the *Satipatthana Sutta* contains the Buddha's central teachings on meditation.

Thai Forest monk Thanissaro Bhikkhu's work has also distinguished between the early Buddhist teachings on meditation and liberation from rebirth on the one hand, and the later Theravada Buddhist teachings on meditation and insight into the nature of reality on the other.<sup>4</sup> His work demonstrates that early Buddhist meditation is focused on a) mindfulness of breathing, the whole body, and the heart-mind, b) cultivating the four meditative absorptions based on mindfulness of breathing and the whole body, c) and cultivating discernment into the process of becoming/rebirth in order to attain favorable rebirth and liberation from rebirth.<sup>5</sup> Thanissaro's work shows that the central theory behind early Buddhist meditation is the teachings on becoming/rebirth via the 12 links of dependent origination.<sup>6</sup> He argues that it is later Theravada Buddhism that a) distinguished between concentration practice (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassana*) practice, b) sees the meditative absorptions as states in which one is not aware of body and mind, and c) sees the teachings that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, suffering, and not self as the central theory behind Buddhist meditation.

Based on my own research into the *Samyutta Nikaya* which builds on the above-mentioned three breakthroughs, I have arrived at the following three hypotheses. First, the *Samyutta Nikaya* contains within it the core interconnected system of oral yogic teachings taught by the Buddha and members of his cotemporaneous fourfold community of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. In

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India, Greater Magadha* (Brill, 2007).; Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism* (Brill, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Ajhan Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness, How Insight Worsted Tranquility in the Satipatthana Sutta*, Second (New South Wales, Australia: Santipada, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Sujato.

<sup>4</sup> Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *First Things First: Essays on the Buddhist Path* (Metta Forest Monastery: Creative Commons, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Bhikkhu Thanissaro, *With Each & Every Breath: A Guide to Meditation* (Valley Center: Metta Forest Monastery, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Bhikkhu Thanissaro, *The Paradox of Becoming* (Valley Center, CA: Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2008).

addition, it also contains later oral teachings added by the fourfold community starting from the time of the Buddha's *parinibbana* to some point during the westward expansion of the Mauryan Empire. Second, four of the the five main collections of discourses, known as "*vaggasamyuttas*," that make up the *Samyutta Nikaya* represent the main structure and themes of the *Samyutta Nikaya*. Those themes are the 12 links of dependent origination in the *Nidānavaggasamyutta*, the five aggregates in the *Khandavaggasamyutta*, the six sense fields in the *Salāyatanavaggasamyutta*, and the teachings on the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, and other teachings on spiritual practice in the *Mahavaggasamyutta* (Great Collection of Linked Discourses). The other remaining *vaggasamyutta* is a collection of discourses with poetic verses called the *Sagāthāvaggasamyutta*. Third, the *vaggasamyuttas* are made up of sub-collections of discourses known as *samyuttas*. For the most part the first *samyutta* of each *vaggasamyutta* contains the central teachings for that particular theme. In other words, one can find the main interpretation of each theme within the discourses (*suttas*) of the first *samyutta* of each *vaggasamyutta*. One notable exception is the subcollection of teachings on sensations (*vedanasamyutta*) which is the second *samyutta* of the *Salāyatanavagga*. I see the topic of sensation (*vedana*) as a major subtheme to the theme of the sense fields. The *vedanasamyutta* contains the central teachings on sensations in the *Samyutta Nikaya*. Another exception is the *Mahavaggasamyutta* which contains multiple *samyuttas* with central teachings on spiritual practice. A third exception is the collection of discourses with poetic verses which lacks a central theme and therefore lacks a central *samyutta*.

### Some notes on translation

The following anthology of 50 discourses from the *Samyutta Nikaya* is built around my three hypotheses about the *Samyutta Nikaya*. My intention was to try and reveal the basic structure of interconnected system oral yogic teachings that the Buddha developed, the main themes of his teachings, and a sense of the early Buddhist world within its context of Greater Magadha and the Mauryan Empire's westward expansion over north India. Almost all of what follows is Sujato's translations for the names of the *vaggasamyuttas*, the *samyuttas* and the *suttas*, as well as the content of the *suttas* themselves. I have made a few adjustments based on the intent of this anthology and a slight difference in interpretation for three key terms. Sujato has used a more descriptive translation for the names of the *vaggasamyuttas*. For example, he translates the *Khandavaggasamyutta* as "The Group of Linked Discourses Beginning with the Aggregates." *Kbanda* means "aggregates," *vagga* means "group," and *samyutta* means "linked discourses." The fact that the first *samyutta* of the *Khandavaggasamyutta* is the *kbandasamyutta* leads him to add the description "beginning with the aggregates." Since in this anthology I will mainly be working with the first *samyutta* of each *vaggasamyutta* and not all of the *samyuttas* in each *vaggasamyutta*, I use a more literal translation for the names of the *vaggasamyuttas*. Thus, I translate *Khandavaggasamyuuta* simply as "The Group of Linked Discourses on the Aggregates" and leave out "beginning with." With regard to the key terms, I translate "*nidana*" as "link of dependent origination" instead of "causation" in order to emphasize that the teachings in the *nidanāsamyutta* of the *Nidānavaggasamyutta* are on the 12 links of dependent origination. I translate "*vedana*" as "sensation" instead of "feeling" because "feeling" can be confused with "emotion" which is in fact a "mental formation" (*sankhara*) and not a sensation (*vedana*). Finally, I translate "*Mahavaggasamyutta*" as "The Great Group of Linked Discourses" instead of Sujato's "Group of Linked Discourses on the Path." Sujato uses the word "path" based on the name of the parallel collection in the *Samyukta Agama* called the "*Maggavagga*." "*Magga*" means "path." He posits that this could have been the original name of the collection. I am open to that being true but for now I stick with the literal translation of *Mahavaggasamyutta* as being "Great" or "Big" for "*Maha*" and "Group of Linked Discourses" for "*vaggasamyutta*."

Rev. Dhammabodhi, Peñasco New Mexico, June12, 2023

## Sagāthāvaggasamyutta

### The Group of Linked Discourses with Verses

#### SN 1.48 Jetavanasutta (Jeta's Grove)

“This is indeed that Jeta's Grove,  
frequented by the Saṅgha of seers,  
where the King of Dhamma stayed:  
it brings me joy!

Deeds, knowledge, and principle;  
ethical conduct, an excellent livelihood;  
by these are mortals purified,  
not by clan or wealth.

That's why an astute person,  
seeing what's good for themselves,  
would examine the teaching properly,  
and thus be purified in it.

Sāriputta has true wisdom,  
ethics, and also peace.  
Any mendicant who has crossed over  
can at best equal him.”



## SN 5.2 Somāsutta (With Somā)

At Sāvattḥī.

Then the nun Somā robed up in the morning and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. She wandered for alms in Sāvattḥī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went to the Dark Forest, plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a tree for the day's meditation.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Somā feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:

“That state's very challenging;  
it's for the sages to attain.  
It's not possible for a woman,  
with her two-fingered wisdom.”

Then the nun Somā thought, “Who's speaking this verse, a human or a non-human?”

Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from immersion!”

Then Somā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:

“What difference does womanhood make  
when the mind is serene,  
and knowledge is present  
as you rightly discern the Dhamma.

Surely someone who might think:  
'I am woman', or 'I am man',  
or 'I am' anything at all,  
is fit for Māra to address.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Somā knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

## SN 8.1 Nikkhantasutta (Renounced)

So I have heard. At one time Venerable Vaṅḡsa was staying near Ālavī, at the Aggālava Tree-shrine, together with his mentor, Venerable Nigrodhakappa.

Now at that time Vaṅḡsa was junior, recently gone forth. He had been left behind to look after the dwelling.

Then several women dressed in all their finery went to the monastery at Aggālava in order to inspect the dwelling. When Vaṅḡsa saw them he became dissatisfied, with lust infecting his mind.

Then he thought, “It’s my loss, my misfortune, that I’ve become dissatisfied, with lust infecting my mind. How is it possible for someone else to dispel my discontent and give rise to satisfaction? Why don’t I do it myself?”

Then, on the occasion of dispelling his own discontent and giving rise to satisfaction, he recited these verses:

“Now that I’ve renounced  
the home life for homelessness  
I’m overrun  
by the rude thoughts of the Dark One.

Even if a thousand mighty princes and great archers,  
well trained, with strong bows,  
were to completely surround me;  
I would never flee.

And even if women come,  
many more than that,  
they won’t scare me,  
for I stand firm in the teaching.

I heard this with my own ears  
from the Buddha, kinsman of the Sun,  
about the path going to extinguishment;  
that’s what delights my mind.

Wicked One, if you come near me  
as I meditate like this,  
I’ll make sure that you, Death,  
won’t even see the path I take.”

### SN 10.9 Pathamasukkāsutta (With the Nun Sukkā (1st))

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

Now, at that time the nun Sukkā was teaching Dhamma, surrounded by a large assembly. Then a native spirit was so devoted to Sukkā that he went from street to street and from square to square, and on that occasion recited these verses:

“What’s up with these people in Rājagaha?  
They sleep like they’ve been drinking mead!  
They don’t attend on Sukkā  
as she’s teaching the deathless state.

But the wise—  
it’s as if they drink it up,  
so irresistible, delicious, and nutritious,  
like travelers enjoying a cool cloud.”

# Nidānavaggasamyutta

## The Group of Linked Discourses on the Links of Dependent Origination

### Nidānasamyutta

#### Linked Discourses on the Links of Dependent Origination

#### SN 12.1 Paṭiccasamuppādasutta (Dependent Origination)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, I will teach you dependent origination. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak."

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"And what is dependent origination? Ignorance is a condition for choices. Choices are a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form are conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. This is called dependent origination.

When ignorance fades away and ceases with nothing left over, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, sensation ceases. When sensation ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

## SN 12:2 Vibhaṅgasutta (Analysis)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, I will teach and analyze for you dependent origination. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“And what is dependent origination? Ignorance is a condition for choices. Choices are a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form are conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

And what is old age and death? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age. The passing away, perishing, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death.

And what is rebirth? The rebirth, inception, conception, reincarnation, manifestation of the aggregates, and acquisition of the sense fields of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called rebirth.

And what is continued existence? There are these three states of existence. Existence in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous form, and the formless realm. This is called continued existence.

And what is grasping? There are these four kinds of grasping. Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self. This is called grasping.

And what is craving? There are these six classes of craving. Craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts. This is called craving.

And what is sensation? There are these six classes of sensation. Sensation born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. This is called sensation.

And what is contact? There are these six classes of contact. Contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. This is called contact.

And what are the six sense fields? The sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These are called the six sense fields.

And what are name and form? Sensation, perception, intention, contact, and attention. This is called name. The four primary elements, and form derived from the four primary elements. This is called form. Such is name and such is form. These are called name and form.

And what is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness. This is called consciousness.

And what are choices? There are three kinds of choices. Choices by way of body, speech, and mind. These are called choices.

And what is ignorance? Not knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called ignorance.

And so, ignorance is a condition for choices.

Choices are a condition for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with nothing left over, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

### **SN 12.11 Āhārasutta (Fuel)**

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. ...

“Mendicants, there are these four fuels. They maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those that are about to be born. What four? Solid food, whether coarse or fine; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. These are the four fuels that maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those that are about to be born.

What is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of these four fuels? Craving. And what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of craving? Sensation. And what is the source of sensation? Contact. And what is the source of contact? The six sense fields. And what is the source of the six sense fields? Name and form. And what is the source of name and form? Consciousness. And what is the source of consciousness? Choices. And what is the source of choices? Ignorance.

And so, ignorance is a condition for choices.

Choices are a condition for consciousness. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with nothing left over, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

## SN 12.13 Samaṇabrāhmaṇasutta (Ascetics and Brahmins)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They don’t understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... sensation ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They don’t understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I don’t deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables don’t realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and don’t live having realized it with their own insight.

There are ascetics and brahmins who do understand old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. They understand rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... sensation ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... They understand choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. I deem them as true ascetics and brahmins. Those venerables realize the goal of life as an ascetic or brahmin, and live having realized it with their own insight.”

## SN 12.38 Cetanāsutta (Intention)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, what you intend or plan, and what you have underlying tendencies for become a support for the continuation of consciousness. When this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When consciousness is established and grows, there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future. When there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

If you don’t intend or plan, but still have underlying tendencies, this becomes a support for the continuation of consciousness. When this support exists, consciousness becomes established. When consciousness is established and grows, there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future. When there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

If you don’t intend or plan or have underlying tendencies, this doesn’t become a support for the continuation of consciousness. With no support, consciousness is not established. When consciousness is not established and doesn’t grow, there’s no rebirth into a new state of existence in the future. When there is no rebirth into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death cease, as do sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”

## SN 12.43 Dukkhasutta (Suffering)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, I will teach you the origin and ending of suffering. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“And what, mendicants, is the origin of suffering? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. This is the origin of suffering.

Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ... Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ... Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. ... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and thoughts. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. This is the origin of suffering.

And what is the ending of suffering? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with nothing left over, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the ending of suffering.

Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. ... Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. ... Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. ... Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. ... Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and thoughts. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a condition for sensation. Sensation is a condition for craving. When that craving fades away and ceases with nothing left over, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. This is the ending of suffering.”



## SN 12.65 Nagarasutta (The City)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: ‘Alas, this world has fallen into trouble. It’s born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn, yet it doesn’t understand how to escape from this suffering, from old age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this suffering, from old age and death?’ Then it occurred to me: ‘When what exists is there old age and death? What is a condition for old age and death?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When rebirth exists there’s old age and death. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death.’

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what exists is there rebirth? ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... sensation ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... What is a condition for name and form?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When consciousness exists there are name and form. Consciousness is a condition for name and form.’ Then it occurred to me: ‘When what exists is there consciousness? What is a condition for consciousness?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form exist there’s consciousness. Name and form are a condition for consciousness.’

Then it occurred to me: This consciousness turns back from name and form, and doesn’t go beyond that. This is the extent to which one may be reborn, grow old, die, pass away, or reappear. That is: name and form are conditions for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form are conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. ‘Origination, origination.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there is no old age and death. When rebirth ceases old age and death cease.’ Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... sensation ... contact ... six sense fields ... name and form? When what ceases do name and form cease?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When consciousness doesn’t exist there is no name and form. When consciousness ceases name and form cease.’

Then it occurred to me: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no consciousness? When what ceases does consciousness cease?’ Then, through rational attention, I comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form don’t exist, there is no consciousness. When name and form cease, consciousness ceases.’

Then it occurred to me: I have discovered the path to awakening. That is: When name and form cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. ... That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. ‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Suppose a person was walking through a forest. They'd see an ancient path, an ancient route traveled by humans in the past. Following it along, they'd see an ancient city, an ancient capital, inhabited by humans in the past. It was lovely, complete with parks, groves, lotus ponds, and embankments. Then that person would inform a king or their minister: 'Please sir, you should know this. While walking through a forest I saw an ancient path, an ancient route traveled by humans in the past. Following it along I saw an ancient city, an ancient capital, inhabited by humans in the past. It was lovely, complete with parks, groves, lotus ponds, and embankments. Sir, you should rebuild that city!' Then that king or their minister would have that city rebuilt. And after some time that city was successful and prosperous and full of people, attained to growth and expansion. In the same way, I saw an ancient path, an ancient route traveled by fully awakened Buddhas in the past.

And what is that ancient path, the ancient road traveled by fully awakened Buddhas in the past? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is that ancient path, the ancient road traveled by fully awakened Buddhas in the past.

Following it along, I directly knew old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation. Following it along, I directly knew rebirth ... continued existence ... grasping ... craving ... sensation ... contact ... the six sense fields ... name and form ... consciousness ... Following it along, I directly knew choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation.

Having directly known this, I told the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. And that's how this spiritual life has become successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans."

# Khandavaggasamyutta

## The Group of Linked Discourses on the Aggregates

### Khandasamyutta

#### Linked Discourses on the Aggregates

##### SN 22.1 Nakulapitusutta (Nakula's Father)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Bhaggas on Crocodile Hill, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood.

Then the householder Nakula's father went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha:

“Sir, I'm an old man, elderly and senior. I'm advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. My body is ailing and I'm constantly unwell. I hardly ever get to see the esteemed mendicants. May the Buddha please advise me and instruct me. It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.”

“That's so true, householder! That's so true, householder! For this body is ailing, trapped in its shell. If anyone dragging around this body claimed to be healthy even for a minute, what is that but foolishness?

So you should train like this: ‘Though my body is ailing, my mind will be healthy.’ That's how you should train.”

And then the householder Nakula's father approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then he went up to Venerable Sāriputta, bowed, and sat down to one side. Sāriputta said to him:

“Householder, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. Did you get to hear a Dhamma talk in the Buddha's presence today?”

“What else, sir, could it possibly be? Just now the Buddha anointed me with the deathless ambrosia of a Dhamma talk.”

“But what kind of ambrosial Dhamma talk has the Buddha anointed you with?”

So Nakula's father told Sāriputta all that had happened, and said, “That's the ambrosial Dhamma talk that the Buddha anointed me with.”

“But didn't you feel the need to ask the Buddha the further question: ‘Sir, how do you define someone ailing in body and ailing in mind, and someone ailing in body and healthy in mind?’”

“Sir, we would travel a long way to learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of Venerable Sāriputta. May Venerable Sāriputta himself please clarify the meaning of this.”

“Well then, householder, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Nakula’s father. Sāriputta said this:

“And how is a person ailing in body and ailing in mind? It’s when an unlearned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the qualities of a noble one. They’ve not seen good persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the qualities of a good person. They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They’re obsessed with the thought: ‘I am form, form is mine!’ But that form of theirs decays and perishes, which gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They regard sensation as self, self as having sensation, sensation in self, or self in sensation. They’re obsessed with the thought: ‘I am sensation, sensation is mine!’ But that sensation of theirs decays and perishes, which gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They regard perception as self, self as having perception, perception in self, or self in perception. They’re obsessed with the thought: ‘I am perception, perception is mine!’ But that perception of theirs decays and perishes, which gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They regard choices as self, self as having choices, choices in self, or self in choices. They’re obsessed with the thought: ‘I am choices, choices are mine!’ But those choices of theirs decay and perish, which gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They regard consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. They’re obsessed with the thought: ‘I am consciousness, consciousness is mine!’ But that consciousness of theirs decays and perishes, which gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

That’s how a person is ailing in body and ailing in mind.

And how is a person ailing in body and healthy in mind? It’s when a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They’ve seen good persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the good persons. They don’t regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They’re not obsessed with the thought: ‘I am form, form is mine!’ So when that form of theirs decays and perishes, it doesn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They don’t regard sensation as self, self as having sensation, sensation in self, or self in sensation. They’re not obsessed with the thought: ‘I am sensation, sensation is mine!’ So when that sensation of theirs decays and perishes, it doesn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They don’t regard perception as self, self as having perception, perception in self, or self in perception. They’re not obsessed with the thought: ‘I am perception, perception is mine!’ So when that perception of theirs decays and perishes, it doesn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They don't regard choices as self, self as having choices, choices in self, or self in choices. They're not obsessed with the thought: 'I am choices, choices are mine!' So when those choices of theirs decay and perish, it doesn't give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

They don't regard consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. They're not obsessed with the thought: 'I am consciousness, consciousness is mine!' So when that consciousness of theirs decays and perishes, it doesn't give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

That's how a person is ailing in body and healthy in mind."

That's what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, Nakula's father was happy with what Sāriputta said.

### **SN 22.2 Devadahasutta (At Devadaha)**

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, where they have a town named Devadaha.

Then several mendicants who were heading for the west went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to go to a western land to take up residence there."

"But mendicants, have you taken leave of Sāriputta?"

"No, sir, we haven't."

"You should take leave of Sāriputta. He's astute, and supports his spiritual companions, the mendicants."

"Yes, sir," they replied.

Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was meditating not far from the Buddha in a clump of golden shower trees. And then those mendicants approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. Then they went up to Venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side and said to him, "Reverend Sāriputta, we wish to go to a western land to take up residence there. We have taken leave of the Teacher."

"Reverends, there are those who question a mendicant who has gone abroad—astute aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics—for astute people are inquisitive: 'But what does the venerables' Teacher teach? What does he explain?' I trust the venerables have properly heard, learned, attended, and remembered the teachings, and penetrated them with wisdom. That way, when answering you will repeat what the Buddha has said and not misrepresent him with an untruth. You will explain in line with the teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuke and criticism."

“Reverend, we would travel a long way to learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of Venerable Sāriputta. May Venerable Sāriputta himself please clarify the meaning of this.”

“Well then, reverends, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:

“Reverends, there are those who question a mendicant who has gone abroad—astute aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics—for astute people are inquisitive: ‘But what does the venerables’ Teacher teach? What does he explain?’ When questioned like this, reverends, you should answer: ‘Reverend, our Teacher explained the removal of desire and lust.’

When you answer like this, such astute people may inquire further: ‘But regarding what does the venerables’ teacher explain the removal of desire and lust?’ When questioned like this, reverends, you should answer: ‘Our teacher explains the removal of desire and lust for form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness.’

When you answer like this, such astute people may inquire further: ‘But what drawback has he seen that he teaches the removal of desire and lust for form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness?’ When questioned like this, reverends, you should answer: ‘If you’re not free of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for form, when that form decays and perishes it gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. If you’re not free of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensation ... perception ... choices ... consciousness, when that consciousness decays and perishes it gives rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. This is the drawback our Teacher has seen that he teaches the removal of desire and lust for form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness.’

When you answer like this, such astute people may inquire further: ‘But what benefit has he seen that he teaches the removal of desire and lust for form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness?’ When questioned like this, reverends, you should answer: ‘If you are rid of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for form, when that form decays and perishes it doesn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. If you are rid of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensation ... perception ... choices ... consciousness, when that consciousness decays and perishes it doesn’t give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. This is the benefit our Teacher has seen that he teaches the removal of desire and lust for form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness.’

If those who acquired and kept unskillful qualities were to live happily in the present life, free of anguish, distress, and fever; and if, when their body breaks up, after death, they could expect to go to a good place, the Buddha would not praise giving up unskillful qualities. But since those who acquire and keep unskillful qualities live unhappily in the present life, full of anguish, distress, and fever; and since, when their body breaks up, after death, they can expect to go to a bad place, the Buddha praises giving up unskillful qualities.

If those who embraced and kept skillful qualities were to live unhappily in the present life, full of anguish, distress, and fever; and if, when their body breaks up, after death, they could expect to go to a bad place, the Buddha would not praise embracing skillful qualities. But since those who embrace and keep skillful qualities live happily in the present life, free of anguish, distress, and fever;

and since, when their body breaks up, after death, they can expect to go to a good place, the Buddha praises embracing skillful qualities.”

This is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what Sāriputta said.

### **SN 22.12 Aniccasutta (Impermanence)**

So I have heard. At Sāvattthī.

“Mendicants, form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent.

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.’”

### **SN 22.13 Dukkhasutta (Suffering)**

At Sāvattthī.

“Mendicants, form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness are suffering.

Seeing this ... They understand: ‘... there is no return to any state of existence.’”

### **SN 22.14 Anattasutta (Not-Self)**

At Sāvattthī.

“Mendicants, form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness are not-self.

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.’”

# Salāyatanavaggasamyutta

## The Group of Linked Discourses on the Six Sense Fields

### Salāyatanasamyutta

#### Linked Discourses on the Six Sense Fields

##### SN 35.1 Ajjhattāniccasutta (The Interior as Impermanent)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, the eye is impermanent. What's impermanent is suffering. What's suffering is not-self. And what's not-self should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

The ear is impermanent. ...

The nose is impermanent. ...

The tongue is impermanent. ...

The body is impermanent. ...

The mind is impermanent. What's impermanent is suffering. What's suffering is not-self. And what's not-self should be truly seen with right understanding like this: "This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self."

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: "Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence."



### SN 35.4 Bāhirāniccasutta (The Exterior as Impermanent)

“Mendicants, sights are impermanent. What’s impermanent is suffering. What’s suffering is not-self. And what’s not-self should be truly seen with right understanding like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

Sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts are impermanent. What’s impermanent is suffering. What’s suffering is not-self. And what’s not-self should be truly seen with right understanding like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.’”

## Vedanāsamyutta

### Linked Discourses on Sensations<sup>7</sup>

#### SN 36.1 Samādhisutta (Immersion)

“Mendicants, there are these three sensations. What three?”

Pleasant, painful, and neutral sensation. These are the three sensations.

Stilled, aware,  
a mindful disciple of the Buddha  
understands sensations,  
the cause of sensations,

where they cease,  
and the path that leads to their ending.  
With the ending of sensations, a mendicant  
is hungerless, extinguished.”

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<sup>7</sup> Sujato translates “vedanā” as “feelings.” I translate it as “sensations” because “feelings” can easily be misinterpreted as meaning emotion. Sensation is the experience of body sensation as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Emotion is made up of sensation and a cognitive stance or narrative. It falls under the category of “mental formation” or “fabrication” which in Pali is “sankhara.” I use “sensation” instead of “feeling” throughout this text when “feeling” means “vedana.”

### SN 36.3 Pahānasutta (Giving Up)

“Mendicants, there are these three sensations. What three?”

Pleasant, painful, and neutral sensation.

The underlying tendency to greed should be given up when it comes to pleasant sensation. The underlying tendency to repulsion should be given up when it comes to painful sensation. The underlying tendency to ignorance should be given up when it comes to neutral sensation.

When a mendicant has given up these underlying tendencies, they’re called a mendicant without underlying tendencies, who sees rightly, has cut off craving, untied the fetters, and by rightly comprehending conceit has made an end of suffering.

When you feel pleasure  
without understanding sensation,  
the underlying tendency to greed is there,  
if you don’t see the escape.

When you feel pain  
without understanding sensation,  
the underlying tendency to repulsion is there,  
if you don’t see the escape.

As for that peaceful, neutral sensation:  
he of vast wisdom has taught  
that if you relish it,  
you’re still not released from suffering.

But when a mendicant is keen,  
not neglecting situational awareness,  
that astute person  
understands all sensations.

Completely understanding sensations,  
they’re without defilements in this very life.  
That knowledge master is firm in principle;  
when their body breaks up, they can’t be reckoned.”

### SN 36.4 Pātālasutta (The Abyss)

“Mendicants, when an unlearned ordinary person says that there’s a hellish abyss under the ocean, they’re speaking of something that doesn’t exist.

‘Hellish abyss’ is a term for painful physical sensations.

When an unlearned ordinary person experiences painful physical sensations they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They’re called an unlearned ordinary person who hasn’t stood up in the hellish abyss and has gained no footing.

When a learned noble disciple experiences painful physical sensations they don’t sorrow or wail or lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They’re called a learned noble disciple who has stood up in the hellish abyss and gained a footing.

If you can’t abide  
those painful physical sensations  
that arise and sap your vitality;  
if you tremble at their touch,

weeping and wailing,  
a weakling lacking strength—  
you won’t stand up in the hellish abyss  
and gain a footing.

If you can endure  
those painful physical sensations  
that arise and sap your vitality;  
if you don’t tremble at their touch—  
you stand up in the hellish abyss  
and gain a footing.”

### SN 36.6 Sallasutta (An Arrow)

“Mendicants, an unlearned ordinary person feels pleasant, painful, and neutral sensations. A learned noble disciple also feels pleasant, painful, and neutral sensations. What, then, is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an ordinary unlearned person?”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. ...”

“When an unlearned ordinary person experiences painful physical sensations they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They experience two sensations: physical and mental.<sup>8</sup>

It’s like a person who is struck with an arrow, only to be struck with a second arrow. That person experiences the sensation of two arrows.

In the same way, when an unlearned ordinary person experiences painful physical sensations they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They experience two sensations: physical and mental.

When they’re touched by painful sensation, they resist it. The underlying tendency for repulsion towards painful sensation underlies that.

When touched by painful sensation they look forward to enjoying sensual pleasures. Why is that? Because an unlearned ordinary person doesn’t understand any escape from painful sensation apart from sensual pleasures. Since they look forward to enjoying sensual pleasures, the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant sensation underlies that.

They don’t truly understand sensations’ origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape. The underlying tendency to ignorance about neutral sensation underlies that.

If they feel a pleasant sensation, they feel it attached. If they feel a painful sensation, they feel it attached. If they feel a neutral sensation, they feel it attached.

They’re called an unlearned ordinary person who is attached to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress; who is attached to suffering, I say.

When a learned noble disciple experiences painful physical sensations they don’t sorrow or wail or lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They experience one sensation: physical, not mental.

It’s like a person who is struck with an arrow, but was not struck with a second arrow. That person would experience the sensation of one arrow.

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<sup>8</sup> I see this as meaning sensations that arise from contact between the six sense bases and the six sense objects and sensations that are contained in the mental formations that arise from the original layer of sensations.

In the same way, when a learned noble disciple experiences painful physical sensations they don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They experience one sensation: physical, not mental.

When they're touched by painful sensation, they don't resist it. There's no underlying tendency for repulsion towards painful sensation underlying that.

When touched by painful sensation they don't look forward to enjoying sensual pleasures. Why is that? Because a learned noble disciple understands an escape from painful sensation apart from sensual pleasures. Since they don't look forward to enjoying sensual pleasures, there's no underlying tendency to greed for pleasant sensation underlying that.

They truly understand sensations' origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape. There's no underlying tendency to ignorance about neutral sensation underlying that.

If they feel a pleasant sensation, they feel it detached. If they feel a painful sensation, they feel it detached. If they feel a neutral sensation, they feel it detached.

They're called a learned noble disciple who is detached from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress; who is detached from suffering, I say.

This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person.

A wise and learned person isn't affected  
by sensations of pleasure and pain.  
This is the great difference in skill  
between the wise and the ordinary.

A learned person who has assessed the teaching  
discerns this world and the next.  
Desirable things don't disturb their mind,  
nor are they repelled by the undesirable.

Both favoring and opposing  
are cleared and ended, they are no more.  
Knowing the stainless, sorrowless state,  
they who have gone beyond rebirth  
understand rightly."

### SN 36.31 Nirāmisasutta (Spiritual)

“Mendicants, there is material rapture, spiritual rapture, and even more spiritual rapture.

There is material pleasure, spiritual pleasure, and even more spiritual pleasure.

There is material equanimity, spiritual equanimity, and even more spiritual equanimity.

There is material liberation, spiritual liberation, and even more spiritual liberation.

And what is material rapture? There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds ... Smells ... Tastes ... Touches known by the body that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The rapture that arises from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called material rapture.

And what is spiritual rapture? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called spiritual rapture.

And what is even more spiritual rapture? When a mendicant who has ended the defilements reviews their mind free from greed, hate, and delusion, rapture arises. This is called even more spiritual rapture.

And what is material pleasure? Mendicants, there are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds ... Smells ... Tastes ... Touches known by the body that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called material pleasure.

And what is spiritual pleasure? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This is called spiritual pleasure.

And what is even more spiritual pleasure? When a mendicant who has ended the defilements reviews their mind free from greed, hate, and delusion, pleasure and happiness arises. This is called even more spiritual pleasure.

And what is material equanimity? There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds ... Smells ... Tastes ... Touches known by the body that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The equanimity that arises from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called material equanimity.

And what is spiritual equanimity? It's when, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called spiritual equanimity.

And what is even more spiritual equanimity? When a mendicant who has ended the defilements reviews their mind free from greed, hate, and delusion, equanimity arises. This is called even more spiritual equanimity.

And what is material liberation? Liberation connected with form is material.

And what is spiritual liberation? Liberation connected with the formless is spiritual.

And what is even more spiritual liberation? When a mendicant who has ended the defilements reviews their mind free from greed, hate, and delusion, liberation arises. This is called even more spiritual liberation.”



# Mahavaggasamyutta

## The Great Group of Linked Discourses<sup>9</sup>

### Maggasamyutta

#### Linked Discourses on the Path<sup>10</sup>

##### SN 45:1 Avijāsutta (Ignorance)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Mendicants, ignorance precedes the attainment of unskillful qualities, with lack of conscience and prudence following along. An ignoramus, sunk in ignorance, gives rise to wrong view. Wrong view gives rise to wrong thought. Wrong thought gives rise to wrong speech. Wrong speech gives rise to wrong action. Wrong action gives rise to wrong livelihood. Wrong livelihood gives rise to wrong effort. Wrong effort gives rise to wrong mindfulness. Wrong mindfulness gives rise to wrong immersion.

Knowledge precedes the attainment of skillful qualities, with conscience and prudence following along. A sage, firm in knowledge, gives rise to right view. Right view gives rise to right thought. Right thought gives rise to right speech. Right speech gives rise to right action. Right action gives rise to right livelihood. Right livelihood gives rise to right effort. Right effort gives rise to right mindfulness. Right mindfulness gives rise to right immersion.”

##### SN 45:8 Vibhāngasutta (Analysis)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, I will teach and analyze for you the noble eightfold path. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“And what is the noble eightfold path? It is right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

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<sup>9</sup> Sujato translates “Mahavaggasamyutta” as “The Group of Linked Discourses on the Path” based on the title of the parallel collection in the Samyukta Agama. In the Samyukta Agama it is Magga (path) Vaggasamyutta (group of linked discourses). Here in Pali it is “Maha” (Great) “Vaggasamyutta” (group of linked discourses). Thus, I am sticking closer to the literal meaning in the Pali Canon.

<sup>10</sup> Sujato translates “Maggasamyutta” as “Linked Discourses on the Eightfold Path.” “Magga” implies the Eightfold Path and that is indeed what the Maggasamyutta is about. But the full way to say Eightfold Path in Pali is “Atthangika” (eight-limb) “magga” (path). I use a more literal translation.

And what is right view? Knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called right view.

And what is right thought? It is the thought of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness. This is called right thought.

And what is right speech? Avoiding speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. This is called right speech.

And what is right action? Avoiding killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual activity. This is called right action.

And what is right livelihood? It's when a noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and earns a living by right livelihood. This is called right livelihood.

And what is right effort? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have not arisen do arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fulfilled by development. This is called right effort.

And what is right mindfulness? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of sensations—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called right mindfulness.

And what is right immersion? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called right immersion."

### **SN 45:91 Paṭhamapācīnaninnasutta (Slanting East)**

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, the Ganges river slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the noble eightfold path slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

### **SN 45.175 Anusayasutta (Tendencies)**

“Mendicants, there are these seven underlying tendencies. What seven? The underlying tendencies of sensual desire, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the seven underlying tendencies.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these seven underlying tendencies.”

### **SN 45.177 Nīvaranasutta (Hindrances)**

“Mendicants, there are these five hindrances. What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five hindrances.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five hindrances.”

### **SN 45.178 Upādānakkhandasutta (Grasping Aggregates)**

“Mendicants, there are these five grasping aggregates. What five? The grasping aggregates of form, sensation, perception, choices, and consciousness. These are the five grasping aggregates.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five grasping aggregates.”

### **SN 45.179 Orambhāgiyasutta (Lower Fetters)**

“Mendicants, there are five lower fetters. What five? Identity view, doubt, misapprehension of precepts and observances, sensual desire, and ill will. These are the five lower fetters.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five lower fetters.”

### **SN 45.180 Uddhambhāgiyasutta (Higher Fetters)**

Higher Fetters

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”

“Mendicants, there are five higher fetters. What five? Desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters.

The noble eightfold path should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters. What is the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which culminate in the removal of greed, hate, and delusion ...” “... which culminate, finish, and end in the deathless ...” “... which slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment.

This is the noble eightfold path that should be developed for the direct knowledge, complete understanding, finishing, and giving up of these five higher fetters.”

## **Bojjhargasamyutta**

### **Linked Discourses on the Awakening Factors**

#### **SN 46.31 Paṭhamakusalasutta (Skillfull (1<sup>st</sup>))**

“Mendicants, whatever qualities are skillful, part of the skillful, on the side of the skillful, all of them are rooted in diligence and meet at diligence, and diligence is said to be the best of them. A mendicant who is diligent can expect to develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors.

And how does a diligent mendicant develop and cultivate the seven awakening factors? It’s when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a diligent mendicant develops and cultivates the seven awakening factors.”

#### **SN 46.33 Upakkilesasutta (Corruptions)**

“Mendicants, there are these five corruptions of gold. When gold is corrupted by these it’s not pliable, workable, or radiant, but is brittle and not completely ready for working. What five? Iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver. When gold is corrupted by these five corruptions it’s not pliable, workable, or radiant, but is brittle and not completely ready for working.

In the same way, there are these five corruptions of the mind. When the mind is corrupted by these it’s not pliable, workable, or radiant. It’s brittle, and not rightly immersed in samādhi for the ending of defilements. What five? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five corruptions of the mind. When the mind is corrupted by these it’s not pliable, workable, or radiant. It’s brittle, and not rightly immersed in samādhi for the ending of defilements.”

## Satipatthānasamyutta

### Linked Discourses on Mindfulness Meditation

#### SN 47.1 Ambapālasutta (In Ambapālī's Mango Grove)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, in Ambapālī's Mango Grove. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment. What four?"

It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of sensations—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

## Indriyasamyutta

### Linked Discourses on the Faculties

#### SN 48.1 Suddhikasutta (Plain Version)

At Sāvattthī.

There the Buddha said:

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five faculties.”

#### Dutiyavibhangasutta (Analysis (2<sup>nd</sup>))

“Mendicants, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

And what is the faculty of faith? It’s when a noble disciple has faith in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ This is called the faculty of faith.

And what is the faculty of energy? It’s when a noble disciple lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They’re strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are completed by development. This is called the faculty of energy.

And what is the faculty of mindfulness? It’s when a noble disciple is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can remember and recall what was said and done long ago. They meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of sensations ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness.

And what is the faculty of immersion? It’s when a noble disciple, relying on letting go, gains immersion, gains unification of mind. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third

absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called the faculty of immersion.

And what is the faculty of wisdom? It's when a noble disciple is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. This is called the faculty of wisdom.

These are the five faculties.”



## Sammappadhānasamyutta

### Linked Discourses on the Right Efforts

#### SN 49:1 Gangāpeyyālavagga (Sloping East, Etc.)

At Sāvattthī.

There the Buddha said:

“Mendicants, there are these four right efforts. What four?”

It’s when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are completed by development. These are the four right efforts.

The Ganges river slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four right efforts slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the four right efforts slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment?

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities don’t arise.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise.

They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are completed by development.

That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four right efforts slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

## **Balasamyutta**

### **Linked Discourses on the Five Powers**

#### **SN 50.1 Gangāpeyyālavagga (Sloping East, Etc.)**

“Mendicants, there are these five powers. What five? The powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. These are the five powers. The Ganges river slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops the five powers slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment? It’s when a mendicant develops the powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the five powers slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

## **Iddhipādasamyutta**

### **Linked Discourses on the Bases of Psychic Power**

#### **SN 51.1 Apārasutta (From the Near Shore)**

“Mendicants, when these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore. What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. When these four bases of psychic power are developed and cultivated they lead to going from the near shore to the far shore.”

## SN 51.22 Ayogulasutta (The Iron Ball)

At Sāvattthī.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, do you have personal experience of going to the Brahmā realm by psychic power with a mind-made body?”

“I do, Ānanda.”

“But do you have personal experience of going to the Brahmā realm by psychic power with this body made up of the four primary elements?”

“I do, Ānanda.”

“It’s incredible and amazing that the Buddha is capable of going to the Brahmā realm by psychic power with a mind-made body! And that he has personal experience of going to the Brahmā realm by psychic power with this body made up of the four primary elements!”

“Ānanda, the Realized Ones are incredible and have incredible qualities. They’re amazing and have amazing qualities.

Sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body becomes lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant.

Suppose there was an iron ball that had been heated all day. It’d become lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant. In the same way, sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body becomes lighter, softer, more workable, and more radiant.

Sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body easily rises up from the ground into the air. He wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.

Suppose there was a light tuft of cotton-wool or kapok. Taken up by the wind, it would easily rise up from the ground into the air. In the same way, sometimes the Realized One submerges his body in his mind and his mind in his body. He meditates after sinking into a perception of bliss and lightness in the body. At that time his body easily rises up from the ground into the air. He wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying himself and becoming one again ... controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.”

# Jhānasamyutta

## Linked Discourses on Absorption

### SN 53.1 Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga (Absorptions, Etc.)

At Sāvattḥī.

“Mendicants, there are these four absorptions. What four?”

It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.

And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’

Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

These are the four absorptions.

The Ganges river slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.

And how does a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slant, slope, and incline to extinguishment?

It’s when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption.

That’s how a mendicant who develops and cultivates the four absorptions slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.”

# Ānāpānasamyutta

## Linked Discourses on Breath Meditation

### SN 54.1 Ekadhammasutta (One Thing)

At Sāvattthī.

“Mendicants, when one thing is developed and cultivated it’s very fruitful and beneficial. What one thing? Mindfulness of breathing.

And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial?

It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and establishes mindfulness in front of them.

Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.

Breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ When breathing in lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing in lightly.’ Breathing out lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing out lightly.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the whole body.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the whole body.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling physical processes.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling physical processes.’

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing rapture.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing rapture.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing bliss.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing bliss.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing mental processes.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing mental processes.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in stilling mental processes.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out stilling mental processes.’

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out experiencing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in gladdening the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out gladdening the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in immersing the mind in samādhi.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out immersing the mind in samādhi.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in freeing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out freeing the mind.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing impermanence.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing impermanence.’

They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing fading away.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing fading away.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing cessation.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing cessation.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ They practice like this: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’

Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial.”

## SN 54.11 Icchānaṅgalasutta

At one time the Buddha was staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. There he addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants, I wish to go on retreat for three months. No-one should approach me, except for the one who brings my almsfood.”

“Yes, sir,” replied those mendicants. And no-one approached him, except for the one who brought the almsfood.

Then after three months had passed, the Buddha came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what was the ascetic Gotama’s usual meditation during the rainy season residence?’ You should answer them like this. ‘Reverends, the ascetic Gotama’s usual meditation during the rainy season residence was immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.’

In this regard: mindful, I breathe in. Mindful, I breathe out.

Breathing in heavily I know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ Breathing out heavily I know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’ When breathing in lightly I know: ‘I’m breathing in lightly.’ Breathing out lightly I know: ‘I’m breathing out lightly.’ I know: ‘I’ll breathe in experiencing the whole body.’ ...

I know: ‘I’ll breathe in observing letting go.’ I know: ‘I’ll breathe out observing letting go.’

For if anything should be rightly called ‘a noble meditation’, or else ‘a divine meditation’, or else ‘a realized one’s meditation’, it’s immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.

For those mendicants who are trainees—who haven’t achieved their heart’s desire, but live aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from the yoke—the development and cultivation of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing leads to the ending of defilements.

For those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetters of rebirth, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—the development and cultivation of immersion due to mindfulness of breathing leads to blissful meditation in the present life, and to mindfulness and awareness.

For if anything should be rightly called ‘a noble meditation’, or else ‘a divine meditation’, or else ‘a realized one’s meditation’, it’s immersion due to mindfulness of breathing.”

### **SN 54.17 Saṁyojanappahānasutta (Giving up the Fetters)**

“Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to giving up the fetters ...”

### **SN 54.18 Anusayasamugghātasutta (Uprooting the Tendencies)**

“Mendicants, when immersion due to mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it leads to uprooting the underlying tendencies ...”

## **Sotāpattisamyutta**

### **Linked Discourses on Stream-Entry**

#### **SN 55:2 Brahmacariyogadhasutta (The Culmination of the Spiritual Life)**

“Mendicants, a noble disciple who has four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.

What four? It’s when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha ... the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... And they have the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones ... leading to immersion. A noble disciple who has these four things is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Those who have faith and ethics,  
confidence, and vision of the truth,  
in time arrive at happiness,  
the culmination of the spiritual life.”

## Saccasamyutta

### Linked Discourses on the Truths

#### SN 56:1 Samadhisutta (Immersion)

At Sāvattthī.

“Mendicants, develop immersion. A mendicant who has immersion truly understands. What do they truly understand? They truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. Develop immersion. A mendicant who has immersion truly understands.

That’s why you should practice meditation to understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’.”

#### SN 56.11 Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma)

At one time the Buddha was staying near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed the group of five mendicants:

“Mendicants, these two extremes should not be cultivated by one who has gone forth. What two? Indulgence in sensual pleasures, which is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And indulgence in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and pointless. Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One woke up by understanding the middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.

And what is that middle way of practice? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is that middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.

Now this is the noble truth of suffering. Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; association with the disliked is suffering; separation from the liked is suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.

Now this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering. It’s the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, chasing pleasure in various realms. That is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving to continue existence, and craving to end existence.

Now this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. It’s the fading away and cessation of that very same craving with nothing left over; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it.



Now this is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

‘This is the noble truth of suffering.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another. ‘This noble truth of suffering should be completely understood.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of suffering has been completely understood.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering should be given up.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been given up.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering should be realized.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ...

‘This is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering should be developed.’ Such was the vision that arose in me ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in me regarding teachings not learned before from another.

As long as my true knowledge and vision about these four noble truths was not fully purified in these three perspectives and twelve aspects, I didn’t announce my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.

But when my true knowledge and vision about these four noble truths was fully purified in these three perspectives and twelve aspects, I announced my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.

Knowledge and vision arose in me: ‘My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there’ll be no more future lives.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the group of five mendicants was happy with what the Buddha said.

And while this discourse was being spoken, the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in Venerable Koṇḍañña: “Everything that has a beginning has an end.”

And when the Buddha rolled forth the Wheel of Dhamma, the earth gods raised the cry: “Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Buddha has rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma.

And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Hearing the cry of the Earth Gods, the Gods of the Four Great Kings ... the Gods of the Thirty-Three ... the Gods of Yama ... the Joyful Gods ... the Gods Who Love to Create ... the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others ... the Gods of Brahmā’s Host raised the cry: “Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Buddha has rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

And so at that moment, in that instant, the cry soared up to the Brahmā realm. And this galaxy shook and rocked and trembled. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appeared in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.

Then the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment: “Koṇḍañña has really understood! Koṇḍañña has really understood!”

And that’s how Venerable Koṇḍañña came to be known as “Koṇḍañña Who Understood”.

### **SN 56.12 Tathāgatasutta (The Realized Ones)**

“‘This is the noble truth of suffering.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in the Realized Ones regarding teachings not learned before from another. ‘This noble truth of suffering should be completely understood.’ ... ‘This noble truth of suffering has been completely understood.’ ...

‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering should be given up.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been given up.’ ...

‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering should be realized.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized.’ ...

‘This is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering should be developed.’ ... ‘This noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering has been developed.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in the Realized Ones regarding teachings not learned before from another.”