

II. The Seven Sets

A. THE TREASURES OF THE TEACHING

Nowhere in the Canon does the Buddha list the seven sets of teachings under the name of Wings to Awakening. He mentions the seven sets as a group many times when he is summarizing his main teachings, but there is no firm evidence as to whether he ever actually gave a name to the group. In one passage he applies the term “wings to self-Awakening” to the five faculties [S77]; and in two passages [S24-25] he makes reference to the seven Wings to Awakening, which may or may not denote the seven sets. Nevertheless, given the fact that the Buddha called the five faculties wings to self-Awakening, and all seven sets are equivalent to the five faculties, the name “Wings to Awakening” for all seven seems appropriate. This was the name that they definitely had in early post-canonical texts, such as the *Petakopadesa*, and that they have maintained ever since.

The seven sets have played an important role throughout the history of Buddhism in all of its various branches. They provided the framework for the earliest Abhidhamma texts, systematic presentations of the doctrine that were added to the early Canons a few centuries after the Buddha’s passing away. They were also part of the first Buddhist text translated into Chinese, and later came to exemplify “Hinayana” teachings in T’ien-t’ai and other Chinese doctrinal systems. Tantric Buddhism features mandalas containing 37 deities, symbolic of the 37 factors making up the seven sets. Tibetan architecture, probably following the treatises of the medieval Indian universities, identifies the various parts of standard stupa design as symbols of the seven sets. Thus the Wings provide one of the few common threads that, in actual or symbolic form, run through all the traditions claiming descent from the Buddha.

One of the peculiarities of the Wings, viewed as a whole, is that two sets are duplicates: the five faculties and the five strengths contain the same five factors. Several theories have been advanced as to why the Buddha included what is essentially the same set twice. One is that he wanted to indicate that the five factors that make up each set could exist in the mind in two distinct levels of intensity, one sufficient for the path to stream-entry, the first level of Awakening, and the other needed for Arahantship, the highest level. This may parallel the passage [S106] where the Buddha makes a similar distinction between the noble eightfold path of stream-entry and the tenfold path of Arahantship. There is some disagreement among later writers as to which of the two sets, the faculties or the strengths, should be considered the more intense, although there is one canonical passage [S85] where the term “faculty” seems to rank on a higher level than “strength.”

Another hypothesis—not necessarily at odds with the first—is that the Buddha wanted the number of factors to total 37 because the number had symbolic meaning. In ancient times, before the development of the decimal system, multiplication tables were arranged in hexagonal patterns. The complete table used to calculate the ratios used in tuning musical instruments to reciprocal scales—

scales that played the same notes going up as going down—had one member in the middle surrounded by three hexagonal rings containing, in ascending order, six, twelve, and eighteen members, giving a total of 37 members. (See the diagram on the back cover of this book.) The table of whole-number ratios that formed the basis for trigonometry, and thus for the study of astronomy, contained 37 members. Thus the number 37 carried connotations of basic completeness. This principle is at work in Plato's *Laws*, where the ideal city has 37 guardians, and it may also be at work here.

A related consideration may be that the number seven, in the seven sets, was symbolic of treasure. The universal monarch was said to have seven treasures that formed his spontaneous regalia [MN 129], and noble wealth consists of seven qualities [AN 7:7]. The Buddha explicitly borrows this number symbolism when he states that the seven sets are the treasures of his teaching.

Another possibility, which we have already noted [I/A], is that musicians in the Buddha's time recognized seven systems for tuning the musical scale—all other systems being rejected as discordant—and the Buddha may have borrowed this numerical symbolism to suggest that his teachings formed a complete guide to all the possible ways in which a Samana—a person in tune (*sama*)—could tune his or her mind to the truth.

From a less historical and more practical point of view, the important question about the seven sets is how they fit into the general plan of Buddhist practice. Their role is most succinctly stated in §25: the development of the seven sets follows on the development of virtue and leads naturally into the development of transcendent discernment, thus filling the role that other passages assign to concentration practice. This suggests—and again, the suggestion is borne out by passages that deal with the issue in more detail—that the seven sets are to be developed in the course of a concentration practice based on a moral life and aimed at the development of discernment. When §23 ends its list of preconditions for the practice of the seven sets with four meditation practices—actually three, as the perception of inconstancy is an integral part of mindfulness of in-and-out breathing—it is simply listing the concentration practices most frequently recommended in the texts as focal points for developing the skills of the seven sets. Nevertheless, although the seven sets focus most specifically on the practice of concentration, the close interconnections among virtue, concentration, and discernment mean that the sets include the factors of virtue and discernment as well, thus encompassing the entire path of Buddhist practice.

A virtuous and moral life is an absolute prerequisite for practicing the sets. This is a point that cannot be overstated, a fact reflected in the large number of canonical passages that hammer it home: far too many to include in this anthology. Some of the sets—the five faculties/strengths and the noble eightfold path—actually include the practice of a virtuous life in their factors, under the faculty/strength of conviction, and under the factors of right speech, right action, and right livelihood in the eightfold path. The remaining sets, the texts tell us, are meant to follow on the development of personal virtue in the same way that sunrise follows on the pre-dawn colors in the eastern sky.

The texts explain the precepts that underline a virtuous life, not as rules imposed by an outside authority, but as guidelines for action that a person would voluntarily

undertake when accepting the importance of the principles of kamma and skillful action in shaping the course of one's experiences. Killing, for instance, is obviously an unskillful action when viewed in the full light of its kammic consequences. The same holds true with other actions forbidden by the precepts, such as drinking alcohol, stealing, illicit sex, lying, and abusive language. [For a more complete list, see §§103-104.] Passage §103 shows that the Buddha's teachings on virtue consist not only of the "don't's" of the precepts, but also of the "do's" of such positive standards as sympathy, reliability, and genuine helpfulness. Skillfulness is not simply a matter of avoiding bad consequences; it also actively cultivates the good.

In keeping with the teaching that kamma is essentially intention, the precepts are designed to focus on the state of mind motivating the act. A precept is broken only when one does so intentionally. Thus the practice of observing the precepts requires constant attention to the factor of intention in one's actions; it also requires that one develop the "sublime attitudes" (*brahma-vihara*) of good will, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity [§98], which strengthen one's ability to side with skillful intentions. In this way, the Buddha's approach to morality is to use the realm of personal action as an arena for the comprehensive training of the mind.

These three aspects of the Buddhist approach to morality—the avoidance of bad kamma, the development of skillful mental states, and the purification of intention—follow the pattern of the heart of the Buddha's teachings as presented in the first verse of §7. They also explain why virtue is a necessary foundation for the practice of concentration: A moral life brings about absence of remorse [AN 10:1]; people who, in all honesty, have no reason for remorse over their actions or for anxiety over the consequences of those actions, feel a natural sense of inner joy. This joy is intensified when they reflect on the positive acts of kindness and generosity that they have performed for others. Thus intensified, this joy then provides the basis for the inner pleasure that allows for concentration. In this way, a healthy sense of self-worth is a necessary precondition for a stable mind [§238].

In addition, the practice of virtue forces one to develop a number of the "concentration" factors in the sets themselves, on a preliminary level of skill, thus making them strong and fit for formal concentration practice. To maintain a precept, one must keep it constantly in mind: this strengthens mindfulness. One must stick to one's determination to abide by one's principles: this strengthens persistence. One must pay attention to the present moment, for that is where the decision to keep or break a precept is made; and one must remain firm in one's cultivation of the sublime attitudes: these factors strengthen concentration. One must be clear about one's motives for acting, and at the same time be sensitive in knowing how to apply a particular precept to one's present situation: e.g., being quick to see how to avoid an issue in which telling the truth might be harmful, yet without telling a lie. This strengthens one's ability to analyze the mind in the present moment, intensifying one's powers of discernment in general. These four factors—mindfulness, effort, concentration, and discernment—are the central elements in all of the seven sets. Thus, the practice of virtue exercises, on a rudimentary level, the qualities of mind needed for concentration practice.

A close look at the seven sets will show that a similar relationship exists between these qualities, as they are developed in concentration practice, and the

transcendent discernment toward which they lead. On the one hand, concentration is needed as a basis for discernment; on the other hand, discernment is exercised in developing concentration, becoming more precise and penetrating as a result. To understand how this happens, we must first note that the seven sets fall into two types. The first type consists of the four frames of reference, the four right exertions, and the four bases of power. Each of these sets focuses on a single factor in the “concentration aggregate” [§105] of the noble eightfold path: the frames of reference on mindfulness, the right exertions on effort, and the bases of power on concentration. Their factors are defined in such a way that the proper development of any one set involves the other two sets, together with the factor of discernment. In this sense they point out the “holographic” nature of the path: each part must include the whole, just as every piece of a hologram can reproduce the entire holographic image.

The sets included in the second type are the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, and the noble eightfold path. Each of these sets lists its factors in a causal chain progressing through a spiraling loop. The five faculties and strengths start with conviction, which then leads naturally to persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and then discernment. Discernment, in turn, provides a basis for even firmer conviction. Similarly, the seven factors for Awakening start with mindfulness, which develops into an analysis of (present) mental qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, and finally equanimity. Equanimity, in turn, provides a steady basis for the further development of mindfulness. The noble eightfold path starts out with right view and right resolve, which together constitute discernment, leading to right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Concentration, in turn, forms a basis for the clearer development of discernment. In this way the various factors of the path are mutually reinforcing in an upward spiral that leads to Awakening.

Comparing the sets in the second type with one another, however, we find a certain complexity in their feedback loops. In terms of their most important factors, we see that the faculties and strengths depict the causal sequence as:

effort » mindfulness » concentration » discernment;

the factors for Awakening give it as:

mindfulness » discernment » effort » concentration;

and the noble eightfold path:

discernment » effort » mindfulness » concentration.

Although the sequences differ, they have one pattern in common: concentration always follows after right effort and mindfulness. This suggests not only that concentration depends on these two factors, but also that effort and mindfulness, when properly developed, are meant to lead to concentration. This suggestion is borne out in the texts that deal with these factors in detail [§§1, 33-35, 58, 61].

The two factors with the most variegated roles in these lists are mindfulness and discernment. Mindfulness is essential at every step along the way. There are passages [§26] teaching that mindfulness is a prerequisite for virtue, which— together with right view—is in turn a prerequisite for right mindfulness [§27]. Similarly, mindfulness is necessary for concentration, which in turn can be devoted to the development of greater mindfulness [§149], which can lead further to

discernment.

As for discernment: If we look at the lists placing discernment after the other factors, we find that certain aspects of discernment are presumed by the earlier factors. In the five faculties, for instance, conviction includes belief in the principle of kamma, which is one of the elements of right discernment. In the lists that place discernment toward the beginning of the process, we find transcendent discernment added on to the end: the seven factors for Awakening, when fully developed, lead to clear knowing (transcendent discernment) and release; when the noble eightfold path reaches the point of full Awakening, it leads to right knowledge (transcendent discernment again) and right release. The implication here is that discernment, functioning on different levels, keeps adding feedback loops of ever greater sensitivity every step along the way. This point is made explicit in §106.

For this reason, skillfulness—as a constant, sensitive mindfulness and discernment toward one’s own actions—lies at the essence of every moment in the continued development of the path. On the one hand it creates the conditions necessary for the path to develop: knowledge of what is skillful and unskillful must necessarily precede right effort and mindfulness, and must help mindfulness lead to concentration. On the other hand, the factors of mindfulness and concentration are necessary for discernment to become even more sensitive to the present moment. Thus, as the path spirals through its many feedback loops, it exercises discernment, making it stronger in the same way that muscles are strengthened with exercise. At the same time, the development of the path steadies the conditions that provide discernment with the solid basis it needs to become more and more precise, just as a solid foundation is necessary for sensitive measuring equipment. In this way discernment develops from a knowledge of what is skillful and unskillful, first gained through the advice and example of others, on through a more intuitive understanding of skillfulness gained through repeated action and reflection on one’s actions, to a knowledge in terms of the four noble truths and the duties appropriate to each, and finally to the knowledge that those duties have been fulfilled [§195]. The Wings thus put mundane discernment to use, and in so doing make it transcendent.

All of this explains why the Buddha said that of all the wings to self-Awakening, discernment is chief [§77]. In its more rudimentary forms it provides the conditions and feedback necessary for each step along the way; its transcendent form, at the culmination of the path, leads directly to Awakening.

The experience of Awakening, according to the texts, can take any one of four levels:

- *stream-entry*, i.e., entry into the stream leading to Unbinding—which cuts the fetters of self-identity views, uncertainty, and grasping at habits and practices—ensuring that one will be reborn no more than seven more times;
- *once-returning*—which further weakens passion, aversion, and delusion—ensuring that one will be reborn no more than once;
- *non-returning*—which cuts the fetters of sensual passion and irritation—ensuring that one will reappear in the highest heavens, called the Pure Abodes, there to obtain Unbinding, never to return to this world; and
- *Arahantship*—which cuts the fetters of passion for form, passion for formlessness, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance—bringing total freedom from the

cycle of rebirth.

In all four levels, the basic dynamic is the same: virtue, concentration, and discernment bring the mind skillfully to a state of “non-fashioning” (*atammayata*) [§179] where all present input into the cycle of kamma is suspended. This state of non-fashioning then opens the way for the experience of the Unfabricated. To put this in terms of the two knowledges that constitute Awakening, the skillful mastery of the processes of kamma to the point of non-fashioning corresponds to the knowledge of the regularity of the Dhamma; the experience of the Unfabricated corresponds to the knowledge of Unbinding.

Although all four levels require mature levels of the path factors of virtue, concentration, and discernment to bring about the two knowledges that constitute Awakening, they differ in the relative maturity of the path factors that lead up to them. Stream-entry occurs at the full maturation of virtue; non-returning, at the full maturation of concentration; and Arahantship, at the full maturation of discernment [AN 3:88; MFU, pp. 103]. Thus they also differ in the depth to which they penetrate the two knowledges of Awakening and in their ability to cut the fetters that perpetuate bondage to the cycle of kamma and rebirth. The texts report a few cases where meditators go straight through all four levels to the level of Arahantship, but in most cases the meditator will pass through the four levels step-by-step, sometimes over course of many years or even several lifetimes.

In this book, except where otherwise noted, discussions of the Awakening experience as described in the discourses focus on the level where virtue, concentration, and discernment are all fully mature, the Awakening total, and the resulting freedom absolutely unlimited. This is the point where all seven sets of the Wings to Awakening ultimately aim.

§ 18. Pahārāda, just as the ocean has these many treasures of various kinds—pearls, sapphires, lapis lazuli, shells, quartz, coral, silver, gold, rubies, & cat’s eyes—in the same way, this doctrine & discipline has these many treasures of various kinds: the four frames of reference, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, the noble eightfold path. This is the seventh wonder & marvel... that the monks, having seen again & again in this doctrine & discipline, delight in.

AN 8:19

§ 19. Then [after relinquishing the will to continue fabricating his life processes] the Blessed One went to the audience hall and on arrival sat down on the seat prepared for him. When he was seated, he addressed the monks: ‘The qualities I have pointed out, having known them directly: You should grasp them thoroughly, cultivate them, develop them, & pursue them so that this holy life may long endure & remain steadfast for the benefit, welfare, & happiness of the multitude, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, & happiness of human & celestial beings. And what are those qualities? The four frames of reference, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, the noble eightfold path. These

are the qualities I have pointed out, having known them directly, that you should grasp thoroughly, cultivate, develop, & pursue... for the benefit, welfare, & happiness of human & celestial beings.' Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, 'I exhort you, monks: All fabrications are subject to decay. Bring about completion by means of heedfulness. It will not be long before the Tathāgata's total Unbinding. He will attain total Unbinding in three month's time.'

That is what the Blessed One said. Then... he said further:

Young & old
wise & foolish
rich & poor:
all end up dying.

As a potter's clay vessels
large & small
fired & unfired
all end up broken,
so too life
heads to death.

Then the Teacher said further:

Ripe my age, little the life
remaining to me.

Leaving you, I will go,
having made a refuge
for myself.

Be heedful, monks,
mindful, virtuous.

With your resolves well-concentrated,
look after your minds.

He who, in this
doctrine & discipline,
remains heedful,
leaving the round
of birth,
will make an end
of stress.

DN 16

§ 20. Suppose a hen has eight, ten, or twelve eggs: If she doesn't cover them rightly, warm them rightly, or incubate them rightly, then even though this wish may occur to her—'O that my chicks might break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely!'—still it is not possible that the chicks will break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely. Why is that? Because the hen has not covered them rightly, warmed them rightly, or incubated them rightly. In the same way, even though this wish may occur to a monk who dwells without devoting himself to

development—‘O that my mind might be released from effluents through lack of clinging!’—still his mind is not released from the effluents through lack of clinging. Why is that? From lack of developing, it should be said. Lack of developing what? The four frames of reference, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, the noble eightfold path....

But suppose a hen has eight, ten, or twelve eggs that she covers rightly, warms rightly, & incubates rightly: Even though this wish may not occur to her—‘O that my chicks might break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely!’—still it is possible that the chicks will break through the egg shells with their spiked claws or beaks and hatch out safely. Why is that? Because the hen has covered them, warmed them, & incubated them rightly. In the same way, even though this wish may not occur to a monk who dwells devoting himself to development—‘O that my mind might be released from effluents through lack of clinging!’—still his mind is released from the effluents through lack of clinging. Why is that? From developing, it should be said. Developing what? The four frames of reference, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, the noble eightfold path.

Just as when a carpenter or carpenter’s apprentice sees the marks of his fingers or thumb on the handle of his adze but does not know, ‘Today my adze handle wore down this much, or yesterday it wore down that much, or the day before yesterday it wore down this much,’ still he knows it is worn through when it is worn through. In the same way, when a monk dwells devoting himself to development, he does not know, ‘Today my effluents wore down this much, or yesterday they wore down that much, or the day before yesterday they wore down this much,’ still he knows they are worn through when they are worn through.

Just as when an ocean-going ship, rigged with masts & stays, after six months on the water, is left on shore for the winter: Its stays, weathered by the heat & wind, moistened by the clouds of the rainy season, easily wither & rot away. In the same way, when a monk dwells devoting himself to development, his fetters easily wither & rot away.

AN7:68

§ 21. A certain monk went to his preceptor and on arrival said to him, ‘My body, sir, now feels like it’s drugged. I’ve lost my bearings. Things are unclear to me. Sloth & drowsiness surround my mind at all times. I am unhappy in leading the holy life. I have doubts about mental qualities [or: things—*dhammas*].’

Then the preceptor, taking his student, went to see the Buddha [and told him what his student had said. The Buddha replied:]

‘That’s the way it is for a person who doesn’t guard the doors to his sense faculties, who doesn’t know moderation in eating, who isn’t devoted to wakefulness, who doesn’t clearly understand skillful qualities, and who isn’t devoted day after day to the development of the wings to Awakening.... Thus you should train yourself, monk: “I will guard my senses, will know moderation

in eating, will devote myself to wakefulness, will clearly understand skillful qualities, and will devote myself day after day to the development of the wings to awakening.” That’s how you should train yourself.’

Then the monk, having received this instruction from the Blessed One, got up from his seat, bowed down, circled the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, and then went away. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing it & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew, ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.’ And thus he became another one of the Arahants.

AN 5:56

§ 22. Endowed with three qualities, a monk is one who follows the way that cannot be faulted and he has aroused the basis for ending the effluents. Which three? There is the case where a monk guards the doors to his sense faculties, knows moderation in eating, & is devoted to wakefulness.

And how does a monk guard the doors to his sense faculties? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. [Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body & intellect.] This is how a monk guards the doors to his sense faculties.

And how does a monk know moderation in eating? There is the case where a monk, considering it appropriately, takes his food not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification, but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, ‘I will destroy old feelings (of hunger) & not create new feelings (from overeating). Thus I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.’ This is how a monk knows moderation in eating.

And how is a monk devoted to wakefulness? There is the case where a monk during the day, sitting & pacing back & forth, cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. During the first watch of the night [dusk to 10 p.m.], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. During the second watch of the night [10 p.m. to 2 a.m.], reclining on his right side, he takes up the lion’s posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with his mind set on getting up [either as soon as he awakens or at a particular time]. During the last watch of the night [2 a.m. to dawn], sitting & pacing back & forth, he cleanses his mind of any qualities that would hold the mind in check. This is how a monk is devoted to wakefulness.

Endowed with these three qualities, a monk is one who follows the way that cannot be faulted and he has aroused the basis for ending the effluents.

AN 3:16

§ 23. Monks, if wanderers who are members of other sects should ask you, 'What, friend, are the prerequisites for the development of the wings to self-awakening?'... you should answer, 'There is the case where a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues. This is the first prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

'Furthermore, the monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. This is the second prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

'Furthermore, he gets to hear at will, easily & without difficulty, talk that is truly sobering & conducive to the opening of awareness, i.e., talk on having few wants, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-entanglement, on arousing persistence, on virtue, on concentration, on discernment, on release, and on the knowledge & vision of release. This is the third prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

'Furthermore, he keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and for taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. This is the fourth prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.

'Furthermore, he is discerning, endowed with the discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. This is the fifth prerequisite for the development of the wings to self-awakening.'

Monks, when a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, it is to be expected that he will be virtuous, will dwell restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity, and will train himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults.

When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, & colleagues, it is to be expected that he will get to hear at will, easily & without difficulty, talk that is truly sobering and conducive to the opening of awareness, i.e., talk on having few wants, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-entanglement, on arousing persistence, on virtue, on concentration, on discernment, on release, and on the knowledge & vision of release... that he will keep his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities, and for taking on skillful mental qualities—steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities... that he will be discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

And furthermore, monks, when the monk is established in these five qualities, there are four additional qualities he should develop: He should develop (contemplation of) the unattractive so as to abandon lust. He should develop good will so as to abandon ill will. He should develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing so as to cut off distractive thinking. He should develop the perception of inconstancy so as to uproot the conceit, 'I am.' For a monk perceiving inconstancy, the perception of not-self is made firm. One perceiving not-self attains the uprooting of the conceit, 'I am'—Unbinding in the here & now.

AN9:1

§ 24. These three divine sounds sound forth among the devas on appropriate occasions. Which three? When a disciple of the noble ones, shaving off his hair & beard, clothing himself in the ochre robe, makes up his mind to go forth from the home life into homelessness, on that occasion the divine sound sounds forth among the devas: ‘This disciple of the noble ones has made up his mind to do battle with Māra’....

When a disciple of the noble ones lives engaged in developing the seven (sets of) qualities that are wings to awakening, on that occasion the divine sound sounds forth among the devas: ‘This disciple of the noble ones is doing battle with Māra’....

When a disciple of the noble ones, through the ending of effluents dwells in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now, on that occasion the divine sound sounds forth among the devas: ‘This disciple of the noble ones has won the battle. Having been in the front lines of the battle, he now dwells victorious’.... These are the three divine sounds that sound forth among the devas on appropriate occasions.

Iti 82

§ 25. A monk who has admirable virtue, admirable qualities, & admirable discernment is called, in this doctrine & discipline, one who is complete, fulfilled, supreme among men.

And how is a monk a person with admirable virtue? There is the case where a monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults. In this way a monk is a person with admirable virtue. Thus he is of admirable virtue.

And how is a monk a person with admirable qualities? There is the case where a monk lives engaged in developing of the seven (sets of) qualities that are wings to awakening. In this way a monk is a person with admirable qualities. Thus he is of admirable virtue & admirable qualities.

And how is a monk a person with admirable discernment? There is the case where a monk, through the ending of effluents, dwells in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. In this way a monk is a person with admirable discernment. Thus he is of admirable virtue, admirable qualities, admirable discernment. In this doctrine & discipline he is called one who is complete, fulfilled, supreme among men.

Devoid of wrong-doing
in thought, word, or deed,
he’s called a person of admirable virtue:
the monk conscientious.

Well-developed in the qualities

that go to the attainment of self-awakening,
 he's called a person of admirable qualities:
 the monk unassuming.

Discerning right here for himself,
 in himself,
 the ending of stress
 he's called a person of admirable discernment:
 the monk without effluent.

Consummate in these things,
 untroubled, with doubt cut away,
 unattached in all the world,
 he's said to have abandoned
 the All.

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B. THE FOUR FRAMES OF REFERENCE

The four frames of reference (*satipatthana*) are a set of teachings that show where a meditator should focus attention and how. This dual role—the “where” and the “how”—is reflected in the fact that the term *satipatthana* can be explained etymologically in two ways. On the one hand, it can be regarded as a compound of *sati* (mindfulness, reference, the ability to keep something in mind) and *patthana* (foundation, condition, source), thus referring to the **object** kept in mind as a frame of reference for giving context to one's experience. Alternatively, *satipatthana* can be seen as a compound of *sati* and *upatthana* (establishing near, setting near), thus referring to the **approach** (the *how*) of keeping something closely in mind, of establishing and maintaining a solid frame of reference. Scholars are divided as to which interpretation is right, but for all practical purposes they both are. The Buddha was more a poet than a strict etymologist, and he may have deliberately chosen an ambiguous term that would have fruitful meanings on more than one level. In the practice of the frames of reference, both the proper object and the proper approach are crucial for getting the proper results. In fact, as we shall see, the taking of a proper object entails the beginning of the proper approach, and the approach ends by taking as its objects the qualities of mind developed in the course of pursuing the approach itself. In other words, as we mentioned in the Introduction concerning the Buddha's Awakening, the “what” merges with the “how” as the “how” of the investigation ultimately becomes what gets investigated.

The texts give two different pictures of the role that the frames of reference play in the practice. Some [§§33, 34, 36] state that developing the frames of reference is a precondition for jhana, which then forms a basis for transcendent discernment. Others [§§27, 43] make no mention of jhana, stating that one goes directly from the frames of reference to the transcendent. On the surface, this would seem to indicate that there are two alternate paths: one with and one without jhana. This reading, though, contradicts the many passages maintaining that jhana is necessary for the development of transcendent discernment [§§165, 166, 171, 173, 178; some of these passages simply say “concentration” instead of jhana, but there seems to be

every reason to assume that concentration here means right concentration, which is nothing other than jhana]. Thus we must look for an alternative reading, and we find one suggested by passages indicating that the development of the frames of reference implicitly entails the full development of the seven factors for Awakening. Because these factors are closely associated with jhana, this would indicate that the proper development of the frames of reference necessarily incorporates, in and of itself, the practice of jhana.

This reading is confirmed by §29, which states that the way to develop the frames of reference is through the noble eightfold path, which includes jhana. It is also confirmed by §31, which describes how the frames of reference relate to the sixteen steps of breath meditation. As we shall see in III/E, these sixteen steps are also a description of how jhana is developed and then used as a vehicle for fostering discernment and ending the effluents of the mind. Thus, we can view the outline of frames-of-reference practice as a description of the stages in the mindful mastery of jhana and its application to the ending of the effluents.

The proper objects that act as frames of reference are four: the body in and of itself, feelings in and of themselves, the mind in and of itself, and mental qualities in and of themselves. The “in and of itself” here is important. To take the body as a frame of reference in this way, for instance, means that one views it not in terms of its function in the world—for then the world would be the frame of reference—but simply on its own terms, as it is directly experienced. In other words, one is not concerned with its relative worth or utility in terms of the values of the world—its beauty, strength, agility, etc.—but simply how it appears when regarded in and of itself.

The four objects that act as frames of reference fall into two classes. The first class—the body, feelings, and the mind—act as the “given” objects of meditation practice: what experience presents, on its own, as an object for meditation. The meditator takes any one of these objects as a frame of reference, relating all of experience to his/her chosen frame. For example, although one will experience feelings and mind states in the course of taking the body as a frame of reference, one tries to relate them to the experience of the body as their primary frame. A feeling is viewed as it affects the body, or the body affects it. The same holds for a mind state. An analogy for this practice is holding an object in one’s hand. When other objects come into contact with the hand, one is aware that they are making contact, but one does not let go of the object in one’s hand in order to grasp after them.

The second class of objects—mental qualities (*dhamma*)—denotes the qualities of mind that are developed and abandoned as one masters the meditation. The list of “dhammas” given in §30 would seem to belie the translation “mental qualities” here, as they include not only the five hindrances and seven factors for Awakening, which are obviously mental qualities, but also the five aggregates, the six sense media, and the four noble truths, which would seem to fit better with another meaning of the word *dhamma*, i.e., “phenomena.” However, if we look more closely at each of these other classes, we will see that they actually deal with variant forms of abandoning the hindrances and developing the factors for Awakening. The section on the sense media focuses less on the media than on the abandoning of the fetters—passion and delight (SN 41:1; MFU pp. 52-53)—associated with those media. The section on the aggregates describes a state of practice that is elsewhere

[§149] identified as a developed form of concentration, in which the aggregates that comprise the state of jhana form the object of analysis [§173]. The section on the noble truths describes a state of practice that elsewhere [§169] is said to require the sort of mental stability and clarity found only in jhana. Thus all the approaches to “dhammas in and of themselves” would appear to be variations on the abandoning of the hindrances and the development of the factors for Awakening. Because the stated function of the frames of reference is to bring about the culmination of the factors for Awakening, and through them the development of clear knowing and release [§92], the translation of *dhamma* as “mental quality” seems an appropriate way to keep that function in mind and to avoid getting lost in the details of its different aspects.

There is historical support for this interpretation as well. The Vibhanga, an ancient Abhidhamma text, includes only the hindrances and the factors for Awakening in its discussion of this heading. The same holds true with the Sarvastivadin version of this discourse, preserved in Chinese translation. Scholars have questioned whether these two texts should be taken as evidence that the original discussion of *dhamma* here included only these two topics. The issue is impossible to decide from the texts available to us, but a case can be made for concluding that, regardless of what the original version may have been, the early tradition regarded the abandoning of the hindrances and the development of the factors for Awakening as encompassing all the factors that might be included under this heading.

Each of the four objects of mindfulness is said to be sufficient for bringing about Awakening [§44]. This point is easy to understand if we look at the approach taken to each of the objects, for then it becomes clear that the approach ultimately involves the development of mental qualities in and of themselves, regardless of what object is first taken up for meditation.

That approach falls into three stages. **The first stage**—here taking the body as an example—is simply called the frame of reference [§29]:

There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

Four terms in this passage are key. “Remaining focused” (*anupassin*) can also be translated as “keeping track.” This denotes the element of concentration in the practice, as one tries to stay with one particular theme in the midst of the welter of experience. “Ardent” (*atapi*) denotes the factor of effort or exertion in the practice; the Commentary equates this with right exertion, which contains an element of discernment in its ability to distinguish skillful from unskillful mental qualities. “Alert” (*sampajano*) means being clearly aware of what is happening in the present. This, too, relates to discernment. “Mindful” (*satima*) literally means being able to remember or recollect. Here it means keeping one’s task in mind. The task here is a dual one—remaining focused on one’s frame of reference, and putting aside the distractions of greed and distress that would come from shifting one’s frame of reference back to the world. In other words, one tries to stay with the phenomenology of immediate experience, without slipping back into the narratives and world views that make up one’s sense of the world. In essence, this is a concentration practice, with the three qualities of ardency, alertness, and

mindfulness devoted to attaining concentration. Mindfulness keeps the theme of the meditation in mind, alertness observes the theme as it is present to awareness, and also is aware of when the mind has slipped from its theme. Mindfulness then remembers where the mind should be focused, and ardency tries to return the mind to its proper theme—and to keep it there—as quickly and skillfully as possible. In this way, these three qualities help to seclude the mind from sensual preoccupations and unskillful mental qualities, thus bringing it to the first jhana.

Passage §33 confirms this reading by equating the successful performance of this first stage in the practice with the first jhana, whereas §§35-36 give advice on how to bring the mind to concentration if this method does not work: focus on the problem of the mind's not settling down, and bring the mind to an inspiring theme that will accomplish the desired end.

When the method does work, §33 describes the next step as a variation on the basic exercise:

Remain focused on the body in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with the body.

This, it says, takes the mind to the second jhana, where directed thoughts and evaluations are abandoned. From there the mind can go up to the third jhana and the fourth [§72].

These points may be illustrated with some meditation techniques that are currently popular in the West: In a “mental noting” practice, mindfulness is a matter of remembering to keep up the noting, alertness means seeing whatever phenomena arise to be noted, and ardency is a matter of sticking with the noting relentlessly and being ever more quick and precise in one's alertness. In terms of the factors constituting jhana practice, the mindfulness and alertness here would be related to directed thought, ardency to singleness of preoccupation, while alertness aimed at evaluating the results of the noting—and ardency in keeping the “pressure” of the noting just right—would be related to evaluation. If this practice is then conducted in line with the texts, it should reach a stage where the mind settles down into the singleness of the first jhana. Then the meditator would be encouraged to stop the noting, so that the mind could engage in the subtler mindfulness and alertness leading to the second jhana.

In a “scanning” or “body sweep” practice, mindfulness means remembering to stick with the process of scanning the body, while alertness would mean seeing the subtle sensations of the body being scanned. Ardency would mean sticking with the scanning process and trying to be ever more sensitive to the subtlest sensations. As in the previous case, these activities are related to factors of jhana, and the process, if conducted in line with the texts, should culminate in a state of full-bodied singleness, at which time the motion of the scanning can be brought to stillness, and the mind can enter deeper concentration.

In “breath” practice, mindfulness means keeping the breath in mind as the theme of the meditation, alertness means being sensitive to the sensations of the breath. Ardency means sticking with the process relentlessly, as well as taking up the stages of “training” [§31; III/E], in which one tries to be aware of the entire body with each in and out breath, and to let the breath sensations grow calm. In terms of jhana factors, mindfulness would be related to directed thought, alertness to evaluation, and ardency to singleness of preoccupation. As awareness fills the body

and the breath grows calm, one's alertness stays steadily with the breath, and the mind enters the singleness of jhana. At this point, one no longer needs consciously to direct the mind to the breath or to enlarge one's awareness any further. Thus the mind, as above, can develop subtler mindfulness and alertness to enter the second jhana.

According to §32, once concentration has been established on one's own body in this way, it may give rise to a similar "knowledge and vision" of the bodies of other people. Knowledge and vision, here, seems to denote intuitive knowledge through the psychic powers that some people develop through concentration. If used properly, this knowledge can help develop a sense of dispassion toward the processes of existence, as one sees that all bodies, even the most desirable, are subject to the same common shortcomings of being inconstant, stressful, and not-self.

Whether one pursues this meditation with one's own body or the bodies of others, it comes under the first stage of practice, as indicated by the following phrase:

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself.

Once the first stage has produced a solid state of concentration, **the second stage**—the development of the frame of reference [§29]—can begin:

One remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body.

The "phenomenon of origination and passing away" covers three sorts of events: conditioned occurrences in the object that forms one's frame of reference itself (in this case, the body); events in the other two "object" frames of reference (feelings and mind); or events in the "approach" frame of reference, i.e., the mental qualities that are developed in (or interfere with) the process of taking a frame of reference to begin with. For instance, when focused on the body, one may notice the arising and passing away of breath sensations in the body. Or one might notice the arising and passing away of feelings of pleasure or mental states of irritation while one remains anchored in the body. Or one might notice lapses of mindfulness in one's focus on the body.

In each of these cases, if the origination and passing away is of neutral events, such as the aggregates, one is directed simply to be aware of them as events and to let them follow their natural course unimpeded so as to see what factors accompany them and lead to their origination. As for events connected with the presence or absence of skillfulness, however, one is encouraged to manipulate and experiment with them so as to observe and further understand their causal interrelationships. This will enable one to become skillful in maximizing skillful mental qualities and minimizing unskillful ones. In other words, one develops insight into the process of origination and passing away by taking an active and sensitive role in the process, just as one learns about eggs by trying to cook with them, gathering experience from one's successes and failures in attempting increasingly difficult dishes.

The need for active participation in the practice explains why meditation must begin by mastering a particular technique, rather than passively watching whatever may arise in the present. The technique gives shape to one's present input into the present moment and makes one more sensitive to this aspect of this/that conditionality. It also provides an active context for appreciating mental qualities as they help or hinder one's success in the technique. Eventually, when one's sensitivity is sufficiently well developed, one can go beyond the technique to explore and master the process of causality as it functions in developing skillful qualities in the mind.

This process can be illustrated with the passage devoted to equanimity. In the first step, as one is still in the beginning stages of observing the mind in its attempts at meditation, one simply discerns the presence and absence of equanimity.

There is the case where, there being equanimity as a factor for Awakening present within, he discerns that 'Equanimity as a factor for Awakening is present within me.' Or, there being no equanimity as a factor for Awakening present within, he discerns that 'Equanimity as a factor for Awakening is not present within me.'

In watching the course of this arising and passing away as one tries to bring the mind to the equanimity of jhana, one should begin to see patterns of cause and effect in what does and doesn't work. This enables one skillfully to give rise to equanimity even when it is not present of its own accord, and—once it is present—can strengthen it until it reaches the point of utmost development:

He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for Awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of equanimity as a factor for Awakening once it has arisen.

A similar process is recommended for events in the "object" frames of reference. This is shown by the standard description of the sixteen steps of breath meditation [§31]. One trains oneself to breathe conscious of the entire body, or to breathe sensitive to feelings of rapture and pleasure, as this training fosters the factors of jhana. One trains oneself to satisfy, steady, and release the mind, as this training brings mastery over the stages of jhana. Passage §179 makes a similar point, directing the meditator to replace unskillful forms of distress, joy, and equanimity with more skillful versions of the same emotions, and then replacing skillful distress with skillful joy, and skillful joy with skillful equanimity.

As this process leads to stronger and more refined states of concentration, it refines one's sensitivity to the fact that the grosser one's participation in the process of origination and passing away in the mind, the grosser the level of stress that results. This leads one to let go of the grosser levels of one's participation as one is able to detect them. This can have one of two results. (1) It may lead to even more refined states of concentration, as one abandons the factors that obscure equanimity, or as one focuses one's equanimity on ever more refined objects. (2) Or, as one becomes able to focus on the activity involved even in refining equanimity, one comes to realize that it, too, is a process of input into the present, fabricated for the sake of non-becoming [§182]. Thus, as a sense of dispassion develops toward equanimity, one goes beyond it to the state of non-fashioning (*atammayata*) [§179], through **the third and final stage** of frames-of-reference practice:

Or his mindfulness that ‘There is a body (feeling, mind, mental quality)’ is maintained (simply) to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains independent, unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world.

This stage corresponds to a mode of perception that the Buddha in MN 121 terms “entry into emptiness”:

Thus he regards it [this mode of perception] as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: “there is this.”

This is the culminating equipoise where the path of the practice leads unmediated to a state of non-fashioning and from there to the fruit of Awakening and release.

Some meditators, reading the two preceding passages, try to step immediately to the stage of non-fashioning without first having gained the inner sensitivity to cause and effect, action and non-action, that comes from developing concentration. In practice, though, this doesn’t work. Only through that sensitivity can the basic causal relationships of dependent co-arising and this/that conditionality be discovered. This discovery is needed to give rise to a sense of dispassion, as one grows more and more disenchanted with the inconstant and artificial nature of all mental phenomena and develops a strong desire to gain release from them. It is also needed to uncover the precise point of non-fashioning between becoming and non-becoming where that release can be found.

As we shall see in later sections (in particular, III/E and III/H), the basic pattern of the three stages in frames-of-reference meditation—

- focusing on events in and of themselves in the present moment,
- understanding their causal relationships with other events by learning to manipulate them skillfully, and then
- arriving at a state of fully developed equipoise, transcending even one’s skill, free from any present input into the causal network—

is basic to all aspects of Buddhist meditation practice. Among other things, it underlies the stages in breath meditation, the mastery of concentration, and the strategy of discernment leading to the transcendent. Thus it should be kept firmly in mind when reading passages not only in this section but also throughout the entire book.

The texts contained in this section, for the most part, provide added details to the outline sketched here. For example, §§45-46 provide a variation on stage two by showing how mindfulness can be developed into equanimity by manipulating perceptions, viewing loathsome objects as unloathsome, and unloathsome objects as loathsome, etc. Anyone attempting these perception games needs firm powers of concentration and sharp discernment so as not to become obsessed with perceptual distortions (*sañña vipallasa*). If handled properly, though, the process of manipulation gives important insights into the way the mind labels its objects, and can drive home lessons on the arbitrary nature of perception and the need not to be deceived by it.

The same point holds true for the contemplation of body parts mentioned in §30. This contemplation has been denounced in Western circles for promoting a negative self-image, but here it is necessary to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy negative images of one’s own body. An unhealthy negative image is one

that views the bodies of other people as attractive, and one's own as unattractive. This is unhealthy in that it creates feelings of inferiority concerning one's own body, compounded by lust and desire for the bodies of others. A healthy negative image sees that all bodies, no matter how attractive, young, or healthy they may seem at the skin level, are composed of the very same parts, all equally unattractive. The livers and intestines of even the most attractive people, if paraded down a walkway, would never capture a title in a beauty contest; if featured in an advertisement, they wouldn't sell. Thus there is no real reason to feel that one's body is inherently inferior to theirs. This perception of the equality of all bodies, if handled properly, is healthy in that it helps liberate one not only from feelings of inferiority and superiority, but also from the disease of lust and desire, promoting a sense of dispassion toward lustful thoughts in general.

As this theme of contemplation is developed through hands-on manipulation of one's perception of the body, it enables one to realize that, when reduced to their simple "bodyness," as bodies in and of themselves, all bodies are on a par, and that questions of attractiveness and unattractiveness derive ultimately from the context of one's frame of reference. One sees that the obstacles to equanimity and higher insights in the practice are not so much the objects of lust or hatred as they are the terms and contexts in which those objects are perceived. This insight can form the basis for perceptual skills that can act as a very liberating antidote to the mind's tendency to self-delusion.

One passage contained here that does not deal with the stages of frames-of-reference meditation is §47. This passage focuses on a charge that has been often leveled at Early Buddhism: that the practice it recommends is essentially selfish, in that one is striving simply for one's own welfare. The Buddha answers this charge by denying any radical distinction between one's own true welfare and that of others. To work for the true welfare of others is to work for one's own true welfare; to work for one's own is to work for theirs. The first point can be illustrated by a number of passages in this collection—showing, for example, how expressions of gratitude to one's parents can foster one's own true happiness [§§123, 124], how support for contemplatives enables one to hear the Dhamma [§128], how virtuous conduct toward other people and their possessions strengthens mindfulness [§27], and how attitudes of good will, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity foster concentration and release the mind from obstructive mental qualities [§98]. Thus, the quality of one's assistance to others cannot help but have an effect on the development of one's own mind.

As for the reverse dynamic—the way in which working for one's own welfare also works for the welfare of others—the Buddha illustrates this point with a perceptive analogy for the interaction of living beings: two acrobats balancing on the end of a pole. If one acrobat loses balance, both will fall. For both to stay balanced, each must maintain his or her own balance. This analogy indicates that the act of developing good qualities in one's own mind is, in itself, an act of kindness to others. One protects them from the detrimental effects of one's uncontrolled anger, etc., and exposes them to the beneficial effects of one's own mindfulness, equanimity, and other skillful qualities. Thus it is not possible to practice the frames of reference properly without the rest of the world's benefiting to a greater or lesser degree. And in a world where no one can keep the balance of another person, the example of one's own skill in keeping balance is an instructive gift for those with the eyes to see and the intelligence to take one's example to heart.

Once one has attained full Awakening and needs to do nothing more for one's own welfare, one continues to act for the welfare of others within the framework of three frames of reference (or "establishings of mindfulness") [S179], different from the four discussed in this section. The three are: the ability to remain (1) untroubled, mindful, and alert when others do not respond to one's teachings; (2) equanimous, mindful, and alert when some do and some do not respond to one's teachings; and (3) untroubled, mindful, and alert when others do respond to one's teachings. In other words, one's mental balance is so firm that others' success or failure in responding to one's help cannot disturb the mind. It is only in this context—the three frames of reference following full Awakening—that the Buddha allows for the possibility of helping others with no thought for one's own welfare, for at that point one's true welfare has no further needs. The Awakened person lives out the remainder of his/her life, insofar as his/her kamma allows, for "the welfare of the many, the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world" [Mv.I.11.1].

§ 26. Imagine a tree devoid of branches & leaves: Its buds don't grow to maturity, its bark doesn't grow to maturity, its sapwood doesn't grow to maturity, its heartwood doesn't grow to maturity. In the same way, when—there being no mindfulness or alertness—a person is devoid of mindfulness or alertness, the prerequisite for a sense of shame & compunction becomes spoiled. There being no sense of shame & compunction... the prerequisite for restraint of the senses becomes spoiled. There being no restraint of the senses... the prerequisite for virtue becomes spoiled. There being no virtue... the prerequisite for right concentration becomes spoiled. There being no right concentration... the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be becomes spoiled. There being no knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be, the prerequisite for disenchantment & dispassion becomes spoiled. There being no disenchantment & dispassion, the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of release becomes spoiled....

Now imagine a tree abundant in its branches & leaves: Its buds grow to maturity, its bark grows to maturity, its sapwood grows to maturity, its heartwood grows to maturity. In the same way, when—there being mindfulness & alertness—a person is abundant in mindfulness & alertness, the prerequisite for a sense of shame & compunction becomes abundant. There being a sense of shame & compunction... the prerequisite for restraint of the senses becomes abundant. There being restraint of the senses... the prerequisite for virtue becomes abundant. There being virtue... the prerequisite for right concentration becomes abundant. There being right concentration... the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be becomes abundant. There being knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be, the prerequisite for disenchantment & dispassion becomes abundant. There being disenchantment & dispassion, the prerequisite for knowledge & vision of release becomes abundant.

AN 8:81

§ 27. Ven. Uttiya: It would be good, Venerable Sir, if the Blessed One would teach

me the Dhamma in brief so that, having heard the Dhamma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute.

The Buddha: In that case, Uttiya, you should purify what is most basic with regard to skillful mental qualities. And what is the basis of skillful mental qualities? Well-purified virtue & views made straight. Then, when your virtue is well-purified and your views made straight, in dependence on virtue, established in virtue, you should develop the four frames of reference.... Then, when in dependence on virtue, relying on virtue, you develop the four frames of reference, you will go beyond the realm of Death.

SN 47:16

§ 28. Mindful & Alert. Stay mindful, monks, and alert. This is our instruction to you all. And how is a monk mindful? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world [§213]. This is how a monk is mindful.

And how is a monk alert? There is the case where feelings are known to the monk as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they persist, known as they subside. Discernment [vi: perception] is known to him as it arises, known as it persists, known as it subsides. This is how a monk is alert. So stay mindful, monks, and alert. This is our instruction to you all.

SN 47:35

§ 29. Analysis. I will teach you the frames of reference, their development, and the path of practice leading to their development. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.

Now, what are the frames of reference? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. These are called the frames of reference.

And what is the development of the frames of reference? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to feelings... with regard to the mind... with regard to mental qualities, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to mental qualities, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to

mental qualities—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called the development of the frames of reference.

And what is the path of practice to the development of the frames of reference? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called the path of practice to the development of the frames of reference.

SN 47:40

§ 30. In Detail. This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of Unbinding—in other words, the four frames of reference. Which four?

There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world [§213]. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

BODY

And how does the monk remain focused on the body in & of itself?

[a] There is the case where a monk—having gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building—sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect and setting mindfulness to the fore [*parimukham*: in the Abhidhamma, this is translated literally as “around the mouth”; in the Vinaya, the same term is used to mean the front of the chest]. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’ Or breathing in short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in short’; or breathing out short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out short.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication [the in-&-out breath].’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.’ Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, discerns, ‘I am making a long turn’; or when making a short turn discerns, ‘I am making a short turn’; in the same way the monk, when breathing in long, discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long’.... He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.’

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that ‘There is a body’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the

world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[b] Furthermore, when walking, the monk discerns, 'I am walking.' When standing, he discerns, 'I am standing.' When sitting, he discerns, 'I am sitting.' When lying down, he discerns, 'I am lying down.' Or however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it.

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

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

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[d] Furthermore... just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain—wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice—and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, 'This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice,' in the same way, monks, a monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.' [S66]

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

[e] Furthermore... just as a skilled butcher or his apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it up into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body—however it stands, however it is disposed—in terms of properties: 'In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property.'

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

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

Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, & various other creatures... a skeleton smeared with flesh & blood, connected with tendons... a fleshless

skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons... a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons... bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions—here a hand bone, there a foot bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone, here a hip bone, there a back bone, here a rib, there a chest bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw bone, there a tooth, here a skull... the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells... piled up, more than a year old... decomposed into a powder: He applies it to this very body, 'This body, too: Such is its nature, such is its future, such its unavoidable fate.'

In this way he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, or externally on the body in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the body in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a body' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself.

FEELINGS

And how does a monk remain focused on feelings in & of themselves? There is the case where a monk, when feeling a painful feeling, discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling.' When feeling a pleasant feeling, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.'

When feeling a painful feeling of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling of the flesh.' When feeling a painful feeling not of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a painful feeling not of the flesh.' When feeling a pleasant feeling of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling of the flesh.' When feeling a pleasant feeling not of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a pleasant feeling not of the flesh.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling of the flesh.' When feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of the flesh, he discerns, 'I am feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling not of the flesh.'

In this way he remains focused internally on feelings in & of themselves, or externally on feelings in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on feelings in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to feelings, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to feelings, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to feelings. Or his mindfulness that 'There are feelings' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on feelings in & of themselves.

MIND

And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in & of itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns that the mind has passion. When the mind is without passion, he discerns that the mind is without

passion. When the mind has aversion, he discerns that the mind has aversion. When the mind is without aversion, he discerns that the mind is without aversion. When the mind has delusion, he discerns that the mind has delusion. When the mind is without delusion, he discerns that the mind is without delusion.

When the mind is constricted, he discerns that the mind is constricted. When the mind is scattered, he discerns that the mind is scattered. [§66] When the mind is enlarged, he discerns that the mind is enlarged. [§150] When the mind is not enlarged, he discerns that the mind is not enlarged. When the mind is surpassed, he discerns that the mind is surpassed. When the mind is unsurpassed, he discerns that the mind is unsurpassed. When the mind is concentrated, he discerns that the mind is concentrated. When the mind is not concentrated, he discerns that the mind is not concentrated. When the mind is released, he discerns that the mind is released. When the mind is not released, he discerns that the mind is not released.

In this way he remains focused internally on the mind in & of itself, or externally on the mind in & of itself, or both internally & externally on the mind in & of itself. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the mind, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the mind, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the mind. Or his mindfulness that 'There is a mind' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on the mind in & of itself.

MENTAL QUALITIES

And how does a monk remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves?

[a] There is the case where a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the five hindrances*. And how does a monk remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the five hindrances? There is the case where, there being sensual desire present within, a monk discerns, 'There is sensual desire present within me.' Or, there being no sensual desire present within, he discerns, 'There is no sensual desire present within me.' He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen sensual desire. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of sensual desire once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further arising in the future of sensual desire that has been abandoned. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining hindrances: ill will, sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty.]

In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or externally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on mental qualities in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to mental qualities, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to mental qualities, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to mental qualities. Or his mindfulness that 'There are mental qualities' is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the five hindrances. [§§131-147; 159]

[b] Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the five clinging-aggregates*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the five clinging-aggregates? There is the case where a monk (discerns), ‘Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. Such is feeling... Such is perception... Such are fabrications... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.’

In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the five clinging-aggregates. [§§149; 170; 173; 199-207]

[c] Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the sixfold internal & external sense media*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal & external sense media? There is the case where he discerns the eye, he discerns forms, he discerns the fetter that arises dependent on both. He discerns how there is the arising of an unarisen fetter. And he discerns how there is the abandoning of a fetter once it has arisen. And he discerns how there is no further appearance in the future of a fetter that has been abandoned. [Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.]

In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or focused externally... unsustained by anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the sixfold internal & external sense media.

[d] Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the seven factors for Awakening*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for Awakening? There is the case where, there being mindfulness as a factor for Awakening present within, he discerns, ‘Mindfulness as a factor for Awakening is present within me.’ Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor of Awakening present within, he discerns, ‘Mindfulness as a factor for Awakening is not present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor for Awakening once it has arisen. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors for Awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, & equanimity.]

In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or externally... unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for Awakening.

[e] Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to *the four noble truths*. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the four noble truths? There is the case where he discerns, as it has come to be, that ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.’

In this way he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or externally on mental qualities in & of themselves, or both internally & externally on mental qualities in & of themselves. Or he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to mental qualities, on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to mental qualities, or on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to mental qualities. Or his mindfulness that ‘There are mental qualities’ is maintained to the extent of knowledge & recollection. And he remains unsustained by (not clinging to) anything in the world. This is how a monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the four noble truths. [§§184-240]

Now, if anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for seven years, then one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis [the knowledge of Awakening] right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging/sustenance—non-return.

Let alone seven years. If anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for six years... five... four... three... two years... one year... seven months... six months... five... four... three... two months... one month... half a month, then one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging/sustenance—non-return.

Let alone half a month. If anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for seven days, then one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging/sustenance—non-return.

‘This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of Unbinding—in other words, the four frames of reference.’ Thus was it said, and in reference to this was it said.

MN 10

§ 31. In practice. Now, how does mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, bring the four frames of reference to culmination?

On whatever occasion a monk breathing in long discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, discerns, ‘I am breathing out long’; or breathing in short, discerns, ‘I am breathing in short’; or breathing out short, discerns, ‘I am breathing out short’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to the entire body’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in...&...out calming bodily fabrication’: On that occasion the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—the in-&-out breath—is classed as a body among bodies, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, ‘I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to rapture’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to pleasure’; trains himself, ‘I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to mental fabrication’; trains himself,

'I will breathe in...&...out calming mental fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—close attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out gladdening the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out steadying the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out releasing the mind': On that occasion the monk remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I don't say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of confused mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on inconstancy'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on dispassion'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on cessation'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on relinquishment': On that occasion the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees clearly with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one who oversees with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four frames of reference to culmination.

MN 118

§ 32. Internal & External. There is the case where a monk remains focused internally on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused internally on the body in & of itself, he becomes rightly concentrated there, and rightly clear. Rightly concentrated there and rightly clear, he gives rise to knowledge & vision externally of the bodies of others.

He remains focused internally on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused internally on feelings in & of themselves, he becomes rightly concentrated there, and rightly clear. Rightly concentrated there and rightly clear, he gives rise to knowledge & vision externally of the feelings of others.

He remains focused internally on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused internally on the mind in & of itself, he becomes rightly concentrated there, and rightly clear. Rightly concentrated there and rightly clear,

he gives rise to knowledge & vision externally of the minds of others.

He remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused internally on mental qualities in & of themselves, he becomes rightly concentrated there, and rightly clear. Rightly concentrated there and rightly clear, he gives rise to knowledge & vision externally of the mental qualities of others.

DN 18

§ 33. Mindfulness & Concentration. Having abandoned the five hindrances—imperfections of awareness that weaken discernment—the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. Just as if an elephant trainer were to plant a large post in the ground and were to bind a forest elephant to it by the neck in order to break it of its forest habits, its forest memories & resolves, its distraction, fatigue, & fever over leaving the forest, to make it delight in the town and to inculcate in it habits congenial to human beings; in the same way, these four frames of reference are bindings for the awareness of the disciple of the noble ones, to break him of his household habits, his household memories & resolves, his distraction, fatigue, & fever over leaving the household life, for the attainment of the right method and the realization of Unbinding.

Then the Tathāgata trains him further: ‘Come, monk, remain focused on the body in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with the body. Remain focused on feelings in & of themselves, but do not think any thoughts connected with feelings. Remain focused on the mind in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with mind. Remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, but do not think any thoughts connected with mental qualities.’ With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters the second jhāna....

MN 125

§ 34. Monks, those who are new, not long gone-forth, only recently come to this doctrine & discipline, should be roused, encouraged, & exhorted by you to develop the four frames of reference (in this way):

‘Come, friends, remain focused on the body in & of itself—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded for knowledge of the body as it has come to be. Remain focused on feelings in & of themselves... on the mind in & of itself... on mental qualities in & of themselves—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded for knowledge of mental qualities as they have come to be.’

Monks, even those who are learners [streamwinners to non-returners]—who have yet to attain their hearts’ desire, who stay resolved on the unexcelled security from bondage—even they remain focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded for complete

comprehension of the body. They remain focused on feelings in & of themselves... on the mind in & of itself... on mental qualities in & of themselves—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded for complete comprehension of mental qualities.

Even those who are Arahants—whose mental effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis—even they remain focused on the body in & of itself—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded, disjoined from the body. They remain focused on feelings in & of themselves... on the mind in & of itself... on mental qualities in & of themselves—being ardent, alert, unified, clear-minded, concentrated, & single-minded, disjoined from mental qualities.

So even those who are new, not long gone-forth, only recently come to this doctrine & discipline, should be roused, encouraged, & exhorted by you to develop the four frames of reference (in this way).

SN 47:4

§ 35. Taking Note. Suppose that there is a foolish, inexperienced, unskillful cook who has presented a king or a king's minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He does not take note of [lit: pick up on the theme of] his master, thinking, 'Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry, or he praises that curry'.... As a result, he is not rewarded with clothing or wages or gifts. Why is that? Because the foolish, inexperienced, unskillful cook does not pick up on the theme of his own master.

In the same way, there are cases where a foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind does not become concentrated, his defilements [Comm: the five Hindrances] are not abandoned. He does not take note of that fact [does not pick up on that theme]. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, his mind does not become concentrated, his defilements are not abandoned. He does not take note of that fact. As a result, he is not rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, nor with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the foolish, inexperienced, unskillful monk does not take note of his own mind [does not pick up on the theme of his own mind].

Now suppose that there is a wise, experienced, skillful cook who has presented a king or a king's minister with various kinds of curry.... He takes note of his master, thinking, 'Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry or he praises that curry'.... As a result, he is rewarded with clothing, wages, & gifts. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful cook picks up on the theme of his own master.

In the same way, there are cases where a wise, experienced, skillful monk

remains focused on the body in & of itself... feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact. As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the wise, experienced, skillful monk picks up on the theme of his own mind.

SN 47:8

§ 36. Directing & Not Directing the Mind. Ānanda, if a monk or nun remains with mind well established in the four frames of reference, he/she may be expected to realize greater-than-ever distinction.

There is the case of a monk who remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, a fever based on the body arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme [Comm: such as recollection of the Buddha]. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, delight arises within him. In one who feels delight, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows serene. His body serene, he feels pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, 'I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw [my mind from the inspiring theme].' He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, 'I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.'

Furthermore, he remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, a fever based on mental qualities arises within his body, or there is sluggishness in his awareness, or his mind becomes scattered externally. He should then direct his mind to any inspiring theme. As his mind is directed to any inspiring theme, delight arises within him. In one who feels delight, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows serene. His body serene, he is sensitive to pleasure. As he feels pleasure, his mind grows concentrated. He reflects, 'I have attained the aim to which my mind was directed. Let me withdraw.' He withdraws & engages neither in directed thought nor in evaluation. He discerns, 'I am not thinking or evaluating. I am inwardly mindful & at ease.'

This, Ānanda, is development based on directing. And what is development based on not directing? A monk, when not directing his mind to external things, discerns, 'My mind is not directed to external things. It is unconstricted front & back—released & undirected. And furthermore I remain focused on the body in & of itself. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.'

When not directing his mind to external things, he discerns, 'My mind is not directed to external things. It is unconstricted front & back—released & undirected. And furthermore I remain focused on feelings... mind... mental

qualities in & of themselves. I am ardent, alert, mindful, & at ease.’

This, Ānanda, is development based on not directing.

Now, Ānanda, I have taught you development based on directing and development based on not directing. What a teacher should do out of compassion for his disciples, seeking their welfare, that I have done for you. Over there are [places to sit at] the foot of trees. Over there are empty dwellings. Practice jhāna, Ananda. Do not be heedless. Do not be remorseful in the future. That is our instruction to you all.

SN 47:10

§ 37. Proper Range 1. Once a hawk suddenly swooped down on a quail and seized it. Then the quail, as it was being carried off by the hawk, lamented, ‘O, just my bad luck and lack of merit that I was wandering out of my proper range and into the territory of others! If only I had kept to my proper range today, to my own ancestral territory, this hawk would have been no match for me in battle.’

‘But what is your proper range?’ the hawk asked. ‘What is your own ancestral territory?’

‘A newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up.’

So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, let go of the quail. ‘Go, quail, but even when you have gone there you won’t escape me.’

Then the quail, having gone to a newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up and climbing up on top of a large clump of earth, stood taunting the hawk, ‘Now come and get me, you hawk! Now come and get me, you hawk!’

So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, folded its two wings and suddenly swooped down toward the quail. When the quail knew, ‘The hawk is coming at me full speed,’ it slipped behind the clump of earth, and right there the hawk shattered its breast.

This is what happens to anyone who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others.

For this reason, you should not wander into what is not your proper range and is the territory of others. In one who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others, Māra gains an opening, Māra gains a foothold. And what, for a monk, is not his proper range and is the territory of others? The five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable by the ear.... Smells cognizable by the nose.... Tastes cognizable by the tongue.... Tactile sensations cognizable by the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others.

Wander, monks, in what is your proper range, your own ancestral territory. In one who wanders in what is his proper range, his own ancestral territory, Māra gains no opening, Māra gains no foothold. And what, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory? The four frames of reference.... This, for a

monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory.

SN 47:6

§ 38. Proper Range 2. There are in the Himalayas, the king of mountains, difficult, uneven areas where neither monkeys nor human beings wander. There are difficult, uneven areas where monkeys wander, but not human beings. There are level stretches of land, delightful, where both monkeys and human beings wander. In such spots hunters set a tar trap in the monkeys' tracks, in order to catch some monkeys. Those monkeys who are not foolish or careless by nature, when they see the tar trap, avoid it from afar. But any monkey who is foolish & careless by nature comes up to the tar trap and grabs it with its paw. He gets stuck there. Thinking, 'I'll free my paw,' he grabs it with his other paw. He gets stuck there. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws,' he grabs it with his foot. He gets stuck there. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws and my foot,' he grabs it with his other foot. He gets stuck there. Thinking, 'I'll free both of my paws and my feet as well,' he grabs it with his mouth. He gets stuck there. So the monkey, snared in five ways, lies there whimpering, having fallen on misfortune, fallen on ruin, a prey to whatever the hunter wants to do with him. Then the hunter, without releasing the monkey, skewers him right there, picks him up, and goes off as he likes.

This is what happens to anyone who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others. For this reason, you should not wander into what is not your proper range and is the territory of others....

SN 47:7

§ 39. Mindfulness of the Body. There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is obsessed with pleasing forms, is repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness unestablished, with limited awareness. He does not discern, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where any evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without trace. [Similarly with ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.]

Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope. Catching a snake, he would bind it with a strong rope. Catching a crocodile... a bird... a dog... a hyena... a monkey, he would bind it with a strong rope. Binding them all with a strong rope, and tying a knot in the middle, he would set chase to them.

Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat. The snake would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the anthill.' The crocodile would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the water.' The bird would pull, thinking, 'I'll fly up into the air.' The dog would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the village.' The hyena would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the charnel ground.' The monkey would pull, thinking, 'I'll go into the forest.' And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would submit, they would surrender, they would come under the sway of whichever among them was the strongest. In the same way, when a monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is undeveloped & unpursued, the eye pulls toward pleasing forms, while

unpleasing forms are repellent; the ear pulls toward pleasing sounds... the nose pulls toward pleasing smells... the tongue pulls toward pleasing tastes... the body pulls toward pleasing tactile sensations... the intellect pulls toward pleasing ideas, while unpleasing ideas are repellent. This, monks, is lack of restraint.

And what is restraint? There is the case where a monk, seeing a form with the eye, is not obsessed with pleasing forms, is not repelled by unpleasing forms, and remains with body-mindfulness established, with immeasurable awareness. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release, the discernment-release, where all evil, unskillful mental qualities that have arisen utterly cease without trace. [Similarly with ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.]

Just as if a person, catching six animals of different ranges, of different habitats, were to bind them with a strong rope... and tether them to a strong post or stake.

Then those six animals, of different ranges, of different habitats, would each pull toward its own range & habitat.... And when these six animals became internally exhausted, they would stand, sit, or lie down right there next to the post or stake. In the same way, when a monk whose mindfulness immersed in the body is developed & pursued, the eye does not pull toward pleasing forms, and unpleasing forms are not repellent; the ear does not pull toward pleasing sounds... the nose does not pull toward pleasing smells... the tongue does not pull toward pleasing tastes... the body does not pull toward pleasing tactile sensations... the intellect does not pull toward pleasing ideas, and unpleasing ideas are not repellent. This, monks, is restraint.

The strong post or stake is a term for mindfulness immersed in the body.

Thus you should train yourselves: 'We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, give it a means of transport, give it a grounding. We will steady it, consolidate it, and set about it properly.' That's how you should train yourselves.

SN 35:206

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

No, lord.

I have given you this parable to convey a meaning. The meaning is this: The bowl filled to the brim with oil stands for mindfulness immersed in the body. Thus you should train yourselves: 'We will develop mindfulness immersed in the body. We will pursue it, give it a means of transport, give it a grounding. We will

steady it, consolidate it, and set about it properly.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.

SN 47:20

§ 41. With mindfulness immersed in the body
well established, restrained
with regard to the six media of contact,
always centered, the monk
can know Unbinding for himself.

Ud 3:5

§ 42. Whoever pervades the great ocean with his awareness encompasses whatever rivulets flow down into the ocean. In the same way, whoever develops & pursues mindfulness immersed in the body encompasses whatever skillful qualities are on the side of clear knowing.

When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed, the mind is calmed, thinking & evaluating are stilled, and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body.

When one thing is practiced & pursued, ignorance is abandoned, clear knowing arises, the conceit ‘I am’ is abandoned, obsessions are uprooted, fetters are abandoned. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body.

Those who do not taste mindfulness of the body do not taste the Deathless. Those who taste mindfulness of the body taste the Deathless.

Those who are heedless of mindfulness of the body are heedless of the Deathless.

Those who comprehend mindfulness of the body comprehend the Deathless.

AN 1:225, 227, 230,
235, 239, 240

§ 43. **The Deathless.** There are these four frames of reference. Which four? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused on the body in & of itself, he abandons desire with regard to the body. As he abandons desire with regard to the body, he realizes the Deathless.

He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, he abandons desire with regard to mental qualities. As he abandons desire with regard to mental qualities, he realizes the Deathless.

SN 47:37

§ 44. It's just as if there were a great pile of dust at a four-way intersection. If a cart or chariot came from the east, that pile of dust would be totally leveled. If a cart or chariot came from the west... from the north... from the south, that pile of dust would be totally leveled. In the same way, when a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself, then evil, unskillful qualities are totally leveled. If he remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves, then evil, unskillful qualities are totally leveled.

SN 54:10

§ 45. Now when Ven. Anuruddha was meditating in solitude, this train of thought appeared in his awareness: 'Whoever neglects the four frames of reference neglects the noble path going to the right ending of stress. Whoever undertakes the four frames of reference undertakes the noble path going to the right ending of stress.'

Then Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Anuruddha's awareness—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—appeared in front of Ven. Anuruddha and said to him, 'To what extent, my friend, are the four frames of reference undertaken?'

Ven. Anuruddha: 'There is the case, my friend, of a monk who internally remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

'Externally he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body....

'Internally & externally he remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

'If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not. If he wants—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful. [§§98; 181]

[Similarly with regard to feelings, mind & mental qualities.]

'It's to this extent, my friend, that the four frames of reference are undertaken....'

SN 52:1

§ 46. It's good for a monk if, at the appropriate times, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome. It is good if, at the appropriate times, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome... percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is... percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not. It is good if, at the appropriate times—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful.

Now, with what purpose should a monk remain percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome? 'Don't let passion arise within me in the presence of things that excite passion.' With this purpose should a monk remain percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome.

And with what purpose should a monk remain percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome? 'Don't let aversion arise within me in the presence of things that excite aversion'....

And with what purpose should a monk remain percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is? 'Don't let passion arise within me in the presence of things that excite passion. Don't let aversion arise within me in the presence of things that excite aversion'....

And with what purpose should a monk remain percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not? 'Don't let aversion arise within me in the presence of things that excite aversion. Don't let passion arise within me in the presence of things that excite passion'....

And with what purpose should a monk—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, remain equanimous, alert, & mindful? 'Don't let passion—in any object, in any place, in any amount—arise within me in the presence of things that excite passion. Don't let aversion—in any object, in any place, in any amount—arise within me in the presence of things that excite aversion. Don't let delusion—in any object, in any place, in any amount—arise within me in the presence of things that excite delusion.' With this purpose should a monk—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, remain equanimous, alert, & mindful. [§§98; 181]

AN 5:144

§ 47. Protecting Oneself & Others. Once upon a time, monks, a bamboo acrobat, having erected a bamboo pole, addressed his assistant, Frying Pan: 'Come, my dear Frying Pan. Climb up the bamboo pole and stand on my shoulders.'

'As you say, teacher,' Frying Pan answered the bamboo acrobat and, climbing the bamboo pole, stood on his shoulders.

So then the bamboo acrobat said to his assistant, 'Now you watch after me, my dear Frying Pan, and I'll watch after you. Thus, protecting one another, watching after one another, we'll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.'

When he had said this, Frying Pan said to him, 'But that won't do at all, teacher. You watch after yourself, and I'll watch after myself, and thus with each of us protecting ourselves, watching after ourselves, we'll show off our skill, receive our reward, and come down safely from the bamboo pole.'

What Frying Pan, the assistant, said to her teacher was the right way in that case. Monks, a frame of reference is to be practiced with the thought, 'I'll watch after myself.' A frame of reference is to be practiced with the thought, 'I'll watch after others.' When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.

And how does one, when watching after oneself, watch after others? Through pursuing (the practice), through developing it, through devoting oneself to it. This is how one, when watching after oneself, watches after others.

And how does one, when watching after others, watch after oneself? Through endurance, through non-violence, and through a mind of good will & sympathy. This is how one, when watching after others, watches after oneself.

A frame of reference is to be practiced with the thought, 'I'll watch after myself.' A frame of reference is to be practiced with the thought, 'I'll watch after others.' When watching after oneself, one watches after others. When watching after others, one watches after oneself.

SN 47:19

§ 48. Then, when the Blessed One had entered the Rains Retreat, there arose a severe illness within him. Sharp & deadly were the pains, but he bore them mindfully, alert, & unperturbed. The thought occurred to him, 'It would not be proper for me to enter total Unbinding without addressing my attendants & without taking leave of the Community of monks. Why don't I, suppressing this illness with persistence, remain resolved on the fabrication of life?' So he suppressed the illness with persistence & remained resolved on the fabrication of life. His illness abated.

Then he recovered from the illness. Soon after his recovery he came out of his dwelling & sat down in the shade of the building, on a seat prepared for him. Then Ven. Ananda approached him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat down to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, 'What a happy sight to see the Blessed One in comfort! What a happy sight to see the Blessed One at ease! Because of the Blessed One's sickness my own body felt as if it were drugged. I lost my bearings. Things were unclear to me. Yet I still took a measure of comfort in the thought that the Blessed One would not enter total Unbinding as long as he hadn't given at least some pronouncement concerning the Community of monks.'

'What more does the Community of monks want from me, Ānanda? I have taught the Dhamma without an inner or an outer version. The Tathāgata has no closed fist with regard to teachings. Whoever has the thought, 'I will rule the Community of monks,' or 'The Community of monks is dedicated to me,' he should give some pronouncement concerning the Community of monks. But the Tathāgata has no such thoughts. So why should he give some pronouncement

concerning the Community of monks?

'I am old now, Ānanda, & aged. My years have turned eighty. Just as an old cart is kept going with the help of bamboo strips, it seems to me as if the Tathāgata's body is kept going with the help of bamboo strips. The only time the Tathāgata's body feels at ease is when, not attending to any theme at all, and with the cessation of certain feelings, he enters & remains in the theme-less concentration of awareness. Therefore each of you should remain with your self as an island, your self as your refuge, without anything else as a refuge. Remain with the Dhamma as an island, the Dhamma as your refuge, without anything else as a refuge. And how does a monk remain with his self as an island, his self as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge? How does he remain with the Dhamma as an island, the Dhamma as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is how a monk remains with his self as an island, his self as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, the Dhamma as his refuge, without anything else as a refuge. For those who—now or after I am gone—remain with their self as an island... the Dhamma as their refuge, without anything else as a refuge, they will be the highest of the monks who desire training.'

DN16

C. THE FOUR RIGHT EXERTIONS

The four activities included in this set show how effort can be applied to developing skillful qualities in the mind. The basic formula runs as follows:

There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent:

- for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen...
- for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen...
- for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and)
- for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen.

These four aspects of effort are also termed guarding, abandoning, developing, and maintaining [§50]. All four play a necessary role in bringing the mind to Awakening, although in some cases they are simply four sides to a single process. The abandoning of unskillful mental qualities can frequently be accomplished simply by focusing on the development of skillful ones, such as mindfulness. The same principle can also act in reverse: in the skillful eradication of unskillful qualities, the skillfulness of the eradication is in and of itself the development of mindful discernment. As we will see when we deal with the seven factors for Awakening [II/G], the act of nourishing a factor for Awakening can in some cases simultaneously starve a hindrance, while the conscious starving of a hindrance can

foster a factor for Awakening. Ultimately, though, right exertion requires more than simply abstaining from what is unskillful, for it must apply the basic factors of skillfulness—mindfulness and discernment—to gain an understanding of how even skillfulness can be transcended [§61].

Perhaps the most surprising element in right exertion is the role played by desire, which is usually associated with the craving that acts as a cause of suffering. We will treat this topic in more detail under the bases for success [II/D], and simply note here that the Buddha recognized that desire can be either skillful or unskillful, and that he freely admitted that skillful desire is a necessary factor in the path to the end of suffering and stress.

The most important point in developing right exertion is to realize that the effort to abandon unskillful qualities and to develop skillful qualities must be skillful itself. Unskillful efforts at eradicating unskillful states, even if well intended, can often exacerbate problems instead of solving them. Treating hatred with hatred, for instance, is less effective than treating it with the kind of understanding developed in the second stage of frames-of-reference meditation [II/B], which sees into causes and effects, and learns how to manipulate causes properly so as to get the desired effects.

For this reason, the basic formula for right exertion includes, both implicitly and explicitly, other factors of the path to ensure that the effort is skillfully applied. Three of the qualities that activate the mind in these exertions—desire, persistence, and intent—are also members of the bases of power [II/D], where they function as dominant factors in the attainment of concentration. The ability to discriminate between skillful and unskillful qualities, implicit in all of these exertions, requires a certain level of mindfulness and discernment. The skillful qualities that are mentioned most prominently as worthy of development are the seven factors for Awakening, which include mindfulness, analysis of mental qualities, and the factors of jhana, all of which must be reinvested in the process of right exertion to bring it to higher levels of finesse.

Passage §51 gives an idea of right exertion's range of application by listing seven ways in which unskillful qualities can be abandoned: seeing, restraining, using, tolerating, avoiding, destroying, and developing. The passage is deliberately vague as to which types of unskillful qualities respond to which type of treatment, for this is a point that each meditator must discover in practice for him or herself. This emphasis on personal exploration is crucial to the practice of right effort, for it encourages one to be sensitive to what can be discovered with one's own mindfulness and discernment.

The same point applies to the question of how much effort must be applied to the practice. The Buddha notes that some meditators will have to undergo painful and slow practice, while others will find that their practice is painful and quick, pleasant and slow, or pleasant and quick [§§84-85]. Thus each has to adjust the effort applied to the practice accordingly. This need for differing levels of effort depends not only on the individual, but also on the situation. In some cases, simply watching an unskillful quality with equanimity will be enough to make it go away; in other cases, one has to exert a conscious effort to get rid of it [§§58-59]. Thus, through observation, one will realize that skillful effort has no room for doctrinaire approaches. The polar extremes of constant exertion to the point of exhaustion and

its opposite, a knee-jerk fear of “efforting,” are both misguided here, as is the seemingly “middle” way of moderation in all things. The true middle way means tuning one’s efforts to one’s abilities and to the task at hand [§86]. In some cases, this entails an all-out effort; in others, simple watchfulness. The ability to sense what kind and what level of effort is appropriate in any given situation is an important element in developing the basic requirements for skill—mindfulness and discernment—by putting them to use.

We have already noted that right exertion is equivalent to the factor of ardency in frames-of-reference meditation [II/B]. In the first stage of that practice, right exertion functions by keeping the mind with its frame of reference and by warding off unskillful mental qualities that would make it abandon that frame. In the second stage, the function of exertion becomes more refined: warding off the tendency to get involved with “what” is arising and passing away, and keeping the mind applied to its task of manipulating, observing, and mastering the **process** of origination and passing away as one steers the mind to the stillness of jhana. In the third stage, the function of exertion becomes finer yet, as it maintains a basic “empty” or radically phenomenological awareness of the frame of reference in order to bring the mind to the state of non-fashioning appropriate for the process of Awakening. The equipoise of this state—beyond the categories of effort or non-effort—explains the paradox expressed in §62, which states that the mind crosses the flood of rebirth by neither “pushing forward” nor “staying in place,” an equipoise that embodies the ultimate skillfulness of right exertion in bringing the mind to a point beyond skill.

Implicit in this discussion of the effort involved in mastering skill to the point of its own transcendence is the fact that the goal of the practice is not an effort to return to a supposedly pure state of childlike awareness prior to social conditionings. Passage §61 makes this fact explicit. According to Buddhist analysis, the state of a child’s mind is one, not of purity, but of ignorance filled with the potential for many unskilled qualities. These qualities show themselves in seemingly innocent ways simply because the infant’s intellectual and physical powers are weak. Once those powers are strengthened, the mind’s potentials become manifest. As one modern teacher has stated, the childlike mind is the source for the round of rebirth. If it were truly pure and fully aware, it would not be susceptible to unskillful social conditioning. Thus the way to purity lies, not in renouncing one’s developed intellectual powers, but in developing those powers to higher levels of mastery and skill. This explains why right exertion is a necessary part of the practice.

§ 49. There are these four right exertions. Which four? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. These are the four right exertions.

Just as the River Ganges flows to the east, slopes to the east, inclines to the east, in the same way when a monk develops & pursues the four right exertions, he flows to Unbinding, slopes to Unbinding, inclines to Unbinding.

SN 49:1

§ 50. There are these four exertions. Which four? The exertion to guard, the exertion to abandon, the exertion to develop, & the exertion to maintain.

And what is the exertion to guard? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. [Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.] This is called the exertion to guard.

And what is the exertion to abandon? There is the case where a monk does not acquiesce to a thought of sensuality that has arisen (in him). He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, wipes it out of existence. He does not acquiesce to a thought of ill will... a thought of violence... any evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen (in him). He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, wipes them out of existence. This is called the exertion to abandon. [§1]

And what is the exertion to develop? There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops investigation of qualities... persistence... rapture... serenity... concentration... equanimity as factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is called the exertion to develop. [II/G]

And what is the exertion to maintain? There is the case where a monk maintains a favorable theme of concentration—the skeleton perception, the worm-eaten perception, the livid perception, the festering perception, the falling-apart perception, the bloated perception. This is called the exertion to maintain. [§30]

These are the four exertions.

Guarding & abandoning,
developing & maintaining:
these four exertions, taught
by the Kinsman of the Sun
[the Buddha].

A monk who strives
ardently at them
reaches the ending
of stress.

AN 4:14

§ 51. The ending of the effluents is for one who knows & sees, I tell you, not for one who does not know & does not see. For one who knows what & sees what? Appropriate attention & inappropriate attention. When a monk attends inappropriately, unarisen effluents arise, and arisen effluents increase. When a monk attends appropriately, unarisen effluents do not arise, and arisen effluents are abandoned. There are effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing, those

that are to be abandoned by restraining, those that are to be abandoned by using, those that are to be abandoned by tolerating, those that are to be abandoned by avoiding, those that are to be abandoned by destroying, and those that are to be abandoned by developing.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing? There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person... doesn't discern what ideas are fit for attention, or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he doesn't attend to ideas fit for attention, and attends (instead) to ideas unfit for attention. And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality arises, and the arisen effluent of sensuality increases; the unarisen effluent of becoming... the unarisen effluent of ignorance arises, and the arisen effluent of ignorance increases.... This is how he attends inappropriately: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?'

As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions—is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity*. This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from stress [S218].

The well-taught disciple of the noble ones... discerns what ideas are fit for attention, and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he doesn't attend to ideas unfit for attention, and attends (instead) to ideas fit for attention.... And what are the ideas fit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen effluent of sensuality doesn't arise, and the arisen effluent of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen effluent of becoming... the unarisen effluent of ignorance doesn't arise, and the arisen effluent of ignorance is abandoned.... He attends appropriately, *This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress*. As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by seeing.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by restraining? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, dwells restrained with the restraint of the eye-faculty. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were to dwell unrestrained with the restraint of the eye-faculty do not arise for him when he dwells restrained with the restraint of the eye-faculty. [Similarly with

the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect-faculties.] These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by restraining.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by using? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, uses the robe simply to counteract cold, to counteract heat, to counteract the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; simply for the purpose of covering the parts of the body that cause shame.

Reflecting appropriately, he uses alms food, not playfully, nor for intoxication, nor for putting on bulk, nor for beautification; but simply for the survival & continuance of this body, for ending its afflictions, for the support of the holy life, thinking, 'Thus will I destroy old feelings (of hunger) and not create new feelings (from overeating). I will maintain myself, be blameless, & live in comfort.'

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

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

The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to use these things (in this way) do not arise for him when he uses them (in this way). These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by using.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by tolerating? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, endures. He tolerates cold, heat, hunger, & thirst; the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles; ill-spoken, unwelcome words & bodily feelings that, when they arise, are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, displeasing, & menacing to life. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to tolerate these things do not arise for him when he tolerates them. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by tolerating.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by avoiding? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspool, an open sewer. Reflecting appropriately, he avoids sitting in the sorts of unsuitable seats, wandering to the sorts of unsuitable habitats, and associating with the sorts of bad friends that would make his knowledgeable friends in the holy life suspect him of evil conduct. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to avoid these things do not arise for him when he avoids them. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by avoiding.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by destroying? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, does not tolerate an arisen thought of sensuality. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, & wipes it out of existence. [Similarly with thoughts of ill will, thoughts of violence, & evil, unskillful mental qualities.] The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to destroy these things do not arise for him when he destroys them. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by destroying.

And what are the effluents that are to be abandoned by developing? There is the case where a monk, reflecting appropriately, develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening... persistence as a factor for Awakening... rapture as a factor for Awakening... serenity as a factor for Awakening... concentration as a factor for Awakening... equanimity as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. The effluents, vexation, or fever that would arise if he were not to develop these qualities do not arise for him when he develops them. These are called the effluents that are to be abandoned by developing.

When a monk's effluents that should be abandoned by seeing have been abandoned by seeing,

his effluents that should be abandoned by restraining have been abandoned by restraining,

his effluents that should be abandoned by using have been abandoned by using,

his effluents that should be abandoned by tolerating have been abandoned by tolerating,

his effluents that should be abandoned by avoiding have been abandoned by avoiding,

his effluents that should be abandoned by destroying have been abandoned by destroying,

his effluents that should be abandoned by developing have been abandoned by developing,

then he is called a monk who dwells restrained with the restraint of all the effluents. He has severed craving, thrown off the fetters, and—through the right penetration of conceit—has made an end of suffering & stress.

MN2

§ 52. These are the five factors for exertion. Which five?

[1] There is the case where a monk has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's Awakening: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy and rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.' [§§71-72]

[2] The monk is free from illness & discomfort, endowed with good digestion—not too cold, not too hot, of moderate strength—fit for exertion.

[3] He is neither fraudulent nor deceitful. He declares himself to the Teacher or to his wise friends in the holy life in line with what he actually is.

[4] He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities.

[5] He is discerning, endowed with discernment leading to the arising of the goal—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

These are the five factors for exertion.

AN 5:53

§ 53. With regard to internal factors, I do not envision any other single factor like appropriate attention as being so helpful for a monk in training, who has not attained the heart's goal but remains intent on the unexcelled security from bondage. A monk who attends appropriately abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful. [§96]

Appropriate attention
as a quality
of a monk in training:
Nothing else does so much
for attaining the superlative goal.
A monk, striving appropriately,
reaches the ending of suffering & stress.

Iti 16

§ 54. With regard to external factors, I do not envision any other single factor like admirable friendship as being so helpful for a monk in training, who has not attained the heart's the goal but remains intent on the unexcelled security from bondage. A monk who is a friend with admirable people abandons what is unskillful and develops what is skillful. [§§115; 125]

A monk with admirable people
as friends,
—who's reverential, respectful,
doing what his friends advise—
mindful, alert,
attains step by step
the ending of all fetters.

Iti 17

§ 55. A person without ardor, without compunction, is incapable of self-awakening, incapable of Unbinding, incapable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. A person ardent & compunctious is capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage.

Without ardor, without compunction,
lazy, with low persistence,
full of sloth & drowsiness,
shameless, without respect:
He's incapable, a monk like this,
of touching superlative self-awakening.
But whoever is mindful, masterful,
absorbed in jhāna,
ardent, compunctious, & heedful,

cutting the fetter of birth & aging,
 touches right here & now
 a self-awakening unsurpassed.

Iti 34

§ 56. Ven. Sāriputta: It is said, friend, that a person without ardor, without compunction, is incapable of self-awakening, incapable of Unbinding, incapable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. Now, how is a person without ardor, without compunction, incapable of self-awakening, incapable of Unbinding, incapable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage? And how is a person ardent & compunctious capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage?

Ven. Mahā Kassapa: There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he arouses no ardor. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he arouses no ardor. 'The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he arouses no ardor. 'The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he arouses no ardor. This is what it means to be a person without ardor.

And how is one a person without compunction? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he feels no compunction. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities.... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities.... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' yet he feels no compunction. This is what it means to be a person without compunction. This is how a person without ardor, without compunction, is incapable of self-awakening, incapable of Unbinding, incapable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage.

And how is a person ardent? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities.... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities.... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. This is what it means to be ardent.

And how is a person compunctious? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels compunction. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities.... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities.... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels compunction. This is what it means to be compunctious. This is how a person ardent & compunctious is capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage.

SN 16:2

§ 57. Ven. Sāriputta: Imagine a bronze bowl brought back from a shop or a smith

all covered with dust & dirt, that the owners would neither use nor clean, but would throw away in the dust. Wouldn't that bronze bowl eventually become even more dirty & defiled with time?

Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: Yes, my friend.

Ven. Sāriputta: In the same way, when an individual with an internal blemish does not discern, as it has come to be, that 'I have an internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will not generate desire, endeavor, or arouse persistence for the abandoning of that blemish. He will die with passion, aversion, delusion—blemished & with a mind defiled....

Now imagine a bronze bowl brought back from a shop or a smith all covered with dust & dirt, that the owners would both use & clean, and would not throw away in the dust. Wouldn't that bronze bowl eventually become clean & pure with time?

Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: Yes, my friend.

Ven. Sāriputta: In the same way, when an individual with an internal blemish discerns, as it has come to be, that 'I have an internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will generate desire, endeavor, & arouse persistence for the abandoning of that blemish. He will die without passion, aversion, delusion—unblemished & with a mind undefiled....

Now imagine a bronze bowl brought back from a shop or a smith all clean & pure, that the owners would neither use nor clean, but would throw away in the dust. Wouldn't that bronze bowl eventually become dirty & defiled with time?

Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: Yes, my friend.

Ven. Sāriputta: In the same way, when an individual with no internal blemish does not discern, as it has come to be, that 'I have no internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will attend to the theme of beauty. As he attends to the theme of beauty, passion will despoil his mind. He will die with passion, aversion, delusion—blemished & with a mind defiled....

Now imagine a bronze bowl brought back from a shop or a smith all clean & pure, that the owners would both use & clean, and would not throw away in the dust. Wouldn't that bronze bowl eventually become even more clean & pure with time?

Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: Yes, my friend.

Ven. Sāriputta: In the same way, when an individual with no internal blemish discerns, as it has come to be, that 'I have no internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will not attend to the theme of beauty. As he does not attend to the theme of beauty, passion will not despoil his mind. He will die without passion, aversion, delusion—unblemished & with a mind undefiled. This is the reason, this is the cause why, of the two individuals who are blemished, one [the first] is reckoned to be inferior, and the other superior... and why, of the two individuals who are unblemished, one [the first] is reckoned to be inferior, and the other superior.

Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: Now this word, 'blemish, blemish.' What is the meaning of blemish?

Ven. Sāriputta: Consorting with evil, unskillful wishes—this is the meaning of ‘blemish.’

MN 5

§ 58. Even if a monk is not skilled in the ways of the minds of others (not skilled in reading the minds of others), he should train himself: ‘I will be skilled in reading my own mind.’

And how is a monk skilled in reading his own mind? Imagine a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, examining the image of her own face in a bright, clean mirror or bowl of clear water: If she saw any dirt or blemish there, she would try to remove it. If she saw no dirt or blemish there, she would be pleased, her resolves fulfilled: ‘How fortunate I am! How clean I am!’ In the same way, a monk’s self-examination is very productive in terms of skillful qualities (if he conducts it in this way): ‘Do I usually remain covetous or not? With thoughts of ill will or not? Overcome by sloth & drowsiness or not? Restless or not? Uncertain or gone beyond uncertainty? Angry or not? With soiled thoughts or unsoiled thoughts? With my body aroused or unaroused? Lazy or with persistence aroused? Unconcentrated or concentrated?’

If, on examination, a monk knows, ‘I usually remain covetous, with thoughts of ill will, overcome by sloth & drowsiness, restless, uncertain, angry, with soiled thoughts, with my body aroused, lazy, or unconcentrated,’ then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities, just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head....

But if, on examination, a monk knows, ‘I usually remain uncovetous, without thoughts of ill will... & concentrated,’ then his duty is to make an effort in establishing [‘tuning’] those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of the effluents.

AN 10:51

§ 59. ‘And how is striving fruitful, how is exertion fruitful? There is the case where a monk, when not loaded down, does not load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure. He discerns that “When I exert a [bodily, verbal, or mental] fabrication against this cause of stress [§223], then from the fabrication of exertion there is dispassion [fading away]. When I look on with equanimity at that cause of stress, then from the development of equanimity there is dispassion.” So he exerts a fabrication against the [first] cause of stress... and develops equanimity with regard to the [second] cause of stress.... Thus the stress [coming from the first cause] is exhausted... & the stress [coming the second cause] is exhausted.

‘Suppose that a man is in love with a woman, his mind ensnared with intense desire, intense passion. He sees her standing with another man, chatting, joking, & laughing. What do you think, monks?... Would sorrow, lamentation, pain,

distress, & despair arise in him?"

'Yes, lord....'

'Now suppose the thought were to occur to him, "I am in love with this woman.... When I see her standing with another man, chatting, joking, & laughing, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair arise in me. Why don't I abandon my desire & passion for that woman?" So he abandons his desire & passion for that woman, and afterwards sees her standing with another man, chatting, joking, & laughing. What do you think, monks?... Would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair arise in him?'

'No, lord....'

'In the same way, the monk, when not loaded down, does not load himself down with pain, nor does he reject pleasure that accords with the Dhamma, although he is not infatuated with that pleasure.... He exerts a fabrication against the [first] cause of stress... and develops equanimity with regard to the [second] cause of stress.... Thus the stress [coming from the first cause] is exhausted... & the stress [coming from the second cause] is exhausted.

'Furthermore, the monk notices this: "When I live according to my pleasure, unskillful mental qualities increase in me & skillful qualities decline. When I exert myself with stress & pain, though, unskillful qualities decline in me & skillful qualities increase. Why don't I exert myself with stress & pain?" So he exerts himself with stress & pain, and while he is exerting himself with stress & pain, unskillful qualities decline in him, & skillful qualities increase. Then at a later time he would no longer exert himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain....

'Suppose that a fletcher were to heat & warm an arrow shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Then at a later time he would no longer heat & warm the shaft between two flames, making it straight & pliable. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was heating & warming the shaft.... In the same way, the monk... no longer exerts himself with stress & pain. Why is that? Because he has attained the goal for which he was exerting himself with stress & pain.'

MN101

§ 60. Udāyin, there are these four types of people to be found existing in the world. Which four? There is the case where a certain person is practicing for the abandoning & relinquishing of acquisitions. As he is practicing for the abandoning & relinquishing of acquisitions, memories & resolves associated with acquisitions assail him. He tolerates them. He does not abandon them, destroy them, dispel them, or wipe them out of existence. I tell you, Udāyin, that this sort of person is associated, not dissociated. Why is that? Because I have known the diversity of faculties with regard to this type of person.

Again, there is the case where a certain person practicing for the abandoning & relinquishing of acquisitions... is assailed by memories & resolves associated with acquisitions. He does not tolerate them. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. I tell you, Udāyin, that this sort of

person is associated, not dissociated. Why is that? Because I have known the diversity of faculties with regard to this type of person.

Again, there is the case where a certain person is practicing for the abandoning & relinquishing of acquisitions.... Owing to lapses in mindfulness from time to time, he is assailed by memories & resolves associated with acquisitions. Slow is the arising of his mindfulness, but then he quickly abandons (those memories & resolves), destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. Just as when two or three drops of water fall onto an iron pan heated all day: Slow is the falling of the drops of water, but they quickly vanish & disappear. In the same way... slow is the arising of his mindfulness, but then he quickly abandons (those memories & resolves), destroys them, dispels them, & wipes them out of existence. I tell you, Udāyin, that this sort of person is associated, not dissociated. Why is that? Because I have known the diversity of faculties with regard to this type of person. [§181]

Again, there is the case where a certain person, realizing that acquisitions are the root of suffering & stress, is without acquisitions, released in the ending of acquisitions. I tell you, Udāyin, that this sort of person is dissociated, not associated. Why is that? Because I have known the diversity of faculties with regard to this type of person.

MN 66

§ 61. Then Pañcakaṅga the carpenter went to Uggāhamāna, a follower of Muṇḍikā the contemplative [or: the shaven contemplative—a Jain?], was staying and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Uggāhamāna said to him, ‘I describe an individual endowed with four qualities as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. Which four? There is the case where he does no evil action with his body, speaks no evil speech, resolves on no evil resolve, and maintains himself with no evil means of livelihood. An individual endowed with these four qualities I describe as being consummate in what is skillful... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.’

Then Pañcakaṅga the carpenter neither delighted in Uggāhamāna’s words nor did he scorn them. Expressing neither delight nor scorn, he got up from his seat & left, thinking, ‘I will learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of the Blessed One.’

Then the carpenter went to where the Blessed One was staying and on arrival, after bowing down to him, sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entire conversation he had had with Uggāhamāna.

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed Pañcakaṅga, saying, ‘In that case, then according to Uggāhamāna’s words a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. For even the thought “body” does not occur to a stupid baby boy lying on its back, so from where would it do any evil action with its body, aside from a little kicking? Even the thought “speech” does not occur to it, so from where would it speak any evil speech,

aside from a little crying? Even the thought “resolve” does not occur to it, so from where would it resolve on any evil resolve, aside from a little bad temper? Even the thought “livelihood” does not occur to it, so from where would it maintain itself with any evil means of livelihood, aside from its mother’s milk? So according to Uggāhamāna’s words a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.

‘If an individual is endowed with these four qualities, I do not describe him as... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. Rather, he stands on the same level as a stupid baby boy lying on its back....

‘An individual endowed with ten qualities is one who I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. With regard to that point one should know that “These are unskillful habits,” I say. With regard to that point, one should know that “That is the cause of unskillful habits” ... “Here unskillful habits cease without trace” ... “This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits,” I say.

‘With regard to that point, one should know that “These are skillful habits” ... “That is the cause of skillful habits” ... “Here skillful habits cease without trace” ... “This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits,” I say.

‘With regard to that point, one should know that “These are unskillful resolves” ... “That is the cause of unskillful resolves” ... “Here unskillful resolves cease without trace” ... “This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves” I say.

‘With regard to that point, one should know that “These are skillful resolves” ... “That is the cause of skillful resolves” ... “Here skillful resolves cease without trace” ... “This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves,” I say.

‘Now what are unskillful habits? Unskillful bodily actions, unskillful verbal actions, evil means of livelihood.... What is the cause of unskillful habits?... They are said to be mind-caused.... Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations.... Any mind with passion, aversion, or delusion: That is the cause of unskillful habits. Now where do unskillful habits cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk abandons wrong bodily conduct & develops right bodily conduct, abandons wrong verbal conduct & develops right verbal conduct, abandons wrong livelihood & maintains his life with right livelihood. This is where unskillful habits cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits.

‘And what are skillful habits? Skillful bodily actions, skillful verbal actions, purity of livelihood.... What is the cause of skillful habits?... They are said to be mind-

caused.... Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations.... Any mind without passion, without aversion, without delusion: That is the cause of skillful habits. Now where do skillful habits cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk is virtuous but not fashioned of virtue. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release & discernment-release where his skillful habits cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits.

‘And what are unskillful resolves? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on violence.... What is the cause of unskillful resolves?... They are said to be perception-caused.... Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations.... Any sensuality-perception, ill will-perception, or violence-perception: That is the cause of unskillful resolves. Now where do unskillful resolves cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is where unskillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves.

‘And what are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation [freedom from sensuality], on non-ill will, on non-violence.... What is the cause of skillful resolves?... They are said to be perception-caused.... Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations.... Any renunciation-perception, non-ill will-perception, or non-violence-perception: That is the cause of skillful resolves. Now where do skillful resolves cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves.

‘Now, an individual endowed with which ten qualities is one whom I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments? One endowed with the right

view of an adept (an Arahant), the right resolve of an adept, the right speech... the right action... the right livelihood... the right effort... the right mindfulness... the right concentration... the right knowledge... the right release of an adept. [§106] An individual endowed with these ten qualities I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.'

That is what the Blessed One said. Glad at heart, Pañcakaṅga the carpenter delighted in the Blessed One's words.

MN78

§ 62. A deva: Tell me, dear sir, how you crossed over the flood.

The Buddha: I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place.

The deva: But how did you cross over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place?

The Buddha: When I pushed forward, I was whirled about. When I stayed in place, I sank. And so I crossed over the flood without pushing forward, without staying in place.

The deva:

At long last I see
a brahman, totally unbound,
who without pushing forward,
without staying in place,
has crossed over
the entanglements of the world.

SN 1:1

D. THE FOUR BASES OF POWER

Iddhi, the Pali word translated here as "power," has so many meanings that no one English equivalent can do them all justice. Other equivalents that have been suggested include success, accomplishment, and prowess. In the context of the bases for power, however, the word specifically means the supranormal powers that can be developed through concentration, such as levitation, walking on water, clairaudience, clairvoyance, remembrance of past lives, the ability to read the minds of others, and the ending of mental effluents. In the Buddhist analysis, only the last of these powers is transcendent. It is the only one absolutely necessary on the path to Awakening. The others are optional and not always desirable, for an unawakened person might find that the attainment of any one of them can cause supranormal greed, aversion, or delusion to arise in the mind. The texts record cases where even Arahants, not fully sensitive to the effect that their actions might have on others, display their powers in inappropriate contexts. This was why the Buddha forbade his monastic disciples from displaying their powers before the laity. None of the displayable powers, he said, is any match for the wonder of a teaching

that, like his, gave the promised results when put into practice [DN 11].

Still, there is no denying that some people acquire these powers in the course of their meditation, and they need guidance in how to use them properly so that their powers can actually help, rather than hinder, their practice. This is the role that the standard formulae for the bases of power play in the teaching. They show how the mastery of any of the first five powers can be fit into the outline of frame-of-reference meditation [II/B] so that the process of mastery can lead to the sixth and most important power, the ending of the effluents, thus resulting in release.

The texts explain the bases of power in two standard formulae: brief and extended. The brief formula runs as follows:

There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on *desire* & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on *persistence*... concentration founded on *intent*... concentration founded on *discrimination* & the fabrications of exertion.

One of the texts [§64] states that these formulae define the process whereby the bases of power are developed; another [§63] states that they define the bases of power themselves. The contradiction here can be resolved by noting that the first text defines the bases of power as “whatever practice leads to the attainment of power, the winning of power.” Because these processes definitely lead to the attainment of power, they would count as at least part of the bases of power. The first text is probably alluding to the fact that there is more to the process, which is included in the extended formula, discussed below.

Each of these four bases has three component parts: the “fabrications of exertion” (which the texts equate with the four right exertions), concentration, and the mental quality—desire, persistence, intent, or discrimination—on which the concentration is based. According to §172, desire, persistence, and intent are present in all states of jhana. Thus the phrase “concentration based on desire” refers to a concentration in which all three qualities are present, but with desire dominant. We should note here that although the *desire* here is directed toward a state of concentration—which is a type of becoming—if that becoming is aimed at going beyond becoming, this desire shifts from a cause of stress to part of the path to its ending. And even though the desire for Awakening, when not yet realized, can be a cause for frustration, that frustration counts as a skillful emotion, as it leads to further efforts along the path [§179]. It is to be transcended, not by abandoning the desire, but by acting on it properly, as explained below, until gaining the desired results.

Discrimination, the fourth mental quality, is not always inherent in jhana, although when functioning as evaluation it plays a role in the first jhana, and is definitely present in the fifth factor of noble right concentration [§150], which leads to Awakening. Furthermore, the extended formula for the bases of power shows that discrimination is necessary for the thorough mastery of concentration based on desire, persistence, intent, or discrimination itself so that—in the course of gaining mastery—one develops mindful discernment into the causal patterns of the mind and so can reach Awakening.

We have already shown that the development of concentration involves the three qualities called for in the first stage of frames-of-reference meditation [II/B]: ardency (right exertion), alertness, and mindfulness. Thus the brief formula for the

bases of power, as a description of concentration practice, can be equated with the first stage of frames-of-reference meditation.

Many popular Western writings criticize the four qualities listed in the bases of power—desire, persistence (effort), intent (will), and discrimination (the discriminating mind)—as enemies of proper meditation, both in that they interfere with the calming of the mind and are antithetical to the goal of the Unfabricated, which lies beyond desire, effort, and the categories of discrimination. The first part of the extended formula deals with the first of these criticisms.

There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion, thinking, 'This desire of mine will be neither overly sluggish nor overly active, neither inwardly constricted nor outwardly scattered.' [Similarly with concentration founded on persistence, intent, and discrimination.]

This passage shows that the problem lies, not in the desire, effort, intent, or discrimination, but in the fact that these qualities can be unskillfully applied or improperly tuned to their task. If they were absent, the practice—if it could be called a practice—would stagnate from loss of direction or motivation. If they ran wild, they would interfere with mindful concentration. So the trick is not to deny them but to tune them skillfully so that they will help focus the mind on the present moment. Thus, for instance, in the practice of meditation, as with any skill, it is important not to focus desire too strongly on the results one hopes to get, for that would interfere with the mind's ability to focus on giving rise to the causes leading to those results. If, instead, one focuses desire on putting the causes in proper order in the present moment, desire becomes an indispensable part of the process of mastery.

Passage §67 deals with the second criticism—that desire, etc., are antithetical to the goal—by showing that these qualities are necessary for anyone who pursues a path, but are automatically abandoned on reaching the goal at the path's end. The image of the path is important here, for it carries important implications. First, the path is not the goal; it is simply the way there, just as the road to the Grand Canyon should not be confused with the Grand Canyon itself. Even though many stretches of the road bear no resemblance to the Grand Canyon, that does not mean that the road does not lead there. Secondly, the path of practice does not cause the goal, it simply leads there, just as neither the road to the Grand Canyon nor the act of walking to the Grand Canyon can cause the Grand Canyon to be. The goal at the end of the Buddhist path is unfabricated, so no amount of desire or effort can bring it into being. Nevertheless, the path to the goal is a fabricated process [§105], and in that process desire, effort, intent, and discrimination all have an important role to play, just as the effort of walking plays a role in arriving at the Grand Canyon.

The final section of the extended formula hints at how these qualities may be directed toward Awakening.

He keeps perceiving what is in front & behind so that what is in front is the same as what is behind, what is behind is the same as what is in front. What is below is the same as what is above, what is above is the same as what is below. (He dwells) by night as by day, and by day as by night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, he develops a brightened mind.

This passage refers to the total mastery of concentration. Freeing the mind from such distinctions as front/behind, above/below, and day/night, one creates an

awareness that is open and bright, unhampered by the normal limitations that come with a conscious sense of being located in time and space. This is the type of awareness needed for the attainment of the supranormal powers.

Many meditators tend to stop here, satisfied with their new-found powers, but the Buddha urges them to go further. As §161 shows, the full perfection of this type of awareness requires extreme sensitivity to the presence of mental defilements that might place subtle limitations on it. This process of sensitivity is nothing other than the second stage of frames-of-reference meditation [II/B], in which one focuses on the phenomenon of origination and passing away of mind states that are limited and unlimited, concentrated and unconcentrated, taking the brightness of one's awareness—the mind in-and-of itself—as one's frame of reference.

The next stage of practice is outlined in a passage that builds on §161. This passage [§167], shows that full mastery of power requires an abandoning even of the notion that "I am" the master of the power, or that "my mind" is concentrated. The proper attitude, in the face of the power, is to "incline the mind to the Deathless." Such an attitude, according to MN 102 [MFU, pp. 81-82], involves simply noting what is present as present, without fashioning anything further out of it. This is the third stage of frames-of-reference meditation [II/B], the entry into emptiness that simply notes, "There is this...." When this level of skilled discrimination is reached, the power has been fully mastered at the same time that the mind stands on the verge of non-fashioning and Awakening.

Because of their association with supranormal powers, the bases of power have generally been slighted in Western writings on Buddhism. If we count the five strengths as identical with the five faculties, the bases of power are the only set in the Wings to Awakening that has not yet been the subject of a book in the English language. The situation in Asia, however, is very different. There, the bases of power have been extrapolated from their specific context and are frequently cited as guides to success in general. In whatever task one may undertake—directed toward worldly ends or toward the Dhamma—one must bring to bear the qualities of desire, persistence, intent, and discrimination, skillfully balanced with concentration and right exertion, if one wants to succeed at one's task.

§ 63. Monks, whoever neglects these four bases of power neglects the noble path going to the right ending of stress. Whoever undertakes these four bases of power undertakes the noble path going to the right ending of stress. Which four?

There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence... concentration founded on intent... concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion.

Whoever neglects these four bases of power neglects the noble path going to the right ending of stress. Whoever undertakes these four bases of power undertakes the noble path going to the right ending of stress.

§ 64. Ven. Ānanda: What, venerable sir, is power? What is the base of power? What is the development of the base of power? And what is the path of practice leading to the development of the base of power?

The Buddha: There is the case, Ānanda, where a monk [1] wields manifold supranormal powers. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, & mountains as if through space. He dives in & out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches & strokes even the sun & moon, so mighty & powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds. {Just as a skilled potter or his assistant could craft from well-prepared clay whatever kind of pottery vessel he likes, or as a skilled ivory-carver or his assistant could craft from well-prepared ivory any kind of ivory-work he likes, or as a skilled goldsmith or his assistant could craft from well-prepared gold any kind of gold article he likes; in the same way, the monk wields manifold supranormal powers....}

[2] He hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified & surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine & human, whether near or far. {Just as if a man traveling along a highway were to hear the sounds of kettledrums, small drums, conchs, cymbals, & tom-toms. He would know, ‘That is the sound of kettledrums, that the sound of small drums, that the sound of conchs, that the sound of cymbals, & that the sound of tom-toms.’ In the same way... the monk hears... both kinds of sounds: divine & human....}

[3] He knows the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with his own awareness. He discerns a mind with passion as a mind with passion, and a mind without passion as a mind without passion. He discerns a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion, and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion. He discerns a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion, and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion. He discerns a constricted mind as a constricted mind, and a scattered mind as a scattered mind. He discerns an enlarged mind [in jhāna] as an enlarged mind, and an unenlarged mind as an unenlarged mind. He discerns an excelled mind [one not on the most excellent level] as an excelled mind, and an unexcelled mind as an unexcelled mind. He discerns a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind, and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind. He discerns a released mind as a released mind, and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind. {Just as if a young woman—or man—fond of ornaments, examining the reflection of her own face in a bright mirror or a bowl of clear water would know ‘blemished’ if it were blemished, or ‘unblemished’ if it were not. In the same way... the monk knows the awareness of other beings....}

[4] He recollects his manifold past lives [lit: previous homes], i.e., one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction & expansion, (recollecting,) ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the

end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’ Thus he remembers his manifold past lives in their modes & details. {Just as if a man were to go from his home village to another village, and then from that village to yet another village, and then from that village back to his home village. The thought would occur to him, ‘I went from my home village to that village over there. There I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, & remained silent in such a way. From that village I went to that village over there, and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, & remained silent in such a way. From that village I came back home.’ In the same way... the monk recollects his manifold past lives....}

[5] He sees—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, & mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the breakup of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, & mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the breakup of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.’ Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and he discerns how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma. {Just as if there were a tall building in the central square (of a town), and a man with good eyesight standing on top of it were to see people entering a house, leaving it, walking along the street, & sitting in the central square. The thought would occur to him, ‘These people are entering a house, leaving it, walking along the streets, & sitting in the central square.’ In the same way... the monk sees—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing....}

[6] Through the ending of the mental effluents, he remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. {Just as if there were a pool of water in a mountain glen—clear, limpid, & unsullied—where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, & pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about & resting, and it would occur to him, ‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, & unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, & pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about & resting.’ In the same way, the monk discerns, as it has come to be, that ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.... These are effluents.... This is the origination of effluents.... This is the cessation of effluents.... This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.’ His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life

fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.')

This is called power.

And what is the base of power? Whatever path, whatever practice, leads to the attainment of power, the winning of power: That is called the base of power.

And what is the development of the base of power? There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence... concentration founded on intent... concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion. This is called the development of the base of power.

And what is the path of practice leading to the development of the base of power? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called the path of practice leading to the development of the base of power.

SN 51:26 {+ DN 2}

§ 65. If a monk attains concentration, attains singleness of mind founded on desire, that is called concentration founded on desire. He generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. These are called the fabrications of exertion. This is desire, this is concentration founded on desire, these are the fabrications of exertion. This is called the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion.

If a monk attains concentration, attains singleness of mind founded on persistence, that is called concentration founded on persistence....

If a monk attains concentration, attains singleness of mind founded on intent, that is called concentration founded on intent....

If a monk attains concentration, attains singleness of mind founded on discrimination, that is called concentration founded on discrimination. He generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. These are called the fabrications of exertion. This is discrimination, this is concentration founded on discrimination, these are the fabrications of exertion. This is called the base of power endowed with concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion.

SN 51:13

§ 66. Analysis. These four bases of power, when developed & pursued, are of great fruit & great benefit. And how are the four bases of power developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit & great benefit?

There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion, thinking, 'This desire of mine will be neither overly sluggish nor overly active, neither inwardly constricted nor outwardly scattered.' He keeps perceiving what is in front & behind so that what is in front is the same as what is behind, what is behind is the same as what is in front. What is below is the same as what is above, what is above is the same as what is below. Night is the same as day, day is the same as night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, he develops a brightened mind.

He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence... concentration founded on intent... concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion, thinking, 'This discrimination of mine will be neither overly sluggish nor overly active, neither inwardly constricted nor outwardly scattered.' He keeps perceiving what is in front & behind so that what is in front is the same as what is behind, what is behind is the same as what is in front. What is below is the same as what is above, what is above is the same as what is below. (He dwells) by night as by day, and by day as by night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, he develops a brightened mind.

And how is desire overly sluggish? Whatever desire is accompanied by laziness, conjoined with laziness, that is called overly sluggish desire.

And how is desire overly active? Whatever desire is accompanied by restlessness, conjoined with restlessness, that is called overly active desire.

And how is desire inwardly constricted? Whatever desire is accompanied by sloth & drowsiness, conjoined with sloth & drowsiness, that is called inwardly constricted desire.

And how is desire outwardly scattered? Whatever desire is stirred up by the five strings of sensuality, outwardly dispersed & dissipated, that is called outwardly scattered desire.

And how does a monk dwell perceiving what is in front & behind so that what is in front is the same as what is behind, and what is behind is the same as what is in front? There is the case where a monk's perception of what is in front & behind is well in hand, well-attended to, well-considered, well-tuned ['penetrated'] by means of discernment. This is how a monk keeps perceiving what is in front and behind so that what is in front is the same as what is behind, and what is behind is the same as what is in front.

And how does a monk dwell so that what is below is the same as what is above, and what is above is the same as what is below? There is the case where a monk reflects on this very body, from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin, full of various kinds of unclean things: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestine, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil,

saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.’ This is how a monk dwells so that what is below is the same as what is above, and what is above is the same as what is below. [§30]

And how does a monk dwell by night as by day, and by day as by night? There is the case where a monk at night develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion by means of the same modes [permutations] & signs & themes that he uses by day, and by day he develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion by means of the same modes & signs & themes that he uses by night. This is how a monk dwells by night as by day, and by day as by night.

And how does a monk—by means of an awareness open & unhampered—develop a brightened mind? There is the case where a monk has the perception of light, the perception of daytime [at any hour of the day] well in hand & well-established. This is how a monk—by means of an awareness open & unhampered—develops a brightened mind. [§147]

[The above discussion is then repeated for persistence, intent, & discrimination.]

When a monk has thus developed & pursued the four bases of power, he experiences manifold supranormal powers.... He hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified & surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine & human, whether near or far.... He knows the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with his own awareness.... He recollects his manifold past lives.... He sees—by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing.... Through the ending of the mental effluents, he remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now.

This is how these four bases of power, when developed & pursued, are of great fruit & great benefit.

SN 51:20

§ 67. I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Ānanda was staying in Kosambi, at Ghosita’s Park. Then the brahman Uṇṇābha went to where Ven. Ānanda was staying and on arrival greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ānanda: Master Ānanda, what is the aim of this holy life lived under the contemplative Gotama?

Ven. Ānanda: The holy life is lived under the Blessed One with the aim of abandoning desire.

Uṇṇābha: But is there a path, is there a practice, for the abandoning of that desire?

Ven. Ānanda: Yes, there is....

Uṇṇābha: What is the path, the practice, for the abandoning of that desire?

Ven. Ānanda: There is the case where a monk develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion. He develops the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence... concentration founded on intent... concentration founded on

discrimination & the fabrications of exertion. This, brahman, is the path, this is the practice for the abandoning of that desire.

Uṇṇābha: If that's so, then it's an endless path, and not one with an end, for it's impossible that one could abandon desire by means of desire.

Ven. Ānanda: Well then, brahman, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit.... Didn't you first have desire, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding desire allayed?

Uṇṇābha: Yes, sir.

Ven. Ānanda: Didn't you first have persistence, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding persistence allayed?

Uṇṇābha: Yes, sir.

Ven. Ānanda: Didn't you first have the intent, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding intent allayed?

Uṇṇābha: Yes, sir.

Ven. Ānanda: Didn't you first have (an act of) discrimination, thinking, 'I'll go to the park,' and then when you reached the park, wasn't the corresponding (act of) discrimination allayed?

Uṇṇābha: Yes, sir.

Ven. Ānanda: So it is with an Arahant whose mental effluents are ended, who has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who is released through right gnosis. Whatever desire he first had for the attainment of Arahantship, on attaining Arahantship the corresponding desire is allayed. Whatever persistence he first had for the attainment of Arahantship, on attaining Arahantship the corresponding persistence is allayed. Whatever intent he first had for the attainment of Arahantship, on attaining Arahantship the corresponding intent is allayed. Whatever discrimination he first had for the attainment of Arahantship, on attaining Arahantship the corresponding discrimination is allayed. So what do you think, brahman? Is this an endless path, or one with an end?

Uṇṇābha: You're right, Master Ānanda. This is a path with an end, and not an endless one.

SN 51:15

§ 68. Ven. Ānanda: Venerable sir, does the Blessed One have direct experience of going to the Brahmā world by means of supranormal power with a mind-made body?

The Buddha: Yes, Ānanda....

Ven. Ānanda: But does the Blessed One also have direct experience of going to the Brahmā world by means of supranormal power with this very physical body, composed of the four great elements?

The Buddha: Yes....

Ven. Ānanda: It's amazing & astounding that the Blessed One should have direct experience of going to the Brahmā world by means of supranormal power with

a mind-made body, and of going to the Brahmā world by means of supranormal power with this very physical body, composed of the four great elements.

The Buddha: Tathāgatas are both amazing, Ānanda, and endowed with amazing qualities. They are both astounding and endowed with astounding qualities. Whenever the Tathāgata merges his body with his mind and his mind with his body, and remains having alighted on the perception of ease and buoyancy with regard to the body, then his body becomes lighter, more pliant, more malleable, & more radiant.

Just as when an iron ball heated all day becomes lighter, more pliant, more malleable, & more radiant; in the same way, whenever the Tathāgata merges his body with his mind and his mind with his body, and remains having alighted on the perception of ease and buoyancy with regard to the body, then his body becomes lighter, more pliant, more malleable, & more radiant.

Now, whenever the Tathāgata merges his body with his mind and his mind with his body, and remains having alighted on the perception of ease and buoyancy with regard to the body, then his body rises effortlessly from the earth up into the sky. He then experiences manifold supranormal powers. Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, & mountains as if through space. He dives in & out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches & strokes even the sun & moon, so mighty & powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahmā worlds.

Just as a tuft of cotton seed or a ball of thistle down, lightly wafted by the wind, rises effortlessly from the earth up into the sky, in the same way, whenever the Tathāgata concentrates his body in his mind & his mind in his body, and remains having alighted on the perception of ease and buoyancy, then his body rises effortlessly from the earth up into the sky. He then experiences manifold supranormal powers... even as far as the Brahmā worlds.

SN 51:22

E. THE FIVE FACULTIES

Indriya—the Pali word translated here as “faculty”—is connected with the name of the dominant Vedic god, Indra. Thus it carries connotations of *dominance* or *control*. Buddhist texts contain several lists of faculties, both physical and mental, but here the word denotes a list of five mental factors that must reach a state of dominance in the mind for Awakening to occur. This set is one of the most comprehensive in the Wings to Awakening, as it covers all of the factors explicitly mentioned in the sets we have covered so far, and in addition lists conviction, which the other sets imply but never specifically mention. This is why this set forms the framework for Part III of this book, in which all of the main factors of the Wings to Awakening will be discussed in detail.

As we noted in II/A, the faculties in this set form a loop in the causal progression

of the mind along the path, as opposed to the “holographic” formulae of the sets we have discussed so far. Two of the faculties—the frames of reference and right exertion—we have covered in detail already. The other three—conviction, concentration, and discernment—we will discuss in detail in Part III. Here we will limit ourselves to some general observations about the set as a whole.

In the causal loop depicted by five faculties, the emphasis is on how the elements of the “concentration aggregate” in the noble eightfold path—right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration—can lead the mind from a state of conviction to one of discernment. To borrow terminology from §106, this is the process by which the mind goes from the preliminary level to the noble or transcendent level of right view. This set can also be regarded as a description of how conviction, when put into action, inherently leads through the concentration aggregate to transcendent discernment.

Passage §69 defines the faculty of conviction as the four factors of stream-entry. Other passages define these four factors in two separate ways: one [§70] listing the factors leading to stream-entry, another [§71] giving the factors that characterize the person who has already entered the stream. Both lists are relevant here, as the person working toward stream-entry must act on conviction, while a person who has entered the stream is endowed with the unwavering conviction that comes with the first glimpse of the Deathless.

In both cases, the factor of conviction has several dimensions: trust in the ability of wise people to know the ideal path of practice, belief in their teachings, and a willingness to put those teachings into practice. Western analyses of faith tend to separate these aspects of conviction, and some writers have tried to decide which aspect is dominant in the Buddhist tradition. In practice, however, all three must work together, for in Buddhism the object of conviction inherently involves all three at once. The primary focus of conviction is the Awakening of the Buddha, and this in turn ultimately comes down to a conviction in the primacy of the mind in creating kamma, a conviction in the efficacy of kamma in shaping experience in the round of rebirth, and a belief that the Buddha made use of mental qualities accessible to all in using the laws of kamma to bring about an end to kamma and thus escape from the round. Kamma and the use of kamma to transcend kamma constitute both the truth that the Buddha taught and the explanation of how he discovered it. Thus, trust in the Buddha and belief in his teaching are two sides of the same coin. At the same time, these truths concerning kamma are also the situation in which the listener is currently placed: the causal nexus that determines both the dynamic of continued life in the cycle of rebirth and the way out of that cycle. So, by definition, conviction in the Buddha’s Awakening is something that must be acted on. If one is convinced that one is entangled in a kammic web that can nevertheless be unraveled, one will naturally try to learn from the example of the Buddha or his disciples, developing the same mental qualities they did and attaining release oneself. Thus, unlike a religion where trust involves the belief that the deity will provide for one’s salvation—either through grace or as a reward for unquestioning obedience—trust in the Buddha and belief in his teachings means that one’s salvation is ultimately one’s own responsibility. In this way, trust, belief, and a willingness to act are inseparably combined.

This is why conviction, the first member of the set of five faculties, leads naturally to persistence, the second. Persistence here is equal to right exertion,

which develops mindfulness as the most essential skillful quality in the mind. As we saw under the frames of reference, the proper development of mindfulness leads to concentration, or the four jhanas, while the jhanas provide the foundation for the arising of discernment, the fifth and final member of this set. When discernment is strengthened to the point of transcendence, leading to the attainment of stream-entry, it then confirms the truths that were previously taken as a matter of conviction and faith [§74]. This confirmation feeds back into the causal loop, strengthening conviction, which provides the basis for developing the faculties still further until Arahantship is attained. At that point there is no need to be convinced that the practice leads to release into the Deathless, for one has fully realized that release through direct experience [§89].

The underlying element throughout the development of this causal loop is the mental quality of heedfulness [§78]. The texts explain heedfulness as a combination of right effort, restraint, and relentless mindfulness, but as a quality of mind it goes deeper than that. Heedfulness realizes the dangers inherent in the round of rebirth and redeath, and the fact that those dangers are inherent in each careless act of the mind. It thus fosters conviction in the possibility of a release from those dangers and a sense of urgency and precision in the practice. This combination of urgency and precision provides the impetus for the full and thorough development of the faculties as one seriously pursues the possibility of release through the skillful development of the mind. This pattern of heedfulness developing the five faculties in the quest of the security of Deathlessness mirrors Prince Siddhattha's own quest, which began with his conviction that there was no need to resign himself to the tyranny of aging, illness, and death, and ended with the discernment that brought about his actual escape from that tyranny. This pattern also calls to mind the famous verse from the Dhammapada, that heedfulness is the path to the Deathless [§80]. The five faculties can be taken as an elaboration of that verse.

Because the five faculties are means to Deathlessness—rather than ends in themselves—they must not only be developed skillfully but also used skillfully as they are developed. The texts emphasizing this point focus on two of the faculties: persistence and discernment.

The passage dealing with persistence [§86] is probably the Canon's most explicit analogy between the performance of music and the practice of meditation [I/A]. One should tune one's effort so that it is neither too intense nor too slack, just as the main string of a musical instrument should be neither too sharp nor too flat. (We have already encountered this issue of balance in the proper development of the four bases of power, and we will encounter it again in the factors for Awakening.) One then tunes the remaining faculties to the pitch of one's effort, just as one would tune the notes of one's scale to the tonic. Only then can one take up the theme of one's meditation—the four frames of reference [§148]—just as one would take up and develop the basic theme of one's musical piece.

As for discernment, passage §88 brings out the point that one's mastery of the faculties is not complete until one discerns the "escape" from them. Normally the texts make this comment only about deceptively attractive objects or unskillful qualities in the mind, but here they use it in connection with skillful qualities. What this means is that there comes a point in the practice where one must go beyond even such skillful qualities as concentration and discernment. They are skillful precisely because their full development allows one to go beyond them.

This point is made explicit in §187, which shows exactly why the right view constituting discernment is right: it is the only view that opens the way going beyond attachment to views. DN 1 [MFU, p. 111] adds that an awakened person—through regarding views not in terms of their content, but in terms of the effect they have on the mind—comes to discern what lies beyond views, and yet does not hold even to that act of discernment. As a result of knowing but not holding, the mind experiences Unbinding in the here and now. This “knowing but not holding” is yet another reference to the perceptual mode of emptiness verging on non-fashioning: the culminating point for each set in the Wings to Awakening.

§ 69. Monks, there are these five faculties. Which five? The faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, and the faculty of discernment.

Now where is the faculty of conviction to be seen? In the four factors of stream-entry....

And where is the faculty of persistence to be seen? In the four right exertions....

And where is the faculty of mindfulness to be seen? In the four frames of reference....

And where is the faculty of concentration to be seen? In the four jhānas....

And where is the faculty of discernment to be seen? In the four noble truths....

SN 48:8

§ 70. Factors of Stream-entry. Association with good people is a factor of stream-entry [§115]. Listening to the true Dhamma is a factor of stream-entry. Appropriate attention is a factor of stream-entry [§51]. Practice in accordance with the Dhamma is a factor of stream-entry.

SN 55:5

§ 71. Now with what four factors of stream-entry is the disciple of the noble ones endowed? There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy and rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.’

He is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the wise for themselves.’

He is endowed with verified confidence in the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types of noble disciples when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples: worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.’

He is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration.

AN 10:92

§ 72. Analysis. And what, is the faculty of conviction? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's Awakening: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy and rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.' This, monks, is called the faculty of conviction.

And what is the faculty of persistence? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. He generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This is called the faculty of persistence. [§§49-50]

And what is the faculty of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is mindful, highly meticulous, remembering & able to call to mind even things that were done & said long ago. He remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness. [§§29-30]

And what is the faculty of concentration? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, making it his object to let go, attains concentration, attains singleness of mind. Quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called the faculty of concentration. [§150]

And what is the faculty of discernment? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising & passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. He

discerns, as it is has come to be, ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.’ This is called the faculty of discernment. [§§184-240]

SN 48:10

§ 73. Just as a royal frontier fortress has a foundation post—deeply rooted, well embedded, immovable, & unshakable—for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata’s Awakening: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.’ With conviction as his foundation post, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful & develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy & develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has a large army stationed within—elephant soldiers, cavalry, charioteers, bowmen, standard-bearers, billeting officers, soldiers of the supply corps, noted princes, commando heroes, infantry, & slaves—for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities, is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. With persistence as his army, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful & develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy & develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has a wise, experienced, intelligent gatekeeper to keep out those he doesn’t know and to let in those he does, for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones is mindful, highly meticulous, remembering & able to call to mind even things that were done & said long ago. With mindfulness as his gatekeeper, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful & develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy & develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has ramparts that are high & thick & completely covered with plaster, for the protection of those within and to ward off those without; in the same way a disciple of the noble ones is discerning, endowed with discernment leading to the arising of the goal—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. With discernment as his covering of plaster, the disciple of the noble ones abandons what is unskillful & develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy & develops what is blameless, and looks after himself with purity....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of grass, timber & water for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones... enters & remains in the first jhāna... for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on Unbinding....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of rice & barley for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones... enters & remains in the second jhāna... for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on Unbinding....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of sesame, green gram, & other beans for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones... enters & remains in the third jhāna... for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on Unbinding....

Just as a royal frontier fortress has large stores of tonics—ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, molasses, & salt—for the delight, convenience, & comfort of those within, and to ward off those without; in the same way the disciple of the noble ones... enters & remains in the fourth jhāna... for his own delight, convenience, & comfort, and to alight on Unbinding....

AN7:63

§ 74. The Buddha: Tell me, Sāriputta: A disciple of the noble ones who is thoroughly inspired by the Tathāgata, who has gone solely to the Tathāgata (for refuge), could he have any doubt or uncertainty concerning the Tathāgata or the Tathāgata's teachings?

Ven. Sāriputta: No, venerable sir... With a disciple of the noble ones who has conviction, it may be expected that he will keep his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities, that he will be steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful mental qualities. Whatever persistence he has, is his faculty of persistence.

With a disciple of the noble ones who has conviction, who is resolute & persistent, it may be expected that he will be mindful, highly meticulous, remembering and able to call to mind even things that were done & said long ago. Whatever mindfulness he has, is his faculty of mindfulness.

With a disciple of the noble ones who has conviction, who is resolute & persistent, and whose mindfulness is established [‘tuned’], it may be expected that—making it his object to let go—he will attain concentration & singleness of mind. Whatever concentration he has, is his faculty of concentration.

With a disciple of the noble ones who has conviction, who is resolute & persistent, whose mindfulness is established, and whose mind is rightly concentrated, it may be expected that he will discern: ‘From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. The total fading & cessation of ignorance, of this mass of darkness, is this peaceful, exquisite state: the resolution of all fabrications; the relinquishment of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; Unbinding.’ Whatever discernment he has, is his faculty of discernment.

And so this convinced disciple of the noble ones, thus striving again & again, recollecting again & again, concentrating his mind again & again discerning again & again, becomes thoroughly convinced: ‘Those phenomena that once I had only

heard about, I here & now dwell touching them with my body and, through discernment, I see them clear through.' Whatever conviction he has, is his faculty of conviction.

SN 48:50

§ 75. Just as, in a house with a ridged roof, the rafters are not stable or firm as long as the ridge beam is not in place, but are stable & firm when it is; in the same way, four faculties are not stable or firm as long as noble knowledge has not arisen in a disciple of the noble ones, but are stable & firm when it has. Which four? The faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, & the faculty of concentration.

When a disciple of the noble ones is discerning, the conviction that follows from that stands solid. The persistence that follows from that stands solid. The mindfulness that follows from that stands solid. The concentration that follows from that stands solid.

SN 48:52

§ 76. It's through the development & pursuit of two faculties that a monk whose effluents are ended declares gnosis: 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.' Through which two? Through noble discernment & noble release. Whatever is his noble discernment is his faculty of discernment. Whatever is his noble release is his faculty of concentration.

SN 48:46

§ 77. Just as, of all scented woods, red sandalwood is reckoned the chief, even so of all the mental qualities that are wings to self-awakening, the faculty of discernment is reckoned the chief in terms of leading to awakening. And what are the mental qualities that are wings to self-awakening? The faculty of conviction is a mental quality that is a wing to self-awakening leading to awakening. The faculty of persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment is a mental quality that is a wing to self-awakening leading to Awakening.

SN 48:55

§ 78. When one quality is established in a monk, the five faculties are developed & developed well. Which one quality? Heedfulness.

And what is heedfulness? There is the case where a monk guards his mind in the midst of mental effluents & their concomitants. When his mind is guarded in the midst of mental effluents & their concomitants, the faculty of conviction goes to the culmination of its development. The faculty of persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment goes to the culmination of its development.

This is how when one quality is established in a monk, the five faculties are developed & developed well.

SN 48:56

§ 79. Just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant's footprint is reckoned their chief in terms of size; in the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, lie gathered in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned their chief....

Just as all the light of the constellations does not equal one sixteenth of the light of the moon, and the light of the moon is reckoned their chief; in the same way, all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, lie gathered in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned their chief.

AN 10:15

§ 80. Heedfulness: the path to the Deathless;
 Heedlessness: the path to death.
 The heedful do not die.
 The heedless are as if
 already dead.

Dhp 21

§ 81. You shouldn't chase after the past,
 or place expectations on the future.
 What is past
 is left behind.
 The future
 is as yet unreached.
 Whatever quality is present
 you clearly see right there,
 right there.
 Not taken in, unshaken,
 that's how you develop the heart.
 Ardently doing your duty today,
 for—who knows?—tomorrow
 death.
 There is no bargaining
 with Death & his mighty horde.
 Whoever lives thus ardently,
 relentlessly,
 both day & night,
 has truly had an auspicious day:
 So says the Peaceful Sage.

MN 131

§ 82. The Buddha: 'Mindfulness of death, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit & great benefit. It gains a footing in the Deathless, has the Deathless as its

final end. Therefore you should develop mindfulness of death.'

When this was said, a certain monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I already develop mindfulness of death.'

'And how do you develop mindfulness of death?'

'I think, "O, that I might live for a day & night, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal." This is how I develop mindfulness of death.'

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I, too, already develop mindfulness of death.'

'And how do you develop mindfulness of death?'

'I think, "O, that I might live for a day, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal." This is how I develop mindfulness of death.'

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... 'I think, "O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to eat a meal, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal"....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... 'I think, "O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal"....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... 'I think, "O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal"....

Then another monk addressed the Blessed One, 'I, too, develop mindfulness of death.... 'I think, "O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal." This is how I develop mindfulness of death.'

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

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

'Therefore you should train yourselves: "We will dwell heedfully. We will develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents." That

is how you should train yourselves.’

AN 6:19

§ 83. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, ‘I exhort you, monks: All fabrications are subject to decay. Attain consummation through heedfulness.’ Those were the Tathāgata’s last words.

DN 16

§ 84. These are the four modes of practice. Which four? Painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition, & pleasant practice with quick intuition.

And what is painful practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally of an intensely aversive nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of aversion. Or he is normally of an intensely deluded nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of delusion. His five faculties—the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment—are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy [Comm: the concentration forming the Path] that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with slow intuition.

And what is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate... aversive... deluded nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of delusion. His five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.

And what is pleasant practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally not of an intensely aversive nature... normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of delusion. His five faculties... are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with slow intuition.

And what is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature... normally not of an intensely aversive nature... normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of delusion. His five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition.

AN 4:162

§ 85. These are the four modes of practice. Which four? Painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition, & pleasant practice with quick intuition.

And what is painful practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a monk remains focused on unattractiveness with regard to the body. Percipient of loathsomeness with regard to food & non-delight with regard to the entire world, he remains focused on inconstancy with regard to all fabrications. The perception of death is well established within him. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner—strength of conviction, strength of shame, strength of compunction, strength of persistence, & strength of discernment—but his five faculties... are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with slow intuition.

And what is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk remains focused on unattractiveness with regard to the body... focused on inconstancy with regard to all fabrications. The perception of death is well established within him. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... and his five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.

And what is pleasant practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna... second jhāna... third jhāna... fourth jhāna. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... but his five faculties... are present in a weak form. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with slow intuition.

And what is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna... second jhāna... third jhāna... fourth jhāna. He dwells in dependence on the five strengths of a learner... and his five faculties... are present in an acute form. Because of their acuity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition.

These are the four modes of practice.

AN 4:163

§ 86. As Ven. Soṇa was meditating in seclusion [after doing walking meditation until the skin of his soles was split & bleeding], this train of thought arose in his awareness: 'Of the Blessed One's disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from the effluents through lack of clinging/sustenance. Now, my family has enough wealth that it would be possible to enjoy wealth & make merit. What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, and to enjoy wealth & make merit?'

Then the Blessed One, as soon as he perceived with his awareness the train of thought in Ven. Soṇa's awareness—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from Mount Vulture Peak, appeared in the Cool Wood right in front of Ven. Soṇa, and sat down on a prepared seat. Ven.

Soṇa, after bowing down to the Blessed One, sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, ‘Just now, as you were meditating in seclusion, didn’t this train of thought appear to your awareness: “Of the Blessed One’s disciples who have aroused their persistence, I am one, but my mind is not released from the effluents.... What if I were to disavow the training, return to the lower life, and to enjoy wealth & make merit?”’

‘Yes, lord.’

‘Now what do you think, Soṇa? Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the vīna?’

‘Yes, lord.’

‘...And when the strings of your vīna were too taut, was your vīna in tune & playable?’

‘No, lord.’

‘...And when the strings of your vīna were too loose, was your vīna in tune & playable?’

‘No, lord.’

‘...And when the strings of your vīna were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned [lit: “established”] to be right on pitch, was your vīna in tune & playable?’

‘Yes, lord.’

‘In the same way, Soṇa, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune [‘penetrate, ‘ferret out’] the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there pick up your theme.’

‘Yes, lord,’ Ven. Soṇa answered the Blessed One. Then, having given this exhortation to Ven. Soṇa, the Blessed One—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—disappeared from the Cool Wood and appeared on Mount Vulture Peak.

So after that, Ven. Soṇa determined the right pitch for his persistence, attuned the pitch of the (five) faculties (to that), and there picked up his theme. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew, ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.’ And thus Ven. Soṇa became another one of the Arahants.

AN 6:55

§ 87. There is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that ‘I am a learner,’ and whereby a monk who is an adept [an Arahant], standing at the level of an adept, can discern that ‘I am an adept.’

...There is the case where a monk is a learner. He discerns, as it has come to be, that ‘This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of

stress.... This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.’ This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that ‘I am a learner.’

Furthermore, the monk who is a learner reflects, ‘Is there outside of this [doctrine & discipline] any contemplative or brahman who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One?’ And he discerns, ‘No, there is no contemplative or brahman outside of this [doctrine & discipline] who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One.’ This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that ‘I am a learner.’

Furthermore, the monk who is a learner discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He sees, having penetrated it with discernment, what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are, but he does not dwell touching them with his body. This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that ‘I am a learner.’

And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that ‘I am an adept’? There is the case where a monk who is an adept discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He sees, having penetrated it with discernment, what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are, and he dwells touching them with his body. This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that ‘I am an adept.’

Furthermore, the monk who is an adept discerns the six sense faculties: the faculty of the eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... intellect. He discerns, ‘These six sense faculties will cease entirely, everywhere, & in every way without remainder, and no other set of six sense faculties will arise anywhere or in any way.’ This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that ‘I am an adept.’”

SN 48:53

§ 88. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns, as they have come to be, the origination, the disappearance, the allure, the drawbacks—and the emancipation from—these five faculties, he is called a disciple of the noble ones who has attained the stream: not subject to perdition, certain, destined for self-awakening.... When, having discerned as they have come to be, the origination, the disappearance, the allure, the drawbacks—and the emancipation from—these five faculties, he is released from lack of clinging/sustenance, he is called an Arahant....

SN 48:3,5

§ 89. The Buddha: Sāriputta, do you take it on conviction that the faculty of conviction, when developed & pursued, gains a footing in the Deathless, has the Deathless as its goal & consummation? Do you take it on conviction that the

faculty of persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment, when developed & pursued, gains a footing in the Deathless, has the Deathless as its goal & consummation?

Ven. Sāriputta: It's not that I take it on conviction in the Blessed One that the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment, when developed & pursued, gains a footing in the Deathless, has the Deathless as its goal & consummation. Those who have not known, seen, penetrated, realized, or attained it by means of discernment would have to take it on conviction in others that the faculty of conviction... discernment... has the Deathless as its goal & consummation; whereas those who have known, seen, penetrated, realized, & attained it by means of discernment would have no doubt or uncertainty that the faculty of conviction... discernment... has the Deathless as its goal & consummation. And as for me, I have known, seen, penetrated, realized, & attained it by means of discernment. I have no doubt or uncertainty that the faculty of conviction... discernment... has the Deathless as its goal & consummation.

SN 48:44

F. THE FIVE STRENGTHS

§ 90. There are these five strengths. Which five? Strength of conviction, strength of persistence, strength of mindfulness, strength of concentration, & strength of discernment. These are the five strengths.

Just as the River Ganges flows to the east, slopes to the east, inclines to the east, in the same way when a monk develops & pursues the five strengths, he flows to Unbinding, slopes to Unbinding, inclines to Unbinding.

And how is it that when a monk develops & pursues the five strengths, he flows... slopes... inclines to Unbinding?

There is the case where the monk develops strength of conviction dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops strength of persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go.

This is how a monk, when developing & pursuing the five strengths, flows... slopes... inclines to Unbinding.

SN 50:1

§ 91. There is a manner of reckoning whereby the five faculties are the same as the five strengths, and the five strengths the same as the five faculties. And what is that method?

Whatever is the faculty of conviction, that is the strength of conviction. Whatever is the strength of conviction, that is the faculty of conviction. Whatever is the faculty of persistence, that is the strength of persistence. Whatever is the strength of persistence, that is the faculty of persistence. Whatever is the faculty of mindfulness, that is the strength of mindfulness. Whatever is the strength of

mindfulness, that is the faculty of mindfulness. Whatever is the faculty of concentration, that is the strength of concentration. Whatever is the strength of concentration, that is the faculty of concentration. Whatever is the faculty of discernment, that is the strength of discernment. Whatever is the strength of discernment, that is the faculty of discernment.

Imagine a river—flowing, sloping, inclining toward the east—in whose midst is an island. There is a manner of reckoning whereby the river is classified as one current, and another manner of reckoning whereby it is classified as two.

And what is the first manner of reckoning? Whatever water lies to the east of the island, and whatever water lies to the west. This is the manner of reckoning whereby the river is classified as one current.

And what is the second manner of reckoning? Whatever water lies to the north of the island, and whatever water lies to the south. This is the manner of reckoning whereby the river is classified as two.

In the same way, whatever is the faculty of conviction, that is the strength of conviction. Whatever is the strength of conviction, that is the faculty of conviction.... Whatever is the faculty of discernment, that is the strength of discernment. Whatever is the strength of discernment, that is the faculty of discernment.

SN 48:43

G. THE SEVEN FACTORS FOR AWAKENING

The seven factors for Awakening (*bojjhanga*) are closely related to the practice of the four frames of reference. The texts use two patterns to describe this relationship. **The first pattern** is a spiral, showing how the seven factors for Awakening build on the four frames of reference [§92]. This point is reflected in the position of mindfulness—defined as the practice of any one of the four frames of reference—as the first factor in the list. Discernment, in the role of the analysis of mental qualities into skillful and unskillful, builds on right mindfulness and leads to persistence, which in the form of right effort/exertion maximizes the skillful qualities and minimizes the unskillful ones. This in turn leads to four factors associated with jhana: rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity. Equanimity, here, is not a neutral feeling, but rather a balancing or moderation—an evenness of mind—with regard to any feeling or object that arises. It is identical with the equanimity in the fourth jhana [§149] and with the inherent equanimity in the fifth factor of five-factored noble concentration [§150], which can develop out of any of the four jhanas. As such it can lead either to greater mastery of meditation—as the purity of mindfulness that accompanies the fourth jhana provides the basis for even more precise analysis of qualities, thus allowing the causal loop to spiral to a higher level—or to the state of non-fashioning that opens to Awakening.

Abhidhamma texts seem to contradict the point that equanimity feeds back into mindfulness in this way, for they maintain that the factors for Awakening are transcendent—in other words, that they come into play only as one reaches the point of Awakening, where no temporal feedback would take place. The discourses, however, show that the factors for Awakening can function in the

development of mundane concentration as well. Passage §96 shows how the “feeding” of the factors for Awakening is needed to “starve” the hindrances, mental qualities that have to be suppressed before mundane concentration can be attained. Passage §98 shows how the factors function in developing the four attitudes that lead to “awareness-release”—a mundane form of release—and indicates the highest state to which those attitudes can lead for one who has penetrated no higher, i.e., who has attained none of the transcendent levels. These passages demonstrate that the factors for Awakening can function on the level of mundane jhana in addition to the level at the verge of Awakening. Thus, equanimity as a factor for Awakening on the mundane plane can feed back into the process of meditation, providing a steady basis for more continuous mindfulness and clearer analysis of mental qualities until all the factors of the list ripen to transcendence.

The second pattern for describing the relationship between the factors for Awakening and the four frames of reference is more holographic. As we have already noted [II/B], all the factors in the list are all implicit in the “approach” stage of frames-of-reference meditation. The texts themselves make this point by saying that the development of any one of the frames of reference brings the factors for Awakening to the culmination of their development [§92].

The differences between these two patterns—a spiraling sequence building on the four frames of reference, and a holographic formula implicit in the frames of reference—is largely one of emphasis. As the dual nature of this/that conditionality indicates—with mental factors building on one another over time and strengthening one another in the present—both aspects act together in actual practice.

Viewed as a spiraling sequence, the factors for Awakening offer some interesting contrasts to the five faculties. Both sets depict one of the causal loops in the skillful development of the mind, but here the emphasis is not on how mindfulness and concentration help to develop discernment, but on how mindfulness and discernment help to develop concentration. This different dynamic is reflected in the mental qualities that act as underlying agents in the development of each set. As we have seen [II/E], heedfulness underlies the development of the faculties; it grows from a sense of conviction in the principle of kamma into members of the “concentration aggregate”—right effort and right mindfulness—in the noble eightfold path. In the case of the factors for Awakening, appropriate attention is what underlies the development of every element in the set [§95]; it grows from a component factor of conviction [§70] into a member of the “discernment aggregate”: right view. Thus, in each set, the agent underlying its development reflects the intermediate members of the set in their role of fostering the final member.

A closer look at the topic of **appropriate attention** will show how the processes of discernment can foster concentration to the point where both issue in Awakening. Because this topic is so central to the practice, we will have to treat it in detail.

The term “appropriate attention” (*yoniso manasikara*) can also be rendered as “wise reflection,” “the proper approach,” or “systematic attention.” It is essentially the basic insight that enables one to see which issues are worth paying attention to, and which ones should be ignored. Passage §51 gives what is probably the best depiction of this process. The meditator ignores questions that lead to the

proliferation of mental effluents, and pays attention to questions that help weaken them. As we noted in I/B, the knowledge that puts an end to the effluents deals with experience in the phenomenological mode. Thus, the best questions for weakening the effluents are ones that lead the mind into that mode.

Now, not all questions are helpful in this way. Some deal in terms that focus the mind on narrative or cosmological issues in ways that actually obstruct a phenomenological viewpoint. For this reason, the Buddha found it necessary to divide questions into four classes: those meriting a categorical answer, those meriting an analytical answer, those deserving a counter-question, and those deserving to be put aside [AN 4:43]. The first class includes questions that are already well-phrased and can yield straight answers useful in weakening one's mental effluents. The second class includes those that are poorly phrased but are close enough to becoming useful that they can be clarified by a redefinition of terms. The third class covers instances where the real issue is not the question as phrased, but the confused line of thinking or hidden agendas behind the asking of the question. Once these underlying elements are exposed and corrected by the proper counter-question, fruitful questions can then be framed. The final class of questions covers instances where both the question and the act of asking it are so misguided that any attempt to get involved in the issue would lead only to the proliferation of mental effluents, and so the whole issue should be put aside.

Of these four classes of questions, the class meriting categorical answers is of most interest here, for it's the class that can act as a focal point for appropriate attention. The vast majority of the questions that the Buddha asks and answers categorically in the texts fall into three general sorts: (a) those that seek to identify terms and categories useful for the task of ending stress and suffering; (b) those that seek to place particular events in their proper category; and (c) those that seek to understand the causal role of events assigned to the various categories: how they condition, and are conditioned by, one another. A sub-set of (c) consists of questions concerning the effect that one's questions and one's approach to the practice in general have on the mind.

All of these three sorts of question are closely related to the three stages of frames-of-reference meditation: sorts (a) and (b) relate to the first stage, and sort (c) to the second, whereas the sub-set of (c) dealing with the questioning approach itself leads directly to the third. This last sub-set also forms the overall principle for delineating all four classes of questions mentioned above: the effect that the process of asking and answering has on the mind. In simple terms, this principle means viewing experience in terms of cause and effect, viewing questions in terms of cause and effect, classifying them according to the results that come from trying to answer them, and treating them only in ways that will help lead to the ending of suffering and stress. This is the proper function of appropriate attention in its most mature form.

To arrive at this mature level, however, appropriate attention must be developed step by step. These steps can be shown by taking the passages given in this section and viewing them in the context of the practice of the fourth frame of reference: focusing on the mental qualities of the hindrances and the factors for Awakening in and of themselves in the course of developing concentration.

The first step is simply to identify the hindrances and factors for Awakening as they are experienced, noting their presence and absence in the mind—a movement

toward what the Buddha called “entering into emptiness” [II/B]. As III/D makes clear, there are several preliminary steps in concentration practice leading up to the ability to do this. When these are mastered, one can focus on, say, the hindrance of ill-will not in terms of the object of the ill-will but on the quality of ill-will as a mere event in the mind. The question here is not, “What am I angry about?” or “What did that person do wrong?” but simply “What is happening in my mind? How can it be classed?”

Given the well-known Buddhist teaching on not-self, some people have wondered why the questions of appropriate attention at this step would use such concepts as “me” and “my,” but these concepts are essential at this stage—where the mind is still more at home in the narrative mode of “self” and “others”—in pointing out that the focus of the inquiry should be directed within, rather than without. This helps to bring one’s frame of reference to the experience of mental qualities as phenomena in and of themselves, and away from the narratives that provoked the ill-will to begin with. Only when this shift in reference is secure can the concepts of “me” and “my” be dispensed with, in the third step below.

The second step in appropriate attention—corresponding to the second stage of frames-of-reference practice—is to inquire into the causal functioning of the hindrances and factors for Awakening, to see how they arise and cease in the course of one’s concentration practice. The aim here is to gain insight into the workings of the hindrances and factors for Awakening as one tries to eliminate the former and bring the latter to full development. The passages in this section dealing with this step treat the issue in terms of two metaphors—balance on the one hand, feeding and starving on the other—and list the desired results of the meditation as a standard of measurement for gauging the success of one’s practice.

We have met with the role of **balance** already in the four bases of power and the five faculties. What is special here is that, instead of finding a balance within each factor for Awakening, the meditator is to use different factors to balance out specific hindrances. The more active members—analysis of qualities, persistence, and rapture—can be used to offset sluggish mind states; the more calming members—serenity, concentration, and equanimity—counteract restless mind states. Mindfulness is the only member of the set that is inherently skillful at all times [§97], for it is the one that keeps the need for balance in mind. To combine the portrayals of balance under this set and under the bases of power, we can say that the more active factors for Awakening should be used to prevent specific bases of power—such as desire—from being too sluggish or constricted, whereas the more calming factors for Awakening should be used to prevent desire, etc., from being too active or scattered [§66]. It is interesting also to note that, although analysis of qualities is a potential cause for restlessness, it is also the factor needed to judge when its own activity is going overboard and needs to be calmed with concentration.

Under the metaphor of **feeding and starving**, the skill of appropriate attention is said to feed all the factors for Awakening, just as inappropriate attention starves them and feeds the hindrances in their place. As §96 points out, the role of appropriate attention at this level is to inquire into the property that acts as a foothold for each hindrance or factor for Awakening. The feeding process is especially direct with analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening—a near equivalent of appropriate attention—and the hindrance of uncertainty. These two form a pair, in that the feeding of analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening in

and of itself starves the hindrance of uncertainty, and vice versa. Appropriate attention to the effects of skillful and unskillful qualities in the mind—in other words, focusing on questions that identify such qualities as the hindrances and the factors for Awakening, and inquire into their causes and effects—not only feeds this factor for Awakening but also enables one to develop its fellow factors. Inappropriate attention to issues that excite uncertainty—asking questions that can lead only to doubt and perplexity—not only feeds the hindrance of uncertainty but also leads to a sense of confusion that prevents all the factors for Awakening from developing.

With some of the other factors for Awakening—such as mindfulness, rapture, and equanimity—the texts are vague as to exactly which properties form their potential footholds. A few of these properties can be inferred from other texts, so they are cross-referenced in the relevant passages. The remaining instances can serve as challenges for each meditator to explore through practice. Challenges of this sort are valuable in forcing one to become self-reliant at observing cause and effect and asking the right questions: two skills that are basic to the development of appropriate attention and the path of practice as a whole.

As one becomes more successful in identifying these properties and attending to them in the appropriate way, one's skill at concentration practice improves. Concentration and equanimity then feed back into the loop by purifying mindfulness in the practice of jhana [§72], providing a steady basis for discernment in terms of more precise analysis of qualities and more subtlety in one's attention. This can lead either to improved abilities at concentration or to a more self-referential mode away from the "object" of the practice and turning toward the "approach" [II/B], where these activities of discernment become sensitive to themselves as events in the causal network. In particular, they can begin to ask questions about their own acts of questioning, to see what latent assumptions are still causing them uncertainty and getting in the way of their further development. In this way, they come to *the third step* in their development.

According to the texts, the most insidious issues that can excite uncertainty are questions that center on the concept of "I": "Do I exist?" "Do I not exist?" In the cosmological or metaphysical mode, this concept leads to such questions as: "Does the self exist?" "Does it not exist?" In the psychological or personal narrative mode, it leads to a sense of self-identity, attachment to the object with which one identifies, and all the suffering that inherently results. In either mode, this concept leads to uncertainty about the past and future: "Did I exist in the past?" "Will I exist in the future?" "What will I be?" All of these questions obviously pull the mind out of the phenomenological mode; passage §51 shows that the Buddha regarded them as leading to mental effluents and thus unworthy of attention. The one time he was asked point-blank as to whether or not there is a self [SN 44:10; MFU, pp. 85-86], he refused to answer, thus showing that the question deserves to be put aside.

What then of the well-known Buddhist teachings on not-self? From the way these teachings are expressed in some of the texts, it might be inferred that the Buddha held to the principle that there is no self. Here, though, it is important to remember the Buddha's own comment on how his teachings are to be interpreted [AN 2:25]. With some of them, he said, it's proper to draw inferences, whereas with others it's not. Unfortunately, he didn't illustrate the distinction between the two types of teachings with specific examples. However, we're apparently safe in assuming that if we try to draw inferences from his statements to give either a

categorical answer (No, there is no self; or Yes, there is) or an analytical answer (It depends on how you define “self”) to a question that the Buddha showed by example should not be asked or answered, we are drawing inferences where they should not be drawn.

A more fruitful line of inquiry is to view experience, not in terms of the existence or non-existence of the self, but in terms of the categories of the four noble truths, which §51 identifies as the truly proper subject of appropriate attention. If we look at the way the Buddha phrases questions about not-self [SN 22:59, MFU, pp. 79-80] in the context of the duties appropriate to the four noble truths [§195], we see that they function as tools for comprehending stress and abandoning the craving and clinging that cause it. Thus this line of questioning helps bring about the ending of the mental effluents. Rather than asking, “Do I exist?”, one should ask, “Is this mine? Is this me? If these things are regarded as me or mine, will there be suffering?” These questions, when properly answered (No, No, and Yes), can lead directly to the phenomenological mode and on to release from clinging and from suffering and stress. Thus they are worth asking.

When applied to the hindrances and factors for Awakening, this line of inquiry can bring the mind to the third stage of frames-of-reference meditation by calling into question the “me” and “my” assumed in the first step of questioning. This undermines any sense of self-identification, first with the hindrances—such as “I’m drowsy”—and then with the factors for Awakening—such as “My mind is serene” [§167]. All that then remains is the radically phenomenological mode that enters fully into the emptiness on the verge of non-fashioning [II/B], where there are no longer any questions, but simply awareness that “There are mental qualities”... “There is this.” This is the threshold to Awakening.

Throughout the process of developing appropriate attention in the course of the second and third stages of frames-of-reference meditation, the spiraling loop of the factors for Awakening continually feeds back on itself, as the factor of equanimity allows the factors of mindfulness and analysis of qualities to gauge the success of the practice and call for adjustments where needed. The **standard of measurement** to be used in this evaluation is given in the formula that frequently accompanies the definition of the factors for Awakening in the texts: each factor ideally should depend on “seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go.” The terms in this list occur both in mundane [§98] and in transcendent [§92] contexts, which indicates that they have both mundane and transcendent levels of meaning. On the mundane level, they play a role in the practice of jhana [for the role of letting go in concentration see §71]. As they develop and reach transcendence, they bring the mind to the state of non-fashioning. By basing one’s practice on the seclusion, dispassion, and cessation found in the jhana that takes letting go as its object [§72], and by feeding it through the constant evaluation provided by appropriate attention and analysis of qualities to the point of ever more refined levels of letting go, one brings together the mental qualities of attention and intention in a mutually reinforcing way that heads in the direction of Awakening. At the highest level of letting go—the “knowing but not holding” that we equated with the perceptual mode of emptiness on the verge of non-fashioning in section II/E—appropriate attention gives way to transcendent clear knowing. The intention underlying the practice of jhana gives way to the stillness of the resulting transcendent freedom. This is how the factors for Awakening, in the words of the texts [§92], “when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release.”

§ 92. Once the Blessed One was staying at Sāketa, in the Añjana Forest Game Refuge. Then Kuṇḍaliya the wanderer came to where the Blessed One was staying and on arrival greeted him courteously and, after engaging in pleasant conversation, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, 'Master Gotama, I like to frequent gatherings in parks. It is my habit at midday, after my morning meal, to go from park to park, from garden to garden. There I encounter various contemplatives & brahmans discoursing on the rewards of defending their own tenets in debate, and the rewards of condemning those of others. Now in the experience of what reward does Master Gotama dwell?'

'The Tathāgata dwells experiencing the reward of the fruits of clear knowing & release.'

'But what are the qualities that, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release?'

'The seven factors for Awakening....'

'And what are the qualities that... lead to the culmination of the seven factors for Awakening?'

'The four frames of reference....'

'And what are the qualities that... lead to the culmination of the four frames of reference?'

'The three courses of right conduct....'

'And what are the qualities that... lead to the culmination of the three courses of right conduct?'

'Restraint of the senses.... And how does restraint of the senses, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of the three courses of right conduct? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a pleasant form with the eye, doesn't hanker after it, doesn't delight in it, doesn't give rise to passion for it. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released. On seeing an unpleasant form with the eye, he is not upset, his mind is not unsettled, his feelings are not wounded, his mind does not become resentful. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released.

On hearing a pleasant... unpleasant sound with the ear... On smelling a pleasant... unpleasant smell with the nose... On tasting a pleasant... unpleasant taste with the tongue... On feeling a pleasant... unpleasant tactile sensation with the body...

On cognizing a pleasant idea with the intellect, he doesn't hanker after it, doesn't delight in it, doesn't give rise to passion for it. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released. On cognizing an unpleasant idea with the intellect, he is not upset, his mind is not unsettled, his feelings are not wounded, his mind does not become resentful. Unmoved in body & unmoved in mind, he is inwardly well composed & well released. This, Kuṇḍaliya, is how restraint of the senses, when developed & pursued, leads to the culmination of the three courses of right conduct.

And how are the three courses of right conduct developed & pursued so as to

lead to the culmination of the four frames of reference? There is the case where a monk abandons wrong conduct in terms of his deeds and develops right conduct in terms of his deeds; abandons wrong conduct in terms of his speech and develops right conduct in terms of his speech; abandons wrong conduct in terms of his thoughts and develops right conduct in terms of his thoughts. This, Kuṇḍaliya, is how the three courses of right conduct, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of the four frames of reference.

And how are the four frames of reference developed & pursued so that the seven factors for Awakening come to completion?

{[1] On whatever occasion the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion his mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When his mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then mindfulness as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[2] Remaining mindful in this way, he examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment. When he remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[3] In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, unflagging persistence is aroused. When unflagging persistence is aroused in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then persistence as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[4] In one whose persistence is aroused, a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises. When a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then rapture as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[5] For one who is enraptured, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of an enraptured monk grow calm, then serenity as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[6] For one who is at ease—his body calmed—the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind of one who is at ease—his body calmed—becomes concentrated, then concentration as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[7] He oversees the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When he oversees the mind thus concentrated with equanimity, equanimity as a factor for Awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[Similarly with the other three frames of reference: feelings, mind, & mental qualities.]

This, Kuṇḍaliya, is how the four frames of reference, when developed &

pursued, lead to the culmination of the seven factors for Awakening.

And how are the seven factors for Awakening developed & pursued so as to lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release? There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening... persistence as a factor for Awakening... rapture as a factor for Awakening... serenity as a factor for Awakening... concentration as a factor for Awakening... equanimity as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This, Kuṇḍaliya, is how the seven factors for Awakening, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release.'

When this had been said, Kuṇḍaliya the wanderer said to the Blessed One: 'Magnificent, Master Gotama, magnificent! In many ways has Master Gotama made the Dhamma clear—just as if one were to place upright what has been overturned, to reveal what has been hidden, to point out the way to one who is lost, or to set out a lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes might see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the Community of monks. May Master Gotama regard me as a lay follower gone for refuge from this day forth as long as life shall last.'

SN 46:6 { + MN 118}

§ 93. Now in what way does a monk develop & pursue mindfulness of in-&-out breathing so that it bears great fruit & great benefits?

There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening accompanied by mindfulness of in-&-out breathing—dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening... persistence as a factor for Awakening... rapture as a factor for Awakening... serenity as a factor for Awakening... concentration as a factor for Awakening... equanimity as a factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so that it bears great fruit & great benefits.

SN 54:2

§ 94. Now what is the manner of reckoning by which the seven factors for Awakening are fourteen?

[1] Any mindfulness with regard to internal qualities is mindfulness as a factor for Awakening. And any mindfulness with regard to external qualities is also mindfulness as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'mindfulness as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

[2] Any time one examines, investigates, & scrutinizes internal qualities with discernment, that is analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening. And any time one examines, investigates, & scrutinizes external qualities with discernment, that too is analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this

manner that it is two.

[3] Any bodily persistence is persistence as a factor for Awakening. And any mental persistence is also persistence as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'persistence as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

[4] Any rapture accompanied by directed thought & evaluation is rapture as a factor for Awakening. And any rapture unaccompanied by directed thought & evaluation is also rapture as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'rapture as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

[5] Any bodily serenity is serenity as a factor for Awakening. And any mental serenity is also serenity as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'serenity as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

[6] Any concentration accompanied by directed thought & evaluation is concentration as a factor for Awakening. And any concentration unaccompanied by directed thought & evaluation is also concentration as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'concentration as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

[7] Any equanimity with regard to internal qualities is equanimity as a factor for Awakening. And any equanimity with regard to external qualities is also equanimity as a factor for Awakening. Thus this forms the definition of 'equanimity as a factor for Awakening,' and it is in this manner that it is two.

This is the manner of reckoning by which the seven factors for Awakening are fourteen.

SN 46:52

§ 95. I do not envision any one quality by which unarisen factors for Awakening do not arise, and arisen factors for Awakening do not go to the culmination of their development, like inappropriate attention. When a person's attention is inappropriate, unarisen factors for Awakening do not arise, and arisen factors for Awakening do not go to the culmination of their development.

I do not envision any one quality by which unarisen factors for Awakening arise, and arisen factors for Awakening go to the culmination of their development, like appropriate attention. When a person's attention is appropriate, unarisen factors for Awakening arise, and arisen factors for Awakening go to the culmination of their development. [§§51; 53]

AN 1:75-76

§ 96. Monks, I will teach you the feeding & starving of the five hindrances & of the seven factors for Awakening. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak....

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

desire once it has arisen.

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

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There are boredom, weariness, yawning, drowsiness after a meal, & sluggishness of awareness. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is non-stillness of awareness. To foster inappropriate attention to that: This is the food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are phenomena that act as a foothold for uncertainty. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen.

Feeding the Factors for Awakening. Now, what is the food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for mindfulness as a factor for Awakening [well-purified virtue & views made straight; see §27]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light [§§2-3]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence... once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for rapture as a factor for Awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of

rapture... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen serenity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of serenity... once it has arisen? There is physical serenity & there is mental serenity. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen serenity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of serenity... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration... once it has arisen? There are themes for calm, themes for non-distraction [these are the four frames of reference; see §148]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration... once it has arisen.

And what is the food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for equanimity as a factor for Awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity... once it has arisen.

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

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is awareness-release [through good will, compassion, empathetic joy, or equanimity]. To foster appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is the stilling of awareness. To foster appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen.

Starving the Factors for Awakening. Now, what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of

mindfulness... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for mindfulness as a factor for Awakening. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence... once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for rapture as a factor for Awakening. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen serenity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of serenity... once it has arisen? There is bodily serenity & there is mental serenity. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen serenity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of serenity... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration... once it has arisen? There are the themes for concentration, themes for non-confusion. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration... once it has arisen.

And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity... once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for equanimity as a factor for Awakening. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for Awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity... once it has arisen.

SN 46:51

§ 97. Fire. Monks, on occasions when the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to develop serenity as a factor for Awakening, concentration as a factor for Awakening, equanimity as a factor for Awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is hard to raise up by those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to make a small fire blaze up, were to place wet grass in it, wet cow dung, & wet

sticks; were to give it a spray of water and smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would make the small fire blaze up?

No, lord.

In the same way, when the mind is sluggish, that is the wrong time to develop serenity as a factor for Awakening, concentration as a factor for Awakening, equanimity as a factor for Awakening. Why is that? The sluggish mind is hard to raise up by those mental qualities.

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

Yes, lord.

In the same way, when the mind is sluggish, that is the right time to develop analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, persistence as a factor for Awakening, rapture as a factor for Awakening....

Now, on occasions when the mind is restless, that is the wrong time to develop analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, persistence as a factor for Awakening, rapture as a factor for Awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is hard to calm down with those mental qualities. Just as if a man, wanting to put out a large fire, were to place dry grass in it, dry cow dung, & dry sticks; were to blow on it with his mouth and not smother it with dust. Is it possible that he would put it out?

No, lord.

In the same way, when the mind is restless, that is the wrong time to develop analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, persistence as a factor for Awakening, rapture as a factor for Awakening....

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

Yes, lord.

In the same way, when the mind is restless, that is the right time to develop serenity as a factor for Awakening, concentration as a factor for Awakening, equanimity as a factor for Awakening. Why is that? The restless mind is easy to calm down with those mental qualities.

As for mindfulness, I tell you, that is beneficial everywhere.

§ 98. Awareness-release. And how is the awareness-release through good will developed, what is its destiny, what is its excellence, its reward, & its consummation?

There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening accompanied by good will, dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening... persistence as a factor for Awakening... rapture as a factor for Awakening... serenity as a factor for Awakening... concentration as a factor for Awakening... equanimity as a factor for Awakening accompanied by good will, dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome. If he wants, he remains percipient of loathsomeness in the presence of what is not loathsome & what is. If he wants, he remains percipient of unloathsomeness in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not. If he wants—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful [§§46; 181]. Or he may enter & remain in the beautiful liberation. I tell you, monks, the awareness-release through good will has the beautiful as its excellence—in the case of one who has penetrated to no higher release.

And how is the awareness-release through compassion developed, what is its destiny, what is its excellence, its reward, & its consummation?

There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening accompanied by compassion... etc.... If he wants—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful. Or, with the complete transcending of perceptions of (physical) form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, (perceiving,) 'Infinite space,' he enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. I tell you, monks, the awareness-release through compassion has the dimension of the infinitude of space as its excellence—in the case of one who has penetrated to no higher release.

And how is the awareness-release through empathetic joy developed, what is its destiny, what is its excellence, its reward, & its consummation?

There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening accompanied by empathetic joy... etc.... If he wants—in the presence of what is loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful. Or, with the complete transcending of the dimension of infinitude of space, (perceiving,) 'Infinite consciousness,' he enters & remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. I tell you, monks, the awareness-release through empathetic joy has the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness as its excellence—in the case of one who has penetrated to no higher release.

And how is the awareness-release through equanimity developed, what is its destiny, what is its excellence, its reward, & its consummation?

There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for Awakening accompanied by equanimity... etc.... If he wants—in the presence of what is

loathsome & what is not—cutting himself off from both, he remains equanimous, alert, & mindful. Or, with the complete transcending of the dimension of infinitude of consciousness, (perceiving,) ‘There is nothing,’ he enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. I tell you, monks, the awareness-release through equanimity has the dimension of nothingness as its excellence—in the case of one who has penetrated to no higher release.

SN 46:54

§ 99. Ven. Ānanda: Uttiya, suppose that there were a royal frontier city with strong ramparts, strong walls & arches, and a single gate. In it would be a wise, competent, & knowledgeable gatekeeper to keep out those he didn’t know and to let in those he did. Patrolling the path around the city, he wouldn’t see a crack or an opening in the walls big enough for even a cat to slip through. Although he wouldn’t know that ‘So-and-so many creatures enter or leave the city,’ he would know this: ‘Whatever large creatures enter or leave the city all enter or leave it through this gate.’

In the same way, the Tathāgata isn’t concerned as to whether all the cosmos or half of it or a third of it led (to release) by means of (his Dhamma). But he does know this: ‘All those who have been led, are being led, or will be led (to release) from the cosmos have done so, are doing so, or will do so after having abandoned the five hindrances—those defilements of awareness that weaken discernment— having well-established (“well-tuned”) their minds in the four frames of reference, and having developed, as they have come to be, the seven factors for Awakening.

AN 10:95

§ 100. Whose minds are well-developed
in the factors for self-awakening,
who delight in non-clinging,
relinquishing grasping:
 resplendent,
 their effluents ended,
 they, in the world,
 are Unbound.

Dhp 89

H. THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The noble eightfold path is the most standard description of the Buddhist way of practice. The Buddha taught it to his first disciples and to his last [S240], as well as to the majority of those in between. It is called noble because when all of its factors come together in a fully developed form, they stand on the threshold to stream-entry, the first of the noble or transcendent attainments.

The image of “path” used for the factors of this set has two major implications,

which we have already encountered in II/D. First, the image implies that these factors are means to an end, not an end in themselves; second, they lead to, rather than cause, the goal. In the context of this set, this image has two levels of meaning: On the beginning level, the path is a series of qualities that one must consciously develop, step by step, in order to bring oneself nearer to the goal. On the ultimate or “noble” level, it is a convergence of those qualities, fully developed, within the mind at the point of non-fashioning, leading inexorably to the Deathless. On the beginning level, one must work at following the path, but on the noble level the path becomes a vehicle that delivers one to the goal.

The eight factors of the noble eightfold path fall under the three “aggregates” of discernment, virtue, and concentration (*pañña-khandha*, *sila-khandha*, *samadhi-khandha*): right view and right resolve fall under the discernment aggregate; right speech, right action, and right livelihood under the virtue aggregate; and right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration under the concentration aggregate. Passage §105 states that although the factors of the noble path fall under these three aggregates, the three aggregates do not fall under the factors of the noble path. What this means is that not every instance of discernment, virtue, or concentration within the mind would count as a factor of the noble path. To begin with, there are such things as wrong virtue, wrong concentration, and wrong discernment [see, for example, §152]. Secondly, even right virtue, concentration, and discernment count as noble only when brought to a level of advanced development. This point is reflected in §106, which distinguishes mundane and noble levels for each factor of the path. Even though the mundane factors counteract blatant cases of wrong view, wrong resolve, etc., they still are conjoined with subtle levels of mental effluents and can lead to further becoming. Nevertheless, one must first nurture the mundane levels of the eight factors before they can develop into their noble counterparts.

On the mundane level, the first five factors of the path correspond to the faculty of conviction. Right view on this level means believing in the principle of kamma and trusting that those who have practiced properly truly understand the workings of kamma in this life and the next. In the Buddha’s words, this level of right view holds that “There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.” What this passage means is that there is merit in generosity; the moral qualities of good and bad are inherent parts of the cosmos, and not simply social conventions; there is life after death; one has a true moral debt to one’s parents; and there are people who have lived the renunciate’s life properly in such a way that they have gained true and direct knowledge of these matters. These beliefs are the minimum prerequisites for following the path to skillfulness, as they necessarily underlie any solid conviction in the principle of kamma.

Mundane levels of right resolve then build on right view, as one resolves to act in ways that will not create bad kamma; mundane right speech, right action, and right livelihood result naturally as one follows through with one’s resolve. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration on this level correspond to the faculties of persistence, mindfulness, and concentration. Right concentration, in turn, provides a basis for insight into the four noble truths, which counts both as the

faculty of discernment and the noble level of right view.

Once right view reaches the noble level, it brings the remaining factors of the path up to the noble level as well. One of the striking features of this level of the path is that it consists primarily of discernment and concentration [see the “qualities that are to be developed” in §111], with the boundaries between the two increasingly blurred. The noble level of right resolve, part of the discernment aggregate, consists of directed thought, evaluation, and mental singleness, all of which are factors of jhana. The noble level of right speech, right action, and right livelihood differ from the mundane levels of those factors in that the emphasis here is on the state of mind of the person abstaining from wrong speech, action, and livelihood. Although §106 does not define the noble levels of right effort, mindfulness, and concentration, it seems safe to assume that they are equivalent to the fifth factor of noble right concentration [§150], to be discussed under III/E and III/F, in which all three of these factors converge with right view and right resolve in a state of full development. In fact, their mutual reinforcement is what makes these factors all “right.”

This point is confirmed by §111, which states that when the noble eightfold path goes to the culmination of its development, tranquility and insight act in concert. This point also explains the statement at the beginning of §106 to the effect that the path consists primarily of right concentration, with the remaining factors as its supports and requisite conditions: These supports and conditions not only lead to right concentration, but when they all become noble, all eight factors coalesce in the mind in a state of solid oneness. Whereas on the mundane level the path factors, though interconnected, were separate, on the noble level they form a single, unified path.

When the noble eightfold path is attained, the mind reaches the level of stream-entry, the first of the four levels of Awakening [§107]. Thus the noble eightfold path represents the culmination of all seven sets in the Wings to Awakening [§111]. To attain each of the next two levels of Awakening—once-returning and non-returning—the eight noble path factors must converge again in the mind. However, to attain the highest level—Arahantship—the eight noble factors must converge together with two more: right knowledge and right release. Right knowledge is nowhere defined *per se* in the Canon, but §195 would seem to indicate the following relationship between it and right view: Right view is realization of the four noble truths and the duties appropriate to each, while right knowledge is the realization that the duties have been brought to fulfillment. The conjunction of right knowledge and right release reflects, on a higher level, the conjunction of discernment and concentration on the noble level of the eightfold path. Passage §76 suggests that release here can be considered as analogous to concentration, albeit totally unshakable. Right knowledge would include awareness of the unshakability of the release [§195], while the release would remain unshaken even in the face of that knowledge.

At this point, even the path can be abandoned, for one has reached the goal [§113]. Abandoning, here, does not mean that one reverts to wrongs views, wrong action, etc.; rather, one no longer needs to use right view, etc., as a means to a further attainment. As MN 107 and SN 22:122 state, the Awakened one continues practicing meditation and exercising right view as pleasant dwellings for the mind, conducive to mindfulness and alertness, and leads a moral life both for its inherent

pleasure and for the sake of the example it offers to those still on the path.

The noble eightfold path, like the seven factors for Awakening, is explicitly explained both as a causal loop and as a holographic formula. We have already described the causal loop above, in showing how the development of the mundane and noble path factors follows the pattern of the five faculties [see also §101]. Passage §106 presents a holographic pattern, in which the development of each factor needs three main supporting factors: right view, which acts as the leader so as to know what the right and wrong versions of the factors are; right effort, which makes the effort to abandon the wrong version and develop the right; and right mindfulness, which keeps the task of right effort in mind. Thus three factors that we have identified as essential to the development of skillfulness—discernment, mindfulness, and effort [I/A]—are involved at each step along the path. As a result of that involvement, they grow stronger to the point where they can help turn mundane right concentration—the fourth factor essential to the development of skillfulness—into noble right concentration. In this sense, they play a role analogous to that of heedfulness in the five faculties and appropriate attention in the seven factors for Awakening. In fact, they seem to be a complete working out of the elements implicit in those two qualities.

A quick review of the seven sets will show that *all* of them develop both in a linear and in a holographic way. Even the “holographic” sets—the frames of reference, right exertions, and bases of power—contain implicit versions of causal loops, in that all three must follow the three stages of frames-of-reference meditation. Even the linear causal-loop sets—the five faculties and strengths, the seven factors for Awakening, and the noble eightfold path—contain implicit holographic formulae, in that the dynamic of their development is inherent in specific qualities or clusters of qualities: heedfulness in the case of the faculties and strengths, appropriate attention in the case of the factors for Awakening, and the cluster of right view, right mindfulness, and right effort in the case of the noble eightfold path. This combination of linear and holographic patterns grows more complex as we remember that each of the first two stages of frames-of-reference meditation can form linear causal loops within themselves [II/B], while two of the factors in the three-part cluster that develops the eightfold path—right mindfulness and right effort—are equivalent to the holographic sets of the frames of reference and the right exertions.

This formal convergence of two causal patterns in the development of the path reflects not only the dual principle of this/that conditionality, but also a very practical point in the task of developing the skills of the mind. The holographic pattern reflects the fact that all the skillful qualities needed for the path are already there in the mind and continually interact along the path. All that is needed is for them to be ferreted out and nourished, their coordination fine-tuned, and they can deliver the mind to the goal. The causal loop pattern reflects the fact that the process must take place over time, as specific qualities are stressed at specific junctures and strengthened by being put to use, and as different skillful qualities need to alternate in helping one another, step by step, along the way. An analogy can be made with learning how to walk: A child who can't yet walk already has all the muscles needed to walk, but she must locate them and exercise them in a coordinated way so that the right and left leg can help and receive help from each other, in order to move from the first tentative step to the point where walking

becomes natural and can be done with grace.

§ 101. Monks, ignorance is the leader in the attainment of unskillful qualities, followed by lack of shame & lack of compunction. In a unknowledgeable person, immersed in ignorance, wrong view arises. In one of wrong view, wrong resolve arises. In one of wrong resolve, wrong speech.... In one of wrong speech, wrong action.... In one of wrong action, wrong livelihood.... In one of wrong livelihood, wrong effort.... In one of wrong effort, wrong mindfulness.... In one of wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration arises.

Clear knowing is the leader in the attainment of skillful qualities, followed by shame & compunction. In a knowledgeable person, immersed in clear knowing, right view arises. In one of right view, right resolve arises. In one of right resolve, right speech.... In one of right speech, right action.... In one of right action, right livelihood.... In one of right livelihood, right effort.... In one of right effort, right mindfulness.... In one of right mindfulness, right concentration arises.

SN 45:1

§ 102. Analysis of the Path. Monks, what is the noble eightfold path? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

And what is right view? Knowledge with regard to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called right view. [§§184-240]

And what is right resolve? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on non-violence: This is called right resolve.

And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, & from idle chatter: This is called right speech.

And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, from taking what is not given [stealing], & from sexual intercourse: This is called right action.

And what is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood. This is called right livelihood.

And what is right effort? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This is called right effort. [§49]

And what is right mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of

themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called right mindfulness. [§30]

And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful (mental) qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration. [§150]

SN 45:8

§ 103. More on Right Action & Right Speech. Having thus gone forth, following the training & way of life of the monks, abandoning the taking of life, he abstains from the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a self that has become pure. Abandoning uncelibacy, he lives a celibate life, aloof, refraining from the sexual act that is the villager’s way.

Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing, & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal.

AN 10:99

§ 104. More on Right Action & Right Speech for Lay People. Abandoning sensual misconduct, he abstains from sensual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with

husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man.

Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty [i.e., a royal court proceeding], if he is asked as a witness, 'Come & tell, good man, what you know': If he doesn't know, he says, 'I don't know.' If he does know, he says, 'I know.' If he hasn't seen, he says, 'I haven't seen.' If he has seen, he says, 'I have seen.' Thus he doesn't consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. [This paragraph is missing in the PTS translation.]

AN 10:176

§ 105. Visākha: Is the noble eightfold path fabricated or unfabricated?

Sister Dhammadinnā: The noble eightfold path is fabricated.

Visākha: And are the three aggregates [of virtue, concentration, & discernment] included under the noble eightfold path, or is the noble eightfold path included under the three aggregates?

Sister Dhammadinnā: The three aggregates are not included under the noble eightfold path, but the noble eightfold path is included under the three aggregates. Right speech, right action, & right livelihood come under the aggregate of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, & right concentration come under the aggregate of concentration. Right view & right resolve come under the aggregate of discernment.

MN 44

§ 106. And what, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness—is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions.

[1] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong view as wrong view, and right view as right view. This is one's right view. And what is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is wrong view.

And what is right view? Right view, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; and there is noble right view, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

And what is the right view that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? 'There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are

contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is the right view that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right view that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of discernment, analysis of qualities as a factor for Awakening, the path factor of right view of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is free from effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right view.

[2] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And what is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on violence. This is wrong resolve.

And what is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; and there is noble right resolve, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

And what is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on non-violence. This is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right resolve that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, (mental) fixity, transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right resolve.

[3] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong speech as wrong speech, and right speech as right speech. And what is wrong speech? Lying, divisive tale-bearing, abusive speech, & idle chatter. This is wrong speech.

And what is right speech? Right speech, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right speech with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; and there is noble right speech, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

And what is the right speech that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from lying, from divisive tale-bearing, from abusive speech, & from idle chatter. This is the right speech that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right speech that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the four forms of verbal misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right speech that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

One tries to abandon wrong speech & to enter into right speech: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong speech & to enter & remain in right speech: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right speech.

[4] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong action as wrong action, and right action as right action. And what is wrong action? Killing, taking what is not given, illicit sex. This is wrong action.

And what is right action? Right action, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right action with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; and there is noble right action, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

And what is the right action that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? Abstaining from killing, from taking what is not given, & from illicit sex. This is the right action that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right action that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of the three forms of bodily misconduct of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right action that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

One tries to abandon wrong action & to enter into right action: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong action & to enter & remain in right action: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right action.

[5] Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood, and right livelihood as right livelihood. And what is wrong livelihood? Scheming, persuading, hinting, belittling, & pursuing gain with gain. This is wrong livelihood.

And what is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right livelihood with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; and there is noble right livelihood, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

And what is the right livelihood that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abandons wrong livelihood and maintains his life with right livelihood. This is the right livelihood that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

And what is the right livelihood that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The abstaining, desisting, abstinence, avoidance of wrong livelihood of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right livelihood that is without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

One tries to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter into right livelihood: This is one's right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong livelihood & to enter & remain in right livelihood: This is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right livelihood.

Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, right resolve comes into being. In one of right resolve, right speech comes into being. In one of right speech, right action.... In one of right action, right livelihood.... In one of right livelihood, right effort.... In one of right effort, right mindfulness.... In one of right mindfulness, right concentration.... In one of right concentration, right knowledge.... In one of right knowledge, right release [§76] comes into being. Thus the learner is endowed with eight factors, and the Arahant with ten.

Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? In one of right view, wrong view is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong view as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right view as their condition go to the culmination of their development. [Similarly with the remaining factors up through:] In one of right release, wrong release is abolished. The many evil, unskillful qualities that come into play with wrong release as their condition are also abolished, while the many skillful qualities that have right release as their condition go to the culmination of their development.

MN 117

§ 107. The Buddha: 'The stream, the stream,' it is said. Now what is the stream?

Ven. Sāriputta: Just this noble eightfold path is the stream: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

The Buddha: Well said, Sāriputta, well said. Just this noble eightfold path is the stream.... 'Streamwinner, streamwinner,' it is said. Now what is a streamwinner?

Ven. Sāriputta: Whoever is endowed with this noble eightfold path is called a 'streamwinner.'

The Buddha: Well said, Sāriputta, well said. Whoever is endowed with this noble eightfold path is called a 'streamwinner.'

SN 55:5

§ 108. Monks, just as a pot without a stand is easy to tip over, and a pot with a stand is hard to tip over, so too the mind without a stand is easy to tip over, and a mind with a stand is hard to tip over. And what is the mind's stand? Just this noble eightfold path.

SN 45:27

§ 109. It's possible that a well aimed spike of bearded wheat or bearded barley, if pressed by a hand or foot, will cut into the hand or foot and draw blood. Why is

that? Because the spike is well aimed. In the same way, it is possible that if one's views are well aimed, one's development of the path is well aimed, they will cut into ignorance, give rise to clear knowing, and lead to the realization of Unbinding. Why is that? Because one's views are well aimed.

And how do well-aimed views and a well-aimed development of the path cut into ignorance, give rise to clear knowing, and lead to the realization of Unbinding? There is the case where a monk develops right view dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops right resolve... right speech... right action... right livelihood... right effort... right mindfulness... right concentration dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is how well aimed views and a well aimed development of the path cut into ignorance, give rise to clear knowing, and lead to the realization of Unbinding.

SN 45:154

§ 110. Just as many kinds of wind blow in the air—east winds, west winds, north winds, south winds, dusty winds, dustless winds, cold winds, warm winds, gentle winds, & strong winds—in the same way, when a monk develops the noble eightfold path, pursues the noble eightfold path, the four frames of reference go to the culmination of their development, the four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for Awakening go to the culmination of their development.

SN 45:155

§ 111. Knowing & seeing the eye as it has come to be, knowing & seeing forms... eye-consciousness... eye-contact as they have come to be, knowing & seeing whatever arises conditioned by eye-contact—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is not infatuated with the eye... forms... eye-consciousness... eye-contact... whatever arises conditioned by eye-contact and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain....

Knowing & seeing the ear.... Knowing & seeing the nose.... Knowing & seeing the tongue.... Knowing & seeing the body....

Knowing & seeing the intellect as it has come to be, knowing & seeing ideas... intellect-consciousness... intellect-contact as they have come to be, knowing & seeing whatever arises conditioned by intellect-contact—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is not infatuated with the intellect... ideas... intellect-consciousness... intellect-contact... whatever arises conditioned by intellect-contact and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

For him—uninfatuated, unattached, unconfused, remaining focused on their drawbacks—the five clinging-aggregates head toward future diminution. The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—is abandoned by him. His bodily disturbances

& mental disturbances are abandoned. His bodily torments & mental torments are abandoned. His bodily distresses & mental distresses are abandoned. He is sensitive both to ease of body & ease of awareness.

Any view belonging to one who has come to be like this is his right view. Any resolve, his right resolve. Any effort, his right effort. Any mindfulness, his right mindfulness. Any concentration, his right concentration: just as earlier his actions, speech, & livelihood were already well-purified. Thus for him, having thus developed the noble eightfold path, the four frames of reference go to the culmination of their development. The four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for Awakening go to the culmination of their development. (And) for him these two qualities occur in tandem: tranquility & insight.

He comprehends through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, realizes through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge, and develops through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge.

And what qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge? 'The five clinging-aggregates,' should be the reply. Which five? The form clinging-aggregate... the feeling clinging-aggregate... the perception clinging-aggregate... the fabrication clinging-aggregate... the consciousness clinging-aggregate....

And what qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge? Ignorance & craving for becoming....

And what qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge? Tranquility & insight....

And what qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge? Clear knowing & release....

MN 149

§ 112. Just as when there is a guest house where people come from the east to take up residence, from the west... the north... the south to take up residence: noble warriors come there to take up residence, brahmans... commoners... vassals come there to take up residence. In the same way, when a monk develops the noble eightfold path, pursues the noble eightfold path, he comprehends through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, realizes through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge, and develops through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge.

SN 45:159

§ 113. 'Suppose a man were traveling along a path. He would see a great expanse

of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the further shore secure & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the other. The thought would occur to him, "Here is this great expanse of water, with the near shore dubious & risky, the further shore secure & free from risk, but with neither a ferryboat nor a bridge going from this shore to the other. What if I were to gather grass, twigs, branches, & leaves and, having bound them together to make a raft, were to cross over to safety on the further shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with my hands & feet?" Then the man, having gathered grass, twigs, branches, & leaves, having bound them together to make a raft, would cross over to safety on the further shore in dependence on the raft, making an effort with his hands & feet. Having crossed over to the further shore, he might think, "How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the further shore. Why don't I, having hoisted it on my head or carrying on my back, go wherever I like?" What do you think, monks? Would the man, in doing that, be doing what should be done with the raft?

'No, lord.'

'And what should the man do in order to be doing what should be done with the raft? There is the case where the man, having crossed over, would think, "How useful this raft has been to me! For it was in dependence on this raft that, making an effort with my hands & feet, I have crossed over to safety on the further shore. Why don't I, having dragged it on dry land or sinking it in the water, go wherever I like?" In doing this, he would be doing what should be done with the raft. Even so monks, I have taught you the Dhamma like a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Understanding the Dhamma to be taught like a raft, you should let go even of dhammas, to say nothing of non-dhammas.'

MN 22

§ 114. The great expanse of water stands for the fourfold flood: the flood of sensuality, the flood of becoming, the flood of views, & the flood of ignorance. The near shore, dubious & risky, stands for self-identity. The further shore, safe and free from risk, stands for Unbinding. The raft stands for just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. Making an effort with hands & feet stands for the arousing of persistence.

SN 35:197