

Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta

The Discourse on the Analysis of the Truths

[The four noble truths & spiritual friendship]

(Majjhima Nikāya 141/3:248-252)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2005

Introduction

1 Summary

The **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22) and the **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) contain exactly the same materials, except that the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta closes with a long section, the Chapter on the Truths (*sacca, pabba*) (D 22.18-21),¹ which also forms a separate shorter sutta, namely, the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta (M 141), but with his own narrative background. The dependent-arising cycles—the 6 senses, the 6 sense-objects, the 6 sense-consciousnesses, and their respective contacts, feelings, perception, volition, craving, thinking and pondering, leading to suffering—showing their arising [§19] and their ending [§20]—found in the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, are not found in the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta.

The Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta opens with the Buddha staying where he has first set in motion the Wheel of the Truth (Dharma, cakra), that is, the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares [§1]. The Buddha starts his teaching with a “historical synopsis” [§2] of the four noble truths [§§2-4]. He goes on to speak on the roles of Sāriputta and Moggallāna as “wise and helpful” spiritual teachers and exemplary spiritual friends, and that their examples should be emulated [§5], and then he retires into his residence (*vihāra*) [§7].

Sāriputta takes the cue from the Buddha’s praise, repeats the historical synopsis [§§8-9], and goes on to define the first noble truth [§§10-20], the second noble truth [§21], the third noble truth [§22], and the fourth noble truth [§23], also defining the noble eightfold path [§§24-31]. The Sutta closes with a refrain of the “historical synopsis,” and the assembly’s joyful approval [§32].

2 Sāriputta and Moggallāna

Sāriputta and Moggallāna are the two chief disciples of the Buddha. The basic functions of the chief disciples are threefold:

- (1) to help the Buddha consolidate the Dharma, thereby making it a vehicle of spiritual transformation and deliverance of beings;
- (2) to serve as models for other monks to emulate and to supervise their training; and
- (3) to assist in the administration of the Sangha, particularly when the Buddha is in retreat or away on an urgent mission.

Of the two chief disciples, the right-hand one, on account of his great wisdom (*mahā, paññā*), is regarded as closest to the Buddha. In the case of Gotama Buddha, this is **Sāriputta**, whose special task in our Buddha’s Dispensation is the systematization of the Dharma and the detailed analysis of its contents (a methodology later called Abhidhamma).

The other chief disciple, **Mahā Moggallāna**, who usually stands on the Buddha’s left, is distinguished for his strength and versatility in the exercise of psychic power (*iddhi*). This power is not a means of dominating others or for self-aggrandizement, but is the product of profound mental concentration and the experience of selflessness, founded on the mastery of mental concentration (*samādhi*). This power is used where beings cannot be reached by the conventional approach of verbal instruction.

In the **Sacca, vibhaṅga Sutta**, the Buddha exhorts his disciples to cultivate the spiritual friendship of Sāriputta and Moggallāna and to associate with them. They are wise and helpful to their companions in

¹ D 22.18-21/2:305-314. The Burmese elders at the 6th Council in Rangoon (1956) added the long section on the four noble truths to the Majjhima version; the PTS, the Sinhalese, the Thai and all the other traditional versions keep to the original short statement on the truths. See Analayo 2003:15 & Sujato 2004b:175 = SD 13.1(10c).

the holy life. Sāriputta is like a mother who brings forth stream-winners and Moggallāna is like a wet nurse who nurtures them right up to arhathood [5]. According to the Commentary, Sāriputta trains his pupils *until he knows they have attained the fruit of stream-winning*, he lets them develop the higher paths on their own, and takes on a new batch of pupils. Moggallāna, on other hand, continues to train his pupils *until they have attained arhathood*. (MA 5:63)

Although we usually associate Sāriputta with wisdom, he is also famous for great patience and love. He would admonish and instruct his pupil up to a hundred or a thousand times until his pupil gains the fruit of stream-entry. Only then does he discharge him to help other students. There are a great number of those who, having received his instructions and following them faithfully, have attained to arhathood.

The Majjhima Commentary states that Sāriputta would instruct his pupils to lead them only up to stream-entry, after which they have to progress on their own (MA 5:63). Even so, in individual cases, he helps various monks to gain the higher stages of sainthood. The Udāna Commentary, for example, says that “at that time, monks in higher training would often approach the venerable Sāriputta for a subject of meditation that could help them to attain to the three higher paths” (UA 362). Such is the case of the elder **Lakuṇṭika Bhaddiya** (“the Dwarf”), who as a stream-winner is instructed by Sāriputta and as a result gains arhathood (U 7.1).²

3 Sāriputta’s compassion

In the **Devadaha Sutta** (S 22.2), the Buddha praises Sāriputta for being “wise and helpful to his fellows in the holy life” (S 22.2/3:5). The Commentary then gives a long account of how Sāriputta assists his fellow monks with both their material needs (*āmisānuggaha*) and with their spiritual needs (*dhammānuggaha*) (SA 2:256).³ By way of “material help,” the Commentary says, Sāriputta does not go on almsround in the early morning as the other monks do. Instead, when they have all left, he walks around the entire monastery grounds, and wherever he see an unswept place, he sweeps it; wherever refuse has not been cleared, he clears them; and he arranges furniture in good order. In this way, if non-Buddhist ascetics should visit the monastery, they would not see any disorderliness and show no contempt of the monks.

Then he would go to the infirmary, and having consoled the indisposed, he would ask them about their needs. If he needs to get any medicine, he would bring along some young novices and find them through almsround or from some appropriate sources. When the medicine has been obtained, he would give them to the novices, saying, “Caring for the sick has been praised by the Master. Go now, good people, and be heedful!” After that, he would go on his almsround or take his meal at a supporter’s house.

When he goes on a journey, he does not walk at the head of the procession, shod with sandals and umbrella in hand, thinking: “I am the chief disciple.” Instead, he would let the novices take his bowl and robes, asking them to go on ahead with the others, while he himself would first attend to the very old, very young and the indisposed, making them apply oil to any sores on their bodies. Only later in the day or on the next day, he would leave together with them.

Due to this maternal predisposition, Sāriputta often arrives late at his destination. On one occasion he arrives so late that he is unable to find proper quarters and has to spend the night seated under a tent made from robes. Seeing this, the Buddha assembles the monks and relates **the Tittira Jātaka** (J 37), the story of the elephant, the monkey and the partridge who, after deciding which of them is the eldest, lived together showing respect for the most senior.⁴ Then he lays down the rule that “lodgings should be allocated according to seniority” (V 2:160 f).

4 Related suttas

² For a more detailed study on Sāriputta and Moggallāna, see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:ch 5 (“True Friendship”).

³ Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:21-25.

⁴ J 37/1:217-220.

The Buddha's first discourse—the **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11)⁵—is mentioned four times in this sutta: twice by the Buddha himself [2, 4] and by Sāriputta [8, 32]. It is also evident that **the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta**, as the name suggests, is a detailed analysis of the brief teachings of the four noble truths given in the first discourse, of which it is, as such, a commentary.

The four noble truths are also presented, but concisely, in **the Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (M 9).⁶ Sāriputta's own unique presentation is recorded in **the Mahā Hatthi,padōpama Sutta** (M 28),⁷ where it is stated that “just as the footprint of any living being that walks can be placed within an elephant's footprint, and so the elephant's footprint is declared to be the foremost of them, even so, all wholesome states can be included in the four noble truths” (M 28.2/1:185). Both **the Tathā Sutta 1** (S 56.20) and **the Tathā Sutta 2** (S 56.27) declare that “the four noble truths are true, not false, not otherwise,”⁸ but the latter adds: “therefore, they are called ‘noble truths’.”⁹

The noble eightfold path (*ariy'atṭhaṅgika magga*) comprises the third of the four noble truths. There are two long suttas, both in the Majjhima Nikāya, dealing exclusively with the noble eightfold path. The first, **the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 141/3:248-252), analyses each of the eight factors using standard canonical definitions. The second, **the Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta** (M 117)¹⁰ deals with the path using the framework of “noble right concentration with its support and its requisites.”

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⁵ S 56.11/5:420-424 = SD 1.1.

⁶ M 9.14-18/1:48 f = SD 11.14.

⁷ M 28/1:184-191 = SD 6.16.

⁸ *Imāni kho bhikkhave cattāri ariya,saccāni tathāni avitathāni anaññathāni*, S 56.20/5:430 f = S 56.27/5:435.

⁹ **Tathā S 1**: *Tasmā ariya,saccāni ti vuccanti* (S 56.27/5:435).

¹⁰ M 117/ 3:71-78 = SD 6.10.

The Discourse on the Analysis of the Truths (M 141/3:248-352)

1 [248] Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in the Deer Park at Isi,patana near Benares.

There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus: “Bhikshus!”

‘Bhante!’ the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

The turning of the Dharma-wheel

2 ‘Bhikshus, the peerless wheel of truth [Dharmacakra]—that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin [religious] or deva [god] or Māra [the evil one] or Brahmā [God] or by anyone in the world—has been set in motion in the Deer Park at Isi,patana near Benares, by the Tathagata [Thus Come], the worthy one, the fully self-awakened one; that is, the proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying¹¹ of the four noble truths.¹²

Of what four?

3 The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the arising of suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the ending of suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering.

4 Bhikshus, the peerless Wheel of Truth [Dharmacakra]—that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world—has been set in motion in the Deer Park, at Isi,patana near Benares, by the Tathagata [Thus Come], the worthy one, the fully self-awakened one; that is, the proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the four noble truths.

Spiritual friendship: Sāriputta & Moggallāna

5 Emulate Sāriputta and Moggallāna, bhikshus! Associate with Sāriputta and Moggallāna, bhikshus! They are wise and helpful¹³ to their companions in the holy life. Sāriputta is like a child-giver [mother]; Moggallāna is like the child’s nurse.¹⁴ Sāriputta trains others for the fruit of stream-entry, and

¹¹ According to Comy, Sāriputta trains his pupils until he knows they have attained the fruit of stream-winning, he lets them develop the higher paths on their own, and takes on a new batch of pupils. Moggallāna, on other hand, continues to train his pupils until they have attained arhathood. (MA 5:63)

¹² This is **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:420-424) = SD 1.1.

¹³ “Wise and helpful,” *paññitā bhikkhū anuggāhakā*. In **Devadaha S** (S 22.2/3:5) and **Cunda S** (S 47.13/5:162), Sāriputta alone is mentioned so. SA gives two kinds of help (*anuggaha*): help with material things and help with the Dharma (SA 2:256). **Vinaya** (on the nuns’ monastic code) defines “should not help” (*n’eva anuggaṇheyya*) as “should neither herself help (her pupil) with the recitation, questioning, exhortation and instruction” (V 4:325; cf V 1:50). Clearly, this refers to help with the Dharma, as evident in the next sentence. IB Horner: “It also appears that when *anugga[n]hāti* is used in relation to the attitude of a more experience member of the Order to a less experienced one, it carries a technical or semi-technical sense” (M:H 3:295 n1). On Sāriputta’s compassion, see Introd (2-3) above.

¹⁴ *Seyyathā pi bhikkhave janettī evaṃ Sāriputto bhikkhave, seyyathā pi jātassa āpādetā evaṃ Moggallāno*. Here the drift of the similes is that Sāriputta inspires or initiates others into the spiritual life, and Moggallāna nurtures and trains them further, as expressed in the following sentence.

Moggallāna for the supreme goal.¹⁵ Sāriputta, bhikshus, is able to proclaim, teach, define, establish, reveal, expound, analyze and clarify¹⁶ the four noble truths.”¹⁷

6 The Blessed One said this. Having said this, the Well-farer [Sugata] rose from his seat and entered his dwelling. [249]

7 Then, not long after the Blessed One had gone, the venerable Sāriputta addressed the monks thus: “Avuso, bhikshus [*āvuso bhikkhavo!*]”

“Avuso!” the monks replied to the venerable Sāriputta in assent.

The venerable Sāriputta said this:

The four noble truths

8 “Avuso, the peerless Wheel of Truth [Dharmacakra]—that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world—has been set in motion in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Benares, by the Tathagata [Thus Come], the worthy one, the fully self-awakened one; that is, the proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the four noble truths.

What are the four?

9a I. The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is suffering.

II. The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the arising of suffering.

III. The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the ending of suffering.

IV. The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering.

9b ‘Avuso, the peerless Wheel of Truth [Dharmacakra]—that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world—has been set in motion in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares, by the Tathagata [Thus Come], the worthy one, the fully self-awakened one; that is, the proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying¹⁸ of the four noble truths.

Of what four?

9c The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the arising of suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the ending of suffering.

The proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering.

¹⁵ *Sāriputto bhikkhave sotāpatti, phale vineti, Moggallāno uttam’atthe*. Here *uttam’attha*, “highest goal,” refers to arhathood. Sāriputta makes it a point to train the newly-ordained monks rather than those who are already more spiritually developed. On his compassion, see Introd (3) above.

¹⁶ “Able to declare, ... clarify,” *ācikkhituṃ desituṃ paññāpetuṃ paṭṭhapetuṃ vivaretuṃ vibhajetuṃ uttāni, kātuṃ*.

¹⁷ The Buddha is clearly alluding to Sāriputta as *Dhamma, senāpati*, the general of the Dharma, next to the Buddha with the ability to keep the Dharma wheel in motion. What ensues is like the second turning of the Dharmacakra.

¹⁸ According to Comy, Sāriputta trains his pupils until he knows they have attained the fruit of stream-winning, he lets them develop the higher paths on their own, and takes on a new batch of pupils. Moggallāna, on other hand, continues to train his pupils until they have attained arhathood. (MA 5:63)

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

I. The noble truth that is suffering

10 [D 2:305] (A) And what, avuso, is **the noble truth that is suffering**?¹⁹

- (1) Birth is suffering,
- (2) decay²⁰ is suffering,
- [] disease is suffering,²¹
- (3) death is suffering;
- (4) to be associated with the unpleasant is suffering;
- (5) to be separated from the pleasant is suffering;
- (6) not getting what one wants is suffering,
- (7) sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair are suffering²²—
- (8) in short, the five aggregates of clinging²³ are suffering.

11 (1) And what, avuso, is **birth**?²⁴

Being born, becoming, descending [into a womb], [arising,]²⁵ generating, manifesting of the aggregates, obtaining the sense-bases of various beings, in various groups of beings, here and there.
—This, avuso, is called birth.²⁶

12 (2) And what, avuso, is **decay**?²⁷

Ageing, decaying, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkled skin, the dwindling away of one's years, the weakness of the sense-faculties, in various beings, in various groups of beings, here and there.²⁸
—This, avuso, is called decay.

13 (3) And what, avuso, is **death**?

Falling away, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, death, dying, one's time being up²⁹ [completion of one's time], breaking up of the aggregates, discarding of the body, [uprooting of the life-faculty,]³⁰ in various beings, in various groups of beings, here and there.³¹
—This, avuso, is called death.

14 (4a) And what, avuso, is **sorrow**?

One's being touched [affected] by one thing or other of a painful nature, by any kind of misfortune, sorrow, grief, distress, inner grief, inner woe, here and there.³² [D 2:306]

¹⁹ Following list: *Jāti pi dukkhā, jarā pi dukkhā, maraṇam pi dukkham, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanass'upāyā-sā pi dukkhā. Yam p'icchaṃ na labhati tam pi dukkham, saṅkhittena pañc'upādāna-k, khandhā dukkhā.* The rest of this sutta is found in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.18-21/2:305-313), but with extra details: see Introd (1) above.

²⁰ *Jarā*, old age, aging, decay.

²¹ Be Ke omit; also omitted in the questions below. Perhaps inserted here by mistake, from **Dhammacakkapavattana S** (S 5:421) (Rhys Davids & Carpenter, edd. *The Dīgha Nikāya* 2:305 n2)

²² Found in most MSS but not in Be and Ce.

²³ *Pañc'upādāna-k, khandha*, namely, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness (S 3:47, Vbh 1).

²⁴ *Jāti*. This section is also found in **Sammādiṭṭhi S** (M 9.26/1:50).

²⁵ *Nibbatti*, so Ke & M 3:249.

²⁶ *Yā tesam tesam sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi satta, nikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti nibbatti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho—ayaṃ vuccat'āvuso jāti.*

²⁷ This section and the following are given as *jarā, maraṇa* and in almost identical words in **Sammā Diṭṭhi S** (M 1:49 = 9.22)

²⁸ *Yā tesam tesam sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi satta, nikāye jarā jīraṇatā khaṇḍhiccam paliccam valittacatā āyuno saṃhānī indriyānaṃ paripāko—ayaṃ vuccat'āvuso jarā.*

²⁹ *Kāla, kiriyā*, lit “having done one's time”.

³⁰ *Jīvit'indriyass'upacchedo*, found in Be; omitted here and in **Sammādiṭṭhi S** (M 9.22/1:49).

³¹ *Yā tesam tesam sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi satta, nikāye cuti cavanatā bhedo antaradhānaṃ maccu maraṇam kāla, kiriyā khandhānaṃ bhedo kaḷebarassa nikkhepo* [Be: *jīvit'indriyass'upacchedo*]*—idaṃ vuccat'āvuso maraṇam.*

—This, avuso, is called grief.

15 (4b) And what, avuso, is **lamentation**?

One’s being affected by one thing or other of a painful nature, by any kind of misfortune, crying, weeping, [250] wailing, lamenting, bewailing, lamentation.

—This, avuso, is called lamentation.

16 (4c) And what, avuso, is **physical pain**?³³

Whatever painful bodily feeling, unpleasant bodily feeling, painful or unpleasant feeling arising from bodily contact.

—This, avuso, is called physical pain.

17 (4d) And what, avuso, is **mental pain [displeasure]**?³⁴

Whatever painful mental feeling, unpleasant mental feeling, painful or unpleasant feeling arising from mental contact.³⁵

—This, avuso, is called mental pain [displeasure].

18a (4e) And what, avuso, is **despair**?

One’s being affected by one thing or other of a painful nature, stress, distress, despair, desperation.

—This, avuso, is called despair.³⁶

³⁷[**18b** (5) ³⁸And what, avuso, is association with the unpleasant?

Here, whoever has undesired, disliked, unpleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch or mind-objects, or encountering, meeting, associating with, mixing with those who wish one ill, harm, discomfort, insecurity.

—This, avuso, is called association with the unpleasant.

18c (6) And what, avuso, is separation from the pleasant?

Here, whoever has desirable, likeable, pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch or mind-objects, or encountering, meeting, associating with, mixing with those who wish one well, good, comfort, security: mother or father or brother or sister or friends or colleagues or blood-relations, and is then deprived of such concourse, intercourse, connection, union.

—This, avuso, is called separation from the pleasant.] [2:307]

19 (7) And what, avuso, is not getting what one wants?

(i) In beings *subject to birth*, avuso, this wish arises:

‘O that we were not subject to birth, that we might not come to birth!’

But this cannot be won by wishing—that is not getting what one wants.

(ii) ...subject to decay [ageing],...

(iii) ...subject to disease,...

(iv) ...subject to death,...

(v) In beings *subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, anguish and despair*, this wish arises:

‘O that we were not subject to sorrow...despair, that we might not have sorrow...despair!’

³² *Anto, soko anto, parisoko*. I have taken these two terms literally (as in CPD, PED, DP). They refer to self-caused grief and woe, or to unexpressed grief and woe. It is possible to render them as “deep grief” and “deep woe” respectively.

³³ *Dukkha*, here used in a restricted sense, ie, *dukkha, dukkha* or *dukkha, dukkhatā*, the 1st of the 3 kinds of suffering (*dukkhatā*); the other two being: *vipariṇāma, dukkhatā* (suffering due to change) or mental pain (*domanassa*), and *saṅkhāra, dukkhatā* (suffering due to formations) or inherent suffering (D 3:216; S 4:259, 5:56).

³⁴ *Domanassa*, here used in a more restricted sense, ie the 2nd of the 3 kinds of suffering (*dukkatā*): see prec n. Often found in the dvandva, *abhijjhā, domanassa* (covetousness and displeasure), ie, liking and disliking (eg D 22.1c/2:290).

³⁵ *-samphassa*, -contact, that is, the impingement of the sense-object on its sense-faculty.

³⁶ *Upāyāsa*. See D:W n698.

³⁷ This and following §§ found in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.18A(5-6)/2:306) are omitted in the parallel passage of **Saccavibhaṅga S** (M 3:250 =141.19).

³⁸ §§18bc, thus in Be Ke, but omitted in PTS.

But this cannot be won by wishing.

—That is not getting what one wants.

20 (8) And what, avuso, are, the five aggregates of clinging in brief?

They are as follows:

- the aggregate of clinging that is form,
- the aggregate of clinging that is feeling,
- the aggregate of clinging that is perception,
- the aggregate of clinging that is formations,
- the aggregate of clinging that is consciousness.

These are, in short, the five aggregates of clinging that are suffering.

This, avuso, is called the noble truth that is suffering.

II. The noble truth that is the arising of suffering

21 (2) And what is the noble truth that is the arising of suffering?

It is this craving that leads to renewed existence [to rebirth], accompanied by pleasure and lust, seeking pleasure here and there; that is to say,

- craving for sensual pleasures,
- craving for existence, **[251]**
- craving for non-existence.

This, avuso, is called the noble truth that is the arising of suffering .

III. The noble truth that is the ending of suffering

22 And what, avuso, is **the noble truth that is the ending of suffering?**

It is the utter fading away and ending of that very craving, giving it up, letting it go, being free from it, being detached from that craving.³⁹

This, avuso, is called the noble truth that is the ending of suffering.

IV. The noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering

23 And what, avuso, is **the noble truth that is the way leading to the ending of suffering?**

It is this noble eightfold path,⁴⁰ that is to say,

- (i) right view,
- (ii) right thought,
- (iii) right speech,
- (iv) right action,
- (v) right livelihood,
- (vi) right effort,
- (vii) right mindfulness,
- (viii) right concentration.

24 (i) And what, avuso, is **right view?**⁴¹ [2:312]

Avuso, it is the knowledge⁴² of suffering,
the knowledge of the arising of suffering,
the knowledge of the ending of suffering,

³⁹ **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22) follows here with a long section here on how restraint of the 6 senses, the 6 sense-objects, the 6 sense-consciousnesses, and their respective contacts, feelings, perception, volition, craving, thinking and pondering, lead to ending of suffering (D 22.20/2:310 f).

⁴⁰ For an insightful study of the eightfold path, see Gethin 2001:190-226 (ch 6).

⁴¹ *Sammā, diṭṭhi*, lit “right seeing.” By itself, *diṭṭhi* is usually tr as “views,” always connoting “wrong view.” “Right vision” is ambiguous, while “perfect view” (which may tr *sammā, dassana*) refers to the supramundane eight-fold path (Vism 605).

⁴² *Ñāna*.

and the knowledge of the way leading to the ending of suffering.

—This, avuso, is called right view.

25 (ii) And what, avuso, is **right thought [intention]**?

Avuso, it is the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-malice, the thought of harmlessness.

—This, avuso, is called right thought.

26 (iii) And what, avuso, is **right speech**?

Refraining from lying;

Refraining from slander;

Refraining from harsh speech;

Refraining from frivolous talk.

—This, avuso, is called right speech.

27 (iv) And what, avuso, is **right action**?

Refraining from taking life;

Refraining from taking the not-given;

Refraining from sexual misconduct;

—This, avuso, is called right action.

28 (v) And what, avuso, is **right livelihood**?

Here, avuso, the noble disciple, having given up wrong livelihood,⁴³ supports himself through right livelihood.

—This, avuso, is called right livelihood.

29 (vi) And what, avuso, is **right effort**?

Here, avuso,

(1) a monk rouses his will, makes an effort,

stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states.

(2) He rouses his will, makes an effort,

stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to abandon evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen.

(3) He rouses his will, makes an effort,

stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to cultivate unarisen wholesome mental states. [252]

(4) He rouses his will, makes an effort,

stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, so that they are not lost, [2:313] to bring them to greater growth, to develop them to full perfection.

—This, avuso, is called right effort

30 (vii) And what, avuso, is **right mindfulness**?

Here, avuso,

(1) having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, a monk dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, contemplating body in the body.⁴⁴

(2) Having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, contemplating feeling in the feelings.

(3) Having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, contemplating mind in the mind.

⁴³ A list of unwholesome trades is given **Vañijja S** (A 5.177/2:208). For a detailed list of wrong livelihood, see the *sīla* section of the *Dīgha*, esp **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.45-63). See also **Mahācattārīsaka S** (M 117.28-33/3:75). Comy given at *Vism* 1.61-65.

⁴⁴ On the tr of *ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā, domanassaṃ*, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10) = SD 13.1 Intro (4).

- (4) Having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, contemplating phenomena [dharmas] in the phenomena.

—This, avuso, is called right mindfulness

31 (viii) And what, avuso, is **right concentration**?⁴⁵

- (1) Here, avuso, a monk, detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, enters and remains in the first dhyana,⁴⁶ accompanied by initial application and sustained application,⁴⁷ accompanied by zest and happiness, born of detachment.
- (2) With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner calm and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.⁴⁸
- (3) With the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body, he enters and remains in the third dhyana, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’
- (4) With the abandoning of pleasure and pain— and with the earlier disappearance of joy and grief— he enters and abides in the fourth dhyana, that is neither pleasant nor painful, with a mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁴⁹
- This, avuso, is called right concentration.
This, avuso, is what is called the way leading to the ending of suffering.

32 Avuso, the peerless Wheel of Truth [Dharmacakra]—that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world—has been set in motion in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Benares, by the Tathagata [Thus Come], the worthy one, the fully self-awakened one; that is, the proclaiming, teaching, defining, establishing, revealing, expounding, analysing and clarifying of the four noble truths.”

This is what the venerable Sāriputta said. The monks rejoiced and approved of the venerable Sāriputta’s word.

— evam —

⁴⁵ Buddhist practitioners like Brahmavamsa teach that *jhāna* (orig meaning simply “meditation”) is unique to Buddhism, ie discovered by the Buddha (2003:5-7). See also Bronkhorst 1986 & Gethin 2001:180 f.

⁴⁶ For a more details description of the dhyana with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 1:73-76=2.75-82).

⁴⁷ “Initial application and sustained application,” *vitakka, vicāra*. For a discussion on these terms, see Gethin 1992:137-157.

⁴⁸ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuñhī, bhāva*), explains **Kolita S** (S 2:273), because within it initial application and sustained application (*vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their ceasing, speech cannot occur. In **Kāmaṅgala S 2** (S 4:293) *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formations (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161=26.4), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence.” Comy on the passage says that those who cannot attain *jhāna* are advised to maintain “noble silence” by attending to their basic meditation subject.

⁴⁹ Vbh 245, Vism 165=4.183.

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